



Ridge Historical Society

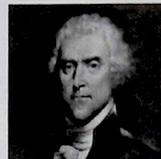
NEWSLETTER

October/November 2002

Visit the web site at www.ridgehistoricalsociety.org

2003: Our Next Bicentennial

Fort Dearborn, Lewis & Clark and the Jefferson Presidency



Two hundred years ago the presidency of Thomas Jefferson changed America. He was a popular, approachable President, in marked contrast to his predecessors. His victory over Federalist Aaron Burr by the smallest of margins so split the nation that for a time the New England States threatened to leave the Union! The forward-looking Jefferson was gazing westward hoping that somewhere out there might be the birthplace of a new America, unencumbered by old-fashioned East Coast concept of government.

He had ideas about how to organize the Northwest Territory into states. The Jeffersonian one-mile grid, originating in Ohio was successfully adopted but the proposed state boundaries never got off the drawing board. But Jefferson soon got his chance to be an empire builder when in late 1802 his representative returned from France with the astounding news that, in the middle of negotiations for the United States' purchase of New Orleans, Napoleon's people offered to throw in all remaining French claims in North America for a few million more! But before he could announce his intentions to buy the vast parcel soon to become known as the Louisiana Purchase, he began planning a voyage of discovery with his personal secretary, Merriweather Lewis.

Thus began the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition, the transcontinental trip whose "bicentennial moments" promise to generate national media attention for the next two years. What remains to be seen is how well Chicago ties in to all this with its own significant historical milestone, the construction of the first Fort Dearborn. Consider the facts; both parties boasted a mix of Frenchmen and other backwoodsmen led by a handful of Army officers carrying nearly identical flags, rations

and armament. Both Lewis and Clark and Ft. Dearborn provided Washington with its first "toehold" on the new frontier, before 1803 the westernmost American military presence is Ft. Wayne in Indiana territory. (Following the Treaty Of Greenville at Fort Wayne in 1795 by which the U.S. government acquired a six-mile square section of land at the mouth of the Chicago River, local trader William Burnett wrote that he expected the Army to build a fort there by the spring of 1796. As it turned out he was a little premature.) The juxtaposition of the timelines of these two simultaneous projects produces a fascinating chronology:

1802

France regains Louisiana Territory from Spain via a secret treaty.

1803

March 9 - Jefferson's Secretary of War, Henry Dearborn orders Detroit's Col. Hamtramck to survey the region around Chicago for a possible fort site.

April - *Capt. John Whistler and six men select a site on the south side of the Chicago River for Ft. Dearborn, rejecting a Calumet location.*

April 30 - Jefferson makes his "Louisiana Purchase" for \$15 million which "enhances the strategic importance of Chicagoland for future commerce" notes historian Ulrich Dankers.

July 14 - *Lt. Swearington and Capt. Whistler leave Detroit bound for Chicago.*

August 17 - Both parties meet at Chicago (Swearington overland and Whistler via the

We hope you enjoy the new look to our newsletter and welcome your comments and contributions. We welcome letters, articles and news from our members and readers.

Let us know what you're doing and what you would like to see in future issues.

Continued on Page 4

John Robert Bailey 1902 - 2002 An Appreciation



When John Bailey, our beloved former treasurer, died on August 6, his death left us with a sense of fulfillment rather than loss. John's friends and family celebrated his 100th birthday at a benefit for the Ridge Historical Society on January 28, and he enjoyed hearing the esteem in which we held him. The Bailey family had just taken a trip so he could satisfy a wish to see Alaska once more, and indeed died within a few days of their return, having accomplished this last adventure.

In the best sense, John was the personification of the Ridge, engaged in community activities, willing to lend a hand when needed, committing himself to his tasks in a serious way, but always carrying on with gusto which conveyed the essential joy of his life, and suggesting to us that we too were obliged to confront everything we did with balance and good spirits. We will miss him terribly.

Harold T. Wolff

From "The Post", 1912:

DOG NOTICE

The running at large of any dog within the corporate limits of the Village of Morgan Park between the first day of June and the first day of November is prohibited, unless such dog be securely muzzled.

Any dog found running at large contrary to the provisions of this notice, will be destroyed.

John's obituaries dwelt on his early struggles to make something of himself, his early jobs, his decision to go to college, his successful years with Illinois Bell, and his retirement career as a tour facilitator. But for his many friends and admirers on the Ridge, John will always be our irrepressible fellow citizen, whom old age slowed a bit but couldn't stop. When we think of him, it will be selling Kiwanis peanuts at 107th and Longwood on Peanut Day, or marching for so many years in the Memorial Day Parade in top hat and tails, or livening up discussions at Men of Leisure in his trademark plaid tuxedo jacket, or displaying his vast collection of tools at the Trinity United Methodist Church Strawberry Festival, or angling a door in a scenery flat for the Beverly Hills University Club so it would close when not in use.

Ridge Historical Society Newsletter

Editor - David Daruszka
Editor Emeritus - Elmer Johnson
President - Gene Delves

The Ridge Historical Society
10621 S. Seeley Avenue
Chicago, IL 60643 (773) 881-1675
Web site:
www.ridgehistoricalsociety.org
Email: ridgehistory@hotmail.com
Open to the public Thursdays and
Sundays 2 to 5 PM, or by
appointment.



From the PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

The newsletter's new look is the creation of our new editor, Dave Daruszka. He succeeds Elmer Johnson in this position, and that is a very hard act to follow. Elmer was editor of US Gypsum publications for 33 years, and in retirement has shared his writing and makeup skills with his church, the Beverly Art Center and, since 1994, with RHS. He brought the newsletter from typewritten and copier production to the more cutting edge photo and print shop version. Dave's still more cutting edge skills now lead us into computer design. So, a big round of applause for Elmer, and a big thank you for Dave picking up where Elmer leaves off. Already the coordinator of our web site and all posters and fliers, Dave now will coordinate all publicity outreach for the Society.

At our last meeting, the Board elected Linda Lamberty to the position of Vice President and Program Coordinator. She will complete the term of Eileen Klees who will continue to monitor other activities. Considering the large size of our program repertoire, this is a very big and important job. Thanks to Eileen for tireless work shouldering these responsibilities, and many thanks to Linda for being willing to pick up the reins.

Gene Delves, President

GARDEN PROJECT REPORT

In a continuous effort to augment the two major improvement projects undertaken in 2002 for upgrading the RHS grounds, Morgan Park Junior's will be working on **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12** (rain date Sat. Oct. 19) from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Mayor Daley's "Clean and Green" is supplying rakes, brooms, trash bags, and green paint for lampposts. We need to supply eager participants to make the day productive. All RHS members are invited to come with shovel & garden tools. Join the Morgan Park Junior's, a Scout troop or two and committed neighbors for a fall blitz that can make a real difference. Continental breakfast will be served, along with fortifying snacks throughout the work day. Call Joyce Black at 233-3680 to sign up, and then lend a hand for an hour or more on October 12.

Special gratitude to: Carol Belshaw, Sue Delves, Eileen Klees and Simone McNeil who gave invaluable assistance and time at the beginning of the Greencorps Grant process. Special thanks to the McGunn Family for giving so generously to begin the "Longwood Slope" transformation, and to the Garden Club of Morgan Park for its \$500 gift for additional landscape improvements. Landscape Architect Wendy Schulenberg, who donated the slope design, continues to be an invaluable asset solving big and small problems. Many members of Morgan Park Junior's and RHS worked to make the project happen, then monitored watering efforts all through this extremely long, hot season. Mel Black's and Steve Zang's day spent bushwhacking weed trees and underbrush to "rediscover the slope" was especially heroic.

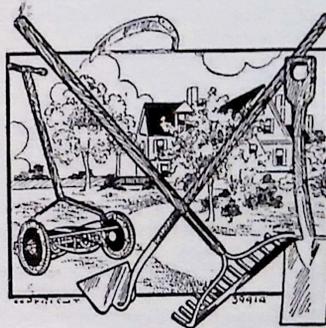
It seems particularly meaningful, after the destructive violence of Sept. 11, 2001 that we remain committed to building and enhancing as counterpoint, and as a reflection of our hope & optimism for our future.

Joyce Black, Garden Projects coordinator



Photo taken during work on the landscape restoration at Driscoll House.

Left to right:
Sue Delves,
Pat McGrail,
and Joyce Black



FOR THE LAWN AND GARDEN we have many conveniences that will save you from a backache. The newest garden tools in our

MODERN HARDWARE STOCK have been designed for utility and to save you from some of the hardest labor.

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Phone: Morgan Park 933.

Ad for Greenman Hardware taken from "The Post", Morgan Park's weekly newspaper.

Fort Dearborn, Lewis & Clark and the Jefferson Presidency - continued from Page 1

Great Lakes on the schooner TRACY) and commence construction of "a stockade works aided by blockhouses".

August 30 – *A trader out of Ft. Wayne named La Gueness applies for the first permit to trade at "Chicago".*

August 31 – Merriweather Lewis, after gathering supplies, leaves Pittsburgh with a large keelboat (which keeps getting stuck in the shallows of the upper Ohio) and three pirogues each loaded with up to 8 tons of provisions.

October – *Finding no good construction-grade timber nearby, the soldiers building Ft. Dearborn are forced to travel miles up the north branch looking for oak groves.*

October 15 – William Clark (younger brother of George Rogers Clark of Revolutionary War fame) joins the expedition party in Kentucky where he had spent the summer recruiting men from the Louisville area.

December – *Capt. Whistler's men, in their unfinished fort on the shore of Lake Michigan become first group of men to ever winter at Chicago...local Indians, traders and most large game by this time having sensibly relocated to the south as they do every year.*

December 12 – Lewis and Clark and company set up winter camp along the eastern shore of the Mississippi across from the mouth of the Missouri River.

1804

May – *Trader John Kinzie arrives at Chicago on horseback from St. Joseph with his family and buys the old de Sable residence directly across from the fort.*

May 13 – After buying additional supplies in St. Louis Lewis and Clark begin their ascent of the Missouri River, reaching Ft. Mandan, North Dakota in November.

December – *Kinzie, now justice of the peace is the proud father of another daughter, Ellen Marion the first American born at Chicago.*

1805

April – Lewis and Clark expedition presses on into the unknown experiencing all manner of "dangers, difficulties and fatigues" on the northern plains. Back in Illinois territory the officers and gentlemen of Fort Dearborn put the finishing touches on their enclosure and while out on one of their frequent hunting expeditions discover that the Calumet River is much enlarged having changed mouths. Last years drought combined with heavy winter snow has conspired to block the old original mouth in the sand dunes. It's likely at this time that the men of Fort Dearborn are regularly camping on our area. They would give the Ridge its name, and become some of the first landowners.

So as the rest of the country revels in "Lewis and Clark Fever" we here in Chicago have our own bicentennial to celebrate, but unless I missed the press release, City Hall hasn't yet made any plans. Your move Mayor Daley!

Paul Petraitis



The rededication of the 111th Street Train Station will take place Thursday, October 10th. Festivities will take place throughout the day and will include light refreshments, history displays, music, and actors in period costumes. Join your friends and neighbors in celebrating the restoration of this prominent community landmark. This date also coincides with the 150th Anniversary of the first train from Chicago to Joliet on the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. The Rock Island played a pivotal role in the development of the Ridge communities. Volunteers are also needed to assist with the events of the day. Read our volunteer column elsewhere in this newsletter for more information.

Webbs Little Stock Yards

A barn and shanty were built on Seeley Ave. in the mid 1860's. There were fences on either side of Seeley about a half a block back nearly to 107th, and block long feeding troughs for the cattle. Some of the cattle came from as far away as Texas, and were driven down the Township Road (103rd) to a slough between Wood and Prospect Streets.

From notes written by Alice S. Barnard

MOUNT GREENWOOD



Chicago's Most Beautiful Rural Cemetery.

Ridge Historical Society and Mount Greenwood Cemetery Sponsor October Tour

Late in the 19th century, long established urban "burying grounds" were closing down and being converted into city parks. New and improved cemeteries - complete with official Landscape Architects - sprang up outside city limits to absorb removals from old sites, as well as to meet the inevitable needs of an exploding population. Drawing city dwellers out to the country on new commuter railroad systems, these settings were designed to be places of peaceful recreation as well as burial.

Mt. Greenwood Cemetery, the oldest of these in our community, with the Ridge Historical Society invite you into this very special place. At the optimum viewing time for fall foliage, participants may walk, drive or bike a leisurely self-guided tour of the park-like grounds, while learning much about these who walked the Ridge in our earliest days - and then chose this lovely spot for eternal rest. The cemetery's picturesque stone chapel will feature exhibits and light refreshments both during and after the tour for the remainder of the day, and grounds will remain open until 4:45 PM for those who chose to take their time.

Saturday, October 5, 2002 - Official tour runs continuously from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, with gate closing at 4:45 PM. \$5.00 in advance or at the door will cover refreshments, program and tour materials. **RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED** by calling or stopping by: Mt. Greenwood Cemetery, 2900 W 111th St. Chicago, IL 60655 773-233-0136.

The Ridge Historical Society's October program will take place in the chapel the following day, Sunday, October 6 beginning at 2:30 PM.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

for the following positions and events:

Docents

Docents work at Driscoll House during our public hours (Thursdays and Sundays, 2 to 5 PM) to greet visitors and give tours of the house. Call:

Joy Egan at 773-238-8886.

111th Street Station Rededication

Volunteers needed on Thursday October 10 any times from 5:30 AM to 6:30 PM. Help serve light refreshments to commuters and provide other assistance during this significant community event. To volunteer call:

Mary Olsson 773-238-1794

Judy Wagner 773-445-3374

Karen Meyer 773-233-671

Flyer Distribution

Help distribute and post flyers for upcoming programs and events at local businesses and public facilities. Contact:

Dave Daruszka 773-233-8788

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

As a not-for-profit, volunteer organization we depend on our members for their support. Here are some ways you can help:

Financial Support

The membership dues cover only a fraction of the costs of operating the organization. Consider donating to our Endowment Fund, whose interest provides us with money to cover operating expenses. All donations are tax deductible.

Volunteer Support

If you have the time, give a few hours a month to assist with one of our projects or events. Enthusiasm, and not experience, is the most important thing we are looking for.

Donating Artifacts

You may have items or photographs that help to document the history of our community. We are actively seeking these materials to add to our collections.

Italian Renaissance poet Torquato Tasso (1544-1595) wrote a renowned romantic poem "Rinaldo" when he was 18, and the epic poem "Jerusalem Delivered" when he was 31. 13 streets in the Village of Morgan Park were taken from names related to his works. These included Tasso Place, Rinaldo, Ebuda, Borso and Armida. These names disappeared with the village's annexation to the city, with the exception of Lothair.

NOT TO BE MISSED

A Calender of Events and Attractions

The deadline for the December/January Newsletter is Monday November 11th. We also accept submissions via email at ridgehistory@hotmail.com

"A DAY IN THE PARK"

Mount Greenwood Cemetery
Saturday, October 5, 2002
10 AM to 1 PM

Tour the area's oldest cemetery on foot or by bike. Cosponsored by the Ridge Historical Society and the Mt. Greenwood Cemetery. \$5. per person includes light refreshments. Call 773-233-0136 for more information.

RHS October Program

At the Mount Greenwood Cemetery
2900 W. 111th Street, Chicago
Sunday, October 6, 2002
2:30 PM

Our bimonthly program and meeting will be a slide presentation of the history of the Mt. Greenwood Cemetery. *Note: This program is in the cemetery chapel, and not at Driscoll House.*

BAPA Falling Leaf Festival

Sunday, October 6, 2002
12 to 7 PM
773-233-3100 for more information.

RHS Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, October 9, 2002
7:30 PM
Driscoll House - 10621 S. Seeley Avenue

111th Street Station Rededication

Thursday, October 10
5:30 AM to 6:30 PM
773-881-1675 for more information.

RHS Board of Directors Meeting

Wednesday, November 13, 2002
7:30 PM
Driscoll House - 10621 S. Seeley Avenue

Ridge Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

Ridge Historical Society
10621 S. Seeley Ave.
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Lewis & Clark & Jefferson
John Bailey Remembered
Mount Greenwood Cemetery Tour

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