



Ridge Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

June-July 2004

Visit the web site at www.ridgehistoricalsociety.org

Chain Stores Invade Beverly-Morgan Park

A Hot Time in the Old Town

The next entertainment on the Glazier course will be given next Thursday evening, March 15. Miss Mary Hazel Freeman, who gives dramatic and comic readings and impersonations, and Hattie Rood Grace, the dramatic soprano and whistler, will furnish the program. Each lady comes well recommended. From the Bethany Union Church "The Reminder", Thursday, March 10, 1910

One might think that this article is about the recent invasion into our community of chain stores, such as CVS, Walgreens, and Borders. Did you know that 75 years ago Beverly and Morgan Park were invaded by the first wave of chain grocery and drug stores? Retailers such as the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (A&P), Walgreens Drug Store, National Tea Company (National), and the General Market Company expanded into the commercial districts sprouting up in Chicago's neighborhoods and suburbs in the 1920s.

In 1929, real estate developer George W. Prassas began construction of a building at 1752-60 West 95th Street, at the northeast corner of 95th Street and Wood Street. This one-story brick building with a stone front facade was designed to house six commercial stores. Its convenient location next to the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad station would appeal to residents stepping on and off the train as they made their daily commute. Location had its price. According to *The Economist*, George Prassas reportedly paid \$100,000 for the vacant 105x126 parcel in April of 1929.

George Prassas discovered a real estate niche in the booming 1920s. He specialized in one and two-story buildings designed primarily for chain stores. Using designs by architect Jens J. Jensen and others, he began his initial ventures on the north and northwest sides of Chicago. Expanding to the South side, as well as suburban communities such as La Grange, Elmhurst, and Des Plaines in 1929, he also looked towards the North Shore and other areas. Many of these buildings can still be found in neighborhood commercial dis-

tricts, and are quite similar, with storefronts of minimal classical or art deco ornamentation clad in stone or terra cotta. Prassas worked principally with the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company, the General Market Company, and other chains such as the Walgreen Company.

Many people may not be aware that the Walgreen Company opened its first stores on Chicago's South Side, where it also had its base of operations. It's not surprising that as Walgreen's expanded into outlying neighborhood commercial districts, the company sought to open a store in Beverly Hills in 1929. Perhaps the store was also opened since Charles Walgreen, Jr., son of the founder, lived in Beverly Hills. Charles Walgreen, Jr. once resided in a Tudor Revival-style home at 8910 South Hamilton Avenue, constructed in 1926 and designed by architect S. McDonald Lovell. His father, Charles Walgreen, Sr., once was president of Beverly County Club. The Beverly Hills store was one of 397 stores opened by Walgreens throughout the country by 1929.

The Walgreens Building at 1752-60 West 95th Street is unique in that it represented a new building policy inaugurated by the Walgreen Company. The company would construct a building for their store in a neighborhood business district, then lease out additional storefront space in the same building to other chains, including grocers. This development prototype was effective where residents of the neighborhood could walk to stores in the neighborhood commercial districts. With the advent of the automobile this type of development evolved from walk up storefronts, into the now familiar

Continued on Page 4

The Passing of Charles B. Goes

After making a brave fight against sickness for more than a year, Mr. Goes passed beyond this life at noon on Monday, March fourteenth. He was a warm-hearted, generous friend and is mourned by many outside of his family circle. He leaves his widow, to whom he was married in 1883, two sons and one daughter. The funeral will be held this, Thursday, afternoon at two o'clock and the interment will be at Mt. Hope.

Mr. Charles B. Goes was born in Terre Haute, Indiana in September 1855, the son of a Lutheran minister. It was while the family was stationed in Milwaukee that this son, aged thirteen, entered upon his apprenticeship as a lithographer. He came to Chicago directly after the great fire and worked at his trade until 181,

Continued on Page 3

Ridge Historical Society Recipient of Conservation Assessment Program Grant

The Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) and Heritage Preservation are pleased to announce the Ridge Historical Society has been awarded a 2004 Conservation Assessment Program (CAP) grant. Ridge Historical Society joins the 2,100 museums that have participated in CAP since the program began in 1990. CAP assists museums by providing funds for professional conservation specialists to identify the conservation needs of their collections and recommend ways to correctly improve collections conditions. Heritage Preservation's President, Lawrence L. Reger, praised Ridge Historical Society for "making the vital work of caring for collections and sites a priority at their institution and helping ensure that they are available to present and future generations."

CAP provides funds for a general conservation assessment of the museum's. Professional conservator(s) will spend two days surveying the site and three days writing comprehensive reports that will identify conservation priorities. The on-site consultation will enable the Ridge Historical Society to evaluate its current collections care policies, procedures, and environmental conditions. The assessment report(s) will help the museum make appropriate improvements for the immediate, mid-range, and long-range care of their collections. The Ridge Historical Society expects to assess its collections and facility with the goal of improving its conservation efforts by participating in CAP.

"The Institute of Museum and Library Services is proud of its role in helping museums, both large and small, establish and meet their conservation goals," remarked IMLS Director, Robert S. Martin. "Through its conservation grants, IMLS has helped transform conservation practices across the nation.

CAP is a one-time award funded by IMLS and administered by Heritage Preservation. IMLS provides Federal support for museums and libraries and comprises the Offices of Museum Services (OMS) and Library Services (OLS). Congress established IMLS in 1996 through the Museum and Library Services Act that consolidates museum support formerly administered by the Institute of Museum Services and library programs formerly administered by the Department of Education. Heritage Preservation, based in Washington, D.C., is the national organization representing conservation and preservation activities in the United States. For more information about CAP, contact Heritage Preservation at 1625 K Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20006 or 202-634-1422.

Corrections

Sue Delves was the author of the article on Jack Simmerling in the last issue of the Newsletter. She was not credited.

Mary Olsson is the new President of RHS, her name was not included in the masthead in the last issue of the Newsletter.

Ridge Historical Society NEWSLETTER

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Open to the public Thursdays and
Sundays, 2 to 5 pm, or by appointment.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Archives Committee met with Jennifer Hartz of the Chicago Historical Society April 9, 2004 at RHS. Ms. Hartz is a curator for CHS under the U.S. Newspaper Program, a grant-sponsored program initiated by the National Endowment of the Humanities. CHS is undertaking a large scale documentation of public domain newspapers in Illinois with the eventual goal of microfilming these collections.

Most religious and association-news organs are not considered under this grant. Nonetheless, Linda Lamberty may have convinced Ms. Hartz that the Bethany Union Reminder was more than a church newsletter!

Because of the vast scale of this undertaking it will be years (potentially 2006) before any newspapers in our collection are retrieved for microfilming. It is important to note that this project is not associated with the Illinois State Museums. The CHS won this grant through the NEH, and administers it solely.

Ms Hartz had a very finite view of what was

significant to her and how our collection fit the grant objectives. She was on a reconnaissance mission, collecting our inventory lists, which we gave her. Ms. Hartz wasn't in the position to tell us how to manage our collection or advise us about what to keep and what to eliminate or stop collecting.

What was clear, however, is there may be a considerable amount of information-sharing with other collections. Ms. Hartz gave us a list of newspapers related to our area that are housed in other collections. RHS has the most complete sets of several of the more obscure (The Post) and the most secure (e.g. The Beverly Review). She will take the list we provided and determine where our collections meet CHS project parameters and if we have the most complete sets (largest runs for filming) then our priority for filming may get boosted. When all is done, the University of Illinois at Urbana is likely to be the repository for all of the microfilm and will provide access to these films through the interlibrary loan system.

Eileen Klees

when he went into business for himself, the firm's name being Goes, Quensel & Libold. In 1902 the plant was removed to Englewood and become the Goes Lithographing Company.

From the Bethany Union Church "The Reminder", Thursday, March 17, 1910

Note: The Goes Lithographing Company is still in business at the Englewood location, and can be seen when traveling downtown on Metra.

The following Annual Fund contributors were inadvertently left off the list in our last issue. We apologize for the omissions:

Alan D. Schultz
Barry Kritzberg
M/M Harry Robertson
Marie McDonough
Mati Maldre
Chuck Shanabrich
Katie George
Pat & John Coffey
Ed Gabriel
Lilyan Nash
Carol & Fred Haw
Linda Lane
Lori Daker

Audrey Gramstad & Margaret Wynne

Grace Kuikman
Nancy & Larry Brown
Helen Jean Wyatt
Dick & Margaret Arnold
Jan & Wayne Helge
Kay MacNeil
Norine Beirne
Ted & Eleanor Hollander
Bob Wirtshafter
Robyn Dare
Ethel Horton
Frank Lucente
Gertrude Knight
John & Mary Meany

The Dangers of Everyday Life

Belmont Station (present day 107th Street train station) is lighted with gasoline gas. Last Monday evening the wood-alcohol torch used to ignite the gas, exploded, badly burning Mr. Hornbeck's two hands and one hand of his older son. The two-year old boy was so close to the flame that he suffered very serious injury, internal as well as external. The physicians think he will recover.

From the Bethany Union Church "The Reminder", Thursday, January 13, 1910

Chain Stores Invade Beverly-Morgan Park (continued)

commercial strips with frontage parking lots that combined a grocery with the drug store. Walgreens and other chain drug stores have abandoned the combination grocery and drug store strip to develop a multitude of free-standing structures in order to accommodate drive-through pharmacies.

Shortly after the building's construction on 95th Street, Walgreens occupied the corner storefront that faces the train station, A & P leased the two storefronts next to Walgreens for one of its "new self-service stores," and the General Market Company and the Birk-Fellinger Company, cleaners and dyers, leased the remaining stores. Although the stores were leased, George Prassas was not finished with his ventures in Beverly Hills and Morgan Park. In November 1929, Prassas purchased a 50x100 property at 1981-1983 W. 111th Street to construct another one-story building to be occupied by the A & P and the General Market Company.

The Walgreens Building at 1752-60 West 95th Street is historically significant for its association with 1920's commercial development in the neighborhood around our historic train stations. Not only was it the location of the neighborhood's first Walgreens Drug Store, but the building is also significant as a proto-

type for additional commercial development by the Walgreen Company in 1929. Although the building is considered a contributing building within the Ridge Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is scheduled for demolition as part of the City of Chicago's Fire Station Project on 95th Street.

Jennifer Kenny
RHS Historian

Many thanks to Donna Lindgren, Coordinator of the Walgreens Drug Stores Historical Foundation, for her donation of three books to the RHS Collections:

Bro, Margueritte Harmon and Myrtle R. Walgreen. *Never a Dull Day: An Autobiography of Myrtle R. Walgreen*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1963.

Walgreens: Celebrating 100 Years As the Pharmacy America Trusts. Deerfield, IL: Walgreen Company, 2001.

Kogan, Herman and Rick Kogan. *Pharmacist to the Nation: A History of Walgreen Co*. Deerfield, IL: Walgreen Company, 1989.

Jennifer Kenny
RHS Historian



1752-60 W. 95th Street
Photograph by David Daruszka

Simmerling Minatures Exhibit Highlights

Lost Prairie Avenue Mansions

The dollhouse and miniature exhibit, Small Wonder, was well under way this last holiday season when Jack Simmerling politely offered the Ridge Historical Society the loan of a few tiny paper models he had made as a boy - if we were interested. We had no idea when he arrived what wonders, truly, would unfold!

Jack brought in 4 small paper and cigar-box buildings (and vintage photos) for the exhibit, but commented that he had many more still in boxes at home. Sue Delves and I immediately gave each other knowing looks! She suggested, as I thought, that more of the same would make a fine exhibit all on their own. Jack not only agreed, but also offered to loan some of the countless amazing artifacts, photos and stories he had accumulated, along with paintings and drawings he created, throughout intervening years.

Jack's focus, primarily the legendary Prairie and Calumet Ave. mansions and their like, had become a lifelong passion for him. As he collected salvaged bits and pieces from demolished buildings year after year, the little models were relegated to attic after attic, first by his mother and later within his own household. About fifty years passed before they saw the light of day again, in the interest of RHS and our desire to spread the gospel of Preservation.

Sue gladly interviewed Jack, which made a wonderful article for our newsletter and the local press, and in addition Jack brought in his dear friend, Brenda Rotzoll of the Sun Times. She did a BEAUTIFUL spread on Jack and the models at RHS, complete with exemplary photos by staff photographer, Scott Stewart, which took up more than an entire page of the Sun Times Real Estate section on Sunday, April 18th, a week before our exhibit opened. We couldn't have paid for better press!

New Board member, Carol Flynn (who as proprietor of The Dollhouse Corner in Worth

ably co-curated Small Wonder) set to cleaning and repairing Jack's dusty and sometimes rumbled models with the loving hand and eye of a master.

You cannot believe the details Jack copied and preserved with the barest of scrap materials. The results are absolutely stunning. (And Jack has just informed me that he has found more of them at home!) If we didn't have an exciting and time-sensitive exhibit in the works (see insert and more on Mati Maldre's upcoming photo installation and the visit of the Walter Burley Griffin in America Society in June) we would be begging to keep Jack's treasures all summer long!

To top it off, Jack has made more than one personal appearance to share the captivating and often heart-wrenching saga of his life amidst both people and structures lost. He came along too late to know the kings who built the castles, but one way or another he has captured the magic and preserved it. Jack Simmerling counts both people and buildings his dear friends, and they somehow live on through him.

We thank you, Jack, for what you have so graciously shared - and for having ALWAYS been A VERY GOOD FRIEND to RHS!

If you missed the all-too-brief exhibit of Jack Simmerling's collection, you may still catch his amazing paper mansions at the Ridge Historical Society through August 16, 2004!

The other art and artifacts will have gone home with Jack by the time you read this, but we are moving his exquisite models to the Driscoll House dining room and will continue to display them throughout the course of the new exhibit.

Come see this rare treat while you still can - along with "Lost Ridge", a late-blooming feature on local Preservation causes lost and won.

Linda Lamberty

Perhaps They Didn't Get It the First Three Times

Sunday morning at Bethany Union Church, the pastor will preach the second and final sermon on the subject: "Christian Growth." At 7:15 in the evening the pastor will speak for the fourth time on Samson. The special subject will be: "Samson's Famous Hair Cut." *From the Bethany Union Church "The Reminder", Thursday, March 17, 1910*

An Untimely Death

Mr. William S. Wood, assistant superintendent of telegraph of the Rock Island Railroad, died of heart trouble on Thursday afternoon, March 3, at his residence, 9916 Winchester Avenue. Mr. Wood entered the service of the Rock Island Road when sixteen years of age and remained in its service nearly twenty-nine years, being in his forty-fifth year at the time of his death. He had been a resident of Tracy and Longwood for some time, a man whose quiet refinement won the esteem of those he met. Mr. Wood leaves a wife and ten-year old daughter. The funeral services will be held at his old home in Geneseo, Illinois on Saturday, March 5. *From the Bethany Union Church "The Reminder", Thursday, March 10, 1910*



Old Time Radio Program a Huge Success

Remember when the family would gather around the radio for the evening's entertainment? In the days before television, families would listen to shows like "Fibber McGee and Molly", "Suspense", "Lights Out", "Jack Benny", "Fred Allen" and many others. Friday, April 30th, Ridge Historical Society brought old time radio back to life. An audience of 95 was treated to an evening of dinner and two radio programs presented by the "THOSE WERE THE DAYS RADIO PLAYERS".

The performers included Beverly's and RHS's own **Mel** and **Joyce Black** acting in an episode of "The Life Riley". The players also recreated an episode of "The Shadow". The radio players have been performing for over ten years and recreate vintage radio scripts complete actual with sound effects. Dinner and desserts were provided by RHS board members, including **Carol Belshaw**, **Joyce Black**, **Kate Eaton**, **Paula Everett**, **Sue Delves**, **Carol Flynn**, **Lois Grayston**, **Linda Lamberty**, **Linda Lane**, **Lori McGunn**, **Joan Murphy**, **Marie Sandstrom** and **Michelle Stern**.

Thanks to everyone who volunteered and a special thanks to **Bill Sandstrom**, who lent RHS twenty additional chairs he borrowed from his church to accommodate the overflow crowd. The radio players plan a return engagement this winter. As fundraisers go, this program was an RHS night to remember.

Milwaukee Visitors Discover Neighborhood Through RHS

Who said that Historical Societies had to be

NEWS BRIEFS

OUR MOTTO: IF IT FITS IT'S NEWS TO US!

desiccated, stagnant, stuffy places? On Saturday, April 24 RHS was warming with architectural history buffs visiting from Milwaukee, over twenty Morgan Park Junior Woman's Club volunteers, and nearly one dozen RHS board members assisting with catering a lunch for twenty-eight, redesigning and re-landscaping the planting bed all along RHS's front driveway, and then conducting the Milwaukee visitors on a bus tour of the community. In addition, four new composting bins were constructed from pallets donated by The Home Depot for recycling organic yard waste.

As if that weren't enough, local art gallery owner and history buff **Jack Simmerling**, provided our out-of-town guests with a fascinating introduction to his new exhibit, which was to open to the general public the following day. **Sue Delves**, RHS emeritus board member who graciously conducted the bus tour, related that the Milwaukee tour group had no idea that Beverly Hills/Morgan Park even existed; much less that it was a community of such beauty and architectural significance.

Special thanks also go to board members **Carol Belshaw**, **Mel and Joyce Black**, **Paula Everett**, **Carol Flynn**, **Jennifer Kenny**, **Linda Lamberty**, **Linda Lane**, **Mati Maldre**, and **Marie Sandstrom** for working so hard to accomplish much on that very busy day. **Margaret Heywood** and **Judy Wagner**, members of Morgan Park Jr. Woman's Club deserve kudos for volunteering their efforts in the kitchen, along with **Marie Sandstrom** and **Joyce Black**. Special thanks also go to Morgan Park Jr. member **Edris Hoover** for lending her china for the luncheon service.

Many volunteers working together helped make this a pleasant and productive day.

Notification of Deadline Change and Submission Requirements for the Ridge Historical Society Newsletter

The new newsletter deadline will be the 1st of each month the newsletter is submitted to the printer. 2004's dates are as follows:

August/September:	July 1st
October/November:	September 1st
December/January:	November 1st

Contributions may be submitted as follows:

- Placed in the Newsletter Editor's inbox on the Docent's desk at Driscoll House.
- Mailed to RHS at our mailing address.
- Via email to: ridgehistory@hotmail.com

All submissions must be on a computer file in a standard word processing program (MS Word, Word Perfect, etc.). A disk with the submitted computer file must be included with a printout of the document if it is left in the inbox or sent via standard mail. All contributions submitted via email must be sent as **text attachments** with the email. Please include the words "**newsletter submission**" in the subject of the email. Information included in the body of the email will no longer be accepted. This requires reformatting of the text and adds additional time and steps to the production process. If you have any questions regarding how to do this please contact me at the RHS email address. All photographs and artwork must be submitted as originals to be scanned, or submitted on a disk as TIFF files (Tagged Image File Format).

Typed or hand-written copy will not be accepted as a rule, though some exceptions may be made at the discretion of the editor. Please make arrangements to have that information retyped in computer format. Materials submitted after the listed deadlines will not be used. Materials that are time sensitive should be submitted with enough advance to make it in the newsletter **BEFORE** the event takes place. The newsletter is usually distributed by the first week of the month. Non-time sensitive materials submitted after the deadline will be included in the next scheduled newsletter, space permitting.

David Daruszka
Newsletter Editor

75 YEARS AGO IN OUR COMMUNITY

The Beverly Hills Center of the Infant Welfare Society was organized in September 1929 under first president, Mrs. Paul Headland, and vice president, Mrs. Eugene Schobinger.

The Morgan Park Police District, known as the 13th District, was established in 1929. The district boundaries were Halsted Street on the East, 99th Street on the north, and the Chicago city limits on the south and west. Ac-

ording to the Chicago Tribune, the police were welcomed with a parade through the streets of the community on December 14, 1929, headed by the Morgan Park Military Academy band. The 13th District was first located in a leased space in a now razed commercial building located at 1923-1927 West Monterey Avenue. Their time in the leased space was short lived. In 1936, they moved into a new building constructed at the corner of Esmond and Monterey.

Jennifer Kenny
RHS Historian

He Can Hardly Wait

Mr. J.H. Burdette of Longwood Boulevard is anxiously awaiting the arrival of his new Chadwick automobile, which is the fastest machine in the city, running 107 (mph) on the track.

From the Bethany Union Church "The Reminder", Thursday, March 10, 1910

NOT TO BE MISSED

A Calendar of Events and Attractions

Preservation Hints

Preservation is not just about preventing demolition of old buildings; it is also about preserving historic character.

Did you know that you can remodel an old building and keep its historic character at the same time? Instead of removing or destroying, you could retain historic elements that make your building unique.

The Prairie School in Beverly

An Exhibit of Photographs
by Mati Maldre

June 12 - August 16

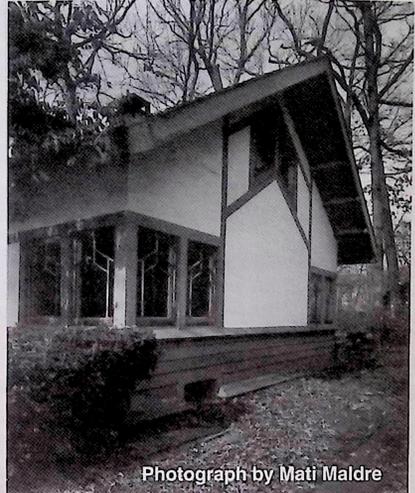
Thursdays and Sundays, 2 - 5 PM or by
appointment

Reception

June 12, 5 - 7 PM

Sponsored by the Walter Burley Griffith
Society of America

Ridge Historical Society
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Photograph by Mati Maldre

Ridge Historical Society

NEWSLETTER

Ridge Historical Society
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Chicago, IL 60643

DATED
MATERIAL

FIRST CLASS
MAIL

Inside this issue...

Chain Store Invasion
RHS Receives Assessment Grant
Simerling Miniature Exhibit

Page 1
Page 2
Page 5