Ridge Historical Society

RECORD

BEVERLY HILLS, MORGAN PARK, WASHINGTON HEIGHTS & MT. GREENWOOD

THE RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BEGINS CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF THE RIDGE NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Ridge Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, begins its landmark 30th year. With 19th-century origins as a suburban retreat once outside of the City of Chicago, the district is a special place with a vast collection of uninterrupted blocks of well-built and architect-designed historic, single family homes from the mid-19th to mid-20th century.

The district is considered one of America's largest urban National Register Districts, with close to 3,000 buildings that contribute to its historic character (Pilsen, one of Chicago's newest National Register districts, is the largest with over 4,000 buildings).

Besides its scale, many unique attractions are honored within the district. Six rare examples of historic railroad passenger stations along the Metra-Rock Island line are of interest to railfans across the country. It boasts the City of Chicago's most extensive collection of Prairie-style architecture representing designs by masters such as Frank Lloyd Wright, Walter Burley Griffin, George Maher, and local architects who were greatly influenced by them.

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No other topographical feature in the city has as much interpretive value as the Blue Island Ridge or "the Ridge," an ancient feature that explains glacial movement. "The Ridge" attracted late 19th- and early 20th-century affluent homebuilders, who constructed high style mansions on its crest.

Other individual buildings are of great significance, including the Givens Castle, a Romanesque Revival-style building from 1886 based on an Irish design, and the Dickey-Harris House, the long-time home of Paul Harris, founder of Rotary International.

RIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT LOGO

How will the Ridge Historical Society kick off a year-long celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Ridge Historic District?

The Historic Buildings Committee has engaged fabulous designers Matthew Maldre and Erik Maldre, sons of RHS board member, Mati Maldre, to produce a district logo. Many thanks to them for their volunteer efforts.

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The committee believes the logo is a meaningful symbol that represents something unique in the district, is upscale and substantial like the quality of the historic housing in our district, while also being recognizable and inviting to visitors and potential residents.

After 30 years, a logo will re-establish an identity for our historic district that can be used for:

- publicity and tourism related materials
- a new homeowner plaque program
- signage at entry points, on street signs and on street lights
- Web site amd fundraising items such as t-shirts and buttons.

The logo design will be unveiled this summer during the 30th anniversary year.

SUMMER 2006

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RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10621 S. Seeley Ave.
Chicago, IL 60643

T 773/881-1675

ridgehistory@hotmail.com

Open to the public
Tuesday 2 - 5 p.m.
Thursday 2 - 5 p.m.
Sunday 2 - 5 p.m.
or by appointment

We assume this photo is from the 1890s or early 1900s, but we know little else. Do you recognize any of the team members? If so, please contact Ridge Historical Society.

Historic Home Plaque Program to launch soon

Once the new Ridge Historic District logo is introduced, Ridge Historical Society will launch its new Historic Home Plaque Program, also initiated in celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Ridge Historic District. The program promotes awareness of community history and creates an appreciation of the architecture of buildings within the Ridge Historic District. Additionally, Ridge Historical Society hopes the program will encourage the preservation and appropriate rehabilitation of historic buildings in the district.

The program is an honorary program, open to all property owners within the boundaries of the Ridge Historic District.

Buildings must meet the following criteria:

- Built at least 50 years ago
- Conveys its historic appearance from the street with no major alterations or additions.

An application form and further information about the program will be available later this summer. There is a small application fee (higher for non-members of RHS) plus the cost of the cast metal plaque. To participate in the program, applicants must know the date of construction of the building, first owner and/or resident, and architect (if available). The Ridge Historical Society encourages homeowners to research for the application, but the Ridge Historical Society will conduct building research for an additional fee.

The wall-mounted plaques will be customized with the historic name of the building, date of construction, and architect (if known) and feature the new logo for the Ridge Historic District.

A mystery from history … the MP baseball team

Do you know who these individuals are?

Summer and baseball have long been a tradition in our neighborhoods (as can be seen by this great vintage photo of a local team), but what is the history of baseball in our area? For how many years have there been teams, who were the players, where did they play, what were the scores, what equipment did they use, who sponsored the teams, who was the photographer?

Like many facets of our community's history, Ridge Historical Society has a few facts, but often it is families and people like you who help fill in the details, along with research by our volunteers.

On the back of the baseball photo is a list of partial names, but they are by team position, not by rows in the photograph.

An example of how research is done at RHS

This photo is an example of how you can help. On the back of the reproduced photo is a list of partial names, but they are by team position, not by rows in the photograph.

____ Cumbert, P.
____ ___ry__, 1st Base
____ ____lly, 2nd Base
____ _____hbelt, 3rd Base
____ _____ks, L.F.
___ Mackle, C.F.
___ ____llon (or ____lbon), R.F.

The manager and the bat boy are not listed, nor is a shortstop or catcher. Seven names are given for eleven people. No date is given, nor the location of the photo. Some of the individuals look Irish, some look German. Two men are not wearing uniforms; a huge padded mitt rests on the ground, but several people away a man has padded quilted pants. The ball looks dark and small and two men wear small leather gloves.

Only one person has been identified: Will Mackle, seated on the far right in the bottom row. Born in 1878, his father died in a horse accident when he was a few months old. His mother subsequently moved the family to Morgan Park and he married at St. Margaret of Scotland Church in 1902.

We assume the photo is from the 1890s or early 1900s, but we know little else. It provides RHS with opportunities. For example, our volunteer researchers could investigate local and neighboring newspapers from this period. We can try to locate the original photo with its hand written notes on the back, since we only have a copy of the photo and its back side notes. Perhaps there is a baseball historian or a photo historian who can help. Perhaps school records or a community organization membership list from that time period may help.

It also provides opportunities for you to help. Do you recognize any of the team members? Do you have other photos related to local baseball teams from other years in our community? Do you know of other sources of information about Chicago neighborhood, church, etc. baseball teams – remember, teams may have ranged far and wide in Cook or other counties when playing opposing teams, so we may be able to find information on our local teams by looking at other community's resources. We welcome any and all of your ideas.

As a side point, if you like to do history research, we have volunteer opportunities for you. Send an e-mail to ridgehistory@hotmail.com or phone or write to Ridge Historical Society.

How historical societies can help genealogists

Some of the most common requests of Ridge Historical Society are genealogy and family history queries. On May 6th, RHS hosted the Chicago Genealogical Society in a class on "What Historians Can Do for Genealogists – A Breathtaking View of Local History from a Hilltop Mansion."

Community interest was high with 30 local individuals who were not members of the Chicago Genealogical Society, in addition to a number of CGS members attending the class. Based on this response, more genealogy programs will be provided in the future.

If you would like to be notified of such, send an e-mail to ridgehistory@hotmail.com or phone or write to RHS to be put on a notification list.

Ridge Historical presents Party On The Hilltop!

Save the date!
Friday July 7, 2006

Once again Ridge Historical Society will be the *best* place to enjoy the Beverly Hills Cycling Classic on Friday July 7, 2006 as we enjoy the sweeping veranda and great front lawn on Longwood and the close-up views on Seeley.

In addition to great food and incredible racing action, your ticket purchase helps Ridge Historical Society maintain the historic Graver-Driscoll House. Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy an evening with friends, food, and the only professional cycle racing in town!

A limited number of tickets are available. They are $40 in advance; $50 at the door.

For information or to purchase tickets, e-mail RHS-Party@ hotmail.com or call us at 773/881-1675.

The Irish after World War II

On March 13, Rev. William T. Corcoran, Pastor of St. Linus Parish in Oak Lawn, provided a most interesting and pertinent discussion on how and why Irish Culture blossomed after World War II.

Until recently, the Irish, like many immigrants, lost their cultural heritage as they became Americans. Based on his historical research and interviews of Chicagoans and individuals in Ireland, he explained how and why this changed and resulted in events such as St. Patrick Day parades, cultural centers like Gaelic Park, Irish dance troupes and gift shops.

Future Irish theme events being planned

Our audience that evening was diverse and kept Rev. Corcoran until closing time with many questions and comments. If you missed the event, we plan to reschedule it or a do a similar program next year. E-mail ridgehistory@hotmail.com or call or write RHS if you would like to be notified of future Irish theme events.

Many thanks are extended to Mike Nix and the Board of the Beverly Arts Center for their support and the use of their auditorium that evening.

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MEMBERSHIP
A newsletter subscription is a benefit of membership.

ANNUAL DUES
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Looking for a captivating speaker?

New series of programs available

Is your local church, youth, civic, social or community group looking for speakers?

Paul Petraitis, well known Chicago historian and storyteller, will be offering a wide variety of programs this year:

Geology of the Ridge
French and Indian History in Chicago
Fort Dearborn: the Doomed Mission
How Gurdon Hubbard Transformed Illinois
The Vincennes Road & the First Pioneers
The Underground Railroad in Southern Cook County
Chicago & the History of Photography
The Southside: Chicago's Hinterland
Chicago Blues
Mapping the Ridge

Paul Petraitis is a lifelong southsider, who graduated from Fenger High School and the Illinois Institute of Technology's Institute of Design. For sixteen years at the Chicago Historical Society he worked fulltime as a photographer, in addition to being a researcher for Chicago History Magazine. He co-curated the "Music of Chicago" exhibit.

Paul has worked as a consultant for many organizations including the National Park Service, the Balzekas Museum, the National Trust, the Historic Pullman Foundation, the Chicago Board of Education, the Illinois State Geological Survey, the Dutch Heritage Commission and others, and has been a regular speaker for us since he came to RHS in 1999.

He has spoken to a wide range of audiences – the Chicago City Council, the Newberry Library, university level workshops, public and private grammar school through high school classrooms, retirement homes, scout troops, church groups, fraternal lodges, school reunions, etc.

Contact Ridge Historical Society

Contact RHS at 773/881-1675 or e-mail ridgehistory@hotmail.com for details on how your group can book storyteller and Chicago historian Paul Petraitis.

Ridge Historical Society co-sponsors Kate Starr Kellogg and Kellogg School historical celebration

The Kate Starr Kellogg Elementary School Local School Council (LSC) is celebrating the history of the school and of the woman it was named for with an exhibit. The opening reception was held on Saturday, May 20, from 6 to 8 p.m. at Ridge Historical Society.

Kate Starr Kellogg, born in 1854, was a prominent Chicago educator, as teacher, principal of Lewis-Champlin High School in Englewood, and a District Superintendent in the Chicago Public Schools. She was a suffragette and leader in the campaign for education reform and many other social and community causes in the early 20th Century.

Kate Starr Kellogg and Friends (Kate is front right)

Miss Kellogg lived much of her life on the family farm in Evergreen Park, which was bounded by present-day California Avenue, 95th and 91st Streets, and the B&O CT Railroad tracks. Parts of the property are now the Little Company of Mary Hospital parking lot and Evergreen Golf Course.

The Kellogg family was prominent in the early social life of the area near 95th Street and Western, one of the first local areas to be settled.

First graduating class of Kate Starr Kellogg School, 1939
left to right
Nova Pyle, teacher; George Ralston, Chris Papakis, Arthur Schlosser, Don Nelson and Jennie S. Jenkinson, Principal
on loan from George Ralston

Exhibits were prepared by the LSC, as well as by Kellogg students, accented by costume pieces and illustrations from the RHS collections. School class photographs, some recent yearbooks, and a class ring from the first class to graduate from Kellogg School in 1939 accompany articles and photographs chronicling the life of Miss Kellogg and of the school's history.

The society and the LSC hope that people who have stories of the school or photographs, yearbooks, scrapbooks and other memorabilia will contact RHS or the LCS. RHS also hopes anyone with photographs of the Kellogg family, or of their farm will call the society at 773/881-1675.

Projects of Kellogg School students related to Kate Starr Kellogg history

The grand opening event was planned as a reception for adults —parents, people who attended Kellogg School, or who were involved in its history, and interested persons. At least 30 people were in attendance to view the wonderful exhibits and to hear some of the students present their projects. Ridge Historical Society board is happy that this co-operative venture has brought so many younger families in the doors of RHS and has gotten them interested in our mission.

Portions of the exhibit will be open to families throughout June during Ridge Historical Society's regular hours, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday from 2-5 p.m., or by appointment.

100 years of weddings — or — here comes the bride … the bride … the bride!

Ridge Historical Society's exhibit of 100 years of weddings opened Sunday, June 4 at 2:00 p.m. and will run until early July.

The exhibit, mounted by Costume Curator Pat McGrail, with assistance from volunteer Ellen Tritschler, includes wedding gowns and items related to weddings, exhibited on two floors of the society.

Some of the items are flower girls dresses, an 1873 "going-away" outfit, accessories and ephemera. Gowns from three generations in the Clissold family are also on exhibit.

Ethel Clissold married Harry Weeks Thayer of Morgan Park in November of 1903. Her daughter–in-law, Henrietta "Susie" Wright married Robert W. Thayer in 1938. She was later widowed and remarried, taking the name Susie Thayer Newnam. Her daughter, Susan Thayer married Michael Sak-Hian Tjong in 1969.

For the Brewster family, two generations of gowns or wedding accessories are on display. The wedding shoes worn by Jane Ellen Hughes, (nee Zimmer), mother, are shown along with the wedding gown and honeymoon suit of Jean Hughes Brewster, who married in 1925.

Mrs. McGrail says there is also a "Jilted Bride" dress, a lavender wedding gown from 1890, a gown from 1914 with three petticoats, wedding shoes and engraved toasting glasses, and a1939 gown from a wedding in old St. Barnabas Church.

Information on wedding customs and their origin are also part of the exhibit.

A portion of the current exhibit at RHS on Kate Starr Kellogg will remain on display during the exhibit of wedding fashions.

Our natural history and the Dan Ryan Woods

Given that a major part of the Beverly neighborhood sits atop a hill, more formally called the Blue Island Ridge, we ask, "How well is our hill holding up?" Some 14,000 years after being dumped here at the end of the last ice age and resisting the turbulent

run off that formed Lake Michigan and carved the Illinois River and its tributaries, our ridge has been progressively flattening out.

Geologists estimate that about every seven billion years the entire surface of the earth will wash away to the sea as sediment only to be pushed back up by tectonic, seismic and volcanic upheavals. The subterranean engine that drives this powerful action is predominantly nuclear energy residing in the molten core of the earth sparked by the massive forces of compression that consolidated debris to form the various objects in space, some "live" like our earth and sun, some dead like the moon and comets.

Turning from macro theory to micro facts, the Forest Preserve District of Cook County undertook three separate erosion control projects in the Dan Ryan Woods during the Depression when federally financed manpower was put at its disposal. After 70 years of rain, snow and ice, to say nothing of vandalism, these erosion control structures urgently need repair. The Forest Preserve has allocated in its budgets for 2006 and 2007 $550,000 for restoration of Depression era public works in the Dan Ryan Woods. In addition, $600,000 has been allocated to replace or rebuild nine picnic shelters.

On Tuesday June 13, Benjamin Cox, Executive Director of Friends of the Forest Preserves, will lead a walk through the Dan Ryan Woods to formulate ideas about restoration projects addressing the WPA-built ravine and other structures. You are invited to meet at 6 p.m. in the parking lot at 89th and Western Avenue.

Residents interested in the history and ecology of the Blue Island Ridge have two ways to find like minded people. Those with a preference for outdoor activity can find a working task force on the second Saturday of each month from 9 am. to noon doing hands-on projects in the Dan Ryan Woods. These are ongoing projects and an excellent opportunity for high school students to earn social service credits.

Those more inclined to historical research are welcome at Ridge Historical Society where a group meets at 7 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month. Its focus is on the Ridge and the southern part of Cook County from the last ice age to the days of early European settlement.

For more information, Friends of the Forest Preserves can be reached at www.fotfp.org or at 312/696-0070. The Ridge Historical Society can be reached at www.ridgehistoricalsociety.org or 773/881-1675. Joseph F. O'Connor 773/238-4456, freiherr@sbcglobal.net

Monthly Third Thursday Evening Programs

Beginning in September, RHS will offer monthly evening programs. The topics will be an interesting blend of history and community.

Using local speakers, often with artifacts and archives from RHS's collection, these programs are designed as an introduction to the wide variety of people, places and activities that have affected our neighborhood. Mark you calendars now:

Third Thursday of the Month Programs

Held from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. (doors open at 7:00 p.m.)

Sept 21st - "The Status of Our Historical Districts" by Maureen Gilligan & Mary Olsson

Oct 19th - "Victorian Clothing – with examples from the RHS Costume Collection" by Pat McGrail

Nov 18th - "Genealogy & Family History"by Peg Kapustiak & Linda Lamberty

More programs of interest

In addition to the Third Thursday Programs, many other events and activities are being developed for this year. Be sure to also put these on your calendars:

June and July 2006 – "100 years of Weddings" - This Exhibit will fascinate all brides, past and present. Open during regular museum hours. See separate article on this Exhibit.

Friday, July 7th – Party on the Hilltop Bike Event - Experience the thrill of the Beverly Hills Cycling Classic as world class athletes race while you enjoy a wonderful ambiance with a casual atmosphere. See separate article.

Sunday, October 15th at 2:00 p.m. – "Awarding of Historic Buildings Certificates and a program on Art Moderne an International Style Home Designs in the Neighborhood" with Jennifer Kenny and Joel Morbito.

Sunday, October 8th (the actual 130th anniversary of the cataclysmic event) – meet at RHS at1:30 p.m. for a "Bus Tour of Chicago Fire Sites and Dinner at the Fire House Restaurant" with City of Chicago official Chicago Fire Tour host Herman Schell. Dinner will follow 2-5 p.m. tour, with the bus returning to RHS afterwards.

Upcoming programs

Details are described within this newsletter.

June & July – fascinating history and costume Exhibit of "100 Years of Weddings" Friday evening, July 7th – Party on the Hilltop in conjunction with Beverly Hills Cycling Classic

Thursday evening, Sept 21st - "The Status of Our Historical Districts" program

Sunday afternoon, October 8th – Bus tour of Chicago Fire sites

Sunday, October 15th – Historic Homes Certificates and "Art Moderne and International Style Homes" program

Thursday evening, Oct 19th - "Victorian Clothing & Examples from the RHS Costume Collection"

Thursday evening, Nov 18th - "Genealogy & Family History" program

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