

Ridge Historical Society

RECORD

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

A walk in the park across from Oakhaven

BY SUE DELVES

In 1925, the first Annual Report of The Oakhaven Old People's Home, (original name for Washington and Jane Smith Home) noted: "Our building is advantageously located on a large area of ground on Western Ave. and 113th Place. Covering our whole frontage is a public park which, when finally improved, will provide a beautiful foreground and insure for all time extensive, open vistas."

This same open vista over the treetops of Kennedy Park is

the local Calumet Park District at the Blackwelder home in October, 1903. Land for Western Ave. Park was purchased in January, 1912, prior to Morgan Park's annexation to Chicago. Later it was renamed to honor Dennis J. Kennedy, President of the Calumet Park District from 1912 to 1932.

As we walk in the park today, we are intrigued by many types of trees we cannot identify, and have learned that some trees removed from the Century of Progress after it closed in 1934 were transplanted in Kennedy Park. Closer to the railroad was a 5 acre dump filled with old cars and debris. It was purchased and cleared in 1926, giving the park a total of 18 acres.

Morgan Park Woman's Club scrapbooks and records reveal that for about seven years their Conservation Committee created a bird sanctuary, planting shrubs and

trees in the new acreage, many of which were donated by local people. A field house and small swimming pool were built in 1931 by a government project

to provide emergency employment for workers.

The club gave up its project when it became obvious

SEE OAKHAVEN, PAGE 2



An aerial shot of Kennedy Park and Washington & Jane Smith Home in 1938. Note the left (west) end of Kennedy Park where the bird sanctuary was set up. There is yet to be much development in the land just south of Kennedy Park.



The same view today. Smith Village on the right has become a large complex. Kennedy Park is re-configured and the bird sanctuary is gone. The area south of the park is completely developed with homes and businesses.

SPRING 2010

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RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

10621 S. Seeley Ave.
Chicago, IL 60643

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



This Kennedy Park fieldhouse was built in the 1930s by federal public work programs.

what Gene and I see from our third floor windows at Smith Village today, 85 years later. Citizens of Morgan Park organized

Annual Fund Campaign a big success

BY DORIS MOULTON, PRESIDENT

First, I would like to introduce the 2010-2011 RHS Board of Directors (see sidebar). Any of these folks can be contacted through the RHS office. Just call Carol Flynn, the RHS Office Administrator, at 773-881-1675. The office is open Monday through Friday, from 2 to 5 p.m.; or you may leave a message on the machine and we will get

back to you.

Second, the entire board extends a big "thank you" to those who have contributed to the 2009-2010 RHS Annual Fund and to Gene Delves for serving as Chairman of the Annual Fund Campaign. The contributors to date are listed below. The Annual Fund is a major source of revenue for the Society and is used for RHS operations, including the

newsletter.

Special thanks to...

And a very special thank you goes to Wendell and Margaret (Peg) Kapustiak for their generous gift of special file cabinets for maps and drawings. These cabinets allow RHS to store historic documents in an archivally safe manner.

Please be sure to check the calendar in this newsletter for our

upcoming events. We hope to see you at them!

Wish to donate?

Those who would still like to donate can send their checks marked "Annual Fund" to RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago, IL 60643.

We will continue to list the names of donors in future newsletters.

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OAKHAVEN, FROM PAGE 1

that the new Chicago Park District would maintain the park grounds. Their Spring, 1934 report anticipated the "opportunity to complete something of which our children will be proud."

Today we walked through the park to the railroad, where old bushes grow on either side of the fence. I like thinking they could be what remain of the bird sanctuary.

2010 - 2011 RHS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Dixie Highway integral to development

BY CAROL FLYNN

Prior to the arrival of the automobile, means of transportation were pretty limited. Local transportation relied on horse and buggy, trolleys (in some cities), bicycles or walking. Long-distance trips were made by train, meaning travelers were confined by routes and schedules.

New technologies in the beginning of the 1900s, especially the automobile, allowed more options and freedom for traveling.

But to make automobiles really usable, it became obvious that there needed to be a great improvement in roads.

Up to that time, most roads were primarily dirt roads, and while passable in dry weather, became muddy quagmires when it rained.

The Good Roads Movement was founded in 1880, initially by

bicycle enthusiasts, but other groups took the lead once automobiles became more popular. Good Road advocates endeavored to influence legislators on local, state and national levels, pushing for new road construction and improved roadways throughout the country. They often involved themselves in local politics and these issues often became crucial factors in elections.

As a result of this movement, two cross-country projects directly affecting Illinois came about. The first was the east-west Lincoln Highway (1913). The second was the north-south Dixie Highway (1915), which runs through Beverly Hills/Morgan Park along Western Avenue.

Carl G. Fisher, an Indiana entrepreneur who had business

interests in both cars and real estate in Florida, pushed the idea of a north-south highway that would run from Chicago to Miami. Representatives from Florida, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois attended an organizational meeting in 1915. Pressure from the State of Michigan led the planners to designate two routes of the highway. Another branch was added later for North Carolina and South Carolina. The construction of the national highway was complete by 1926, with over 5,000 miles of roadway.

That local politics played a big part in the exact route of the Dixie Highway should come as no surprise. Competition for a place on the highway was fierce, as that promised

income from the many travelers who would pass through. The original plan was to have the highway start in Chicago, but then immediately swing east into Indiana,



Meet Dixie Highway author on June 6

RHS program and book signing

Author James Wright will present "The Dixie Highway in Illinois" and sign copies of his book on Sunday, June 6, 2010, at 2:30 p.m. (doors open at 2:00 p.m.) at RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago. There is no admission charge for the program and the book costs \$21.99 (charge cards, checks, cash accepted.) Light refreshments will be served. Call RHS at 773-881-1675 for information and to reserve a seat.

Fisher's home state. But the Illinois delegates to the planning meeting lobbied the other states for a greater role for "the Land of Lincoln." As a result, the route selected ran from Chicago south for about 136 miles to Danville, Ill., and then swung east into Indiana. The route started at Adams Street and Michigan Boulevard in downtown Chicago, ran down Michigan to 55th Street, west to Western Avenue, and south on Western through Blue Island and on south.

Today's alignment of the highway varies



Camp of contractor beginning work on grading Western Ave. This picture is not in the new book but many other pictures of the grading of Western Ave. are.

CAMP OF CONTRACTOR PREPARING TO START LOWERING GRADE OF BEVERLY HILLS ON WESTERN AVE FOR 570' 0" TURN R.R. MISS. DIST. AUG. 20th 1922

SEE DIXIE, PAGE 5

Klees Golf celebrates 100 years on Chicago's south side

BY LINDA LAMBERTY

In an April, 2007 Chicago Tribune Magazine feature story on the shop, Rick Kogan stated that Klees Golf (10436 S. Western) was "America's oldest golf



CC Chattell, who published golf books before financing the start of Jackson Park Golf Shop. (Chicago Daily News from Chicago History Museum.)

store." They've been at that address just over ten years, though the family has been in the community for more than 50 years.

From 1968 to 1999, Klees Golf was a feature on 87th Street between California and Kedzie, having come from 87th and Bennett after ten years there. Before that is where the story begins, at 64th and Stony Island.

Jackson Park Golf Club was the first public course to open in the Midwest with a 9-hole course. It was built in 1899 over the remains of the 1893 Columbian Exposition, just south of the Museum of Science & Industry. A year later, an 18-hole course was added. In 1906, 127,000 people played golf on the two courses.

With the growing popularity of golf in Chicago, a wave of Scottish immigrants came to the U.S., many

of them establishing themselves as golf smiths, teaching pros and club caddies. Initially, the Scots were the "only game in town" to handle these specialized tasks.

The first Charles J. Klees opened the Jackson Park Golf Shop with Clarence C. Chattell in 1910. Klees had come to Chicago from Saginaw, MI to study law at John Marshall Law School, but developed a vision problem that prevented him from practicing law after he graduated. "CC" Chattell was an avid golfer who wrote books about golf.

Klees and Chattell formed a partnership when both were 25 years old. CC provided the money to open the store at the corner of 64th

and "Stony" across the street from the entrance to Jackson Park. CC had already published golf books before financing the start of the shop. The Chicago Daily News photo collection contains a 1905 image of CC with a club in his hand in front of the clubhouse at Onwensia so he must have already developed some reputation as a golfer or golf aficionado.

By 1915 the Jackson Park Golf Shop had at least six competitors in the surrounding area, all assembling and repairing golf clubs for the hundreds of people who played at the park every week. One way Klees and Chattell managed to distinguish their business was to offer lockers for golfers to store their clubs between rounds. Since many customers took the train or street car to Jackson Park, renting a locker at the golf shop was very convenient.

That year, Klees bought out Chattell, who retired from the golf shop upon the death of his widowed mother. CC went on to write books and Charlie took over the business, working 80 hours per week alongside a handful of Scottish hired help. The expanded shop offered lockers, showers, lessons, repairs, custom clubs and apparel.

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Carol Flynn

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A newsletter subscription is a benefit of membership.

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An early storefront for Klees Golf at 1536 E. 64th St. in Chicago.

The store had completed its conversion to Charles J Klees Golf Shop by 1916. At 1556

E. 64th St., it was barely two blocks away from the 63rd Street station of the electric transportation



Klees actually made clubs. They were assembled from forged heads imported from Scotland, hickory shafts and persimmon wood heads from U.S. companies and leather grips from the Wilson Meat Packing company (the forerunner of Wilson Sporting Goods, which was near the Stockyards.) The components were shipped to the golf shop in a raw state where Scottish golfsmiths finished and assembled them into the finished product. The golfsmith or shop owner would stamp his "cleek mark" on the clubhead to identify it as his make.

line that took golfers from downtown, Hyde Park and Woodlawn to the south suburbs where country clubs such as Ravisloe, Idelwild, Calumet Park, Homewood (now Flossmoor CC), Midlothian and Olympia Fields were established.

In 1925, over two years after Charles Klees's son, John, was born, the senior Klees contracted tuberculosis. He and his family moved to Tucson, AZ, leaving the shop in the hands of Walt Steinway. Walt came to Klees with a golf heritage from his father who worked at both MacGregor and Burke Golf in Ohio.

After Charlie Klees died, Louisa Klees, Charlie's widow, returned to Chicago, forming a partnership with Walt

and running the shop through the Great Depression and WWII before her son, John, joined her, and Walt left for California. The shop stayed at the 64th Street location another 10 years before burning to the ground in 1956. The shop was rebuilt at 87th and Bennett.

Since 2001 the business has been owned and run by the first Charles Klees's grandson and namesake, Charlie, with his wife Eileen (former RHS Board member and most recently the former Editor of the RHS newsletter.) Their three sons also help out at the shop.

Klees Golf Shop,
10436 S. Western Ave.,
Chicago, IL 60643.
www.kleesgolf.com

DIXIE, FROM PAGE 3

somewhat from the original plan. Some changes were made along the way to straighten out sharp turns and to widen narrow stretches. And with the advent of the Interstate Highway System and the completion of Interstate 57 in Illinois, the Dixie Highway lost its stature. However, it still remains a backbone for many of

the communities it passes through.

Arcadia Publishing has come out with a new book, *The Dixie Highway in Illinois*, authored by James R. Wright. Part of Arcadia's "Images of America" series (like our own Chicago's Beverly/Morgan Park Neighborhood), the book tells the story of the Dixie Highway in Illinois mainly through historic

photos and captions. Photos from all along the route in Illinois are included. RHS supplied some pictures for the book – specifically, pictures of the leveling and grading of Western Avenue in 1922.

The author, Jim Wright, is a lifelong resident of Homewood and has been a member of the Homewood Historical Society for 25 years, serving as president for several terms. An insurance claim

manager by profession, he has also served on the Homewood Fire Department and the Homewood Village Board. He is an organizer of "Drivin' the Dixie", an "annual moving car show and tour" along the highway in Illinois.

Starting out as a road rally for antique cars, within a few years many people wanted to participate in the event whether they owned an antique car or not.

Participants drive along the Dixie Highway, stopping in pre-planned places along the way to view historic spots and partake in other events. Many spectators come



The Sinclair station formerly near 100th and Western, along the Dixie Hwy. (not in book). In some areas of the country local businesses along the Dixie, such as hotels, restaurants and service stations, helped finance road development and improvements.

SEE DIXIE, PAGE 6

"Abraham Lincoln: Self-Made in America" exhibit coming to Beverly Arts Center and RHS

Coming this summer: Abraham Lincoln in Beverly/Morgan Park!

Sponsorship opportunities available

Will you be one of the financial sponsors for the "Abraham Lincoln: Self-Made in America" exhibit being displayed at the Beverly Arts Center (BAC), from August 5 to September 3, 2010?

This world-class

traveling exhibit featuring reproduction artifacts from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (ALPLM) in Springfield, Illinois is being displayed in only 40 public libraries and historical societies across the country to celebrate

the 200th birthday of America's greatest president.

The Ridge Historical Society, working cooperatively with BAC, has received the honor of being one of the hosts for this exhibit.

The exhibit covers all aspects of Lincoln's life, from his childhood to his assassination, and features items such as an axe he used to chop wood, his stovepipe hat, toys from his children, bloody gloves from the night of his assassination, and many other unique and interesting items.

Evening reception

The exhibit will open with an evening reception at BAC on Thursday, August 5th from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M. Additional programming will be held throughout

August.

Renowned Lincoln and Mrs. Lincoln portrayers Michael Krebs and Debra Ann Miller will make an appearance; an exhibit on "Life on the Ridge" during the Civil War will be shown at RHS; and a self-guided local cemetery tour of Civil War sites culminating in a program at Mt. Greenwood Cemetery will be held.

Please consider making a donation to RHS to help support this great event in our community. RHS is a 501 (C) 3, tax-exempt organization and all donations are tax-deductible to the extent of the law. All sponsors will be acknowledged in program materials.

For more information, please contact RHS at 773-881-1675.



The "Abraham Lincoln: Self-Made in America" exhibit covers all aspects of Lincoln's life, from his childhood to his assassination, and features items such as an axe he used to chop wood, his stovepipe hat, toys from his children, bloody gloves from the night of his assassination, and many other unique and interesting items.



Are these ladies taking a ride in their Model T on the new Dixie Highway?

DIXIE, FROM PAGE 5

out to watch. In 2009, about 200 cars participated, with 130 cars leaving Blue Island alone (this is the northern starting point).

RHS will host Jim Wright on Sunday, June 6, at 2:30 p.m. for a presentation and book signing (see sidebar on page three).

If you cannot attend Jim's presentation but are interested in purchasing the book, please buy it from RHS so that the Society can receive the revenue. We will carry signed copies of the book following the presentation.

Contact the RHS office at 773-881-1675 to purchase the book.

Castle documentary in the offing

BY LINDA LAMBERTY

In 2011, Robert C. Givins' noteworthy "Irish Castle" on the hill at 103rd St. and Longwood Drive will celebrate its 125th anniversary.

To mark that milestone event and to raise funds to support restoration and upkeep of this iconic landmark, local resident and Men of the Castle member (of the Beverly Unitarian Church), Errol Magidson, is making a documentary detailing the history of the Castle and its keepers over the last one and a quarter centuries.

Errol, with the help of RHS Historian Linda Lamberty and others, has logged hundreds of hours in painstaking research to uncover details about this legendary building, along with the people and institutions responsible for it during that period.

Spoiler Alert: Myths will be dispelled! While we may be sad to lose some of them, so many

fascinating new facts have come to light to take their place that no one should be disappointed. Robert Cartwright Givins was yet to become a self-made man when he came to Chicago with next to nothing in his pocket in the 1860s.

By 1886 he had a family with his first wife, lost most of them and remarried, all the while making a name for himself in Chicago-area real estate. When he chose to build his distinctive new home in this then-rural locale, Givins had also become a world traveler and a popular novelist of the day. In fact, he was so busy that one wonders if he stood still long enough to fully enjoy his new home.

The Castle has been held by only four owners in its lifetime, though it was rented for some years around the turn of the last century. All in all, these holders have a big story to tell. For example,

the second owners, the Burdetts, were quite the trendsetters of their day. In 1901 they won the first auto race in Chicago, sponsored by the Chicago Automobile Club. It took the fashionable couple only 1 hour, 49 minutes and 18 seconds to make it from 38th and Archer to the Joliet Courthouse! This was in a day when roads were fewer and those that existed were not paved.

It would be another dozen years before the Lincoln Highway first spanned the continent east to west, followed two years later by the Dixie Highway doing the same thing north to south.

That first race was won a whole 21 years before our own Western Avenue, by then a leg of the Dixie Highway, was finally paved.

On May 2 just past, in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Castle's Children's Annex which has served as a Sunday school for

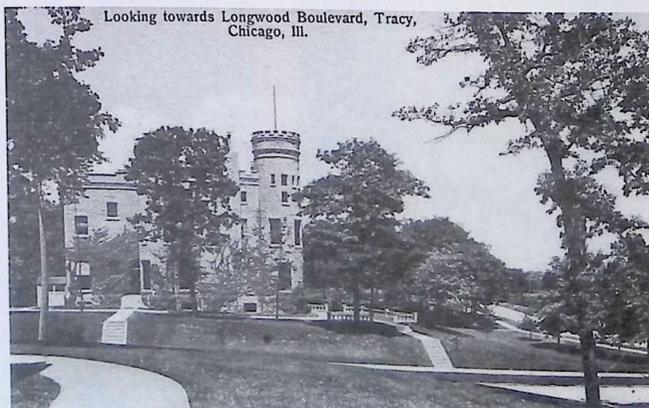
religious education and as one of our community's premiere preschools, Errol gave a multimedia presentation on the last, longest and current Castle keeper, the Beverly Unitarian Church. If that program was any indication of what the upcoming documentary will offer, we're in for a fun and interesting show!

Errol is looking for old photos and stories of the Castle to add to the amazing historic record he is compiling. If anyone has a photo of children sledding down the Castle hill, for example, he would love a copy or a scan of it. You can contact RHS at 773-881-1675 if you have any pictures to share.

It is the hope of Errol, the Men of the Castle, the Church and countless local historians and admirers that this monument to ingenuity and local history will stand yet another 125 years, but it won't be easy without support from the community.

Plans for celebrations in honor of the Castle's 125th anniversary are in the works between the Ridge Historical Society, the Beverly Area Planning Association and Beverly Unitarian Church. Look for some exciting events centered on Castle history next year!

An early view of Robert C. Givins' noteworthy "Irish Castle" on the hill at 103rd St. and Longwood Drive in Beverly.



Looking towards Longwood Boulevard, Tracy, Chicago, Ill.

Ridge Historical Society
RECORD
BEVERLY HILLS, MORGAN PARK, WASHINGTON HEIGHTS & MT. GREENWOOD

10621 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago, IL 60643



Mark your calendar for these exciting events

SUNDAY, JUNE 6, 2010

The Dixie Highway in Illinois

Presented by author James R. Wright,
program and book signing. Program at
2:30 P.M. (doors open at 2:00 p.m.) at
RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago,
IL 60643. Light refreshments. Free for
program; book costs \$21.99. (See article
elsewhere in newsletter.)

Call 773-881-1675 for information and
to reserve a seat. Proceeds from books
purchased at RHS benefit the Society.

FRIDAY, JULY 9, 2010

Sixth Annual Party On The Hilltop

RHS event in conjunction with the 7th
Annual Beverly Hills Cycling Classic; 5:00
to 9:00 p.m. [Buffet supper from 5:30 to
7:30 p.m., wine, beer and soft drinks].
At RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago,
IL 60643. Tickets are \$40 for RHS
members; \$50 for non-members. Children

free.
Sit on the terrace and watch the bike
race while you enjoy a hot supper and cold
beverages. Call RHS at 773-881-1675 for
more information and to make reservations.
This is a fund raiser - all income directly
benefits the Society.

Spencer, who passed away on May 6, Carl

This year's party will honor
member, a WWII veteran and an avid
cyclist. An upcoming RHS newsletter will
pay further tribute to Carl.

AUGUST 5 TO SEPTEMBER 3, 2010

Abraham Lincoln: Self-Made In

America

An exhibit from the Abraham Lincoln
Foundation. Co-hosted by RHS and the
Beverly Arts Center (BAC), the exhibit
will be held at BAC, 2407 W. 111th St.,
Chicago, IL 60655.
There will be an opening reception on
August 5 and programs throughout August
- watch for more announcements.
Call RHS at 773-881-1675 for more
information.