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

Mickelberry's Log Cabin Restaurant

By Sue Delves

A recent 'find' from an estate sale was a small booklet describing the beloved Mickelberry's Restaurant on 95th St., from 1933 until the late 1960s. Following are some samples of what Gene Gallivan, a restaurant critic, wrote long ago,and some of the illustrations from the booklet.

The other day I chanced upon a restaurant which for food and for atmosphere is undoubtedly a topnotcher, and I must let the world at large share in my discovery.

The restaurant is housed in a rambling log cabin, located on West 95th Street, two blocks east of Western Avenue in Beverly Hills, a south side suburb of Chicago. Nestled in a grove of giant willows and surrounded by a wandering split rail fence and a wishing well, the log cabin stands, looking weathered and time worn. I came across it about lunch time. Intrigued, I lifted the old wooden latch and entered the big door.

After a luncheon that more than satisfied my critical palate I cornered my host Charles M. Mickelberry, and inquired into the log cabin's history. Built in 1933, it is a replica of one built by his family in 1830 in Spaulding, Georgia. Because no paint or stain has been used, the timbers have weathered naturally, giving the aged appearance. Wooden pegs are used throughout, instead of nails.

Rails in the fence surrounding the grounds were taken from the Mickelberry plantation and from the Lincoln Exhibit at the Century of Progress.

The interior of the log cabin radiates a rugged hospitality. Gay red checkered cloths cover the tables which are lighted by small lamps. Cheerful fires burn in the two great stone fireplaces. Hunting and fishing trophies and a collection of old newspapers and Western art line the rough timber walls.

Here, just a step from the rush of the modern world, is a spot where you can relax and enjoy the traditional good food and genial

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From RHS President Doris Moulton: Mickleberry's was a magical place in winter. It was the place to go for hot chocolate after tobogganing in Palos. What better than a log cabin ... red and white checked tablecloths ... a blazing fireplace. Perfect! (Vintage postcards from the RHS collection.)

This candlestick phone from Mickelberry's Collection of Americana is now in the RHS collection, donated by Sue and Gene Delves. (Photo by C. Flynn)

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

RHS responds to readers' questions...

By Carol Flynn, Newsletter Editor

RHS loves to receive feedback on the Record – what you enjoyed, what you would like to see more of, questions, corrections... you name it. Here we share input and questions on previous articles.

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Gibson Girls

First, last year we ran an article about life 100 years ago. The article included the statement, "The Gibson girl look is the fashion." Several readers (male) asked, "What is a Gibson girl?"

The Gibson Girl was the representation of the ideal woman as caricatured by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. She was tall and slender but endowed with curves formed by wearing a tight-fitting corset.

Her hair was piled high on her head with a waterfall of curls ("chignon") framing her face. She was portrayed as being at ease, fashionable, multi-faceted, independent, educated, personally fulfilled – an equal companion to men.

Many models and famous women posed for illustrations which appeared in magazines and on merchandise such as ashtrays, fans, and chair covers.

Changing fashions and the outbreak of World War I caused the Gibson Girl to fall out of favor – women of this era favored more practical clothes compatible with war work over the bustle gowns of the Gibson Girl.

Austin Wiswall

Second, in the last newsletter there was an article about Austin Wiswall of Morgan Park who served as a lieutenant in the United States Colored Troops (USCT) during the Civil War. The question was asked, "Was Austin Wiswall African-American?"

The USCT were regiments of the U.S. Army during the Civil War, composed of African-American soldiers, but all the officers, including Wiswall, were white men. In 1863, following the Emancipation Proclamation and Union setbacks in battles, recruitment of colored regiments began in full force.

The USCT was formed and the soldiers served bravely in the infantry, cavalry, and light and heavy artilleries. But advancement for black soldiers was limited only to the ranks of sergeant. Many USCT soldiers won some of the nation's highest military awards, including the Medal of Honor. It wasn't until the 1990s, however, that tribute was paid to African-Americans who fought in the Civil War. Now there is a national museum and a memorial sculpture called Spirit of Freedom in Washington, D.C.

"Pony Bob" Haslam

Third, in the last newsletter there was an article on Robert "Pony Bob" Haslam, famous Pony Express rider, buried at Mount Greenwood Cemetery.

If there is one thing we learned from researching this topic, it is that there is so much undocumented information "out there" on the Pony Express that it is hard to separate fact from fiction.

Very few records exist from the Pony Express, and newspaper and other accounts from the time give inadequate and/or conflicting information.

For example, the article discussed Haslam's ride to deliver Lincoln's Inaugural Address in March 1861, and stated that the address reported that the Confederates had attacked Fort Sumter. Actually, Fort Sumter was not attacked until the following month, April 1861.

Upon a second review of the literature,

Sketches of Gibson Girls, the representation of the ideal woman as caricatured by illustrator Charles Dana Gibson in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Come and Join Us Brothers. U.S. Colored Troop Recruitment illustration 1863-1865. (Courtesy of Rare Book, Manuscript, and Special Collections Library at Duke University)

it appears that the Pony Express made several daring rides to California to deliver political news including Lincoln's election to the Presidency, the Inaugural Address, and that the war had started with the firing upon Fort Sumter.

The article also reported that Pony Bob received injuries from an Indian attack on one of these rides, and assuming this is true, it is unclear as to which ride this was!

RHS received an email about the Pony Bob legacy from Russell A. Spreeman of LaPorte, Indiana. Mr. Spreeman states:

I have been researching Mr. Haslam extensively over the past year and have been able to put together a great deal of information regarding him which has previously not been known. I believe I know how he met his wife Jennie and how she came to Chicago; I can say Haslam did not accompany Bill Cody's Wild West to Europe and it was after the Wild West left that Haslam met Jennie.

I have located his baptismal record and it indicates his year of birth was not 1840 but 1842. He seems to have had little contact with his own family after arriving in the US and likely his records were lost or left behind. His own death certificate only gives '1840' as his year of birth, indicating his wife (and he of course) did not have a precise date.

Some have claimed Haslam was a fraud who only made up his Pony Express service after-the-fact, because there was no concrete information connecting him to the Express (in print) prior to mention of his service in an 1868 newspaper article about a July 4th horse race. I have found him in the 1860 Census – listed as 'Pony Express Rider', which should dispel any doubts.

I have a newspaper article in which he gives a firsthand description of how he got the name 'Pony Bob' and it was not until after his years with the Pony Express. He had another nickname prior to that which few know of, but he tells it in the article, and another article written anecdotally of something that happened to him meshes with it perfectly. Mr. Haslam was quite cross-eyed and his earlier nickname was 'Cockeye'.

For the past year, and as I intend, for the years to come, I have assumed the responsibility of caring for his grave and seeing that it is kept reasonably well tended. I think he deserves that much.

RHS has been in touch with Mr. Spreeman to thank him for this information and for caring for Mr. Haslam's grave, at which he has planted a variety of hardy plants and flowers.

We hope to partner with Mr. Spreeman, and an RHS member, James Cummings from Texas, who is also investigating the historical records on Robert Haslam, to build a resource file at RHS.

Stay tuned for more updates on Pony Bob, a little known true life hero who has now gained some much deserved attention.

Hearse builder

Fourth, while we were putting together information on Charles O. Ten Broeke, the Morgan Park man who built the hearses for the Chicago funerals of Abraham Lincoln and Senator Stephen Douglas in the 1860s, for the last newsletter, RHS received a visit from a Morgan Park resident researching her home at 11336 Lothair Ave.

It turned out that Lisa Wallace-Griffin now owns the house in which Ten Broeke resided in 1909 – quite a coincidence!

In the 1909 postcard collection, Ten Broeke is listed as the resident of the house, although official records do not show him as the owner, so it is assumed he was a tenant.

Lisa tells us she is quite thrilled to own a house with this historical connection to Lincoln and Douglas. Although the funerals were sad events, creation of magnificent hearses was one of the last true ways to honor the late President and Senator.

The house at 11336 Lothair as it appeared in 1909 when Ten Broeke lived in it. (Original postcard collection at Chicago History Museum.)

The house at 11336 Lothair as it appears in 2010. (Photo by C. Flynn.)

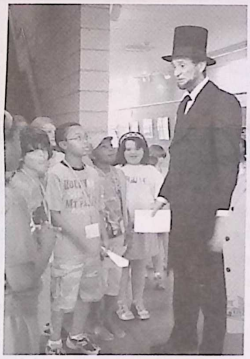
Capturing the moment… the RHS year in pictures

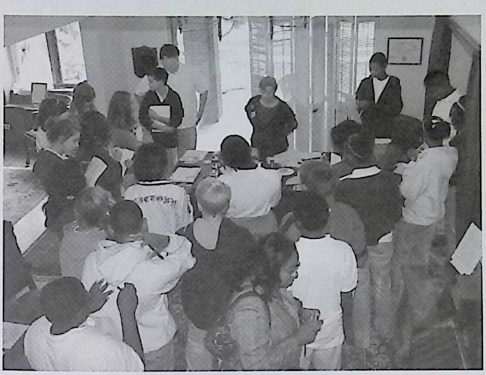
Photos by Carol Flynn and Linda Lamberty

I hope your face is among those "captured" in these photos. At the very least, that you participated in and enjoyed some of the 2010 activities. Thank you for your support of RHS… we will endeavor to keep it during the coming year. See *you* next year!

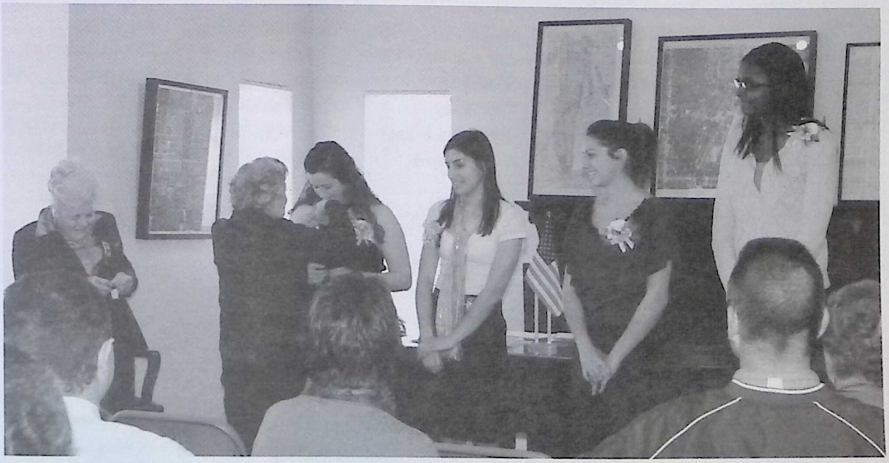
Doris Moulton, President

Photos (clockwise, from upper left): RHS Exhibit: Life on the Ridge during the Civil War; To Live and Die a Civil War Soldier – speaker Wayne Wolf at Mt. Greenwood Cemetery; Author Bill Barnhart, John Paul Stevens: An Independent Life – Barnhart (seated) signing books; Meeting the Lincolns – stage production at the Beverly Arts Center; The Carl Spencer Bike Race party – memorial for Carl Spencer; Abraham Lincoln Exhibit – visitors at the Beverly Art Center; Memorial Day Parade; The Carl Spencer Bike Race Party – watching the race on Seeley Ave., (center) Meeting the Lincolns – actor Michael Krebs talks with Plaid Academy students.





Photos (clockwise, from upper left): Visits by schools such as the Clissold eighth grade; RHS Garage and Book Sale; All Pet Fun Event – Two small visitors bond with a tummy rub; Dewalt Mechlin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution meets at RHS - Good Citizens' Awards and Tea – Presenting the awards; Beverly Area Planning Association History Mystery Bike Tour – Longwood Drive lawn festival.



RHS can help with your holiday gift list

Remember that RHS has a variety of unique items and services available for gifts for those special people on your holiday gift list. Our offerings include:

Membership in RHS

For those interested in the history of the area and wishing to support a community institution. Benefits include the RHS newsletter and free admission or reduced fees for programs and research.

Historic building research

House histories for those who live in the Beverly/Morgan Park area.

Historic home plaques

For homes that meet certain requirements; a cast bronze plaque for mounting on the home includes the original name of the house, the construction date, architect, and the logo of the Ridge Historic District.

Paver brick program

This offers you the opportunity to have a message engraved on a brick paver stone, which is then installed in the landscaped garden settings at RHS. This is a great way for a lasting record of any type of notable event or recognition.

Nostalgic print

This shows sketches of a number of Beverly/Morgan Park businesses and other symbols that were around in the '60s such as Mickelberry's, an old Rock Island passenger car, etc.

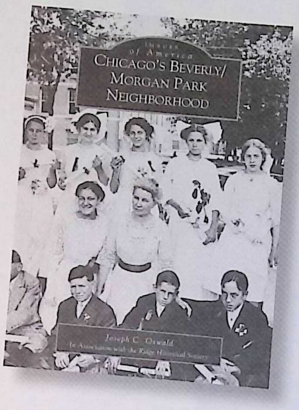
Books

Images of America – Chicago's Beverly/Morgan Park Neighborhood

By Joseph Oswald, published by Arcadia Press (shown at right).

Chief O'Neill's Sketchy Recollections of an Eventful Life in Chicago

By Ellen Skerrett and Mary Lesch



Please call RHS at 773-881-1675 about any of these items. The business office is open Monday through Friday, from 2 to 5 p.m.

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Membership
A newsletter subscription is a benefit of membership.

Annual dues
Student (<18) $10
Individual $25
Family $40
Contributor $100
Patron $150
Guarantor $500

The Ridge Historical Society thanks...

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Kurt & Mary Quinn Olsson
Janella and Greg Richmond
Bill and Marie Sandstrom
Elaine Spencer
Marilyn and Bob Stone
Barbara Thompson
Martin Tully
Matt and Lisa Walsh

RHS also thanks

"Keeping Beverly Green" for the new oak tree
Peg Kapustiak for many hours spent organizing the collection
Lois Schell for help with the garage sale and membership files
Mt. Greenwood Cemetery and Paula Everett for program space
Blue Island Public Library, Blue Island Historical Society, and Chicago Corral of the Westerners for co-sponsorship of programs
Everyone who contributed to and helped with the garage sale
RHS Board for the many activities and events managed this year

All Pets Fun Day Sponsors

Bow Wow Pet Laundry and Grooming
Forever Photos
Loubelle's Pet Boarding, Day Care and Grooming
Sit Means Sit Dog Training

RHS reminder and thank you

We trust that you have received the Annual Fund letter sent by Gene Delves, Annual Fund Chairman. Thanks for your past support and for considering RHS again this year.

From our 1939 - 40 archives:

THOUSANDS OF CARS JAM RIDGE: THRONGS VIEW MAGNIFICENT YULETIDE SPECTACLE; JUNIOR CHAMBER AWARDS DISPLAYS

"While thousands from all parts of Chicago jammed the Ridge district over the Christmas holidays, the judges of the Yuletide decorations contest sponsored by the Ridge Junior Chamber of Commerce painstakingly viewed the numerous beautiful displays.

Automobiles formed a solid mass of slowly moving vehicles with the passengers straining their necks to get just a glimpse of the millions of lights in the grandeur of manifestations of the Christmas spirit. A number of accidents and casualties occurred.

The judges in the Decorations contest, after great difficulty in arriving at their decisions, awarded the three prizes to the Elmer Luckows, 9554 Hamilton Avenue, the Bert Henkens, 9715 Hoyne Avenue, and the Fred Lindquists, 9545 Hoyne Avenue.

Serving on the Judges committee were Mrs. Ben E. Buttles, Mrs. Walter M. Rennie, James G. Skinner, Mrs. Walter Heineman, Harry B. Gear and Dr. W.W. Iliffe."

The Ridge Historical Society wishes its members a healthy and happy holiday season!

MICKELBERRYS, FROM PAGE 1

hospitality of the Old South. Of course the log cabin is mentioned in Duncan Hines' 'Adventures in Good Eating', which lists choice eating places of the country.

Recipes used in preparing the food have been brought from the South by Mr. Mickelberry. Every part of the meals is prepared on the premises. The sausage is made, the beef aged, corn beef cured and the hams and bacon smoked according to recipes treasured by the Mickelberry family for generations. All bakery goods including pies, cakes, breads, rolls and cornbread are baked in the kitchens. Pecan pies are one of the delicacies seldom found in these northern parts. Old fashioned buckwheat cakes, hominy grits, collards and black eyed peas are other specialties of the log cabin.

Each waitress is pleasant, well mannered and efficient. They all dress alike in blue and white checked, full skirted old fashioned gowns.

Charles Mickelberry was born in the Spaulding County, Georgia cabin in 1880. At the age of fourteen, Charles came to Chicago to work in a restaurant. By 1914 he and his brother C. Wallace were operating their father's business, the Mickelberry Old Farm Sausage Company. Food served in the Log Cabin Restaurant was meant to enhance the sausage products and to reflect the old South.

In 1923 Jay Adler joined them in the Sausage Company after graduation from Notre Dame, and when the restaurant was begun, Adler became its official host and business manager until it closed.

Commentary by Sue Delves: Yes, the waitresses were friendly and gracious, and well behaved children were welcome. One evening in 1960, I ordered jambalaya. Observing I was very pregnant, the waitress served two TUMS with my food, saying, "Honey, I think you're gonna need these."

Charles died in 1954. Closing the restaurant in the late 1960s was Adler's choice. He declined the request to extend his lease another 10 years. With one week's notice, the amazing Americana collection was sold at auction.

I was there!

One buyer bought 14 Remington or Russell drawings. Others bid on framed newspapers from World War I, relics of the old West, and clocks. A United pilot claimed an early airplane propeller for his garden, and somebody went home with the Mickelberry familys handmade Confederate flag.

Two weeks later, our Christmas presents included one very used snowshoe for each son and a candlestick phone with an office dial for our daughter. It now belongs to RHS.

Mark your calendar for these exciting events

Ridge Historical Society will hold holiday teas and a Champagne/desserts reception

Here's a way to brighten the days between Christmas and New Year's - entertain your out-of-town guests and children with a visit to the Ridge Historical Society. View our exhibit of Christmas memorabilia and toys from the RHS collection, and enjoy a program of Christmas nostalgia based on original sources from the RHS archives. Everyone will receive a souvenir memento to take home.

Call RHS at 773-881-1675 for reservations. Business office open Monday through Friday, 2:00 to 5:00 pm (closed December 24th)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 26

Holiday Tea

Held at RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave. 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., reservations are required. $20 per adult; $15 per child under 12.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28

Holiday Tea

Held at RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave. 3:00 - 5:00 p.m., reservations are required. $20 per adult; $15 per child under 12.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30

Champagne and Dessert Reception

Held at RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Reservations are required. $20 per adult; $15 per child under 12.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23

House Doctors visit RHS: Roofing

Presentation by Jan Glowacki, Restoration by Marion and Ken Swart, Mortenson Roofing Co., questions and answers, light refreshments. Topic: Maintenance of slate and tile roofs and associated masonry issues of parapet walls and chimneys using the Graver-Driscoll House as example. First in a series on restoration and maintenance of historic homes.

Sunday, January 23, 2011, 3:00 to 5:00 p.m., at RHS; free for RHS members, $10 for non-members.

FEBRUARY 20, 2011

RHS Annual Meeting of Members

Business meeting at RHS, election of RHS Board members and officers, program and refreshments, 2:30 p.m.

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