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

East side, west side, all around the town... the sidewalks of the ridge

By Carol Flynn

Sidewalks – we take them for granted until we must shovel snow or repair them, or until we visit a community where there are none. Sidewalks tame the landscape. They ease pedestrian travel and create a safe zone from the street. They are a sign of development in many communities.

When The Blue Island Land and Building Company purchased, around 1870, the land that is now Morgan Park, the developers carefully laid out avenues through the prairie, in graceful curves and windings. These early streets were not much more than dirt paths, muddy when it rained. And in the beginning there were no sidewalks to speak of.

In a paper from the Ridge Historical Society (RHS) collection, titled "Portrait of Morgan Park," author Henry Justin Smith (1875-1936) tells how in the early days of Morgan Park, "...it was possible in springtime to snare crawfish in front of one's very own home; for then, between front yards and muddy streets, there were ditches with three feet of water."

Another early resident, Owen N. Price, shares more on the early state of sidewalks with us in his paper, "Morgan Park – Sixty Years Ago," presented in 1972. Price describes his paper route in 1912, taking us through all of Morgan Park from the railroad depot at 111th Street, where he picked up his papers, to Novander's monument works at 115th and Fairfield and many other stops along the way.

Along this walk, Price traversed old plank sidewalks; unplowed, empty prairie paths; cinder (packed ashes) sidewalks; and a few new cement sidewalks on 111th Street. Price talks about the wood sidewalks of the day,

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Edward Ayers was village clerk of Morgan Park. In 1894, his home, now demolished, was on Park Street (now Pryor Ave.). (Photo from RHS collection.)

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RIDGE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
10621 S. Seeley Ave.
Chicago, IL 60643

773/881-1675

ridgehistoricalsociety.org
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

Look for the Ridge Historical Society on Facebook.

Streets of yesterday still in Morgan Park

By Carol Flynn, with research assistance from Robert Langston

A hundred years ago, streets paved with brick were the norm for Chicago. There are few remaining original brick streets, but some of the best examples are in Morgan Park, including 110th Place, from Hoyne to Western Avenue. These streets (and also on 110th Street) were scheduled for concrete paving about 40 years ago, but home owners fought the city to preserve the historic nature of their blocks, and won.

Erosion over time

Over time, the base of a brick street can erode and no longer support the weight of the bricks, the result being a sunken section of street often filled in with other paving materials. Also, utility cuts for repairs are often patched with asphalt or concrete. Actually, many of Chicago's streets are concrete laid over the old bricks.

Restored to original state

In 2001, at the approximate cost of $600,000, the stretch of brick paving on 110th Place was restored as close as possible to its original condition. This was a pilot project, the city's first attempt to preserve a brick-paved street. Sewers, curbs, gutters and sidewalks were replaced. As many of the old bricks as possible were recycled, and 20,000 square feet of new bricks, chosen to match the color, were purchased to replace bricks previously removed for sewer work.

The street foundation starts with stone, which is covered by concrete. Then a layer of sand is put down and the bricks are laid by hand and hammered into place, using sand as filler between bricks. The city used a machine to compact the bricks into the sand.

Are brick streets cost effective?

Along with maintaining the historic character of a neighborhood, brick-paved streets are extremely durable.

The cost of repairing a brick street might seem high, but as it should last for another hundred years, compared to the cost of several re-pavings of concrete or asphalt, the cost is in line.

And brick streets have an additional benefit, traffic calming. Bumping along an old brick street usually causes car drivers to slow down – in fact, many drivers avoid brick streets.

111th Street looking west; notice the plank sidewalks. This is where Owen Price would begin his paper route. (From RHS collection.)

110th Place showing the 100-year old brick street. In the background is the Palmer D. Diamond House, built in 1906 of ornamental concrete blocks. Notice the castle-like garage in the left background. The house and brick street help maintain the historic nature of Beverly/Morgan Park. (Photo by C. Flynn.)

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describing them as five-foot white pine planks laid on wooden stringers. Pictures from the RHS collection showing homes of prominent citizens of the day give excellent visual evidence of this description.

Most of the sidewalks in the area at the time were of this material, but Price does state that, "It was a gala day for the neighborhood youngsters when a plank sidewalk was torn up and a cinder or cement walk was laid, for there were wasp and bumblebee nests to be destroyed, field mice and cottontail bunnies to be chased and pennies and nickels lost through cracks to be found – occasionally. And when the concrete was still soft, foot and hand prints to be made, as well as initials, dates and saucy remarks scratched for the enjoyment of future generations!"

Early paved sidewalks had the names of the streets stamped into them. Although annexation to the City of Chicago was a hot topic of the day, Morgan Park was still a separate village at the time, and the names of the streets were those given by the early founders.

The names reflected a variety of interests and sources – the names of trees and shapes, and even wives. Characters and people associated with the 16th century Italian epic poem, *Jerusalem Delivered,* by Torquato Tasso, which had been popular reading in the 1870s, were used – examples are Armida and Rinaldo, even a street named Tasso. However, when the village was annexed to the city in 1914, many of these original street names changed to conform to the Chicago grid.

Today, one can still occasionally find one of the original cement sidewalks.

Thus was the case when Paula Everett, President of Mount Greenwood Cemetery, and Secretary of RHS, discovered the stamps on a corner close to her house. A picture shows the street names of *Crescent Ave.* and *Remington Ave.* Do you know where this street corner is? (See the end of the article for the answer.)

RHS hopes that readers will report the whereabouts of other old street name stamps in the sidewalks so pictures may be captured in situ. Spring will be here before long, so keep a look out during your neighborhood walks and bike rides, and if you know where any of these markings can be found email a message to RHS at ridgehistory@hotmail.com.

And the location of this existing stamp? The street names are stamped into the sidewalks at the northeast and northwest corners of 107th Place (Remington) and Bell Avenue (Crescent).

This historic stamp can be found in the sidewalk at the corner of 107th Place and Bell Avenue. (Photo by C. Flynn).

Undeveloped 103rd St. and Longwood Drive showing a plank sidewalk in very early years. (Photo from RHS collection.)

A later view of 111th Street (then Morgan Ave.) showing paved sidewalks. (Photo from RHS collection.)

Upcoming RHS program: house doctors discuss driveway construction

By Joe O'Connor, House & Grounds Committee

On March 18 at 2:30 p.m., the House Doctor series will present another discussion by local tradesmen about a capital expenditure topic challenging the directors of RHS.

The topic for discussion in March will be driveway construction using concrete or asphalt. The meeting will be held at RHS headquarters, the Graver-Driscoll House, 10621 S. Seeley Ave.

RHS is the owner of the Graver-Driscoll House, a beautiful home constructed soon after the end of the First World War. The Graver Family owned adjacent property to the north along Seeley Avenue and the family business may have generated some additional net worth during the war from government contracts at its steel tank fabrication facility in northwest Indiana.

The house was constructed in a style that bespoke wealth, and is an early contribution coming from three generations of Hetherington architects that grace our neighborhood.

Maintaining that character 90 years on is matter for prudent deliberation and commitment to preservation.

RHS has a long driveway that approaches the house from Seeley Ave. and includes an oval turn-around in front of the manse. The lie of the land generally slopes east away from Seeley Ave. toward the house. One of the particular challenges of the site is to properly pitch the surface. Another is that we use commercial plowing for snow so that surface stability will demand a deep and stable foundation bed that runs amid mature oak trees.

RHS invites attendance of our members and neighbors at this meeting. It is a topic common to home ownership and one upon which we expect reasonable minds may differ.

Thoughtful questions from an attentive and experienced audience should make the meeting an informative one.

We expect the program to last about an hour, perhaps a bit more with questions coming from the audience. Light refreshments will follow the program. The cost is $5/$10 at the door.

Those who are not members of RHS may attend and apply the meeting cost as a discount to an annual membership fee.

If you have any questions, please call RHS at 773-881-1675, or email to ridgehistory@hotmail.com. Parking is available on the west side of Seeley Ave. or at Beacon Therapeutic School at the corner of 107th St. and Seeley Ave.

The driveway leading up to the Graver-Driscoll House will be the topic for House Doctors to discuss at a program on March 11. (Photo from RHS collection.)

Tea time comes to RHS – with hats!

On Sunday, April 29, at 3:00 p.m., RHS will hold a Spring Bonnet Tea for adults and young ladies. Everyone must wear a hat! This will be a 'full tea' with a fine selection of savories (tiny sandwiches and appetizers), scones with jam and clotted cream, and pastries such as petit fours and shortbread. The cost is $20 per adult, and $10 per child aged 8 to 16.

The event will be held at the Graver-Driscoll House, RHS headquarters, 10621 S. Seeley Ave. There will also be a Vintage Hat and Bonnet exhibit at RHS during April featuring many fine items from the RHS costume collection.

A Chinese folk story relates the origins of tea drinking. Around 2700 B. C., the story goes, Emperor Chen Nong was visiting a distant region of his realm. He and his court stopped for a rest, and his servants began to boil water for drinking, a hygienic practice. Dried leaves from a nearby plant blew into the water. The emperor tasted the brownish liquid which resulted from the leaves soaking in the boiled water, and found the beverage to be refreshing with an interesting flavor. So they made more for all to drink. The rest, they say, is history.

A Mad Tea-party

Tea made its way to England some 4300 years later and to America shortly after that. Another legend recounts the beginning of 'afternoon teatime.' Supposedly, one of Queen Victoria's ladies-in-waiting, Anna Marie Stanhope, the Duchess of Bedford, suffered from 'a sinking feeling' at about four o'clock in the afternoon. There had been an early, big breakfast but just a light noon meal; the main meal would be a full supper but not until a fashionably late hour. The Duchess had her maidservants sneak to her a pot of tea and some bread; later she expanded this to include cakes, sweets and small sandwiches. She began inviting friends to join her. When the Duchess returned to Court in London, she continued the practice. Not to be outdone socially, other hostesses quickly picked up the practice. By the 1880s, the fine hotels were opening Tea Rooms where ladies and gentlemen would meet in the late afternoon for tea and conversation.

Specific etiquette rules for tea time developed. These included how to hold a tea cup (pinkie up for balance – not straight up, but slightly tilted); how to use a teaspoon (never stir your tea, but softly fold the liquid two or three times); how to serve tea (milk not cream; lemon slices not wedges); and how to drink tea (sip, don't slurp).

And hats! Is a hat a fashion accessory or a clothing necessity? Well, history tells us it's both. In the Middle Ages, women began to wear hats regularly when the Church decreed their heads must be covered. Create a need, and a profession and market build up around it. At first hats were made in the home, just simple things. But in the 1700s, 'milliners' established an actual profession, soon developing into stylists as well as the actual makers of hats. When fair complexions became the vogue, large-brim hats were discovered to be most advantageous in keeping the sun away, thus beginning the use of the hat as a necessary sun screen. Once parasols became popular, the size of hat brims could decrease and hats became more ornamental. Of course, hats in cold weather were always a necessity. But the spring bonnet – well, that became the one must-have in every woman's wardrobe. The tradition of donning a new hat in spring dates back to the 1870s in New York when everyone would come out for the annual Easter Parade.

Join us for a Spring Bonnet Tea (and hat party), Sunday, April 29, at 3:00 p.m. at RHS (see back page for details).

2012-13 RHS board named

RHS elected its 2012-2013 Board of Directors and officers at the February 19 Annual Membership Meeting.

Four new Board members were welcomed for a two-year term (2012-2114): Larry Brown, Carol Macola, Fran Oehmen, and James Wognum. They join Sarah Berkey, Mary Ellen Cassidy, Edris Hoover, and Joel Morbito, who were reelected for two more years.

The current officers were re-elected for an additional one-year term. And there are board members continuing to serve 2011-2013 terms, bringing the total to 18 people.

In addition, two long-standing volunteers who have served on the Board were recognized for their many contributions, both in the past and continuing, by being elected as Board Emeritus members. This honor was bestowed upon Linda Lamberty and Herman Schell. Congratulations to all of the elected Board members.

New RHS board members (from left to right): Larry Brown, Fran Oehmen, James Wognum and Carol Macola

Officers
Doris Moulton, President
Edris Hoover, Vice President
William Sandstrom, Treasurer
Paul Everett, Secretary
Mary Ellen Cassidy, Membership Secretary
Sarah Berkey, Curator

Directors
Larry Brown
Sue Cummings
Cathi Hogan
Carol Macola
Cathy Majeske
Mati Maldre
Joel Morbito
Joseph O'Connor
Fran Oehmen
Mary Quinn Olsson
Lisa Walsh
James Wognum

Directors Emeriti
(Doris Moulton, President)
(William Sandstrom, Treasurer)
Julie DeHaan
Sue Delves
Lois Grayston
Linda Lamberty
Linda Lane
Patricia McGrail
Herman Schell

Thank you to our Annual Fund contributors

With gratitude, we acknowledge these contributors to the 2011 RHS Annual Fund. This is a partial list, as donations continue to arrive, and we will acknowledge additional contributors in the next newsletter. It is never too late to send in your donation!

Helen Ayers
Asa M. Bacon
Tom Baffes, County Fair
David & Jane Barclay
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Lisa & Matt Walsh
Gary Westerfer
Henry Vellinga

Museum software expedites service to our community

By Sarah Berkey, Curator

This summer and fall have been amazing. Through the efforts of a few Volunteers and our recent museum software acquisition of PastPerfect, over 4,000 materials have been input into the computer.

The wonder of Version 5 PastPerfect is that we can now assign "search terms" to each document or object and do "Google or Yahoo like searches."

For example, typing the word "Clissold" results in over 26 items or "St. Barnabas" results in 13 items or "scouts" results in 9 items.

The downside is that we are running short of supplies. If you have not yet sent in your Annual Fund donation you may want to earmark it for the Collections Committee. We thank you in advance for your donations.

Summer and fall call-outs for collections volunteers a success

A warm thank you to the Summer and Fall 2011 Call Out Archiving and Collections Volunteers.

Linda Lane	Peggy Gannon	Susan O'Neill
Sue Cummings	Rena Schergen	Peg Kapustiak
Paula Everett	Susan Snow	Jeanne Hokens
Jennifer Kenny	Joel Morbito	Marcia Thomas
Robert Langston	Sarah Berkey	Fran Oehmen
Cathy Majeske	Lisa Walsh	Cathi Hogan
Maureen Gilligan	Patti Graber	Joe O'Connor

Recent donations

Thank you to donors who have contributed funds to buy archiving supplies, boxes and shelving and also to donors who increased the collections of photographs; business, school, social and civic organizations; maps; railroad memorabilia; and cultural memorabilia from the 1910s through the 1990s.

Ed Moore in memory of Anne H. Orr	Lois and Herman Schell	Peg Kapustiak
Chuck Rita in honor of Jennifer Kenny	Diana and Ron Johnson	Lydia Xentaras
Family of Joan Wynne Murphy	Mary Quinn Olsson	Jennifer Kenny
Sue and John Mulcahy	Roy Fonda	Jane Nicoll
	Eamon Rago	Dorothy Hoefle
		Linda Lane

We are actively seeking materials on families and life here in the 1950s through the 1990s.

Do you have historically significant memorabilia on our neighborhoods, or family history?

Or have information on the Catholic and Irish community in the South Side area?

Do you know of local authors, artists or photographers?

If your church or school or business or club is celebrating a significant anniversary in the next few years, please let us know.

Are you seeking information on your family or your house? We may be able to help you, based on what has or is being donated to us.

Interested in history? Love legend and lore? Family history or genealogy?

But only have a few days to give – that's OK!

Spring and summer 2012 call-out for volunteers

Can you volunteer for a few hours or a few days this spring and/or summer? We will have many different archiving and collections projects. We will be concentrating on clothing, household objects, photographs and cultural memorabilia. You have a choice of what you would like to do. We will train you and be there to answer your questions. Email RHS at ridgehistory@hotmail.com or call us at 773-881-1675 and leave a message with your name and number, and we will get back to you.

Thanks for the BAPA email blast

Warm thanks to Matt Walsh and to our colleagues at the Beverly Area Planning Association for their email blast and an advertisement in the November Villager Newspaper. A number of volunteers have been recruited through BAPA's support and help.

Annual membership renewal time is here – be a part of the RHS team!

Enclosed with this newsletter is the annual membership renewal envelope – otherwise known as the "dues envelope." RHS relies on memberships as a major source of revenue for operations, producing the newsletter, managing the collection, and maintaining the historic Graver-Driscoll House, RHS headquarters. Your continuing support is very much appreciated.

Mark your calendar for these exciting events

Sunday, March 18, 2:30 p.m. – House Doctors visit RHS: Driveway Construction Using Concrete or Asphalt;
Program with local tradesmen (see article); light refreshments. $5 for RHS members, $10 for non-members, may be used toward purchasing new RHS membership. At RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., parking on west side of Seeley or Beacon School at 107th and Seeley.

Sunday, April 29, 3:00 p.m. - Spring bonnet tea for adults and young ladies – Everyone must wear a hat!
Full Victorian Tea (see article) and exhibit of vintage hats and bonnets. $20 per adult; $10 per child 8-16; children must be accompanied by adult. At RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., parking on west side of Seeley or Beacon School lot at corner of Seeley and 107th St. Call (773-881-1675) or email (ridgehistory@hotmail.com) for reservations.

Programs in Blue Island arranged through the Blue Island Public Library that RHS co-sponsors:
Wednesday, March 14, 7:00 p.m. – "Harps! Houli! Soda bread!"
Celebrate St. Patrick's Day with Celtic Harpist Aislinn; Actor/Writer/Humorist Mike 'Houli' Houlihan; and the winning entry of the Blue Island Chamber of Commerce Soda Bread Contest. At Christ Memorial Church, 2440 York, Blue Island. By ticket only; free tickets at the Library's Main Desk. Contact Dan Carroll at 708-388-1078 x 30 with any questions. Entry forms and rules for the Soda Bread Contest are at the Library. Sponsored by the Blue Island Public Library and Chamber of Commerce and the Christ Memorial Church.

Wednesday, April 4, 7:00 p.m. – "The '59 Go-Go Sox!"
Baseball historian and author Chuck Billington debuts his new book, *Comiskey Park's Last World Series: The Go-Go White Sox and the Pennant of 1959*. Book available for purchase. At the Blue island Public Library, 2433 York St., Blue Island. Free tickets can be picked up at Library's front desk. Dan Carroll, 708-388-1078 x30.

Wednesday, April18, 7:00 p.m. – "Never Forget!"
A Special Holocaust Memorial Week Event – Actress Betsey Means plays Holocaust survivor Alicia Appleman-Jurman, a jewish girl in Nazi-occupied Poland who retains her faith in God and humanity despite facing a terrifying world. At Christ Memorial Church, 2440 York, Blue Island. Free tickets at Library's Main Desk (2433 York, across from Church). Dan Carroll, 708-388-1078, x30.

Thursday, April 26, 7:00 p.m. – "The Civil War on the Waves"
Session 5 of The Civil War: A Series – Actor Edward Finch plays Captain Silas Terry, a Federal Navy Officer during the US Civil War. Grant from the Illinois Humanities Council, at the Blue Island Historical Society, 13018 Maple, Blue Island. Co-sponsored by the Civil War Roundtable.

Sunday, April 29, 2:00 p.m. – "Devil in the White City Day"
Two-part program: Chicago Architecture Foundation slide presentation on its tour of locations connected with the events of serial killer H. H. Holmes during the 1893 World's Fair in Chicago; and Ursula Bielski, Chicago paranormal expert and author, explores the 'Holmes Curse' and paranormal activity surrounding the events. By ticket only – tickets at Library's Main Desk (2433 York, Blue Island). Dan Carroll, 708-388-1078, X30.

Thursday, May 24, 1:00 p.m. – "The Legacy Girls present the Andrew Sisters"
For Memorial Day – Enjoy lunch beginning at 11:00 a.m., then the program of WWII songs at 1:00 p.m., at the Salvation Army Center, 2900 Burr Oak Road, Blue Island. Co-sponsored by the Blue Island Senior Office. Call Rita Pacyga for reservations at 708-388-5735.

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