

RECORD

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

A walk on the wild side... of the ridge

Conclusion of "The Wild, Wild Ridge"

By Carol Flynn

Summer has finally arrived, and what better way to enjoy it than to take walks through the neighborhood to enjoy the sights and sounds of nature. At one time,

the Ridge was an unknown and hostile wilderness, but it was also an area of great natural beauty and abundance. Eventually, nature gave way to development. But even today, here and there remnants of the once great wild Ridge can still be

found. In this issue, we will look at some of the natural areas preserved and/or restored on the Ridge, places worth a visit.

Thousands of years ago, the Blue Island was an actual island in prehistoric Lake Chicago, the ancestor of

Lake Michigan. As the level of Lake Chicago dropped, sand dunes, beach lines and ridges were all left behind. Sand deposits on the north and west of the island made good ground for cemeteries and golf courses. The community of Mount Greenwood was once known as "Seven Holy Tombs" because of the cemeteries. The land was not productive for agriculture, but the dry, yielding, well-drained soil made for easy digging of graves. Remnants of the sand deposits and dunes can still be seen in the rolling terrain of the cemeteries, especially the undeveloped



The undeveloped areas of Mount Hope Cemetery, whose entrance is at 115th and Fairfield Ave., are perhaps the last vestiges of the ancient sand deposits and dunes that ran along the western edge of the Blue Island that can still be seen with the naked eye. Lichens, fungi, mosses, grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees all are part of a dunescape. Dune plants adjust their survival to the harsh environment of low soil moisture and drifting sand. Birds, reptiles, insects and mammals

can all be found in dune environments – goldfinches, hawks, fox, butterflies, and box turtles may all be making their homes along the western edge of the Ridge. St. Mary's, Evergreen, Mt. Greenwood, Mt. Olivet, Mt. Hope and early cemeteries in Blue Island all trace this path where winds molded the subtle peaks and valleys that give these cemeteries their distinctive look. Photo by C. Flynn.

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Ridge, from page 1

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sections of Mount Hope Cemetery.

To the north of the Ridge lies Dan Ryan Woods, part of the Forest Preserves of Cook County. In pre-settlement times, this 257-acre area was part of an oak grove surrounded by open prairie. Today, the woods are managed as an oak woodland dominated by burr, white and red oak, with swamp white oak in the southeast corner.

Some of the plants to be found include wild ginger, wild geranium, jack-in-the-pulpit, May apple, trout lily, trillium and more. Like many of Cook County's preserves, Dan Ryan

Woods is a mix of deep, closed canopy woods; more open edges with a mix of native and non-native flowers and grasses; small wetlands; and mowed playing fields.

Native Americans used fire as a management tool

The top of the Ridge was once an oak savanna, that is, lightly forested grassland often occurring on the forest/prairie border. Fires, set by lightning or Native Americans, ensured that the savanna areas did not turn into forests. Certain oak species are more tolerant of fire and were able to survive. These savanna areas provided habitat

for many animals, including American bison, elk, and white-tailed deer.

Today, Hurley Park Woodland at 100th St. and Winchester Ave., part of the Chicago Park District, is a preserved section of the old savanna, with an impressive stand of burr, red and white oaks. In 1996, staff from the Morton Arboretum joined with the Chicago Park District and local volunteers to restore the small woods.

Native grasses and sedges such as Canada wild rye, woodland brome, and common wood sedge were planted to restore the understory. A few shrubs such as hazelnut and New Jersey tea

were planted. Wild columbine blooms in May, and asters, joe pye weed, and goldenrod bloom in the late summer and early fall.

Ridge surrounded by marshlands and floodplains

The lands to the east of the Blue Island Ridge were vast marshlands and wide floodplains. The Ridge Park Wetlands, located at 95th and Wood Sts., are the only natural remnants left in the city of the many "seeps" that were prevalent in the area. They are fed not from surface water but from water seeping out from the hill to the west.

Aspects of the original wild Ridge are still visible

The local cemeteries, forest preserves and city parks illustrate aspects of the original wild Ridge – sand deposits, oak savannas and woodlands, and wetlands. And scattered throughout the Ridge are numerous old growth oak trees. As part of our historical heritage, the Ridge communities are fortunate to have some remnants of "the wild side" to still walk through.



The 1.1-acre Ridge Park Wetlands is fed from water that seeps out of the Ridge and trickles into the wetland. Oaks, black walnuts and elm trees tower over the wetland. Blue asters, wild rye grass, and raspberry-colored swamp milkweed have all been introduced, and have taken hold in the understory. Photo by C. Flynn.

Photo by C. Flynn



Big improvements underway at Dan Ryan Woods

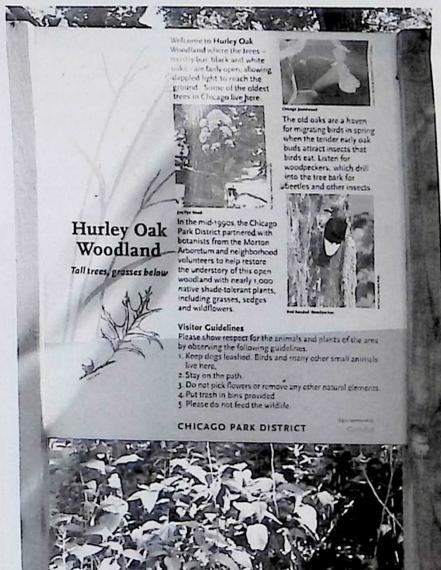
Dan Ryan Woods is one of the few forest preserves located right in the city. Volunteer groups have worked to remove invasive species, promoting native trees and wildflowers and restoring eroding slopes. In one area, a "Migratory Bird Makeover" area has been established. Planting native shrubs, grasses and wildflowers to provide food and cover areas will increase bird species such as black-throated green warblers, Nashville warblers, chestnut-sided warblers, scarlet tanagers, rose-breasted grosbeaks and yellow-bellied flycatchers. The woods are named for Dan Ryan, Sr., who was President of the Cook County Board. Upon his death in 1923, his vacancy on the Board was filled by his son, Dan Ryan, Jr., who went on to also serve as the board's president. The Dan Ryan expressway is named for the son.



Hurley Park Woodland has a mature canopy of oaks, but mowing and clearing caused the understory to degenerate. The natural slope of the land provides the well-drained high ground that nurtures the park's oaks. Photo by C. Flynn.



The land on which the Ridge Park Wetlands sit was slated to become a parking lot for the Metra commuter train line that runs along Wood Street, but a neighborhood group advocated for protection. The Chicago Park District acquired the land from Metra in 1991. The basic canopy of savannah oaks, and the hydrological conditions, that is, the natural flow and cycling of the water, were intact; therefore, the restoration was made easier. Photo by C. Flynn.



In 1984, Hurley Park Woodland was renamed in honor of Father Timothy J. Hurley (1870-1946), the founder of St. Barnabas Parish, who served as pastor from the church's founding in 1924 until his death in 1946. The park has an impressive stand of burr, red and white oaks. Looking up and down Winchester, most front yards have oaks in them, which pre-date the houses. Photo by C. Flynn.

Real photo postcards help document early history of the Ridge

By Carol Flynn

The study and collection of postcards is known as “deltiology” and particularly prized by many collectors are “real photo postcards” or RPPCs. RPPCs are postcards printed on actual photographic paper using the photographic process

rather than printed cards created on a printing press. It became possible thanks to George Eastman of Eastman Kodak Company fame, who developed a light-weight hand-held box camera that was preloaded with exposures of film. Once the pictures

were taken, the entire camera was sent to the company for developing. The consumer had the choice of prints or sepia-colored real-photo postcards. The camera was reloaded with undeveloped film and returned to the consumer.

Other manufacturers soon offered real photo postcard cameras also. These early cameras brought photography to the masses, allowing people for the first time to capture families and children, and events and locations, of personal and local interest that otherwise may have

gone unnoticed. An entire new industry arose from this innovation. Itinerant photographers roamed cities and the country sides photographing street scenes, homesteads, business places, parades, fires, floods, you name it. The postcards started to be sold as local souvenirs. Many, if not most, of these early postcards were not produced in great quantities.

Besides serving as examples of early photographic technology, with the passage of time, RPPCs have become valuable for another reason: the visual documentation of history. RPPCs are often referred to as “folk photography.” For an historical society, interest in RPPCs is a given.

RPPCs with images from the Ridge communities pop up periodically on eBay, the online auction site. Presented here are four examples of recent listings that offer excellent examples of the value RPPCs have for looking at the past.



The note on the back of this real photo postcard is dated 1913. At this location, Morgan Ave. is today 111th Street, and Crescent is now Bell Ave., looking west toward Western Ave.



This real photo postcard was taken ca. 1910 looking west along Morgan Ave. (now Monterey Ave.) up the hill, from about where Homewood Ave. is now. The electric trolley is notable, as are the horse-drawn conveyances.

The MPWC "Clippers" offer a valuable service to RHS

By Carol Flynn

It is said that "service is the rent we pay for a room on earth." If this is the case, then the women who serve with the Morgan Park Woman's Club have earned rooms in the finest mansions.

MPWC celebrates its 125th anniversary this year. There will

be more press on this before the year is out. In this issue of the RHS Record we want to recognize and thank the MPWC members for a valuable service they have been providing to the Society since 2001: maintaining the RHS newspaper "clippings" notebooks.

The notebooks of

clippings were started by Julie DeHaan, an RHS Board emeritus member, and member of MPWC. Some of the papers the clippers review are Beverly Review, Villager, Chicago Tribune, Southtown, Sun-Times, and other papers as articles are noted.

See Clippers, page 7



The MPWC "clippers" meet and review local and city newspapers for articles related to the Ridge community that are timely and will be of historical importance to researchers. From left are Nancy Mishlove; Gretchen McDowell, Chair of the Clipping Committee; Anna-Marie Brodsky; and Jeanne Hokens. Photo by C. Flynn.



Two houses on the 9100 block of Longwood Drive are shown in this real photo postcard. The back of the postcard is postmarked January 1908. Today, the house on the right still looks very similar to the



picture taken over 100 years ago, but the one on the left has been substantially altered and turned into condos.



This is a 1907 real photo postcard of Morgan Hall, which was on the campus of the Morgan Park Military Academy, now the Morgan Park Academy. The building was originally Seminary Hall of the Baptist Union Theological Seminary and stood on 111th St. until it was torn down around 1915-16.

The News Desk

Edris Hoover, President

Programs, events, spring cleaning

It has been pretty busy at Ridge Historical Society. I want to write about some of the things that have happened since our last newsletter.

The long anticipated program on Baseball and the National Archives took place on April 6th. Kris Maldre Jarosek, the education officer at the National Archives in Chicago and the daughter of Board Member Mati Maldre, was our presenter. She is an accomplished speaker and teacher. She made it all very interesting with an informative handout and presentation of historic photos and memorabilia. There are copies of the handout at RHS should you wish to pick one up.

Focusing on other activities, Board Member Fran Oehmen organized a yard clean up on Saturday, May 3 with volunteers from the Morgan Park Junior Woman's Club and the community. In addition to clearing winter debris, a Northern Red Oak sapling was planted, a donation from the

Juniors' community improvement fund.

The Spring Bonnet Tea was held on Sunday, May 4. Pat McGrail and Cathy Majeske arranged a display of ladies' hats from our collection. Linda Lane filled out the picture by hanging paintings and drawings of fashionable women and filling the cases with vintage cards and fashion magazine illustrations. Twenty guests were entertained. Door prizes were given; cucumber sandwiches and sweets were served along with English tea and scones.

Thanks to volunteers Lois Schell, Lisa Walsh, John Baily and others who prepared the goodies. The displays will remain in place for a few more weeks.

And remember, this is an annual event - it is a totally civilized opportunity to participate in a social afternoon, wear a fancy hat and support your historical society. Thanks to all the volunteers who participated over this busy weekend.

Office work

Important functions affecting

our governance and not-for-profit status have received attention recently. The Illinois State form 990, a report required of all not-for-profits, was completed.

This is an annual requirement to report financial information to the State of Illinois. Thanks to Larry Brown, now responsible for this task as our Treasurer, with Bill Sandstrom's help, the data was compiled and this task completed in full and on time.

Also corporate information filed with the Illinois Secretary of State which lists the officers of the organization has been updated. This is necessary to obtain a current certificate of good standing kept on file with our financial advisors. The last time this was done was in 2004. Ridge Historical Society was organized and incorporated in 1971. None of those who signed the documents are still with us, yet thanks to the leadership of many volunteers our mission is being carried forward. You can see the articles of incorporation in the RHS office if you are

interested. These tasks take place behind the scenes, but I believe it is good for the members to know that business is being taken care of.

Snow emergency fund and maintenance

I want to thank everyone who contributed to the Snow Emergency Fund. Your generosity raised close to \$1,000 and will enable RHS to move forward with some budgeted maintenance projects that would not otherwise be funded. First among these projects is the apron of the driveway. It is badly broken and must be replaced with concrete as required by the city. Our driveway was paved with black top two years ago, but the cost of the concrete persuaded us to defer doing the apron. Now it is imperative; it will only get worse.

Membership

Finally a word about membership. March was membership emphasis month. There are now 154 2014 members on record. We thank you very much for your response to that

See Membership, page 7

The time is 1913. Should Morgan Park be annexed to the city?



Bronson Roseboro, accompanied by his family, receives a check for \$250 from Edris Hoover, RHS President, at an awards ceremony at RHS. Bronson's essay won first place in RHS's essay contest on annexation. Photo by L. Lamberty.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the annexation of Morgan Park to

Chicago. The next issue of the RHS newsletter will take a look at this topic.

RHS held an essay contest for students at Morgan Park High School and Morgan Park Academy. The theme was: *The time is 1913. Should Morgan Park be annexed to the city?*

The winner of the contest was Bronson Roseboro, a junior at MPHS, who resides at 115th St. and Longwood Drive. Bronson used an innovative approach with his essay: He

wrote a letter to the leaders of the day in 1913, in support of annexation, as if it were written by a youth of the times 100 years ago. He incorporated some actual events of the day – a petition in favor of annexation put together by a child named William Weinfort and the support of the women of the area for annexation.



Volunteers from the Morgan Park Junior Woman's Club, RHS and the community recently planted a Northern Red Oak and cleaned up the RHS grounds. From left: Kathy Hartmann, Nick Pasquaz, Cailyn Gaudette, Fran Oehmen, Larry Busking, Joe O'Connor, Susan Burnet, and Karen Meyer. Not pictured: Allison Moulton, Anne Knibbs, Mary Jo Hosman, and Lisa McDowell-Spolarich. Photo supplied by F. Oehmen.

Membership, from page 6 appeal. Please be aware that the Fall issue of the newsletter will be the last issue sent to those who are not current members. An individual membership at \$25 does make a

difference and every dollar above that supports the work of your society to sustain the historic record of our community and to maintain the Graver-Driscoll House.

Thanks for listening.

Clippers, from page 5

In addition to Julie, the MPWC members who serve as clippers are Judy Wagner, Mary Curley, Jacquelynn Michichich, and Cheryl Tully, plus those in the accompanying pictures. They report that clipping is enjoyable both for the camaraderie as well as a good way to keep up with the news. Anna-Marie Brodsky, who is also an RHS Board member, says with a smile, "It's putting the world in order."

The clippings notebooks are available for use by members of the public. Contact the RHS office, 773/881-1675 or ridgehistory@hotmail.com.



The "clippers" notebooks in the RHS library contain pertinent newspaper articles and cover topics from BAPA (four volumes) to the Vanderpoel Art Gallery, and all points in between. Topics include the Beverly Art Center, Business Development, Chicago Police Department, Churches, local associations and service organizations, Morgan Park Academy and Morgan Park High School, the 19th Ward, Parks, People, Schools, the St. Pat's Parade, Smith Village, and of course, RHS. Photo by C. Flynn.



Doris Moulton, past President and Board emeritus member of RHS, now serving as President of MPWC, is also a "clipper." Photo by C. Flynn.

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

10621 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago, IL 60643

SUMMER 2014 ISSUE



Mark your calendar for these exciting events

THURSDAY, JULY 24, 2014, 4:30 - 9:30 P.M.

Annual Carl Spencer Memorial Bike Race Party

Held in conjunction with the 12th Annual Beverly Hills Cycling Classic. At RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago. Catered hot buffet supper, wine/beer/soft drinks, and home-made desserts. Cost: \$40 per RHS member; \$50 per non-member; children under 12 free, must be accompanied by an adult. For reservations or questions, contact RHS at 773/881-1675 or ridgehistory@hotmail.com.

One of the neighborhood's favorite summer events is undergoing some terrific changes this year! Now a race in the Prairie State Cycling Series, the 12th Annual Beverly Hills Cycling Classic will feature a pro am women's race at 4:40 pm and a pro am men's race at 6:30 pm. The Prairie State

Cycling Series is part of USA Cycling National Criterion Calendar (NCC), so this race is sure to draw some top level riders eager to make points and win prizes - the competition will be fast and furious. The not-to-be-missed RHS party offers great views for watching the bike race while enjoying delicious food and beverages and great company and conversation.

FRIDAY, SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 27, AND 28, 2014

RHS Garage and Better Book Sale

Friday and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.; Sunday, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. At RHS, 10621 S. Seeley Ave., Chicago. Items and books (no clothes) are being accepted now - contact RHS at 773/881-1675 or ridgehistory@hotmail.com for more information.



Photo by G. Luchow