

MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KEEPING HOMETOWN MEMORIES ALIVE

MUSEUM



JOURNAL

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THE DIETRICH FRIEDRICHS HOUSE: THE LOST YEARS

BY EMILY DATTILO

Before 101 S. Maple Street was a museum, it was a home. Dietrich and Lena Friedrichs built the house at 101 S. Maple Street in 1906, and five years later their daughter Bessie was born. Collectively the Friedrichs family spent 60 years in this beautiful house.

After Dietrich and Lena's passing, Bessie decided to move into a home of her own with her husband, Charles Barnes. She sold 101 S. Maple to Richard and Jane Webb in 1966. Just like the Friedrichs family, Richard and Jane adapted the home to meet the needs of modern life and personal preferences.

One of the Webb family's adaptations involved creating a main floor bathroom out of the pantry adjacent to the kitchen, as suggested in the 1966 real estate listing for the house. The Webbs also repainted the house yellow, as seen in the photo on this page.

In 1975 First Chicago Bank of Mount Prospect purchased 101 S. Maple Street, and the Webbs moved to another home in Mount Prospect. The bank was located across the street, on the corner of S. Maple Street and W. Busse Ave. in what is now the former Chase Bank building. Their original plan for the property was to tear down the home, garage, and carriage house in order to pave a parking lot. Neighbors and the Village of Mount Prospect, however, were strongly opposed to this plan because the space was zoned as a residential area. Instead,

First Chicago Bank began renting out 101 S. Maple Street, most likely as a way to get a return on their investment.

One of those tenants was Richard, a young man whose lease lasted from 1982 to 1984. He shared the house with four other young people, all in their late teens and early twenties. During that time Richard occupied the room that is now the Historical Society office, and in July 2021 Historical Society staff found a receipt with his name on it stuffed into that door's keyhole. One of the most entertaining memories from his time as a resident was when another resident's cat had kittens. The kittens could be found roaming all over the house!

Richard moved out of town in 1984 and the rest of the tenants moved shortly afterwards. By 1987 the house was empty and once again available for purchase.

First Chicago Bank first approached the Village of Mount Prospect with an offer to sell the house, and the Village then turned to the Mount Prospect Historical Society. The Historical Society was interested in preserving this historic home, and they enthusiastically began an intense fundraising campaign to raise



101 S. Maple Street when the Historical Society purchased it in 1988,
Photo by Walt Rutkowski

\$94,000 in less than a year. First Chicago Bank donated the first \$16,000 towards the purchase price. Individuals, businesses, and local organizations contributed the rest of the almost \$80,000. Fundraising efforts included door-to-door campaigning, bake sales, breakfasts, and other special events. It was truly a community project!

However, it would take plenty of restoration to bring 101 S. Maple Street back to its former glory.

That meant continued fundraising. The Historical Society
(Continued on page 3)

IN THIS ISSUE:

DIETRICH FRIEDRICHS HOUSE	1
FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR	2
FROM THE COLLECTION	2
DIETRICH FRIEDRICHS HOUSE, CONTINUED	3
BUS TRIP	3
UPCOMING EVENTS	4

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

The Historical Society volunteers have been busy this winter. In addition to guiding tours, volunteers have been hard at work adding newly donated artifacts to our database, digitizing files from our archive, and assisting me with an upgrade project for the Historical Society artifact collection.

Digitization efforts have sped up considerably thanks to a generous donation from one of our volunteers that allowed us to purchase a new scanner. This new equipment will allow us to share more of the Historical Society collection not just in exhibits and presentations, but also in the newsletter and through our website and social media accounts.

I am endlessly impressed by the talent and dedication of our volunteers, and we are so lucky to have each and every one of them sharing their time and skills with the Historical Society.

Staff and board members have also been busy planning programs and other events this year. In March we will hold a virtual Annual Meeting on our social media accounts. (The corresponding 2021 financial report is enclosed in this newsletter.) We will announce the exact date and time closer to the presentation, but afterwards all content will be available to view at any time. For my part of the Annual Meeting I will be presenting a new tour of the Dietrich Friedrichs House. I'm especially excited to share some of my recent discoveries about this beautiful historic house.

Probably the most intriguing discovery in this research process was finding a receipt in the keyhole of what is now the door to our office. Thanks to help from a board member and my coworker, Amanda Marcus, we were able to locate and contact the man named on the

receipt. His stories about living at 101 S. Maple Street illuminated a part of the house's history that was previously unknown. It was a rare example of finding answers—and history—in strange places!

Happy spring, readers!



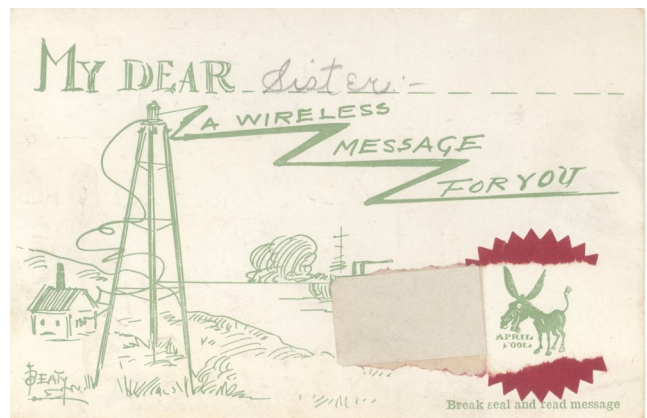
Emily Dattilo
Director

FROM THE COLLECTION

Throughout the early 1900s Lena Friedrichs kept in touch with friends and family by sending postcards. During the first fifteen years of the 1900s, postcards were an immensely popular way to send a quick note to loved ones, much like a text message with emojis today.

Postcards came in all sorts of designs for just about every occasion and sentiment that a sender could imagine. Lena's collection demonstrates this wide variety. Some of the postcards send a holiday greeting or a congratulations, while others are photographs of places that family and friends had visited. Still others are much more whimsical! Now that Lena's collection has been digitized, I wanted to share some favorites with you.

Thank you to all the volunteers who digitized these postcards!



(Continued from page 1)



Crowds waiting to enter the new Dietrich Friedrichs House Museum on opening day, September 12, 1992

formed a Restoration Committee who guided the entire process with thorough research and input from two former residents, Bessie Friedrichs Barnes and Jane Webb. Volunteers spent countless hours researching furnishings and household items appropriate for an early 20th century home. Some of the most significant objects acquired for the museum were those that once belonged to the Friedrichs family. Bessie donated many of these, but others, like the dining room table and chairs and the hall tree in the entryway, were returned by their second owners.

The Mount Prospect Historical Society's Dietrich Friedrichs House Museum officially opened with a dedication ceremony on September 12, 1992. Crowds of supporters gathered to witness the ribbon-cutting ceremony and celebrate all the hard work and dedication that made the day possible. 30 years later, we're still sharing Mount Prospect's history in this beautiful, historic home.

"NORTH SHORE NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS" BUS TRIP PLANNED

The Society has planned its next bus trip for Saturday, May 14. We will be exploring historic delights in the northern suburbs of Evanston and Wilmette.

In the morning, tour-goers will tour both the picturesque home of Frances Willard, a founder and president of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the mansion of Charles G. Dawes, who served as Calvin Coolidge's vice president.

The Frances Willard house was built in 1865. The author and activist lived and worked in this house during the years of her presidency of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU). For many of those years, the house also served as an informal national headquarters for the WCTU and a boarding house for its workers.

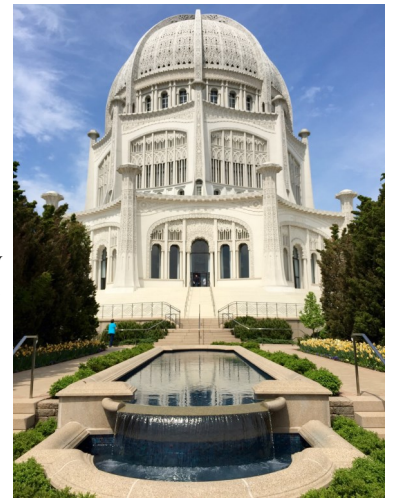
The nearby lakefront Dawes mansion was, from 1909 until his death in 1951, the home of Charles Gates Dawes and his family. Dawes earned the 1925 Nobel Peace Prize for his plan to alleviate the crushing burden of war reparations that Germany was required to pay after World War I. He also served as President Calvin Coolidge's vice president and as a general during World War I.

After lunch on your own in Evanston, the tour will continue north to Wilmette's renowned Baha'i House of Worship, an architectural masterpiece built over a 30-year span from 1921 to 1951, where we will be treated to a private tour. It was dedicated in 1953 and has received many architectural awards. In fact, in 1978 it was added to the United States National Register of Historic Places and in 2007 the Illinois Bureau of Tourism named it one of the "Seven Wonders of Illinois."

Tickets for the May 14 trip are \$67 per person which includes tour admissions and bus transportation. The tour bus will depart from the Historical Society, 101 S. Maple St., promptly at 9 a.m. and is expected to return back there by 5 p.m. Lunch will be on your own. Comfortable clothing and shoes are strongly urged.

Also, be aware that the Society will follow all CDC COVID-19 recommendations in effect at the time of the tour, so please be prepared to wear a mask on the bus and during the tours, if that is required at the time.

Space is limited, so if you are interested, contact the office at 847-392-9006 or register online at www.mtphist.org.



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UPCOMING EVENTS

Second Sundays at the Society

Location: Mount Prospect Historical
Society Central School (103 S. Maple
Street)

The Dietrich Friedrichs House (101 S.
Maple) will also be open for tours.

Fee: Free!

Please note, we will be following all state
and local guidelines regarding COVID-19
procedures.

Trees and Bird Feeders

Sunday, April 10

11:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

Did you know Mount Prospect is a
Tree City USA? Join us for a cute
make-and-take tree craft. Or make an
easy cranberry and birdseed feeder to
hang in a tree at home. All ages are
welcome.



Paper Flowers

Sunday, May 8

11:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

This month's theme is flowers. Stop by
Central School to try your hand at a
variety of crafty blooms. Or pose for a
photo op with Mom in our beautiful
garden to celebrate Mothers' Day.

Old-Fashioned Games

Sunday, June 12

11:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

Join us on our campus for a unique
opportunity to play old-fashioned

games! We'll be sharing the games
children and their families played in
yesteryear.

Annual Meeting, Week of March 28th

Tune in to hear about 2021 at the
Historical Society and watch a NEW video
tour of the Dietrich Friedrichs House. All
presentations will be posted on the
Historical Society Facebook page and
YouTube channel. You may view them at
any time.

North Shore National Historic Landmarks Bus Trip

Saturday, May 14

9am — 5pm

Fee: \$67, includes tour admission and bus
transportation

Space is limited and registration is
required. To register, visit
www.mtphist.org.

Save the dates!

Summer Programs for Young Historians at
the Society

History Camp Week One: June 13-17

History Camp Week Two: July 11-15

Prairie Kids I & II - July 21

The Science of History (wind) - July 28

If You Lived in Colonial Times - July 28