

MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KEEPING HOMETOWN MEMORIES ALIVE

MUSEUM JOURNAL



VOLUME VI, ISSUE 3

FALL 2015

EZRA EGGLESTON: MOUNT PROSPECT'S EARLY VISIONARY



Ezra C. Eggleston and his second wife, Agnes, circa 1880.

Every town in the United States begins with a vision, ambition and investments. Mount Prospect's beginning was no different. However, the person who had the initial vision, ambition and investment was not a member of the founding families that we recognize today. Ezra C. Eggleston, an investor and real estate broker, came across 140 acres of farmland along the Chicago and North Western Railway. He purchased the land from

Walter Burke and Owen Rooney in 1874. There are several reasons why Eggleston chose this particular farmland to invest in, all of which have to do with location. Before the convenience of railroads, most travel was by horse-drawn wagons and

waterways. Access to Rivers, canals and lakes allowed people to import and export goods, so these areas were settled first. As the mode of transportation shifted from boat to train, so did the nature of land settlement. In the early 1850s, officials in northwestern Cook County began discussing the possible construction of a railroad. It was approved by the Illinois legislature and the construction was completed in 1853.

By 1854, the first train traveled from Chicago to Cary. Because of this railroad, the land along it increased in value, which piqued Eggleston's interest.

Once Eggleston purchased the land from Burke and Rooney, he subdivided it into small parcels to sell for profit. Eggleston drew up a map of the land, naming it "Mount Prospect." He called it "Mount" because it sat atop the highest elevation in Cook County. He felt that because it was along a railroad and because of its distance from Chicago's swampland, it was a promising location for a town. He built a rudimentary train depot about 14 feet by 16 feet. Without this train depot, Mount Prospect may not have evolved as it did.

However, the reason that Eggleston is somewhat forgotten is because he never saw his vision come to fruition. Just two years before he purchased the land, the Chicago Fire destroyed homes and lives.

(SEE "EZRA EGGLESTON," PG. 3)

SAVE THESE DATES...!

October 29, 2015:

Purse Auction at the Village Hall Community Room, 7 p.m., \$10.

October 31, 2015:

Trick or Treat for Central School! The children of Mount Prospect will be Trick or Treating this year to help support the restoration of the one-room 1896 Central School.

November 19, 2015:

Mount Prospect Stories: The End of the War, Mount Prospect Public Library, 7 p.m.

December 4, 2015:

Mount Prospect Historical Society's 28th Holiday Housewalk located in the neighborhood around the Mount Prospect Country Club, 3:30 to 9 p.m. \$25 in advanced, \$27 day-of-event purchase.

December 5, 2015:

Christmas with the Friedrichs: Gingerbread Open House at the Mount Prospect Historical Society, time TBD.

December 12, 2015:

Gingerbread Baking program, time TBD.

For more information contact the Historical Society, 847/392-9006.

IN THIS ISSUE:

EZRA EGGLESTON:
EARLY VISIONARY 1

FROM THE DESK
OF THE DIRECTOR 2

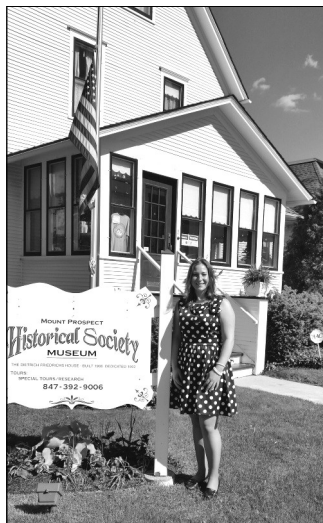
FROM THE
COLLECTION 2

PROTECTING THE
PAST 3

28TH HOLIDAY
HOUSEWALK 4

SOCIETY INFO 4

FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



Lindsay Rice
Executive Director

The Historical Society is rallying Mount Prospect's schools this fall to help raise the last remaining funds for the Central School restoration project. The Central School Capital Campaign committee has

developed a two-part fundraising approach to raise money for Central School. The first part takes place in Fall 2015 called "Cents for Central School!" Large plastic containers will be distributed to local schools for the collection of spare change throughout the month of October. Children can also collect spare change by Trick or Treating on Halloween!

Please start stockpiling your spare change and put it next to the candy bowl on Halloween because the children of Mount Prospect will be Trick or Treating this year to help support the restoration of

the one-room 1896 Central School. Please be generous as the children of Mount Prospect work to give their community the gift of a restored historic schoolhouse for its upcoming 100th birthday. The students of the school that collects the most spare change will sign their names on paneling that will be preserved for generations within the walls of Central School! The winning school will also earn an MPTV-televised proclamation from Mayor Arlene Juracek.

The second part of the campaign will take place in Spring 2016 called, "Finish the Job!" The money collected in this phase will involve all the schools of

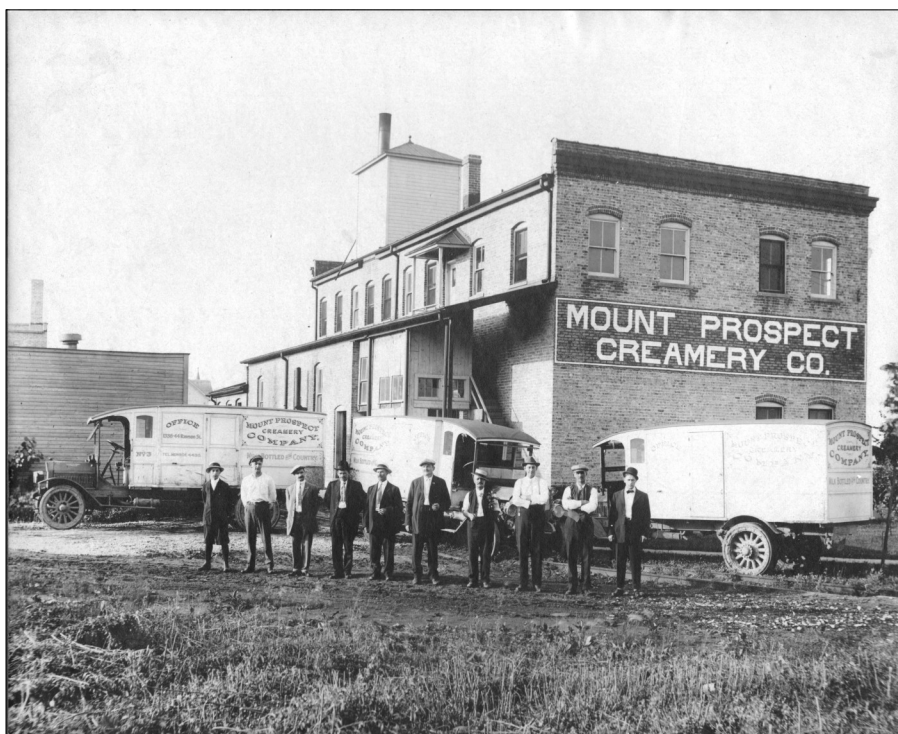
Mount Prospect competing against one another in any manner and time-frame to raise money for Central School.

Students from the winning school will have the honor of marching in the Mount Prospect Fourth of July parade with the Mount Prospect Historical Society schoolhouse replica float and a banner announcing their victory in the schoolhouse challenge. The winner of the challenge will be calculated by percentage of students actively participating in the effort. Please help encourage and support our schools in their efforts to raise money for our treasured one-room schoolhouse!

FROM THE COLLECTION: THE MOUNT PROSPECT CREAMERY CO.

In February the Historical Society hosted its first ever Photo Scanning Weekend where people were invited to bring their photos of Mount Prospect and allow the Historical Society to scan them for its digital photograph collection. One of the photos donated was a unique capture of the Mount Prospect Creamery Co. and its employees. This photograph was taken 100 years ago in 1915. Founded in 1910, the Mount Prospect Creamery became a major distributor of dairy. It was located at 302 E. Northwest Highway.

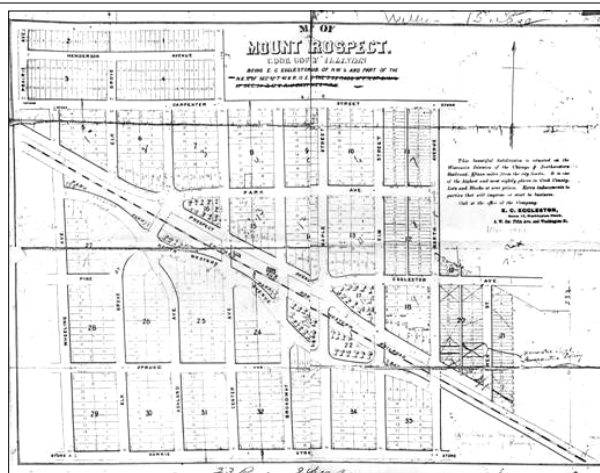
The employees from left to right were: Edwin Busse, Bill Holte, Bill Barengar, Albert Greinke, Edward Busse Sr., Fritz Conrad, William Weide, Herman Scharinghausen, Ernst Gosch, and Edwin Oehlerking.



("EZRA EGGLESTON",
CON'T FROM PAGE 1)

People were focused on rebuilding, not purchasing new land. The Great Depression of 1873 also discouraged people from purchasing new land. Eggleston's vision was further delayed because by this time, 73 percent of Cook County was within 15 miles of a railroad, lessening the unique appeal of his real estate.

Ultimately Eggleston declared bankruptcy and sold his land. After settling his legal issues, Eggleston and his wife, Agnes, moved to Allegan, Michigan. One of Eggleston's chief investors, Ripon College, declared



Ezra Eggleston's map of Mount Prospect, 1873.

that there seemed to be "little future in the Village of Mount Prospect."

Despite the fact that his vision did not flourish as he had hoped, his actions were pivotal to the development of the Mount Prospect we know today.

Nearly 20 years after he

left, a man named Christian Geils purchased a triangle of the land and began to develop. He built the first general store which was located at the corner of Northwest Highway and Main Street (the renovated building, in a new location, is now

home to Capannari's Ice Cream.) One by one, German settlers relocated from their Elk Grove farms to the developing Village of Mount Prospect.

Although Ezra C. Eggleston relocated his family to Michigan, some of his descendants moved back to Mount Prospect in the 1960s. One of his descendants is still in contact with the Historical Society, and recently made a generous donation to help restore Central School. Even though Eggleston abandoned what he thought was a failed vision, his efforts were a catalyst in Mount Prospect's history, and his descendants and our community recognize and appreciate that.

PROTECTING THE PAST TO CELEBRATE THE FUTURE

In 1896, community members William Busse and William Wille worked together to build and establish Central School, where area children received an education until 1927. Central School also gave various community organizations a place to assemble and conduct business. The Mount Prospect Volunteer Fire Department, The Mount Prospect Women's Club, The Mount Prospect Public Library and The Campfire Girls were all community groups that held meetings in Central School. The Village of Mount Prospect was even incorporated inside the one-room schoolhouse in 1917. Since the Mount Prospect Historical Society moved the building in 2008 and began renovations, local businesses and community members have recognized the significance of the historic building and donated resources and money to help support the project. The most recent donation was made by the estate of Dr. Donald Hoeg, a long time resident of Mount Prospect, active member of St. Raymond's Catholic Church and volunteered with Meals on Wheels.

Dr. Hoeg and his wife, Patricia, were also very active with the Clearbrook Center in Arlington Heights. He passed away on March 20, 2014. Dr. Hoeg's house was protected by Active Alarm Company, and it was his wish to donate the alarm system to Central School. John Gatsakos, owner of Active Alarm Company and son-in-law of Dr. Hoeg, contacted the Historical Society to announce the estate's intentions. Just as it happened 119 years ago when Central School was built, Mount Prospect's residents are always on the lookout for ways to support their community. The Historical Society expresses its deepest thanks to Dr. Donald Hoeg, John Gatsakos and Active Alarm Company. We are one step closer to opening Central School so it can once again serve our community!



Dr. Hoeg serving as a Clearbrook Guardian at the Clearbrook Center.



MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

101 South Maple Street
Mount Prospect, IL 60056-3229
WWW.MTPHIST.ORG

Located on the southeast corner of Maple Street and
Busse Avenue, across from the Chase Bank Building

Phone: 847/392-9006
Fax: 847/577-9660
Email: info@mtphistory.org



NEWSLETTER
UNDERWRITTEN BY:



NON-PROFIT ORG

U.S. POSTAGE PAID

PERMIT NO. 90

MT. PROSPECT, IL

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

28TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY HOUSEWALK



320 S. We-Go Trail, owned by The Curran family

This year's 28th annual Holiday Housewalk, to be held from 3:30 to 9 p.m., Friday, Dec. 4, will highlight portions of Mount Prospect's ever-popular Country Club neighborhood to the east of the Mt. Prospect Golf Club along We-Go Trail and See-Gwun, Candota and Na-Wa-Ta Avenues. Tickets go on sale for \$25 each (\$23 for members at the museum only) on November 1.

The interiors of six private homes, originally built between 1940 and 1956 and, in several cases, given major renovations in recent years, will be featured and the exteriors of two other interesting homes will also be highlighted.

The homes featured this year, both inside and outside, are:

- 320 S. We-Go Trail, owned by The Curran family
- 405 S. We-Go Trail, owned by Craig and Trish Chuipek
- 420 S. We-Go Trail, owned by Dave and Beth Diprima
- 523 S. We-Go Trail, owned by William and Nancy Foreman
- 708 S. See-Gwun Ave., owned by John and Mary Claire Hunter
- 514 S. Candota Ave., owned by Travis and Lindsey Phelps

The exteriors of 702 S. See-Gwun Ave. and 601 S. Na-Wa-Ta Ave. will also be highlighted with historical notes featured on lighted outdoor lecterns.

The tour will begin at the Mt. Prospect Golf Club clubhouse, 600 S. See-Gwun Ave., where refreshments will be offered and watercolors of the featured houses displayed. Museum store items will also be sold there.

As an optional feature this year, dinner will be available in the Clubhouse's holiday-decorated restaurant. Patrons may reserve one of three entrees and a specific seating time for \$25 per person (including tax and tip) by phoning the Society at 847-392-9006 with a credit card number or by stopping by the museum during office hours with a check or cash. A cash bar will be available that evening.