

# MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KEEPING HOMETOWN MEMORIES ALIVE

# MUSEUM JOURNAL

VOLUME IX, ISSUE 1      SPRING 2018

## MOUNT PROSPECT AND A CENTURY OF PROGRESS

The suburbs that surround Chicago played an important role in the success of the World's Fair Century of Progress Exposition, which took place in Chicago from 1933-1934. It was a win-win situation for both the fair and the towns positioned along Chicago's perimeter.

One of the benefits of being so close to the city was that the Chicago-suburban towns were granted early access to the World's Fair before it officially opened to the public on June 1, 1933. Residents of Mount Prospect were included in this group of lucky people, and many took advantage of the opportunity to view the fair before the crowds.

Not only did this allow local people to view the fair first, it also gave the fair free advertisement. Fair officials felt that if local people were granted early access, they would write to distant friends and family about how amazing it was, encouraging them to travel from all over to visit the fair.

According to an article from *The Daily Herald* dated June 16, 1933, the Village of Mount Prospect appointed Mr. I. E. Besander to be the official Mount Prospect representative for giving tourists information on local amenities. Because Chicago was so overcrowded and busy, Mount Prospect residents were encouraged to open their homes to traveling fairgoers for room and board. This allowed people to stay outside of the city and take the train to the fair. One of the tasks Besander had was to keep a list of all the homes in Mount Prospect that were available to tourists. The goal was to attract tourists to the Village so that they would stay here during the fair, which would help the local economy.

It was felt that after long days spent at the fair, people might look forward to spending the night in the quiet and comfortable suburbs.



Postcard featuring the Sky Ride at the Chicago World's Fair Century of Progress 1933.

Taking the train to the fair was also exciting. We all know what Chicago driving is like, and it was no different in 1933.

Mount Prospect felt that there was no better way to advertise the Village than by offering hospitality. It only makes sense that our current motto is, "Where Friendliness is a Way of Life."

People from all over attended the fair, including local groups and clubs from Mount Prospect. On June 23, 1933, Bertha Ehard and her Camp Fire Girls attended the fair on Children's Day. Tickets for children under the age of 12 were only a nickel. Many of the Camp Fire Girls took advantage of this offer, and some even pretended to be 12 for the day! The Woman's Club of Mount Prospect provided their transportation to the fair. The group didn't arrive back in Mount Prospect until 11 p.m. The girls spent a lot of their time on Enchanted Island, which was essentially a giant playground for children.

The "Sky Ride" was purportedly the best thrill of the day. The Sky Ride was constructed with two towers, taller than any in Chicago at the time, and visitors were transported via "rocket cars" from one tower to the other, giving them a fantastic view of the fairgrounds. Each tower also boasted an observation deck. The Sky Ride was intended to compete with the popularity of the 1893 World's Fair Ferris Wheel and the 1888 International Exposition's Eiffel Tower.

The Century of Progress lasted from May 1933 through October 31, 1934, and it remains a special

time for not only Chicago's history, but for that of the surrounding suburbs.

### SAVE THESE DATES...!

#### A Peek in Mount Prospect's Attic

Saturday, April 14  
10 a.m. - noon  
Central School  
103 S. Maple St.  
FREE

#### Guys and Dolls Speakeasy Soirée

Saturday, April 21  
6-10 p.m.  
Rob Roy Country Club  
505 E. Camp McDonald Rd,  
Prospect Heights  
\$50/person

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

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Lindsay Rice  
Executive Director

At the Village's February board meeting, Mayor Arlene Juracek presented a copy of the *New Common-School Song Book*, 1917, to Mount Prospect Historical Society President Frank Corry. The book will be kept in our one-room schoolhouse and possibly used as a part of the Central School Living History

## FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

Experience field trips.

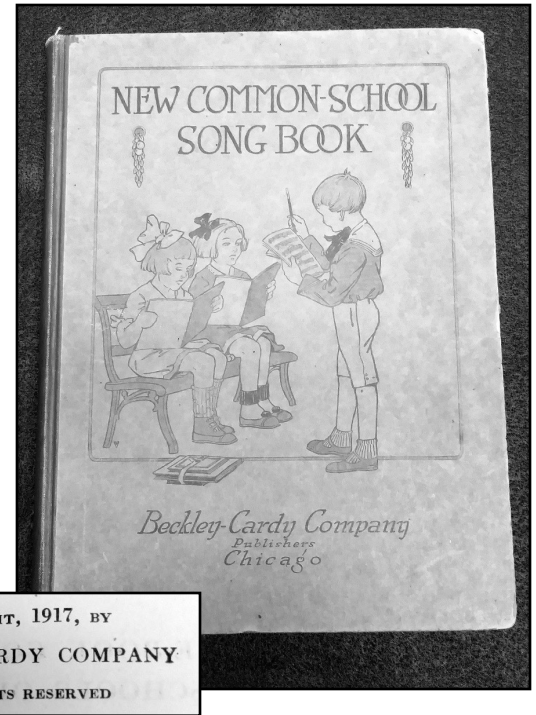
According to the preface of the book:

*Music should have a place in every school. Song is the universal language of childhood, and no child should be deprived of the joy of singing. There probably is nothing which gives greater pleasure to children or has a more beneficent and widespread influence on them than the singing of songs.*

It also mentions in the preface that this book was intended for schools of mixed grades, i.e. one-room schoolhouses. This book was published in 1917, the same year that Mount Prospect was incorporated, and also when Central School (then Mount Prospect Public School) was still functioning as a one-room schoolhouse. Perhaps this song book was used in Central School as a part of the curriculum, who knows? We know for certain that the school

put on many plays and recitals for the community. This book makes an excellent addition to the collection, as well as to the schoolhouse.

Thank you, Mayor Juracek!



## GROWING YOUR FAMILY TREE

WRITTEN BY MICHELE RUNDE

If you have had your DNA tested by *23andMe*, *FamilyTreeDNA*, *AncestryDNA*, or *MyHeritage* this year, know that you are not alone. You are one of more than 12 million people (1 in 25 Americans) who had their DNA tested in 2017. According to the *MIT Technology Review*, this means that more people took tests this year than all the previous years combined.

From a historical perspective, DNA results can tell people where their ancestors (both recent and distant) came from and help them locate family, near and far. The results can be helpful to family research, opening a window to the past.

Mount Prospect resident Dianna Franzen, who had her parents' DNA tested, enjoys researching her family tree. The DNA testing "didn't turn up anything too exotic," she says. However, her father was surprised to find his DNA more English and Irish than German. Her family research shows that her father's family arrived in America in 1723 and took part in the Revolutionary War. Colonial roots aside, her father continues to identify more strongly with his German roots. Her mother's results were less surprising. As a second-generation Irish-American, she is 95% Irish.

Franzen says one nice surprise that came out of the DNA tests, is that she was able to link her dad with some cousins he had never met. Her family traveled to Missouri for an extended family reunion with long lost family.

In Europe, people are less amazed to find family connections, which Franzen discovered on a visit to her family's ancestral town in Ireland. Upon meeting a distant relation and explaining the reason for the visit, the relative seemed unimpressed. "I realized that all her ancestors were just down the road in the cemetery and there's no great mystery," she says. "As Americans, our experience is unique."



Another Mount Prospect resident, Sandy Haltman, purchased *AncestryDNA* kits for her family this Christmas. Her husband Joe's results show a very strong match to the Eastern European region and her own as prominently British. Research of her family tree shows her first American ancestor, on her mother's side of the family, was John Hopkins who arrived in Plymouth as part of the "Winthrop Fleet" around 1630, with his wife Jane Strong. Now the rest of the Haltman family is eagerly awaiting their results to see which family ethnicity is strongest for them.

If you are on the fence about joining the DNA experience, check the PBS show "Finding Your Roots" or TLC's "Who Do You Think You Are?" or "Long Lost Family." The Mount Prospect Historical Society houses hundreds of documents and photos that can also help you find your family and get in touch with your roots. Call us today for any genealogical assistance! Happy Hunting!

## A PEEK IN MOUNT PROSPECT'S ATTIC

As part of its mission to preserve the history of our town, the Mount Prospect Historical Society has a vast collection of historic artifacts. Most of these items are housed on the Society's campus. An interactive program to explore some of these relics is scheduled for Saturday, April 14, from 10 a.m. to noon, at the Mount Prospect Historical Society's Central School, 103 S. Maple St. This FREE program is open to children in grades three through five.

"This is a fun and unique opportunity to not only see, but to use, some of the items in our collection," said Lindsay Rice, executive director of the Society. "The children will learn how the items were used in the daily lives of past residents, giving a hands-on peek into the history of Mount Prospect."

The program is being offered by the Living History Committee of the Society and will feature household and domestic items. There is no fee, but space is limited and registration is required. Walk-ins will be admitted on the day of the event only if space is available. For more information or to register, please call the Mount Prospect Historical Society at 847/392-9006 or visit [www.mtphist.org](http://www.mtphist.org).



## HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLABORATES ON VETERAN'S KIA PROJECT

The Mount Prospect Historical Society is collaborating with American Legion Post 525, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1337, the Mount Prospect Public Library, and the Mt. Prospect Park District on a project to establish a memorial for Mount Prospect residents who were killed while in service to their country.

The project involves identifying service members and then finding obituaries and/or other biographical information. Loren Helwink, a Mount Prospect resident, is leading the project for the American Legion/VFW.

To kick off the project, the Mt. Prospect Parks Foundation has donated \$3,000 to the memorial. Once the material has been gathered, an appropriate memorial will be chosen and unveiled on Memorial Day. The memorial is adjacent to the Veterans Memorial Band Shell in Lions Memorial Park. It has been designed as a tranquil, contemplative setting featuring a fountain and columns of engraved bricks. A limited number of bricks are also available for purchase. To purchase a brick through the Mt. Prospect Park District, visit [www.mppd.org](http://www.mppd.org).

Please contact the Mount Prospect Historical Society via [info@mtphist.org](mailto:info@mtphist.org) if you have information about a Mount Prospect service member who was killed in action.

The VFW Post 1337 is reserved for veterans who have received a campaign medal for overseas service, have served 30 consecutive or 60 non-consecutive days in Korea, or have ever received hostile fire or imminent danger pay. They meet monthly at Arlington Legion Post 208, 121 N. Douglas, Arlington Heights.

American Legion Post 525, founded in 1930 by 16 World War I veterans, provides service to veterans, the community and nation. It is open to all former service member whether they experienced hostile fire or not. Meetings are held monthly at Arlington Legion Post 208 in Arlington Heights.





## 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

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## “GUYS AND DOLLS SPEAKEASY SOIRÉE”

The Mount Prospect Historical Society’s “Guys and Dolls Speakeasy Soirée,” its seventh annual History in the Headlines dinner, will be held on Saturday, April 21, at Rob Roy Country Club, 505 E. Camp McDonald Rd., Prospect Heights.

This year, the Mount Prospect Historical Society will re-imagine the atmosphere enjoyed in area speakeasies during Prohibition. “The Roaring Twenties” was a time of sustained economic prosperity with a distinctive cultural edge in the United States and Western Europe, but particularly in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. Jazz music blossomed, the “flapper” redefined the modern look for women in the United States and Britain, and Art Deco peaked. The spirit of the time was marked by a general feeling of novelty associated with modernity and a break with traditions. Everything seemed to be feasible through modern technology and jazz, and dancing rose in popularity in joyous contrast to the mood of World War I.

Guests will enjoy a prime rib carving station, along with salad, vegetables, bread and, of course, dessert for \$50 per person. Call the office with special dietary needs. There will also be a cash

bar with signature cocktails of the era offered. Partygoers are invited to dress casually or elegantly and even to wear clothing of the 1920s or 1930s.



After dinner they will be entertained by Bill Hazelgrove, author of “Al Capone and the 1933 World’s Fair.” He will talk about Capone’s gangster life and how worried World’s Fair organizers got him out of the picture during the event. There will also be a challenging 1920s and 1930s trivia competition during Mr. Hazelgrove’s intermission, and a raffle.

Reservations are limited and may be made individually or in tables of 10. For more information or to purchase seats via PayPal, log onto [www.mtphist.org](http://www.mtphist.org). You may also phone 847/392-9006 Tuesday through Thursday during office hours to pay by credit card.

All of the proceeds from this event will benefit the Mount Prospect Historical Society’s many educational projects and help pay for upkeep on the 1906 Dietrich Friedrichs house museum and the 1896 one-room Central Schoolhouse.