

MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MUSEUM JOURNAL

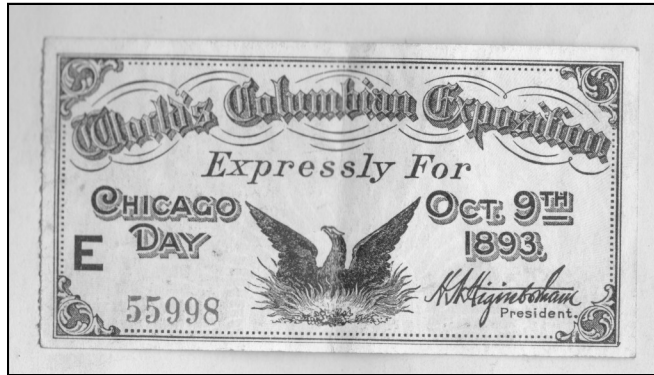
VOLUME V, ISSUE 1 SPRING 2014

THE 1893 COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION

On Oct. 9, 1893, 19-year-old George Busse of Elk Grove Township made his way to Chicago to visit the astounding Columbian Exposition. We know this because we have his ticket to the fair in our Mount Prospect Historical Society collection. At the time, he was only three years away from marrying Maria Oehlerking and was living at his parent's creamery near the intersection of Algonquin and Arlington Heights Roads. His older brother, William, was a deputy Cook County Sheriff and one has to wonder if he procured the ticket for George.

Imagine the excitement a 19-year-old from a farm must have felt walking down the Midway for the first time at the World's Fair. The sights, smells and sounds would have been overwhelming. It must have been like walking through a fantasy world.

Despite the innovations and technology that were introduced at the World's Fair, the spectacle gave visitors something far simpler. It gave them the opportunity to escape their daily lives and experience



This is the ticket that was purchased by George Busse to attend the World's Fair on Oct. 9, 1893.

things of which they never would have dreamed.

The Columbian Exposition was full of grand architecture, machinery, culture and illumination. Chicago was dubbed "The White City" because the buildings of the fair were constructed of white stucco, which made it seem like they were illuminated. In conjunction with the color of the buildings, there were street lights positioned all over the fair, giving the city a dream-like atmosphere. Countries from all over the world set up tents and pavilions showcasing their music, food and culture.

One of the attractions of the Columbian Exposition was the Ferris wheel. George W.G. Ferris was the architect who designed the

gigantic rotating wheel that raised riders high above the ground to observe the fair. The Ferris wheel was meant to rival the size and design of the Eiffel Tower, which was built for the Paris International Fair of 1889. The Ferris wheel was 825 feet in diameter, 30 feet wide and 140 feet high. The wheel supported 36 cars that could hold up to 40 people each. Each car boasted swivel chairs and glass windows.

In front of the Casino and Music Hall was a pier that extended out onto Lake Michigan. Visitors could use a 4,300-foot-long moving sidewalk to get from one side to another. The sidewalk was built upon 351 flat cars and it could hold up

(SEE "EXPOSITION," PG. 3)

SAVE THE DATES...

May 16-17, 2014:
Community Garage Sale

June 19, 2014:
Sports Trivia Night at the Village Hall Community Room, 7:30 p.m.

Aug. 13, 2014:
Silent Movie Night/Ice Cream Social on the Museum Campus, 101 S. Maple St.

For more information:
Call the Historical Society, 847-392-9006. Or go to www.mtphist.org/category/events/.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

After a little over three months as executive director of the Mount Prospect Historical Society, I already feel like Mount Prospect is my second home. It is not only the rich history that makes me feel at home, but it is also the people and the town itself.



Lindsay Rice
Executive Director

From the time that I was eight years old, I knew I wanted to make history the centerpiece of my life. It wasn't until I was 17 that I decided what table on which I wanted to place that centerpiece.

It was King Tutankhamen's return to the Field Museum that triggered my interest in museums. My parents always took us to museums when we were kids, and I always regarded them as guardians that protected history and culture. In my mind, museums meant marble floors, mahogany woodwork and hushed voices talking about very important things. I can't explain why, but for some reason, it captivated me. When I attended the King Tut exhibit, I made up my mind I wanted to be a

part of the profession that I held in such high esteem.

From the beginning of my college career, a profession in the museum field was fixed in my sights. In every class I took, I absorbed the information and contemplated how I could apply it in a museum. I received my bachelor's degree in history from Northern Illinois University. Then in the fall of 2011, I enrolled in the Museum Studies program at NIU, where I soaked up as much information and experience as I could.

Throughout my graduate studies I completed three internships. During my first internship at Midway Village Museum in Rockford, I found myself becoming more interested in local history. It was

at this point that I realized how much I love local history and what it means for a community. History gives a community its context. Community is more than just a group of people. It is pride, identity, kinship and home.

This idea is what gets me up every morning and drives me an hour and a half to work here in Mount Prospect. Knowing that I can make a difference in a community and connect the people with their past is worth more to me than any marble floor or mahogany trim. It is my goal to ensure that through exhibits, social media and educational programming, Mount Prospect's history is not only shared with the entire community, but also with the rest of the Chicago land area.

HAROLD WEARY DIES AT 105

Mount Prospect lost one of its best-known, most-decorated residents Friday, Feb. 14, 2014, when Harold Weary, 105, died at the Lutheran Home in Arlington Heights.

With his many years in finance at United Airlines, Harold Weary brought his deep financial expertise and experience to the role of treasurer and board member of the Mount Prospect Historical Society. In addition, Harold contributed in many other ways to the MPHS. He was a key contributor of time and effort to the MPHS Car Show for the 15 years the show was in downtown Mount Prospect.

Harold was also an incredible fund raiser. In the early 1990s, his idea and hands on effort to collect contributions during the Mount Prospect Fourth of July parade raised a significant amount of money that went toward the renovation of the Dietrich Friedrich Historical Museum.

Born in Kansas in 1908, Harold came to Chicago to work for a publishing company in the stockyards. That is where he met his wife, Irene. They had three children: Marlys, Sharon and Ronald.

In 1942, he joined United Airlines and spent 32 years there, first at Midway Air-

port and then in Elk Grove Township when the airline moved its corporate offices. That prompted the family to move to Mount Prospect in 1961.

In 1988, the Mount Prospect Public Library board named the library's genealogy collection in his honor because, by that time, he'd given it more than 20 years of service to the library. Harold was also a founding member of the Mount Prospect Public Library Foundation, stepping down only last October on the occasion of his 105th birthday.

The village honored him with the "Living Legend Shining



Star" award in 1995 for his service to the library, the Mount Prospect Historical Society and Trinity United Methodist Church. In 2007 he was honored with the John McNamara Service Above Self Award.

Services were Saturday, Feb. 22, 2014, at Trinity United Methodist Church in Mount Prospect.

(“EXPOSITION,” FROM PG. 1)

to 5,610 people. Visitors could choose from two different speeds at which to travel on the sidewalk. The first speed was three miles per hour and the second was six miles per hour. The moving sidewalk and the Ferris wheel were just two of the many innovations that were seen at the World’s Fair.

One of the biggest spectacles at the Columbian Exposition was the 250,000 incandescent electrical lights sprinkled all over the fair. For the people who worked for Westinghouse or General Electric Co., light bulbs and electricity were not a new concept. For visitors who traveled from the outlying areas, the concept of a bulb filled with light was beyond their imagination. People like George Busse who traveled from beyond Chicago were still using only kerosene lamps to light their homes. According to some of the newspaper articles written during the fair, there were “electric fountains pointing rainbow sprays at the sky,” and “glittering lamps of many colors sparkling under the clear waters of the lagoon.”

The Columbian Exposition would



World's Art Fair Series, Vol. 1, No. 16, Feb. 22, 1894

Grand Plaza on Chicago Day, Monday, Oct. 9, 1893, marked the 23rd anniversary of the Chicago Fire and was celebrated by approximately 900,000 people. The entire Plaza and all of the buildings of the fair were “engorged with humanity.” George Busse’s ticket was dated Oct. 9, 1893.

have made a large impression on someone like George Busse. In addition to his impressionable age, he was a farmer at that time. The typical life of a farmer involved running the farm and household Monday through Saturday. There wasn’t usually time for leisure activities. The World’s Fair was such a huge deal, that even farmers

from the outlying areas went to see the spectacle. After spending a day in the shadow of a giant Ferris wheel, electric fountains and a moving sidewalk, is it any wonder that a few years later George’s brother was able to lure him away from the farm to the comparative excitement of a fledgling Mount Prospect?

FIRE DESTROYS PART OF HISTORIC BUSSE BUILDING



The Main Street Busse Building circa 1930s. The left end of the building is the original structure that appears in the well-known photo of Santa and the children of Mount Prospect, taken around 1923.

One of Mount Prospect’s most historic buildings was severely damaged in a fire during the early morning hours of Feb. 9.

The Busse Building began as a one-story dry goods store that was built in 1897 by William Busse, with a two-story addition made circa 1913. In 1926, William Busse began the construction of the Busse Building. Later he decided to connect the Busse Building with his dry goods store, so he built a third section to connect them.

Sakura Japanese Restaurant occupied the same storefront that previously housed the William Busse Jr. General Store, then Meeske’s Market and finally, the Otto H. Landeck Men’s Shop. The Chamber of Commerce and Picket Fence Realty were located in spaces once called home by the Post Office and National Tea Co. The Central Continental Bakery occupied the building built to house an expanded Meeske’s Market around 1950.



MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER

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AN EVENING AT THE COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION



Reservations are necessary, and guests will be accommodated on a first-come, first-served basis. **No tickets will be sold at the door.**

For more information:

Call the Mount Prospect Historical Society, 847-392-9006.

Or go to www.mtphist.org/category/events/.

The 1893 Columbian Exposition still stands as one of Chicago's greatest moments in history.

Held only 22 years after a massive fire destroyed most of the city, it marked the high point of The Gilded Age of rapid industrial growth and immigration.

To commemorate this epic event, the Mount Prospect Historical Society will present "An Evening at Chicago's 1893 Columbian Exposition" at Rob Roy Country Club on Saturday, April 5, 2014, from 6 to 11 p.m. As in years past, patrons will choose from two meal options: The \$25 "Midway Meal" and the \$75 "Pavilion Dining."

The Midway Meal includes Vienna Beef Hot Dogs, which were actually introduced at the Fair, and all the trimmings, along with other treats like macaroni and cheese, vegetable soup and sweet pickle cucumber salad. The Pavilion Dining menu, prepared by Chef Dave Esau of Dave's Specialty Foods, includes turkey croquettes and crab bisque soup, along with historically appropriate side dishes.

Party-goers will be able to chat with the Fair's master builder, "Daniel Burnham," and after the meal, he will tell the story of the building of the World's Columbian Exposition, from the first shovelful of earth to the world's largest enclosed building. The evening will be rounded out by Columbian Exposition trivia and a cash bar.