

# MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KEEPING HOMETOWN MEMORIES ALIVE

# MUSEUM JOURNAL

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## MATERNITY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Home deliveries were the norm in Lena Friedrichs' day. The nearest hospitals to Mount Prospect were located in Elgin, Evanston and Elmhurst. Lena's physician, Dr. Elfelt, a family doctor who lived in Arlington Heights, cared for families in both that village and Mount Prospect. At that time there were no family practice doctors residing in Mount Prospect.

Following the birth of her daughter in 1911, Lena was ordered to spend 10 days in bed. During that period, it was customary for family members or friends to live-in and to help nurse the new mother back to health, look after the baby and to maintain the household.

Victorian-era advice-books advocated this type of care.

Lena's sister, Ida Krumwiede, came to stay and carry out these duties.

She was the ideal choice because she was also a trained nurse.

Mother and baby Bessie were to remain home and were not allowed to leave the house until the baby was six-weeks-old.

In Bessie's family there was a belief (an old German custom) that the baby was not allowed to go out until baptized. Bessie was baptized at home, following this custom, or simply because the church was considered too far away for the baby to travel. The pressed-glass bowl currently in the parlor of the Dietrich Friedrichs House was used for this baptism.

As it was for most families, baptism was the baby's first big social event - accompanied by a special church service and special clothing. How the baby looked was all important!



*Bessie at six months old, c. 1911.*

Women made elaborate hand-sewn and lace-inserted christening gowns for this special event. Worn by both boys and girls, these long dresses extended beyond the baby's feet were popular and were believed to prevent drafts. Christening gowns, like wedding gowns, often become heirlooms. There is a large picture above the piano in the Dietrich Friedrichs House of six-month-old Bessie in a long white dress. Although it is not her baptism dress, it is similar to what baptism gowns looked like.

Naming the baby was also very important and usually officially done at the christening. Perhaps another old German tradition, it was customary to add the names of sponsors, or godparents, to the names of the baby. For example, Bessie's father had four sponsors, two of whom were named "William," and therefore, it had become somewhat of a family joke

because he had two middle names the same. In fact, one of these "Williams" was none other than William Busse!

Somehow, Bessie was spared this tradition and her mother's first name became her middle name.

Bessie often complained about her first name, because other children would tease her by saying that only cows were named "Bessie." Her mother's loving reply to her frustrations

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*Lindsay Rice  
Executive Director*

For those of you who read our last issue, you may have noticed that the last half of the last sentence in the first article ended abruptly. Sorry about that!

## FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

This is what it was meant to say:

“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 the surrounding suburbs.”

Now back to our regular programming...

Spring 2018 concludes the first full season of Central School Living History field trips.

Approximately **346** students visited Central School between October 2017 and May 2018. We are happy to provide the community with this rich historical experience. It

has been wonderful to have the museum campus so full of life!

We have several summer programs for children in 2018, including our ever popular “Life as a Prairie Girl.” Please be sure to check out page 4 of this newsletter for more details on upcoming events.

Finishing touches have been completed in the schoolhouse, including recognition of our many generous donors.

To “show off” the finished schoolhouse, we will be hosting a dedication and open house on Saturday, June 23 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

We hope to see you there!



## MARY HAGAN WAJER – 1944-2018

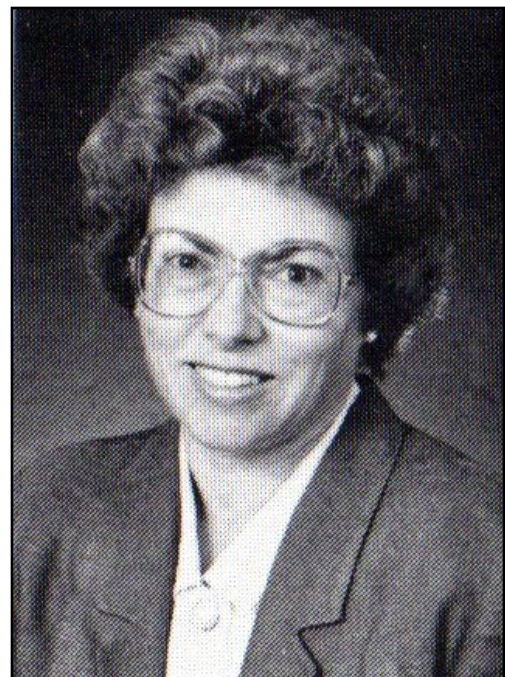
We are very sad to report the death of Mary Hagan Wajer on April 22 at the age of 73.

Mary was a founding member of the Historical Society, working with Society pioneers like Dolores Haugh, Gertrude Francek, Edith Freund, Meta Bittner, Jack Weber and Doris Weber Norris. She served as its president in 1978.

Later, Dolores Haugh connected her with Daily Herald reporter Jean Murphy and the two co-wrote “Mount Prospect: Where Town and Country Met” in 1992 to help celebrate the Village’s 75th anniversary. Mary handled the majority of the research while Jean did the writing.

Born and raised in Des Plaines, Mary earned her undergraduate degree in history at Loyola University and her master’s degree at Western Illinois University. Her thesis was on the history of Elk Grove Township. She later worked at the Des Plaines Library and the Indian Trails Library.

Mary was married to Ronald Wajer for 48 years and was the mother of Mike and the late Cathy Wajer.



(Continued from page 1)

would always be, “All pets are named Bessie,” and this seemed to make her feel better.

There are many artifacts at the Dietrich Friedrichs House that are reminders of when there was a baby in the home. Bessie's silver baby cup and cutlery set are but two examples. These may actually have been gifts, since silver mugs, pencils, spoons, and coral teething rings were popular to give during this period.

On your next visit make certain the second floor nursery is not overlooked.



Lena and Bessie, c. 1911.



Bessie, c. 1911.

### FLORIOGRAPHY AND “THE MOUNT PROSPECT GARDEN”

The Language of Flowers, also known as “floriography,” soared in Victorian England and the United States during the 19th century. Gifts of blooms, plants and specific floral arrangements were used to send a coded message to the recipient, allowing the sender to express feelings which could not be spoken aloud in Victorian society. Victorians often exchanged small “talking bouquets”, called nosegays or tussie-mussies, which could be worn or carried as a fashion accessory.

If planting zones were of no consequence and we could plant anything, anywhere, this is what a garden representing Mount Prospect would look like:



Flower/ Plant	Meaning	Why it represents Mount Prospect
American Starwort <sup>1</sup>	Welcome To A Stranger	Between the Village and all the community organizations, newcomers to Mount Prospect are always welcomed with open arms.
Arborvitae <sup>2</sup> Oak-Leaved Geranium <sup>3</sup> Yellow Rose <sup>4</sup>	Unchanging Friendship, True Friendship	As the Village motto goes, “Where Friendliness is a Way of Life.”
Beech Tree <sup>5</sup>	Prosperity	Mount Prospect was originally advertised to early settlers as a land of great prospects and prosperity.
Bee Orchid <sup>6</sup> Red Clover <sup>7</sup>	Industry	Since before its incorporation, Mount Prospect has always been an industrious community, taking pride in both local and outside business.
White Periwinkle <sup>8</sup>	Pleasure of Memory	The Village and residents of Mount Prospect have always taken a pride in their town’s rich history. Sharing memories, stories and histories, the community as a whole takes great pleasure in remembrance.
Scotch Fir <sup>9</sup>	Elevation	With its elevation at 665 ft, Mount Prospect remains the highest point in Cook County. This is where “Mount” in our Village’s name comes from.
Stock <sup>10</sup>	Lasting Beauty	From our magnificent trees to our gardens throughout the town, Mount Prospect always boasts lasting beauty.
Red Morning Glory <sup>11</sup>	Attachment	Even when residents move away from Mount Prospect, they always return to visit their hometown. There is something special about Mount Prospect that people hold dear.





## MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## SUMMER EVENTS!

### MOUNT PROSPECT STORIES

#### **The Growth of Mount Prospect from 1960 to the Millennium**

Thursday, June 13  
7 p.m.

Mount Prospect Public Library  
10 S. Emerson St.



### LIFE AS A PRAIRIE GIRL - Thursday, July 19

#### **Life as a Prairie Girl** (morning session)

For girls entering 2nd through 5th Grade  
Activities: corn husk dolls, chores, games and gardening

Thursday, July 19  
9:30-11:30 a.m.

Cost is \$25 per child\*

Mount Prospect Historical Society  
101 S. Maple St.



#### **Life as a Prairie Girl** (afternoon session)

For girls entering 2nd through 5th Grade  
Activities: sewing, paper doll chains, dessert making, flower planting

Thursday, July 19  
1:30-3:30 p.m.

Cost is \$25 per child\*

Mount Prospect Historical Society  
101 S. Maple St.



### HISTORY IS FUN! - Thursday, July 26

#### **The Science of History!** (morning session)

For boys and girls entering 3rd through 5th grade  
Activity: Building Lincoln Log cabins using paper towel rolls  
Thursday, July 26

9:30-11:30 a.m.

Cost is \$25 per child\*

Mount Prospect Historical Society  
101 S. Maple St.



#### **Living the Revolution: A Patriotic Experience** (afternoon session)

For boys and girls entering 3rd through 5th Grade  
Activity: Create your own secret code or use invisible ink to send secret messages as they did during the Revolutionary War. Sample 18th century food and drink.

Thursday, July 26  
1:30-3:30 p.m.

Cost is \$25 per child\*

Mount Prospect Historical Society  
101 S. Maple St.



*\* (\$20 per session if you register for both morning and afternoon sessions)*

*For more information visit [www.mtphist.org](http://www.mtphist.org) or contact the Historical Society, 847/392-9006.*