

# MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KEEPING HOMETOWN MEMORIES ALIVE

## MUSEUM



## JOURNAL

VOLUME XV, ISSUE 1

SPRING 2024

### DEDICATED TO FASHION: THE STORY OF DORIS KIRKEBY FASHIONS AND JEWELRY

BY EMILY DATTILO

When Doris and David Kirkeby, along with daughter Carol and family cat Pretty Boy, arrived in Mount Prospect in 1948, there weren't many places in town to shop for a new, ready-to-wear outfit. They could purchase items at the William F. Kenning Dry Goods Store (105 S. Main Street), but they would have to drive to other towns for more variety, like the Emerald Shop in Arlington Heights.

Fortunately for the Kirkeby family, they arrived in Mount Prospect just as its commercial landscape was beginning to grow. The 1950s brought more residents to town and, as a result, more commercial spaces and business opportunities. Harry Grimm opened James Marietta Fashions and Jewelry in 1956, joining many other new business owners that decade. This shop was located at 133 W. Prospect Avenue, a block away from the new Mount Prospect Park and Shop. Only a year after James Marietta opened, Doris Kirkeby became a partner. By that fall she was sole owner of the shop, which she renamed Doris Kirkeby Fashions and Jewelry. Doris'

husband, David, is later listed as a co-owner too.

Doris was very active in the community. Newspaper articles show that she frequently hosted and participated in fashion shows arranged by local Woman's Club chapters. Many of these events also served as fundraisers for organizations like Northwest Community Hospital and the Wheeling Braille School.

Doris also made an effort to connect with local teens by establishing the Kirkeby High School Fashion Board in 1959. This program gave teenage girls an opportunity to chime in on the latest fashions appearing in the shop. An August 1959 *Arlington Heights Herald* article notes that this board was the first of its kind in the suburbs. In this instance, Doris was actually ahead of the fashion industry as a whole by getting teens involved in dictating local fashion trends. The "youthquake" of the next decade transformed popular culture as young people's clothing choices, not adults' choices, increasingly inspired fashion designers.

Business boomed for Doris Kirkeby Fashions and Jewelry, and in 1960 the store moved most of their operations to the corner of Main Street and W. Busse Avenue, formerly occupied by Mount Prospect State Bank. The junior shop stayed in their previous location at 143 W. Prospect Avenue.

One of the new storefront's highlights was the "After Five Room," which sold high-end fashions in what was originally the bank's bookkeeping department. An August 1960 *Daily Herald* article admires how the mirrored wall and "comfortable 18th-century furniture" completely transformed the office into an elegant space to shop.

The "After Five Room" was likely modeled on similar rooms appearing in Chicago department stores where ladies could find high-fashion clothes



Dress and belt from Doris Kirkeby Fashions and Jewelry, c.1960s

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Advertisement in the May 2, 1965 issue of the Chicago Tribune

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR

It takes a team of volunteers to run a historical society, and the Mount Prospect Historical Society is no exception! We rely on volunteers to help with all aspects of running the Historical Society, from facilitating programs and events to long-term projects to weekly tasks. Our organization is so lucky to have an amazingly talented and dedicated team of volunteers.

If you've visited the Dietrich Friedrichs House Museum, then you've likely met one of our volunteer tour guides. This group of volunteers welcomes visitors of all ages to the museum and introduces them to life in Mount Prospect in the early 1900s through the home of the Friedrichs family. These guides are not just giving tours; they're having conversations about history and helping visitors connect with Mount Prospect's past.

Throughout the year we welcome students from local schools to Central School for Living History Experiences. Students travel

back in time to attend a school day in 1896, with a volunteer Schoolmarm or Schoolmaster teaching the day's lessons. They bring history to life for these students, and it's wonderful to see children get excited about history because of their efforts.

The history fun continues into the summer with our annual youth programs, like History Camp and Prairie Kids I & II. Once again volunteers share their time to help bring history to life for the historians-in-training through history-themed crafts and activities. Because we have a small staff at MPHS, it would not be possible to offer these programs without the help of volunteers.

Collection volunteers primarily work with the objects, photos, and documents in the MPHS collection. From processing new artifact donations to digitizing slides, this group of volunteers is always busy behind the scenes. Although visitors rarely see this group of volunteers, the results of their

work are very visible. Most of the photos, documents, and photographed objects you've seen in Historical Society newsletters, on display, or in social media posts are the result of volunteers processing the items long before they are seen by the public.

If you enjoy local history and want to be part of sharing and preserving Mount Prospect's history, then we'd love to have you join us! Fill out the volunteer application at [www.mtphist.org/volunteer](http://www.mtphist.org/volunteer) to get started. Then, Office Manager Amanda Marcus or I will contact you with more details about beginning as a volunteer. I look forward to meeting new volunteers this year!



**Emily Dattilo**

## FROM THE COLLECTION



*Newspaper advertisement for Arlington Club Beverage Company*

Arlington Club Beverage Company made Mount Prospect history in 1964 when they moved to 1326 W. Central Road, a building later dubbed The Pop Shop. This bottle of sparkling water was produced and sold at this facility sometime after it opened. At the time Arlington Club Beverage Company was one of several businesses along this stretch of West Central Road. The Charles Bruning Company, Hines Lumber, and Illinois Range Company were neighbors, and what is now the adjacent Melas Park was used by the Chicago Water Reclamation District.

Before Arlington Club Beverage Company moved to Mount Prospect, they spent almost 100 years in Arlington Heights. Half-brothers Louis H. Sass and Frederick W. Müller founded Sass and Brother in 1872 and began bottling different flavors of soda pop at 116 S. Dunton Avenue. Within a year, Frederick bought out Louis' share of the company.



The Müller family delivered cases of pop all over the Northwest Suburbs from their bottling plants, which eventually moved to the corner of Vail and Fremont Streets. Today their two bottling plants on this corner are part of the Arlington Heights Historical Museum. Frederick's sons, William and Henry, began managing the business when Frederick retired in 1923 and that year the brothers changed the name to Arlington Club Beverage Company.

Arlington Heights zoning laws changed in 1964 and that prompted the move to Mount Prospect. After almost 30 years in Mount Prospect, Arlington Club Beverage Company declared bankruptcy and closed the Pop Shop. The building was purchased by the Mt. Prospect Park District and opened in 1997 as The Art Studio at Melas Park.

*Thank you to the Arlington Heights Historical Museum for the background information on the Arlington Club Beverage Company.*

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for special occasions. In fact, Marshall Field and Company's room was also named the "After Five Shop." Through this addition Doris' "After Five Room" brought a little downtown luxury to the suburbs.

Although Doris had seen plenty of success since opening, the store closed in August 1965. David Kirkeby admitted in a *Daily Herald* article that month that "the cost of doing business in this large shop is not commensurate with the volume secured." In other words, they needed to downsize. Earlier newspaper accounts record that the building's basement flooded in May of that year. Even though the flood was not included in the official statements about the closing, those damages certainly would have added financial strain to the business. David said that they hoped to reopen in a smaller building within the next couple of months, but there is no record of that ever happening. Although the doors of Doris Kirkeby Fashion and Jewelry never reopened, Doris earned her place among notable Mount Prospect businesswomen for supporting her community and keeping local ladies looking their best.

*Thank you to Anne Shaughnessy, Local History and Genealogy Librarian at the Mount Prospect Public Library, for her help in uncovering Doris Kirkeby's story.*

*If you're interested in learning more about mid-century fashion in Mount Prospect, join Emily Dattilo at the next Mount Prospect Stories presentation on March 21st at 7pm for "Dressing for a New Era: Shopping for Clothes in Post-War Mount Prospect." This in-person event will be held at the Mount Prospect Library. For more information and to register, visit [www.mpppl.org](http://www.mpppl.org).*

## **MONTHLY 'BESSIE'S WORKBASKET' CRAFT CLASSES FOR ADULTS**

Have you ever seen a beautiful, unique craft or piece of needlework and wondered how you could ever learn to make something like that?

For the past two years Mount Prospect Historical Society volunteers Martha Nelson and Nancy Corry have been teaching crafts from around the world once a month to enthusiastic adult students and have developed quite a following. In fact, they are now offering their classes both in the morning, from 10 a.m. to noon, and in the evening, from 7 to 9 p.m., on the second Wednesday of each month in Central School, 103 S. Maple St., Mount Prospect.

Participants have created fleece blankets for Project Linus, a non-profit organization that provides handmade blankets to children who are seriously ill, traumatized or otherwise in need; woven rugs, trivets and small baskets for themselves from old t-shirts; made coasters using the Japanese sashiko stitchery technique; and much more.



*Instructor Nancy Corry with blankets the crafters made for Project Linus*

All experience levels are welcome to attend and try each month's spotlight project for \$10. Advance registration is recommended.

For instance, on February 14 they learned to "Knit Like a Viking." Trichinopoly or Viking knitting makes a filigree cord out of metal! Early examples of this ancient technique were found in 8th-century Scandinavian burial sites, and the design is still fashionable today. They will make a bracelet using simple tools and wire.

In March, the group will be making wool hook "mug rugs" (like coasters). In the 19th century, women used every bit of fabric to make something useful. They made quilts, rugs for the floor and hangings for the walls. Learn how to take recycled wool strips and make something useful!

Then, on April 10 they will be making a bookmark using a bargello pattern. Bargello is a type of needlepoint embroidery consisting of upright flat stitches laid in a mathematical pattern to create motifs. The name originates from a series of chairs found in the Bargello Palace in Florence that have a "flame stitch" pattern.

Traditionally, Bargello was stitched in wool on canvas. Embroidery done this way is remarkably durable. It is well suited for use on pillows, upholstery and even carpets, but not for clothing. In most traditional pieces, all stitches are vertical with stitches going over two or more threads. Traditional designs are very colorful, and use many hues of one color, which produces intricate shading effects. The patterns are naturally geometric.

Punch needle coasters, candlewicking, ribbon embroidery, quilling and Temari balls are also in the plans.

To peruse the craft offerings and register, visit [www.mtphist.org/bessies-workbasket](http://www.mtphist.org/bessies-workbasket). Registration is limited.





## MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Second Sundays at the Society**

11:30am — 1:30pm

Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.) and the Dietrich Friedrichs House (101 S. Maple St.) will be open for tours.

Fee: Free!

**April 14:** Pinecone Bird Feeders

**May 12:** Mother's Day Crafts

**June 9:** Old-Fashioned Games

### **Bessie's Workbasket**

10:00am — 12:00pm & 7:00pm — 9:00pm

Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.)

Fee: \$10 donation, registration required

All experience levels are welcome.

**March 13:** Wool Hook Mug Rugs

**April 10:** Bargello Embroidery

### **Evening Creations at MPHS**

6:30pm—8:30pm

Location: Dolores Haugh Education Center (behind 101 S. Maple St.)

Fee: \$60, registration required

**May 28 & May 30:** All Summer Long

Container Flower Garden

Instructor: Jill Tumberger

### **MPHS Book Club—Rescheduled**

7:00pm—8:00pm

Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.)

Fee: \$5 donation

**May 16:** Chat about *Mount Prospect Historic Sites* with author and MPHS Director Emily Dattilo

### **Afternoon Tea**

1:00pm—2:30pm

Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.)

Fee: \$25, registration required

**June 1:** Lady Churchill: On Being Winston's Mother

### **Youth Programs**

*History Camp*

9:00am—12:00pm

Location: Mount Prospect Historical Society campus

Fee: \$100, registration required

**June 10-14:** Session 1

**July 8-12:** Session 2

### **Youth Programs—Save the Date!**

**July 18:** Prairie Kids I & II

**July 25:** Old Fashioned Game Day

**July 25:** If You Lived During the Olympics

For more information, visit our website at [www.mtphist.org](http://www.mtphist.org) or call us at (847) 392-9006.

