

THE WHISTLESTOP



Villa Park Historical Society & Museum Newsletter – SPRING 2015

220 S. Villa Avenue, Villa Park IL 60181 Phone: 630-941-0223 Website: www.vphistoricalsociety.com

NEW EXHIBITS

A Dollhouse to Cherish

An extraordinary lovingly furnished two story Colonial style dollhouse is the museum's main exhibit.

Pat Carlson, an avid hobbyist, has been passionately collecting the proper scale items for her dollhouse for many years. The gazebo and outside garden are very authentic. Be sure to look at the miniature portraits as they are actually her family photos.

Antique Miniature Pinball Machines

Three very rare miniature antique pinball machines dating from the 1930's are on display. Pinball machines provided great entertainment during the 1930's as they do today.



Promotional 1932 Bally Ad.



Pinball Ad Catalog from 1936.

Men's Hats

In the 1920's, men always wore a hat...

A display was created from the museum collection of men's hats. Included are a silk top hat, straw boaters, and fedoras.



Remnants from the Biermann Farmhouse

The Biermann Farmhouse c.1864 was demolished in 2014. The property owner uncovered a treasure of artifacts consisting of over 100 old bottles, tins and other goodies. Many antique bottles dated back to the late 1880's. Researching bottle history became very interesting. One bottle was from Dr. Oleson from Lombard and dates to the 1870's.



Ladies Housedresses

The museum has a collection of wearables that were donated by women who lived in Villa Park. Our mannequins are wearing several 1930 housedresses.

Women in this era rarely wore slacks and often made their own dresses as they were also great homemakers and very frugal.

Dresses were often purchased from the catalog or locally at small department stores.



Photographer unknown.



Dress patterns.

Men's Garden Club of Villa Park 79th Anniversary

Al Dekker, of the MGCVP, created our Museum's front window display and a special exhibit in the case using the club's artifacts.

The club was formed in 1936 and boasted over 400 members at one time. It was opened to women in the 1990's.

Their mission is to foster gardening and fellowship for men and women

Each year they host a fantastic Garden Walk so be sure to watch out for it.

VPHS Board congratulates them on this very significant celebration.

Visit: www.homegardening.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Over the winter, the volunteer board has been preparing new exhibits for our spring opening, addressing information requests, archiving history and attending to general housekeeping tasks.

The Board would like to thank **Robert Dollinger** for doing an excellent job preparing the obituary books over the past few years. We are now looking for a volunteer to take over this responsibility.

Bonnie Yarke has joined the VPHS Board and is serving as its Treasurer. She was a founding member of the society and was VPHS's 2nd President in 1979. She participated in the Museum's building's interior restoration.

We are using the museum software PastPerfect to data enter our collection information and have made significant progress in this area. This will enable us to locate our artifacts faster and maintain an accurate inventory.

The Villa/Kenilworth TIF area includes the museum. Future plans may convert our parking lot to a greener environment and includes a change in parking. Additional parking spots should be accommodated. Last year, the "Old Time Villa Avenue" business and building owners have met several times to plan for some 2015 area events.

The Village Park & Recreation conducted two well-attended children events outside our museum.

Many Museum's visitors are railroad buffs and collectors of Ovaltine memorabilia (Captain Midnight and Little Orphan Annie). Our permanent display of these items attract them to our facility.

Our many-changing seasonal front window displays were awesome thanks to Pat Carlson, Gail McGrew and the rest of the board.

I'd like to thank the board, members, volunteers, Village Board & staff, supporters and visitors for your contributions and support. The Board hopes to see you at our upcoming outings and programs.

Sincerely yours,

Carol Marcus

VPHS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- **April 16 (Thursday 6-8 PM) open house at the Museum**
- **April 18 – Museum opens**
- **May 1- The KRDMA Museum PASSPORT program begins.**
- **July 3rd 7:00 – Ice Cream Social**

Museum Hours

- Tuesday-Friday 1:00-5:00 PM
- Saturday-Sunday 10:00 AM-4:00 PM
- **Closed on Mondays**

2015 VPHS BOARD

President & Museum Executive Director,
/ Newsletter / Tours– Carol Marcus
Vice-President / Publicity– Gail McGrew
Treasurer – Bonnie Yarke
Secretary / Gift Shop – Pat Carlson
Building / Railroad– Frank Carlson
Membership – Gail McGrew
Curator / Archives / Computer – Jerry Hughes
Grandma's Attic – Pat Turen
Website – Tom Kopera

Facebook - Kerry Kopera
Obituary Binders – A volunteer is needed
VPHS Museum Greeter/Docent:
Siobhan Gasparotto

GRANDMA'S ATTIC

I would like to thank everyone who has donated to Grandma's Attic during the year, and I hope you will continue to be generous in the coming year. Proceeds help us to be able to operate the museum, change exhibits and front windows, and purchase acid free boxes and folders to store our artifacts.

We have received generous donation of collectible Christmas plates from Joanne Gross Other items have been donated from members, non-members, neighbors and friends of VPHS.

If you are cleaning out your house or having a garage sale, please remember the Museum. We are looking for white elephant items, knickknacks, glasses, dishes, jewelry, books and greeting cards. **We do not accept:** clothing, computer or school books, encyclopedia sets, National Geographic magazines, magazines, records, cassette tapes and large items. **All items donated are Tax Deductible.**

Upon occasion, some donated items will be selected for use for the museum's educational displays and/or permanent collection. Pat Turen

ARTIFACT/EDUCATIONAL/ ADVERTISING DONATIONS

In 2015, the Museum has received many donated items for our collection including educational and advertising items. **The VPHS board appreciates your contribution and thoughtfulness.**

Partial donor list: Caron & Bruce Brennan, Ziedler family, Bill Schultz, Dave Brown, Joanne Gross, Grace Lutheran Church, Village of Villa Park, Frank Carlson, Hughes family.

Sampling of items donated: Old Villa Park photos, Ovaltine, scout uniforms, Biermann house remnants, old kitchen items, fur jacket, fishing collection & handmade tackle box, old toys, wooden cars, matchbook ad covers, old picture frames, canning book, framed sampler, 1st Edition envelopes, VFW Women's Auxiliary uniform, Zenger wall clock, old V.P. maps, and a Hallicrafters radio receiver.

What do we do with the donations? All items will be researched, tagged, archived, repaired, and stored for future use.

VPHS PARTICIPATES in the

Passport to
Adventure



A Guide to the Museums and
Nature Centers in Kane
and DuPage Counties.

KDRMA PASSPORT PROGRAM

Nature, History, and Culture Right Around the Corner! As easy as 1-2-3!

- 1) Each summer from May 1 until Labor Day, pick up a (free!) passport booklet at the VPHS Museum.
- 2) Visit as many sites as you wish - museums, nature centers, and historic sites - described in the booklet. Receive a stamp at each participating site. Some sites are free, some charge a modest entry fee.

3) Return your stamped booklet to VPHS.

PHOTOS – VPHS EVENTS



Girl Scouts Visit the Museum.



Park & Recreation program.



Willowbrook class reunion members.



Holidays in the Air – Pat Carlson; Jerry Hughes

OVALTINE MEMORIES

The **Wander Company**, makers of Ovaltine, had solid roots in the Villa Park Community. Because of their tremendous world-wide growth, its name had many changes over the years, including Ovaltine Food Products, Ovaltine Products, Inc., and Sandoz, USA.

A BRIEF TIMELINE & FACTS:

1914 – 14 acres were purchased by the Wander Company of Switzerland.

1917 – The first factory buildings were built.

1926 – The Wander Company donated property so that the Chicago Great Western Railroad depot in Villa Park could be built.

1928 – A major building expansion was completed.

1928 – Little Orphan Annie Ad Campaign & Radio Show sponsorship started.

- 1924 – 2010 Comic Strip was printed in the Chicago Tribune by creator Harold Gray.
- 1930 – 1942 – Radio shows
- 1932 & 1938 movie films based on comic strip
- Various years - Broadway musicals

1935 – Another large building expansion was completed along the south property.

1938 – Captain Midnight Ad Campaign resulted in a popular radio show

- Radio Shows 1938-1949
- Comic Books 1942-1948
- Television 1954-1958
- Book Captain Midnight Chronicle's 2010
- Internet

- Old Captain Midnight Radio Shows
- Collectibles are highly sought after and can be purchased on EBAY and other websites.

1985 – Sandoz, USA announced that it was moving out of Villa Park to consolidate with their Minneapolis division.

1997 – Original 1917 four-story factory building was severely damaged by fire.

1999 – Lincoln Property Co. purchased the site.

- Most structures were demolished, except for the 1928 & 1935 buildings. These were preserved and were converted to trendy loft apartments.
- New mixed-use construction consisted of combined retail and separate three story high-end apartment buildings.
- This was a large scale redevelopment project of over \$44 million.

2008 – The large smokestack was imploded.

2013 – McCaffery Interests purchased the property and have made many improvements. It is certainly garden-style living with historic charm.



The Villa Avenue entry boasts a new wrought iron sign over the arched gateway to the property. Photo courtesy of McCaffery Interests, Villa Park.

MEMORIBILIA...



Ovaltine Advertisements.

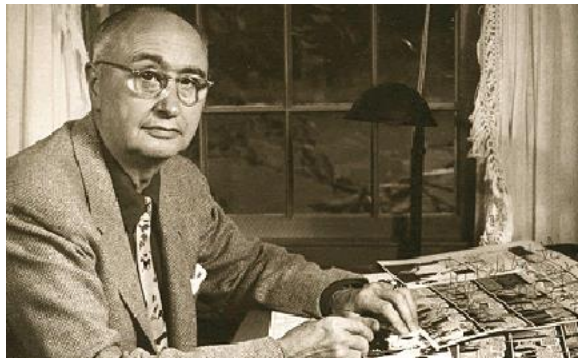


Photo of Orphan Annie creator Harold Gray, Lombard IL, courtesy of the Lombard Historical Society. He was born in 1894 and died in 1968.



Captain Midnight comic books.

CHICAGO, AURORA & ELGIN RAILROAD



Did you know...

On July 3rd, 1957 the Chicago Aurora and Elgin Railroad ceased to exist. Riders had to find their own transportation back home that evening.



Interior of the CAE car 308. Photo courtesy of Frank Hicks.



Chicago Aurora & Elgin Stock Certificate.

VILLA PARK MEMORIES...



The Ardmore Utility Store c 1914 was an early business in town.



The Chicago Great Western Railroad depot in 1933.



This is a photo of the former Trinity Lutheran Church that was located at 305 S. Ardmore Avenue. In 1950's, this property was purchased and became the Villa Park Public Library when Trinity Lutheran built its new church across the street. This building was demolished after the new library was built. Photo courtesy of the Villa Park Public Library.



This is a photo of the former Villa Park Trust and Savings Bank (VPTS) built in 1922 at 207 S. Villa Avenue. In 1964, VPTS erected a new modern building at 10 S. Villa Avenue used a Mies van der Rohe design. BMO Harris Bank now occupies this property.

VPHS is a 501C3 non-profit volunteer organization. VPHS depends on the ongoing support and generosity of its membership, business community and the Village of Villa Park so that we can keep the Historical Museum operating, collect history, maintain its archives, create displays, and provide educational programs.

Newsletter Contributors

Carol Marcus, Jerry Hughes, and Pat Turen have contributed articles, and/or edited this newsletter. Some photos are from the Museum collection, Carol Marcus and as indicated.

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STAMP

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