

Carondelet Historical Society NEWSLETTER

Preserving and Presenting the Heritage of Carondelet

Vol. 47, No. 1

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Winter 2020

Jacoby Art Glass papers given to the Society

From World War II to 1970, the old Southwestern Bell Exchange building at 822 Wilmington Avenue served as the studio of the Jacoby Art Glass Company. Within that building, artists carried on the craft developed during the 13th century of creating stained glass windows. Both American and European-trained craftsmen, working in the building constructed for the River Side phone exchange, adjusted the ancient skills of art glass to enhance the architectural styles coming into vogue in the mid-20th century.

Recently, William Oppliger, whose family was synonymous with Jacoby Art Glass for almost five decades, donated a number of papers, photos, and illustrations from the studio to the Carondelet Historical Society. The collection is of special interest to the Society because not only was the studio located in Carondelet, but it also produced art glass for two area institutions – the Chapel at St. Alexius Hospital on South Broadway and all the stained glass for St. Stephen Protomartyr Church in the Holly Hills neighborhood.

The donated items or ephemera include over a hundred photos documenting the studio's work. There are a half dozen colorized drawings that were produced as proposals for potential customers or patrons. A dozen of the donated artifacts – matted displays showing what proposed windows would be like – are in fragile condition. These feature a colorized version of the windows painted on a transparent material so the effect of light coming through the windows could be recreated for customers.

Promotional brochures from different eras, articles about the studio, personal histories, a hun-



The former telephone exchange building was converted into the art glass studio in 1945. Today, architects Susan Pruchnicki and Tom Peterson are renovating the building as a combined home and architectural studio.

dred identified slides of their windows, and lists of the studio's works found in the collection of ephemera provide valuable information about the significant contributions to local architecture made by Jacoby Art Glass. Though the lists of the studio's works are incomplete, and some of the projects listed were repairs done to other studios' works, they still provide documentation of a number of their projects. Accounts in the collection estimate that the studio had completed 10,000 art glass projects throughout the United States.

These documents refer to the founding of the Jacoby-Spies Mfg. Company on the riverfront in 1896. G.A. Spies, was described as the "Artist-Manager," and Herman Jacoby appears to have been in management and sales. According to William Oppliger, Herman Jacoby was, "the son of Ludwig S. Jacoby, who founded the first German Methodist Church west of the Mississippi River in 1841,..."

The company was incorporated in 1907 as the Jacoby Art Glass Company, headed by Herman Jacoby and *(Continued on Page 7)*

Historical Society Board of Directors

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Upcoming Events

Saturday, February 15
1:00 p.m.

**St. Louis Browns Historical Society
and Fan Club**
Round Table

Sunday, March 22
1:30 p.m.

Richard Buthod
**Researcher with the Archives and
Office of the Recorder of Deeds**
will discuss historical documents
maintained by the Recorder of Deeds
of the City of St. Louis.

Sports Author **Dan O'Neil** and
Archaeologist **Terry Norris** will be
presenting programs at the Society later this
spring. The dates will be announced on the Soci-
ety's website and members will receive notices.

Change of Address Requested

If you have moved, please notify the Society of
your new address. In that way you can save the
Society volunteers hours and postage.

Carondelet Historical Society

Membership Application

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Members enjoy these free benefits:

- Unlimited museum visits & tours
- Unlimited use of research library
- Speakers, presentations & social events
- 20% discount on books & gift items
- Newsletter - January, May & September
- Special gift

Contact us about volunteer opportunities or about
making a gift of stock or making a bequest through
your estate plan

Website: www.carondelethistory.org
Email: carondelethistoricalsociety@yahoo.com

Mail to: **Carondelet Historical Society**
6303 Michigan Ave.
St. Louis, MO 63111

Membership Levels

___ Susan Blow, Educator \$200
___ James Eads, Engineer \$150
___ Fred Bouchein Library \$100
___ Victor Kunz, Artist \$75
___ Business \$50
___ Family \$30
___ Individual \$20
___ Life Member Support \$ _____

We accept major Credit Cards, Checks, PayPal. All membership levels are tax deductible

Historical Society Website

The Carondelet Historical Society is introducing its new website, www.carondelethistory.org, designed by Katie McLaughlin of Locality Studio. This website will enable the Society to connect with targeted audiences and interest groups around the globe. It will be a vehicle for the Society to reach people interested in early childhood education, people who have roots in Carondelet but live in other parts of the nation, or historians focused on the role the iron clads played in the western theater of the Civil War.

Peres School on the “Learn More” page. That page introduces newcomers to the organization of the Historical Society, the history of Carondelet, of the Des Peres School and of Susan Blow.

Other pages on the website provide contact and tour information, along with enabling people to make donations or join the Society through the internet.

Katie McLaughlin

Katie McLaughlin of Locality Studio designed the new website for the Carondelet Historical Society. A born and bred St. Louisan, McLaughlin was raised in South County and earned her undergraduate degree in Urban Affairs at St. Louis University. After receiving a Masters in City Planning at the University of Pennsylvania and working for a consulting firm in Chicago, McLaughlin returned to her home town.

McLaughlin has committed herself to St. Louis, buying her dream city home in the Princeton Heights neighborhood of South St. Louis and starting her own consulting firm that focuses on providing planning and design services for neighborhoods, small municipalities, and non-profits like the Carondelet Historical Society. She operates Locality Studio out of the Nebula co-working space in the vibrant Cherokee Street business district in South City.



Katie McLaughlin, principal of Locality Studio, created Carondelet Historical Society’s new website, www.carondelethistory.org.

The home page of the eight page site is enticing – with revolving photos of the restored facade of the Historical Society, Susan Blow’s Kindergarten Classroom, the Wall of Honor, the recreated neighborhood market, the display of antique dolls, the model of the Iron Clad Carondelet, and the model railroad in the Carondelet Memories Room.

The Library and Archives and the Cleveland High School Room are featured on the Exhibits page. A 19th century photo shows school children on the steps and brick sidewalk of the Des

In Memory of Dave Ditch

Member and volunteer Dave Ditch passed away on November 1, 2019. Dave used his skills to enhance and redesign many of the exhibits in the Carondelet Historical Society.

He used his extensive knowledge of antique dolls and antique toys to identify artifacts and develop exhibits for the Carondelet Memories Room. He created period holiday decorations for exhibits throughout the Society. He was always delighted to share his talents, showing other volunteers how to display artifacts so that they better tell a story.

Clues Found About Carondelet's Stone Houses



This photo taken by Carondelet Historical Society charter member Donald Dates in 1945 shows the Otzenberger House in pristine condition. The raised ground floor with a second floor gallery is typical of the French or Alsatian style of building.

German-built stone cottages from the mid-19th century have given the architectural landscape of Carondelet a unique character. Though many have been lost through the decades to industrial expansion and to highway construction, the remaining stone buildings form a significant feature of the local architectural heritage.

An obituary titled “Old Resident Dead,” published in the Carondelet News on January 28, 1905, provides clues about at least some of these distinctive homes. The article chronicles the life of Mrs. Katherine Bergfeld who died at her home at 7818 Vulcan Street (razed). The obituary recounted that 90 year-old Mrs. Bergfeld had arrived in Carondelet, with her husband George Bergfeld, fifty years earlier (1855). According to the obituary, he was a stone mason. The article noted that when they arrived here, “the building in Carondelet was done with stone or logs.” The article credited George Bergfeld with building, “nearly all the stone dwellings which are still standing in this end of the city.”

The article states, “He resided on Vulcan street, and as he accumulated property he erected stone dwellings on the ground, most of which are in the neighborhood of Vulcan and Courtois street.”

Some of the remaining stone houses in Caron-

delet have been documented or are identified with specific families, but until this article was found, the name George Bergfeld has not appeared in references to any of these homes.

The Carondelet census taken in 1857-1858 confirms that George Bergfeld was a 45 year-old immigrant from Germany residing in Carondelet. Living with George and his 45 year-old German wife were their three sons – 18 year-old William, 14 year-old George and 12 year-old Charles. They lived in the southern part of Carondelet, the area developing as a German village. George was described as a “teamster.” Later city directories list him as a stone mason, suggesting he learned the trade of masonry here, in Carondelet. Eventually, two of their sons also became stone masons, according to city directories.

Though the obituary does not list specific buildings crafted by Bergfeld, the obituary and directories provide evidence that these stone masons added to Carondelet’s built environment.

The obituary for Katherine Bergfeld was found in the microfilm records held in the Carondelet Historical Society Library. The library’s microfilm records include copies of the Carondelet New Era, published 1859-1860, the St. Louis and Carondelet Progress published 1898-1900, the Carondelet News

published 1903-1935, the Naborhood Link News from 1930-1992, and The Bugle from 1945-1994. The newspapers are a remarkable source for Carondelet social, business, and even architectural history. The Society's microfilm section also includes the Carondelet census of 1857-58 and city directories dating back to 1872.

The library is available to researchers during the Society's regular hours. Researchers are welcome, and encouraged to call in advance, 314-481-6303.



Donald Dates photographed the Steins Street stone row houses as they appeared in 1945.

Documented Stone Dwellings

The following stone dwellings of Carondelet were documented by Mimi Stiritz during the late 1970's.

The best known of the stone houses are the Steins Street rowhouses at the southwest corner of Pennsylvania. Originally a four-house row, they were built about 1851 as rental property for Downtown beer garden proprietor Ignatz Uhrig.

Early German immigrant Jacob Steins built his own large stone home in 1843 at 7600 Reilly Avenue. This immigrant from Cologne was originally a glazier. He became an informal immigrant agent and converted part of his home into a tavern in 1852, a gathering place for the growing German population.

A stonemason from the Duchy of Baden, Charles Schlichtig, purchased the land to build his stone house at 8402 Vulcan Avenue in 1851. His large home is two and one-half stories. At one time a row with a small stone cottage, a small brick home and a two story stone home adjoined Schlichtig's own home.

Stone mason and quarry owner Henry

Zeiss built the small stone cottages at 7707-7713 Vulcan in the 1850's.

Joseph Otzenberger with his wife Mary moved into their stone house at 7827 Reilly by 1858. Evidence suggests that Otzenberger was from the province of Alsace bordering Germany and France.

A grouping of stone buildings on Steins at Water Street, including Tim and Marcia Dorsey's restored stone house at 124 East Steins, appear related to mason John Bohrer. (Since Marcia Dorsey's grandparents once called the small, antebellum house their home, they have named it, "Mio Nonni's Casa," Italian for my grandmother's house.) An immigrant, Bohrer was sometimes identified as from France and other times from Germany. He owned the corner parcel of the block, a parcel stretching one hundred and forty feet along Steins and one hundred feet along Water.

A 36-year-old laborer from Bavaria, Anton Schmitt built the stone house that dates to 1859 and is located in South St. Louis Square Park. (The house was moved to the park from its original site on Alaska Avenue near the River Des Peres in 1992.)

Other significant stone dwellings still stand on Vulcan, Pennsylvania and Courtois streets. Evidence suggests more stone cottages still exist, their thick stone walls hidden behind layers of stucco. At one time, it was estimated that 200 stone houses were in Carondelet. The Society's fire insurance map from 1896 indicates there were at least 45 stone dwellings in Carondelet at that time.



This handsome, two-story stone house on Courtois Street faces South St. Louis Square Park.

Happenings...

Archivists Christina Miller and Kelsey Berryhill presented two days of seminars at the Carondelet Historical Society concerning records available through the Missouri State Archives. The legislature created the archives in 1965 to serve as the repository for state records of permanent historical value. Operated under the auspices of the Missouri Secretary of State, the State Archives include records that date to 1770.

Though the presentations were focused on genealogical research subjects, they were valuable to any historical researcher. Thirty-six society members and guests attended the seminars.

Ken Bolte cleaned and repaired some of the delicate artifacts in the collection of the Jacoby Art Glass Studio and has exhibited them in the Society's ground floor. Bolte has also been creating displays of the Society's many historic maps of the Carondelet area. This will make the maps more accessible to researchers. His granddaughter, Grace Neiger, has helped with both these tasks.

A fifth grader at Dressel School in the Lindbergh School District, Grace is helping at the Society as part of her commitment to community service.

John Remelius has reproduced the dozens of pamphlets compiled by the society on various subjects in Carondelet history. The pamphlets feature transcriptions of old newspaper articles that were found by JR Remelius and maps and photos that were compiled by the late Ron Bolte.

Rich and Judy Schmitt of Fairview Heights are identifying and indexing scores of plat maps and architectural drawings in the Federer Collection. This collection was given to the Society by the late Richard Federer, whose family firm developed a number of subdivisions, including Holly Hills.

The library and archives collections include hundreds of brochures, papers, articles, and pamphlets concerning regional history and historic sites. Most of these items date from the 1960's to the 1990's. As they were given to the Society, they were stored in boxes in no particular order.

Jerry Martin, assisted by Diane Hogan and Bee Parsons, has started going through this ephemera, evaluating the individual items. They will then devise a system of cataloguing the material.

Bee Parsons has completed the Herculean job of entering all the information about area veterans who are featured on the Wall of Honor into the computerized catalogue. There are 1,277 entries.

Dave Bouchein continues the monumental task of updating all the information and reviewing the condition of the 58 Carondelet sites that the Society has recognized with historic markers during the last half century. Once completed, this material will be reproduced as a pamphlet.

The Historical Society looked particularly festive for the annual members party and the Historic St. Louis "A Spirited Holiday Past" tour thanks to the efforts of Oscar Harper. He spent several days unpacking boxes of decorations and hanging garlands and wreaths throughout the building. Dave Bouchein and Oscar set up a 130 year-old artificial Christmas tree with antique ornaments in the Susan Blow Kindergarten Classroom. The 1934 Blue Streak Lionel model train circled the base of the tree. (Not only was the train operating, even its whistle was blowing.) Joan Perdue prepared refreshments for the events.

Since the last newsletter the Society has hosted meetings and visits by the ASLAA (Association of St. Louis Area Archivists), the Cleveland High School Class of 1949, the Cleveland High School Alumni Association and participants in Historic St. Louis's "A Spirited Holiday Past."

Our Members are Generous

Since the last newsletter the following friends and members have made donations to the Carondelet Historical Society: Lee & John Grasfeder, Nancy Hillhouse, Michael Hogan, Bonnie Kent, Marcia Kern, Jane Leonardi, Susie McClimans, Joan Perdue and Ron & Patrice Stockmann.

The following groups and organizations have made donations to the Carondelet Historical Society since the last newsletter: The Cleveland High School Alumni Association and the Sappington Chapter of the DAR.

Gifts were made in memory of:

Barry Flachsbart..... *by NiNi Harris*
Carol Buritsch..... *by Paula Buritsch*
Shirleen Coughlin
Loretta Ross
Virginia Svoboda..... *by Bob Svoboda*
Mary Wiegert..... *by friends*

Gifts were made in honor of:

Dave Bouchein..... *by Jerry Martin &*
Kris Zapalak
Bob Fox for his birthday..... *by friends*
via Facebook
Jay Willoughy..... *by Shirley Gockel*
Finger

Jacoby

from page 1

his son Charles as treasurer. Frank Oppliger was shop superintendent and a shareholder.

While the majority of employees appeared to be German, the work force also included Sal Falzoni, Edward Lopatka, R. Worceski and Michael Olszewski. Olszewski formed his own art glass studio, also in the Carondelet area. Olszewski art glass, in the storefront at 4642 Virginia Avenue, created the windows that grace St. Stanislaus Polish Catholic Church in North St. Louis and St. Hedwig Church in the Mount Pleasant Neighborhood.

After Herman Jacoby, Charles Jacoby, and Frank Oppliger all passed away in quick succession, young Fred Oppliger led the studio. He guided the studio through bad economies, through booming economies, and through changing artistic tastes. Though the great majority of their windows were created for churches, Jacoby crafted a well-known series of windows for the Mayfair Hotel in Downtown St. Louis (now known as The Magnolia). The windows were installed in the new hotel's Hofbrau Restaurant, opened in 1933 to celebrate the end of Prohibition. The fun-loving windows depicted, "Wine, Women and Song."

In 1945, the Jacoby Studio moved into the two story building at 822 Wilmington that had been constructed during World War I for the old River Side exchange. Built of speckled brick, its tall windows shed abundant light into the studio spaces.

In this studio, a remarkable group of artists, designers and glass cutters adapted the Medieval art form of stained glass to Midcentury Modern design. The studio's principle designer was Mr. Josef Mayer, who had begun his career with a studio in Munich and immigrated to the United States in 1928. Mayer drew then painted the 13 windows for First Presbyterian Church in Kirkwood. In the early 1950's, two stained glass artists from England joined the crew at 822 Wilmington. An Hungarian refugee who had

worked for a studio in Chicago, Emoe Koch, joined Jacoby Art Glass and focused on modern styles.

Emoe Koch's "flair for the contemporary" is evidenced in his windows in the Chapel at St. Alexis Hospital. The Hungarian also designed the avant-garde windows for the new church of the Oppliger family's own Parish. (Beginning in the mid 1920's, the Fred Oppliger family lived at 3686 Bellerive Boulevard. Other family members lived at 920 Dover Place and, later, Fred Oppliger, Jr. resided at 5909 Marwinette.) In 1962, St. Stephen's Parish at 3949 Wilmington built their new church with expansive Jacoby Art Glass Windows.

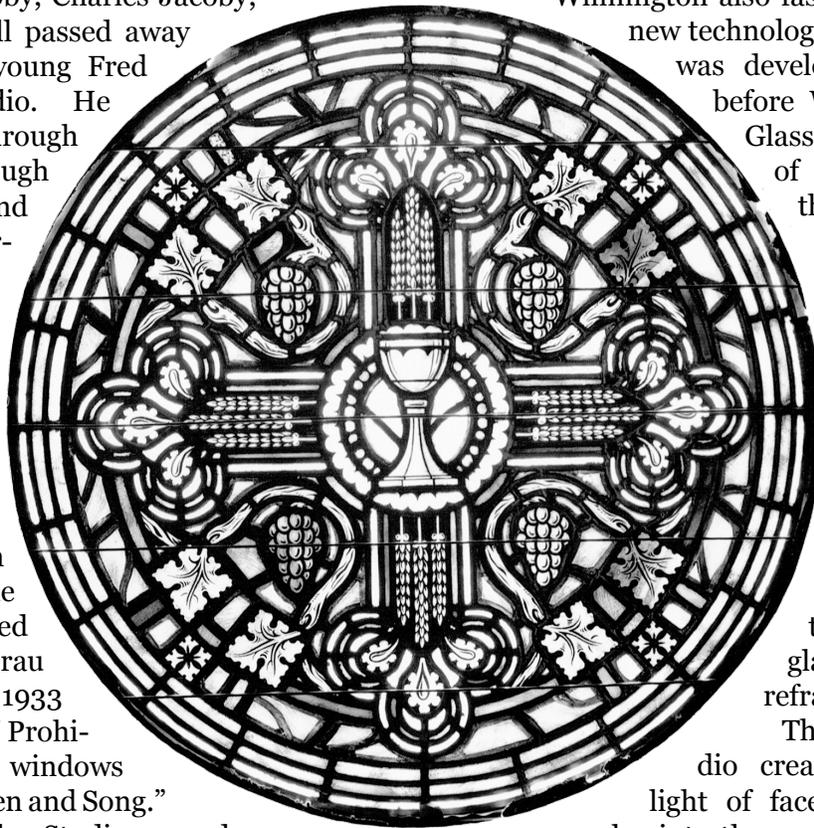
The artists and artisans working at the studio on Wilmington also fashioned windows using a new technology or style of art glass that was developed in France shortly before World War II. Faceted

Glass featured thick pieces of brilliantly colored glass that had been chipped or scalloped like a jewel. Instead of being held together and framed with lead tubing (called came), the chunks of glass are set in a cement-like matrix. The matrix could be a thin frame like the lead came, or appear like a concrete wall punctuated by the chipped glass that reflected and refracted the colored light.

The Jacoby Art Glass Studio created a remarkable skylight of faceted glass that showers color into the round lobby of the St. Louis Archdiocesan Chancery on Lindell Boulevard.

Despite the studio's adoption of midcentury design and modern techniques, the major market for stained glass, church windows, was diminishing. Even with William Oppliger's leadership in moving the studio into contemporary design, Jacoby Studio, Inc. closed in 1970. Their artwork in glass, however, continues to enhance St. Louis's built environment.

The records and ephemera from William Oppliger are available to people wanting to research their church windows to determine if they were the work of Jacoby Studios, Inc. Artifacts from the Jacoby Studio Collection are on display in the ground floor of the Carondelet Historical Society.





Artists and artisans of Jacoby Studios, Inc. were photographed for a promotional brochure. Their names were listed in no apparent order as: Hugo Dieckmann, Emil Hovorka, Dale Horton, Dave Sitzes, Felix Martinez, John Reiter, William H. Oppliger, Dolores Veth, James Forthaus, Frank Fleischmann, Odell Prather, Russell Kraus, Fred Oppliger, Frank Stanton, F. P. Oppliger, William Franke, John Kohlmann, Lee Cook, Naomi Mundy, and Arthur Himmelsbach.

Time Week Ending, *March 6, 1909*

NAMES	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Total Time	Rate	Amount \$	Cts.	
<i>W. Oppliger</i>	"	"	"	"	"	"	"			20		
<i>R. Worell</i>	21	12	6	10	21	10				20		
<i>Edw. Zaboloska</i>		16	13	9	17	8	15	53		90		
<i>J. W. Schmitt</i>	2	22	4	15	3	18	10	48	407	19	55	
<i>E. Coffeydaff</i>	4		1	4				54	37	20		
<i>M. Oppliger</i>	9		2		4	6		53 1/2	37	11	90	
<i>J. A. Stephens</i>	5		1	16	4	1		53 1/2	33 1/2	17	75	
<i>Paul Lang</i>	9	10						54	33 1/2	18		
<i>J. J. Gagnier</i>	10		1	7	1	5	8	4	53 1/2	29 1/2	15	85
<i>Wm. Oppliger</i>	3		5	2	3	1	1	53 1/2	29 1/2	15	70	
<i>Sal. Tarkoni</i>	24			16				53 1/2	29 1/2	15	90	
<i>Paul Ballou</i>	6		5	16	1	19		53 1/2	27 1/2	14	85	
<i>J. Tuppala</i>	11		4	4	8	9	9	53 1/2	22 1/2	11	95	
<i>Leo Schmitt</i>	14		33	32	7	5	34	205 1/2	12 1/2	129	6	65
<i>W. Oppliger</i>	16			5				54	11 1/2	6		
<i> Jas. O. Reilly</i>	15			2		1			0925	5		
<i>Otto Mader</i>	19								111	6		
<i>John Martin</i>	18			2		12				4	50	
<i>J. N. Gammon</i>	21			2		1			466	9		
<i>J. F. Hoelcher</i>									508			
										276	80	

A page from a ledger documents the number of hours worked by the 20 employees at Jacoby Art Glass during the week ending March 6, 1909. The 19 full-time employees worked from 48 to 54 hours each week. Their pay ranged from \$9.00 to \$30.00 per week.

Researched and written by NiNi Harris

Layout by Chad Huber

The Carondelet Historical Society is open for visits or tours on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and Sunday from noon to 2:00 p.m. Visit any time we are open. To schedule a special tour, call (314) 481-6303.

Hours

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