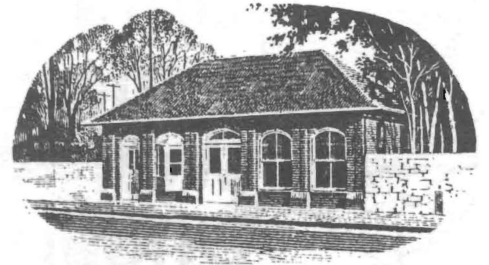


HYDE PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY Newsletter



Volume I, Number 4

November, 1979

COMING A Chance to Share, to Observe, to Banquet

Some interesting and instructive events lie just ahead. They include:

- ▶ An exhibit called HYDE PARK HISTORY ON SHOW, at Hyde Park Federal, on November 11. You should already have received a mailed announcement and invitation to show your historical treasures. Our next Newsletter will report on the meeting and exhibit.
- ▶ On Friday, December 7, the Illinois Historic Sites Advisory Council, meeting at the Windermere Hotel between 9 and 12, 2 and 5, will consider applications for nomination to both the National and the Illinois Historic Registers.

NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR THE PAUL CORNELL AWARDS

Nominations are now open for the Paul Cornell Awards, which are presented annually by the Hyde Park Historical Society.

Members are invited to submit short written statements commending anyone (except a currently serving HPHS Board member) who significantly furthered community knowledge, appreciation, or preservation of Hyde Park's historical heritage in 1979. (For this purpose, "Hyde Park" is the area between 47th St. and the Midway, Cottage Grove Ave. and the Lake.

Award categories are: books and articles; exhibits; lectures; student projects; restoration of exterior or public interior spaces of commercial, civic, or residential buildings; and sympathetic

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According to Council member Michael Conzen (who is also on the HPHS Board), the Council convenes at three-month intervals in different cities in order to encourage greater public knowledge of its activities and procedures. It has not met before in Hyde Park. Interested citizens are urged to come for the entire meeting or any part of it.

- ▶ Our Annual Meeting and Dinner will take place on January 19. Full details will come later. □

This Hyde Park Historical Society Newsletter is published quarterly.

Muriel Beadle, Editor
Corinne Seither, Typing
Michael Conzen, Graphics



Library Renovation Well Underway

NOTE: This is the first in a series of reports on the renovation of the Blackstone Branch Library. The following notes were extracted by Muriel Beadle from a conversation with architectural historian and HPHS Board member Irma Strauss.

Chicago's first branch library was built in 1904 by Mrs. Timothy Blackstone to memorialize her husband. Solon S. Beman (who lived in Kenwood) was the architect of this Greek Revival building. Exclusive of land, it cost \$125,000. The renovation is budgeted at \$700,000.

Beman's renderings survive in the Burnham Library at the Art Institute but the blueprints are missing. Coping with the resultant surprises are the renovation architect, Andrew Heard (he lives in Kenwood, too) and the contractor, R. E. Rudnick. They are doing a sensitive job. According to Librarian Emma Kemp, they are keeping as much as possible of the original fabric yet are taking full advantage of modern technology.

In 1904, the site was a cow pasture. Being on alluvial soil, the building has done much settling. Therefore, the outside stairs needed resetting. The sidewalks have been repaved. In back, a concrete ramp has replaced the steps. New windows have been installed. (Not to re-use the original frames is too bad, but it wasn't possible.) All the wiring has been updated and new fluorescent fixtures, ugly but necessary, are in place wherever bright light is essential. □

Next report: Restoring the details; modern additions.

Social Note

From the Chicago Tribune,
August 17, 1902:

"After a luncheon given to the Grand Duke Boris and his party by Baron Schleppenbach, Arthur Caton drove the visitors, the Baron, and Dr. W.R. Harper about in his tallyho. The university was visited, as well as Jackson Park. After the drive, Mr. Caton entertained at the Washington Park Club." □



By Carol Moseley Braun

Like other best laid schemes of mice and men, Illinois Senate Bill 244 is a scheme that has gang aft a-gley. It was intended to provide incentive for preservation efforts by granting a 10-yr. tax freeze on single family dwellings in Municipal Landmark areas or in National Historic Districts. (There are 26 of the latter in Illinois, among them Hyde Park and Kenwood.)

However, the bill contains many and grave errors. Qualification for the tax freeze depends solely on the house's age and location, not upon the extent of preservation efforts or investment. The owner can take advantage of the tax relief while allowing the property to deteriorate for 10 years. He can make "improvements" which fundamentally change the structure, without loss of tax relief. Wholesale destruction of historic buildings could result from such a loophole.

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PAUL CARROLL PAYS FOND TRIBUTE TO THE IRISH WHO LIVED HERE IN THE 1930's



By Lesley Bloch

The sanctuary of St. Thomas the Apostle Church was the scene of the Oct. 7 Hyde Park Historical Society meeting. It was an ideal spot for Paul Carroll's recollections, Being Irish in Hyde Park. Sipping "tears of the angels" and speaking from a place normally reserved for saints and priests, he delighted the audience with tales of his family, St. Thomas Church and Grammar School, and Kenwood--"the stronghold of the Irish mafia in the 1930's."

Nineteenth Century Picnic Menu

At our pleasant Sept. 15 outing to Naper Settlement, the bag lunches were prepared by Thelma Dahlberg, Jean Ervin, Gladys Finn and Chris Lehigh. Thanks, ladies.

HPHS members enjoyed reading the explanatory sheet which accompanied each lunch. It explained that every item on the menu--plum jam sandwiches, deviled eggs, pickles, apple and black walnut cookies, butter cookies with hazelnuts, fresh-picked grapes, cider--could have appeared at an early 19th century picnic.

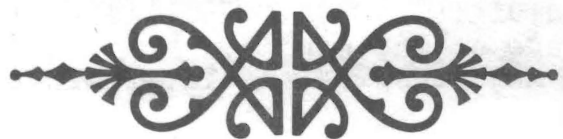
This bread too was made by "setting the sponge" from a carefully kept "starter." The cookie recipes came from century-old cookbooks. The jam and pickles were homemade. Only the butter was "modern"--i.e., store-bought, not churned at home.

Our 20th century cooks also used plastic bags and paper products--much more convenient than following the 19th century practice of wrapping sandwiches in a damp cloth, then packing them in a tin or wicker box. There's a limit to one's yearning for authenticity. □

The relatives living together at 51st and Kenwood were a marvelous crew. The spinster sisters, Nellie and Catherine Rose, attended 6 a.m. Mass, stirred pots of stew and read only the parish obituaries. The four bachelor brothers, aloof from work of any kind, sat behind their newspapers--except on the occasions when they came before J.A. Carroll (real estate developer, builder of the Hyde Park Bank, father of Paul) with candidates for marriage, his approval being required. The candidates were generally unsuitable.

Among young Paul's favorite spots in the neighborhood was the room above the garage at the home of Big Jim McKay. Here, the boy got to see and talk to three pistol-toting bodyguards who played cards continually but were always ready for trouble. A shotgun was a fixture in a corner of the room. Mr. Carroll also recalled with relish the "Friday night fights with the Protestants from Ray School."

For more Irish wit and wisdom from Paul Carroll, listen to WFMT on Sundays at 10:30 p.m., and look for his forthcoming book, Chicago, Magic City of the West. □



HYDE PARKER WITNESSES THE HAYMARKET HANGING

NOTE: This and the story of Joe Hill (facing page) are complementary. One is written from the viewpoint of a modern day union sympathizer, the other reflects the anti-labor sentiment of many members of the Chicago Establishment in 1886.

By Jean Block

Starting with the depression of the 1870's, strife between labor and management was almost constant as workingmen struggled for better wages and working conditions. The Haymarket Riot in 1886 followed a strike at the McCormick works: an apparently peaceable mass meeting was charged by the police, a bomb was thrown into the crowd, and many people were killed or wounded.

Nine anarchists were arrested and hastily tried. Seven were convicted and sentenced to hang. Although no one was ever to know who threw the bomb, the charge was that the thrower was incited by the inflammatory speeches of the accused.

An eyewitness account of the night before the execution as well as the execution itself appears in the papers of J. Frank Aldrich at the Chicago Historical Society. Attached to the account is a finely engraved invitation to the hanging.

Aldrich lived at 5649 Blackstone and then at 4800 Kimbark. A crusading Republican, he was elected President of the County Board in 1886 as part of a reformers' effort to rid the Board of the graft and corruption that were leading the County to bankruptcy.

Because of his office, Aldrich could visit the jail at will. On the eve of the hanging, he talked with August Spies and later wrote:

"Speaking in a well modulated but rather low tone, Spies said he believed he had done no wrong, that all they were contending for was the right of free speech, it was the struggle of the masses against the capitalists who had decreed that they should be 'put out of the way'.... I do not recall that we shook hands when I left him; probably not."

As for the execution, Aldrich wrote: "When the caps were adjusted, Spies said, 'There will be a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today.'... Engel cried, 'Hurrah for Anarchy!'... Fischer said, 'This is the happiest moment of my life.' Parsons said, 'Will I be allowed to speak O men of America? Let me speak, Sheriff Watson. Let the voice of the people be heard.'

Aldrich concluded (with a final sigh of relief) that the event "gave anarchism in this country a set back from which it has never recovered. Amen." □



U.S.S. NAUTILUS JOINS ELITE GROUP

Evidence that a historic place can move around is provided by the listing of the U.S.S. Nautilus on the National Register of Historic Places. This, the world's first atomic powered vessel and the first submarine to circumnavigate the globe at high speed while it was submerged, dates--how time flies!--from 1951.

The Navy hasn't decided whether or not to put its historic place on public display. □

A PARDON FOR THE I.W.W. ORGANIZER JOE HILL?

By Lee H. Morgan

A historical society like ours is, by its very nature, specialized in its interests and program. Even more specialized, however, are the labor history societies which exist in thirteen States. For example:

The Illinois Labor History Society is among groups trying to secure a posthumous pardon for Joe Hill, executed for murder in Salt Lake City in 1915 but whose conviction is felt by many to have been due to anti-labor sentiment.

Joe Hill, born Joel Hagglund in Sweden in 1879, emigrated to the United States in 1910. Here, he joined and became an organizer for the militant Industrial Workers of the World (IWW, whose members were popularly known as "Wobblies").

Also a poet and balladeer, he was the great troubadour of the early 20th century labor movement. The following lyrics are typical of his work; this and other of his songs are still popular with folk-singers.



VICTOR DYER, Blackstone Branch Assistant Librarian and a HPHS Board member, has taken a job with the public library in Marblehead, Mass. Our best wishes go with him. Also our thanks. His farewell gift to us was an expertly done bibliography of all Hyde Park historical materials currently held at the Blackstone Branch library. □



If we workers take a notion,
We can stop all speeding trains,
Every ship upon the ocean
We can tie with mighty chains.
Every wheel in the creation,
Every mine and every mill,
Fleets and armies of all nations
Will at our command stand still.

Hill's way with words did not desert him upon his arrest for the murder of a Salt Lake City grocer and his son, during the trial, and later. Shortly before his execution, he sent to 'Big Bill' Haywood, the IWW leader, this telegram: "Good-bye, Bill. I will die as a true-blue rebel. Don't waste time mourning. Organize." And on the night before he faced the firing squad, he wrote:

My will is easy to decide,
For there is nothing to divide.
My kin don't need to fuss and
moan--

"Moss does not cling to a rolling
stone."

My body? Ah, if I could choose,
I would to ashes it reduce,
And let the merry breezes blow
My dust to where some flowers
grow,

Perhaps some fading flower then
Would come to life and bloom again.
This is my last and final will,
Good luck to all of you--Joe Hill.

On November 19, 1915, he died, despite pleas for a pardon from thousands of people. As for a posthumous pardon, Utah's attorney general says that neither Utah law, federal law nor English common law provide for it. The Illinois Labor History Society is sending its petitions anyway. Its president, Lester Orear, says, "The Utah ruling isn't final; it's only a skirmish." □



FUNDS SOUGHT; GIFT RECEIVED

The drive to raise funds to restore our headquarters building at 5529 Lake Park Ave. is fully underway. Applications for major grants are pending before several foundations and others are being prepared for banks and corporations.

The first donation of a fixture for the building has been received from Dr. and Mrs. Albert Dahlberg, both HPHS Board members. It is a late 19th century water closet, complete with a mahogany water tank with tin lining. □



WANTED

Where are the records of the South Park Improvement Association? They must be in someone's basement, but whose?

If you know, or can provide a clue, get in touch with Jean Block at 1700 E. 56th St., Chicago 60637; phone 363-9093. □

Strolling along Lake Park in days gone by

NOTE: Lake Park Ave., formerly Lake Ave., is now--thanks to urban renewal--hard by the west side of the I.C. embankment. But fragments of the original thoroughfare remain: for example, the section of today's Lake Park between 56th and 57th; the block that abuts the Hyde Park Bank on the east between 53rd and 54th; the driveway and parking lot east of Hyde Park Federal; the roadway which the Blackstone Branch Library faces.

*

According to a memoir written by a pioneer settler here, Mrs. Homer Nash Hibbard, Hyde Park in 1860 "was a cluster of scattered houses, less than a score, dropped down among the oak trees. There was no store, no postoffice, no market, and a single passenger car on the Illinois Central, three times a day, was the only connection with the city except Purcell's ox-cart, which served as an express to bring from the city barrels of flour and groceries. The one sidewalk, a board walk on Lake Avenue, was fringed with ferns and violets, wild flowers and strawberries."

--from the 1910 history of the Hyde Park Presbyterian Church (now the United Church of Hyde Park)

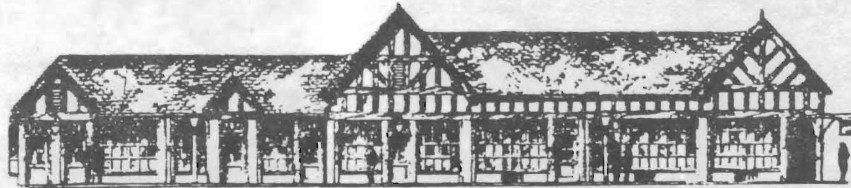
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About 1925, an 11-year-old youngster named Fred Sherwood lived at 5442 Dorchester, attended Ray School, and roamed the community during his leisure hours. A little over 50 years later, this is how he remembers Lake Park Ave. (from which the ferns and violets had certainly departed):

"There was still a livery stable there; also a wholesale butcher and a cigar shop where the owner sat in the window, hand-rolling cigars. There were several horse troughs with semi-circular basins, one of which also had a slow-flowing 'people' spout."

--from a 1979 letter from Fred Sherwood, who now lives in Sawyer, Michigan. □

HAVE YOU EATEN AT THE COLLEGE INN?



Where students meet and eat. Best food at best prices.

READERS CAMPUS DRUG STORE.

61st and Ellis Avenue

Fairfax 4800 (also on campus exchange)



ADVERTISING IN THE NEWSLETTER?
Not yet. Older Hyde Parkers may remember Readers Campus Drug Store and correctly date the ad as circa 1935. (HPHS Board member and University Archivist Al Tannler dug it out for us.)

The half-timber and stucco shops and gas station at 61st and Ellis were built in 1931. The University owned other commercial property in Hyde Park—from offices let to the Anti-Saloon League to shoe shining parlors—but the stores at 61st and Ellis were the first it had built for the benefit of students.

As the University Record said, these shops would make it easy for students "to buy a linen collar or obtain a 'permanent wave'". It was expected that dormitories for women would be erected near the existing College Residence Hall for Men (now Burton-Judson). Its Gothic splendor was, of course, the reason for the Olde Englishe architecture of the retail shops.

Although the women's dorms never materialized, the stores long did well. The University still owns them but, alas, only the gas station is open. The shops are boarded up, waiting for a revival of the economy south of the Midway. □

--Muriel Beadle

City House

March 21-23, 1980 are the dates for Chicago's second annual "CITY HOUSE: A Home Improvement Fair of Older Houses," at Navy Pier. If you want to exhibit, call Edward Jeske at 744-3200. □



SENATE BILL 244 ... from page 2

Governor Thompson signed the bill into law on Sept. 22, but used his amendatory veto to postpone the effective date of the legislation from January 1980 to January 1981. This, he said, was to give preservationists a chance "to work with the sponsors to improve the bill."

Anyone who cares about the preservation of our architectural heritage should send his or her suggestions for the amendment of Senate Bill 244 to its sponsors, Sen. Jeremiah E. Joyce and Rep. Daniel P. O'Brien, care of their respective legislative bodies in Springfield. □

The Preservation News is filling little spaces like this one with an alliterative one-liner: LOVE A LANDMARK. Someone ought to use it as a bumper sticker. □



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NOW IS THE TIME TO MAKE NOMINATIONS FOR THE PAUL CORNELL AWARDS

From page 1

renovation or adaptive re-use. Our awards may be made in any, all, or none of those categories, but only one award will be made in each category. Recipients of awards will be announced at our annual meeting in January. Send your nominations by Dec. 1 to Kathleen Conzen, 1333 E. 50th St., Chicago 60615.

*

To refresh your memory, our 1978 awards went to:

★ George Cooley, "for leadership in researching and preparing a plan for the restoration of the Wooded Island to its former glory."



★ Mr. and Mrs. Victor Barcilon, "for their sensitive exterior restoration of the Heller House [5136 Woodlawn Ave.], tuckpointing it in the unique manner initially specified by its architect, Frank Lloyd Wright."

★ Eliza Davey, "for developing an architectural outdoor study-game, Queen Anne Meets the Greek, which heightens the observational skills of parents and children."

Incidentally, there's a nice sequel to this one. Mrs. Davey, Ancona School's Art Center Coordinator, will produce three similar Streetgames during 1979-80, thanks to a \$26,000 grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. The Games will be tested city-wide by 12 to 17 year olds. □