

GAZETTE



Spring/Summer 2022 Volume 29 No. 1

winnetkahistory.org

Five Indian Hill Road Celebrates 100 Years

by Joan Evanich & Meagan McChesney



Five Indian Hill Road in 2017. (Photo: Hudson Real Estate Group)

This year, the stunning Italian villa-style home at 5 Indian Hill Road turns 100 years old. Throughout its long history, 5 Indian Hill has been home to several notable Winnetkans beginning with the original owner, Thomas H. McInnerney.

Born in Iowa in 1867, McInnerney first came to Illinois to study at the School of Pharmacy at the University of Illinois. After graduating, he opened a

drug store in Chicago. Five years later, he sold the store and went to work as the general manager of Siegel-Cooper department store, where he stayed until 1906.

After a brief stint in New York, McInnerney returned to Chicago and purchased the Knickerbocker

continues on page 5



Concertgoers entering Ravinia Park, c. 1904. (Photo: Highland Park Historical Society)

Ravinia: Then and Now

by Helen Weaver

Ravinia Park has changed since its opening in August 1904 as “the most beautiful and complete amusement place in the west,” but the Ravinia of then and the Ravinia of now still have much in common.

A.C. Frost, president of the Chicago & Milwaukee Electric Railway, seeing potential in the farm-land along his newly laid tracks, bought the Daggitt farm north of Glencoe and established Ravinia Park. He created trails and lawns among the groves and “spared no expense in the addition of amusement and entertainment features.” These features included a theater, a casino (dining

continues on page 7

Upcoming Events



Schmidt-Burnham Log House

1140 Willow Road
in Crow Island Woods

Open Sundays beginning
May 1st, 2-4 p.m.

Save the date!
WHS Annual Gala
The 20's Roar Again:
Swanky Soirée
5 Indian Hill Road
Saturday, June 25th

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Ride the Virtual Winnetka History Express!

Interested in learning more about Winnetka's historic sites?

This virtual trolley tour will take you through time and space, from the Native American settlement at Indian Hill, through Winnetka's historic business district, to the scenic Skokie Lagoons, and, lastly, to the fascinating sites along Sheridan Road. You'll learn about many intriguing people, places, and events from the Village's founding in 1869 to 2021.

The Winnetka History Express is available at winnetkahistory.org/winnetka-history-express/ or use the QR code to the right.



Village Green 1896

Village Green in 2020

Village Hall 1920s

Village Hall in 2021

(Photos from WHS archive)



Jennifer Duvall, WHS Program Coordinator

New Program Coordinator Joins WHS

On March 1, 2022, Jennifer Duvall began her new role as Program Coordinator at the Winnetka Historical Society. Jennifer recently received her Master's degree in Public History from Loyola University Chicago, and is expecting to complete a second Master's degree in Library and Information Science from Dominican University in May.

In addition to her impressive educational background, Jennifer brings a wide array of professional experience to WHS, including over 12 years of teaching and program development experience. "I'm very excited about getting started," Jennifer said, "and [am] looking forward to working with the community to create fun and interesting programs that raise awareness about the rich history of Winnetka and the North Shore." ■

Have historic items you'd like to donate?

We are actively collecting items that directly relate to the history of the North Shore. To donate, please email a description and a photo of each item to: curator@winnetkahistory.org

The Winnetka Historical Society cannot accept dropped-off or mailed items without direct communication with museum staff. **Thank you!**



(Photo by Scott Edwards)

Reflections

by Mary Trieschmann, WHS Executive Director

The Winnetka Historical Society (WHS) turns 90 this year and what a journey it has had! In 1932, a small group of Winnetkans interested in preserving history decided to organize WHS. In its first year, founding member Frank Windes described the organization's general mission: "Let us find out all we can, preserve all we can, and hand down all we can to the future generations for their help and guidance." In the early years, WHS members gathered to give papers on Winnetka history through personal reminiscences, retelling of lore and sharing their treasures.

Windes was the longtime custodian of the WHS collection. At first it was stored in his basement, and later in the fireproof vaults at his engineering office. In 1941, WHS was chartered as a not-for-profit corporation, and by 1943 four chests of artifacts were stored in vaults at the Winnetka Trust & Savings Bank. Later, the collection was stored in a basement room in

the public library. Then, in 1987, the growing collection was housed in the shuttered Skokie School.

In 2004, WHS found a new home at 411 Linden Street in a c. 1857 Victorian which is now a Winnetka designated landmark! This building currently houses staff offices, exhibits, a research library, and over 30,000 artifacts in a climate-controlled space including photographs, documents, historic items, books, and more.

The house at 411 Linden was purchased through donations from passionate Winnetkans who truly cared about the mission to honor and preserve the Village's heritage, gather and share the artifacts and stories of its past, and foster meaningful connections among Winnetkans and the broader community. ■

The Winnetka Historical Society is a non-profit 501c-3 organization and is primarily funded by individuals.

You can help preserve our history by making a donation today.

THANK YOU!



by Meagan McChesney, PhD
WHS Curator

Curator's Corner: Collections from the 1920s

This summer, the Winnetka Historical Society's (WHS) annual gala will be held at 5 Indian Hill Road, a historic property that turns 100 this year. Fittingly, the gala will celebrate the 1920s, the decade in which noted architect Reginald D. Johnson designed the house for Thomas H. McInnerney. The house is now owned by the Heneghan family.

To complement the historic setting, WHS will set up a temporary exhibit at the event to showcase some of the fascinating 1920s items from the archives. Here are just a few of the Costume Collection pieces that will be on display.

This peach silk dress is a perfect representation of the ever-popular 1920s flapper dress. The scoop neckline, beaded fringe hem, and velvet rosette detailing make it a particularly stunning example.

The dress was worn by Christine E. Baumann, a longtime Winnetka resident who grew up at 279 Linden Street. Born in 1904, Baumann was a member of the first



Winnetkan Christine E. Baumann wore this peach silk flapper dress, c. 1920s. (WHS collection)

graduating class of North Shore Country Day School in 1921. Her father, Edgar, was a real estate broker, and Baumann followed in his footsteps. She worked as a broker for Bill's Realty Inc. in the Village in her 20s, the same time during which she purchased this peach silk flapper dress. By 1939, she and fellow North Shore resident Florence Cook had joined forces to form Baumann-Cook Real Estate Service at 553 Lincoln Avenue.

Records indicate that Christine Baumann stayed on the North Shore for the remainder of her career, moving to Northfield just outside of Winnetka later in life. Her beautiful flapper dress was donated to the Winnetka Historical Society by Edward Baumann in 1988.

While WHS now maintains careful records of all donations, detailed recordkeeping wasn't always common practice for early historical societies. Thus, we occasionally come across items in the collections with little information about where they came from, who owned them, or how they were acquired. Such was the case for this beautiful 1920s beaded purse. The gold frame, delicate chain strap, and beaded fringe detailing were quite popular in the 1920s, and likely would have been worn out on the town with a dress like Christine Baumann's peach silk flapper style.

To complete her outfit, Christine Baumann likely would have worn short-heeled, pointy-toed pumps like this pair from the 1920s.



Beaded purse with fringe, c. 1920s. (WHS collection)

The understated, yet elegant gold iridescent silk fabric would perfectly complement a beaded flapper style, while the Cuban heels would allow the wearer to comfortably do the Fox Trot or Charleston long into the evening. ■



Gold silk pumps with Cuban heels, c. 1920s. Perfect for dancing away the evening. (WHS collection)

Summer Vacations from Yesteryear: Getting There Was Half the Story

by Peter Butler

If you are a baby boomer who grew up in Winnetka in the 1950s or 1960s, the family vacation may have been easier to fit into the summer plans than is the case today with heavily scheduled lifestyles. Whether you had a small family or large one like mine (one of seven kids), those quick weekend trips or longer vacations were the staple of many family memories.

Some vacationers headed east, west, or south. Some stayed more locally, such as camping at Starved Rock State Park or spending a weekend at fun-filled Wagon Wheel Resort near Rockford. But many of us headed north to a cabin of our own or someone else's. Perhaps it was an all-inclusive place that had common dining (my mom's favorite—no cooking) and rustic cabins on a lake such as Little Sister Resort in Door County or Dairymen's Country Club in northern Wisconsin. Many headed to Michigan: Saugatuck, Sleeping Bear Dunes, Traverse City and even Mackinac Island.

Reaching the final destination was half the vacation story because so much happened on the way. First there was the CAR. The one I remember my family had in the 1950s was a Volkswagen bus. It wasn't very comfortable. It had a four-speed stick shift, and we would chant, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can" going up hills because it had no power.

In the 1960s, the SUV of the day was the station wagon with a rear-facing back seat. Kids could look out the window while passing trucks and encourage them to honk by pumping a fist up and down. The rear-facing back seat removed us from family chaos, but was a disaster for those prone to car sickness.

My sister remembers what she says was the result of an "overdose" of Dramamine where she slept the entire trip on car floor near the front seat. She obviously wasn't wearing a seat belt, but then again, there were none! Then I remember a little triangle window up front that my dad opened to keep his cigarette smoke flowing out. By the way, we were a Pontiac station wagon family, usually a Bonneville or Catalina, largely because Chieftain Pontiac was the car dealership in Hubbard Woods only blocks from our house. And I almost forgot — a station wagon held a lot of people, but also could handle our Sunfish on the top and another on a trailer.

Then there was car ENTERTAINMENT. Everyone remembers it differently, but family dynamics played out in a small space. Our parents didn't care whose fault a fight was — they just wanted peace, which meant



Young Peter Butler holds his brother Dan, alongside brothers John and Jim (far right) while on family vacation in Ellison Bay, Wisconsin, c. 1962. (Photo courtesy of Peter Butler)

no touching and no hitting. No technologies were around to pass the time, so we sang "99 Bottles of Beer on the Wall," competed to find the alphabet on billboards, and played "20 questions." Beyond that, competition for a radio station was fierce, but our parents overruled our choices of WLS and WCFL, which played pop music. We found common ground listening to a Cubs game on WGN.

As for FOOD, I only remember eating black bananas and plenty of candy from gas station vending machines. Some of my siblings wanted candy bars, such as Snickers or Three Musketeers. I preferred Dots (not the green ones), Milk Duds, Necco Wafers, and especially Hot Tamales. For drinks, I remember a time when gas stations gave free wooden cases of coke with returnable glass bottles (no plastic or cans existed) when you filled up your tank. When cans were first available, they had the pop tops which we made into rings if we didn't first cut our fingers on the sharp edges.

And finally, there were TWO BASIC STYLES TO ARRIVE AT YOUR DESTINATION, and both were decided by my father. There were those families with dads who just wanted to get there, meaning leave before sunrise, take no stops along the way (pee jar), and only eat food packed in the car. Then there was my dad. Once we took four days to get to Florida. Another time, we drove back from Door County on a blisteringly hot day with no air conditioning, so we stopped four times to swim in Lake Michigan. Making the trip still a little longer, we ate at local diners.

We made memories along the way, not all of which were warm and fuzzy, but when we got home sweet home and back in our own beds, we slept well and long. Today, revisionist storytelling always adds a touch of humor and reminds us of what relationships and families mean in our lives. ■



The Butler family bought its station wagon at Chieftain Pontiac dealership in Hubbard Woods, c. 1970. (WHS archives)

Five Indian Hill Road *cont. from page 1*

Ice Company. Quickly recognizing that unsold ice was melting away, McInnerney started making ice cream with the excess product. The ice cream business, later named the Hydrox Corporation, flourished, becoming the largest ice cream company in Chicago by 1920.



Thomas H. McInnerney, c. 1940s.
(Photo: Encyclopedia Dubuque)

In 1923, Hydrox merged with the Reick-McJunkin Dairy Company of Pittsburgh to form the National Dairy Products Corporation. By the time McInnerney died in 1952, National Dairy had become one of the largest dairy companies in the United States. The company continued to grow, later merging with Kraft Foods.

Records indicate that McInnerney moved to Winnetka between 1917 and 1920. He lived at 430 Elm for several years before hiring noted California architect Reginald D. Johnson to design a sprawling estate on the northern edge of the Indian Hill Club's golf course.

Early in his career, Johnson was renowned for his Mediterranean-style private homes and public buildings. Working primarily in California, some of his more famous designs include the Lotusland Estate in Montecito, the Biltmore Resort in Santa Barbara, Good Samaritan Hospital in Los Angeles, and All Saints Episcopal Church in Pasadena, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1935, Johnson reached the pinnacle of his career and changed his personal and professional focus.



Ariel view of 5 Indian Hill Road. (Photo: Hudson Real Estate Group)



Architect Reginald D. Johnson, c. 1918.
(Courtesy of the Johnson Family Archive)

"Humanity became [his] client" as he put it and, through a new social consciousness, Johnson became an advocate for respectable public housing. He spoke tirelessly to improve living conditions for the poor. Two Los Angeles public projects designed and built by Johnson were Harbor Hills and the Baldwin Hills Village, for which he received a prestigious award from the

American Institute of Architects. "Wynwyd Estate," as 5 Indian Hill was originally called, is one of Johnson's few notable designs outside California.

The fascinating history of 5 Indian Hill extends beyond the house itself onto the extensive grounds surrounding the estate, which were designed by famous landscape architect Jens Jensen. Throughout his impressive career, Jensen collaborated with numerous well-known architects including Louis Sullivan, Frank Lloyd Wright, George Maher, and Howard Van Doren Shaw. Several properties with Jensen-designed landscapes are listed on the National Register, including, and perhaps most notably, Henry Ford's Fair Lane Estate in Dearborn, Michigan. Five Indian Hill was Jensen's only known collaboration with Reginald Johnson.

Since Thomas McInnerney sold Wynwyd Estate in the 1940s, the property has had several owners and has undergone multiple renovations. In the early 2000s, for example, homeowners Daniel

and Debra Gill hired L.A. Rizzolo Architects to remodel the property and more than double the square footage. While much has changed at 5 Indian Hill, the character and magnificence of Johnson's original design has remained. With their own renovations, the Heneghans, the current owners, committed to preserving the historic integrity of the house, ensuring that this 100-year-old property can survive for generations to come. ■

Research Inquiries

Submit a request through
winnetkahistory.org

or email

curator@winnetkahistory.org

Winnetka Garden Club: 100 Years of Community Engagement

by Barbara Ferry

In 1921, local women with a love for flowers, plants and an eye towards conservation, first organized a group that blossomed into the Winnetka Garden Club (WGC). Meetings were held in a member's home, either preceded by lunch or followed by tea served from a lovely silver tea service with perfectly pressed cloth napkins. Over the century, the dress code has evolved from dresses, hats, and gloves to the more relaxed style of today, but the commitment and dedication of the Club to develop a knowledge and appreciation of gardening, horticulture, floral design, and conservation has remained the same.

One of the hallmarks of the WGC has always been its engagement with the community. The Club initiated the planting of elm trees on Elm Street, secured oak trees at the south end of Centennial Park, helped document notable trees in Winnetka, provided plant and floral arrangements for hospitalized patients at Great Lakes Naval Base and Fort Sheridan, created a native garden at the Elm Street train station, handed out conservation pamphlets to the schools, and for decades provided weekly flower arrangements for the front desk at the Winnetka Public Library. This is a mere sampling of WGC's community activities.

The most visible achievement is Moffat Mall, which, until 1979, was an empty area of turf between Winnetka's Village Hall and the Post Office. Using a landscape designer's plan, WGC built a green oasis with benches and a fountain. Club members have for decades maintained the garden on a weekly basis by weeding, pruning, and eliminating garbage. Moffat Mall has been renovated twice and will



The 1962 grand opening and dedication of Moffat Mall, named for Mrs. Alice Moffat (center), a longtime, active member of the Winnetka Garden Club. (Winnetka Talk)



Winnetka Garden Club members Weezie Monroe, Nancy Side, Linda Walsh, Gwen McConnaughey planting bulbs at Moffat Mall in 2000. (Photo courtesy of WGC)

undergo another facelift in 2022 as part of the Club's centennial project.

There have also been projects further afield, including the restoration and maintenance of the garden at Abraham Lincoln's home in Springfield from 1957-1977.

At a time when conservation issues are headline news, WGC

can proudly claim it has supported such issues almost from its inception. The Club joined the Save the Redwoods League and in 1969, purchased and saved a five-acre grove of redwood trees in Prairie Creek Redwoods State Park in Humboldt County, California. Members also vigorously supported Winnetka's earliest recycling efforts

in the 1960s and 1970s by filling their car trunks with newspaper and glass, and driving to a recycling station located near the old village dump on Willow Road.

In addition to making hundreds of monetary grants toward conservation, the Club has written letters and emails to senators and representatives, including objections to the damming of Dinosaur National Monument in Jensen, Utah, petitions against oil pipeline development, and support for clean water initiatives and efforts to prevent coastal erosion. Years ago, recognizing the success of these conservation letter-writing efforts, the *Christian Science Monitor* put a box on its front page highlighting the impact of "those little ladies in tennis shoes."

The Winnetka Garden Club has always been a creative group. Generations of talented floral designers and horticulture experts have won awards locally and nationally. The Club and its members have had a distinguished history at the "Chicago World Flower and Garden Show," held in the 1960s and 1970s at both McCormick Place and the International Amphitheater in Chicago, and at the "Show of Summer" held at the Chicago Botanic Garden from 1980-2017. One of many notable awards received was the Mayor's Award given in 1974 for a garden "providing the most useful gardening information to Chicagoland homeowners."

In 100 years, styles have changed, and the causes championed have evolved, but as Joan Gately, a member for 55 years, stated, "the strength of the WGC has always been its ability to adapt." ■



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Visit our website at winnetkahistory.org to learn about Winnetka's long-term businesses and more.

Ravinia: Then and Now *cont. from page 1*



The all-male Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Ravinia Park, 1918. (Photo: Highland Park Historical Society)

and dancing), a sports stadium, a Traver Circle Swing, a toboggan slide, and a skating pond. The theater and ornamental gateways are still in use today. The original pavilion, constructed in 1905, was destroyed by fire in 1949 and replaced the following year. Designed as a year-round resort, Ravinia offered “only the highest-class theatrical performances” and “no intoxicating liquors permitted on the grounds.” Then, as now, visitors were encouraged to take the train to and from the park.

In words that could be from 2022, a 1905 *Chicago Tribune* writer asked: “If you care anything for good music and derive any pleasure from being amid beautiful out-of-doors surrounds, make a journey to Ravinia Park.” As reported in the *Tribune*’s society page, early Winnetkans including the Thornes, the Hoyts, and Mrs. Augustus Peabody listened as Walter Damrosch conducted the New York Symphony in 1907.

The 1907 Bankers’ Panic led to the failure of Mr. Frost’s enterprise and both the railroad and Ravinia Park were put into receivership. In 1911, a group of wealthy concerned citizens, led by businessman Louis Eckstein, formed the Ravinia Company and bought the park. The Ravinia of today owes much of its ability to stay solvent to the activities of the Women’s Board who have raised over \$27 million since 1962. The same was true for the Ravinia of 1911. The Ravinia Club, made up of hundreds of women from the north suburbs, created children’s programs, held benefit teas and dances, and spread word of the fun to be had at the park. Many Winnetkans served on committees of the Ravinia Company and Club during those years including Rudolph Matz, Landon Hoyt, Douglas Smith, Carrie Prouty, Jessie Willard Bolte, and Alice H. Wood.

By 1914, Ravinia had devoted its programs to opera, and its reputation as the “summer opera capital” spread worldwide. Thousands attended and the Company stayed afloat until the Great Depression. The park remained closed for four seasons and in 1936, after the death of Louis Eckstein, a new group of concerned citizens, chaired by Winnetkan Willoughby G. Walling, formed the Ravinia Festival Association and hosted a five-week series of 20 concerts by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Today’s Ravinia still hosts the Chicago Symphony, but has added popular music performances plus drama, ballet, and educational events that take place throughout the year.

To increase ticket sales, the Association formed a Coupon Sales Committee, made up of dozens of North Shore women who pre-sold bundles of tickets at a discounted rate. In 1946, under the leadership of Winnetkan Mrs. Ernst Von Ammon, the committee sold close to \$70,000 of tickets before the season opened.

In 1962, seven women trustees of the Association formed the nucleus of the first Women’s Board. Then and now, many Winnetka men and women have served or still serve on the Women’s Board or as trustees. Two of the most influential are Sandra K. Crown, who served as Women’s Board Chairman from 1972-1975, and Jeannie James. A life trustee, “Sandy” started the Friendship Booth, the precursor of the Ravinia Festival Shop. Jeannie was part of the early 1990s outreach committee that became “Reach Teach Play,” a modern representation of the Ravinia Club’s early children’s programs created “especially for families of modest means.”

Ravinia today is an enormous professionally run organization with over 80 staff and hundreds of volunteers on three boards (trustees, women’s, and associates) all working together to bring up to 140 different events to the North Shore every summer. In addition to the CSO, today’s performers range from Yo Yo Ma to John Legend to Trombone Shorty’s Voodoo Threaxdown. ■



The Chicago Symphony Orchestra has called Ravinia its summer performance home since 1936. (Photo courtesy of Ravinia Festival)

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P.O. Box 365
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