SUMMARIZING

The Grayslake Historical Society has held four interesting programs during the first half of the year. They are briefly reviewed here for all to enjoy.

On Wednesday, **February 11** the audience enjoyed a 1994 video of "The Good Ole Boys" telling stories. Charles Clow was the moderator, first introducing Jack Richardson who spoke about his family's history and their time in Grayslake. His father Orlando was a carpenter who built many of the fine homes in town. Dick Lawrence talked about the rise of the Sears Roebuck Company and the Sears estate and farm in Grayslake. Dick worked on the farm which is now part of Wildwood. Wesley Sears built the house which became the Country Squire Restaurant. Jim Davis, who owned Bill's Tavern, told about his Grandfather Schlosser who had a matrimonial agency in Grayslake. It is said that the match making service kept the local post office in business during the depression years. Wes Druce described when family and friends gathered at someone's house and talked about the old days. Wes reminisced about his family's farm which became the Straw Barn for several years and was operated by a relative. His stories included names like Charlie Kapple, Eb Harris, Chet Cozy and others. Wally Strang described his family's business and the building where the bowling alley was located. He also mentioned the pro-bowling career of his father.

The annual meeting of the Grayslake Historical Society was held on Wednesday, **March 11**. The following officers were elected to two year terms: Charlotte Renahan - President; Will Frank - Vice-president; Jim Rockwell - Secretary; Connie Dunbar & Nancy Reed - Co-treasurers; Directors Lori Baumgartner & Kathi Starzec. Continuing as board members are Chris Brenner & Jane Tiffany-Hansen. The amendments to the Society's Constitution and by-laws as printed in the January 2015 newsletter were approved. World War I letters with bios were read for the program.

Linda Willhite set the stage for the program. Though parts of the letters were censored, they still managed to give a unique account of the writers' lives in the service
of their country. Will Frank and Todd Spohnholtz alternated reading the letters, while Connie Dunbar gave the individual biographies following each letter. In a December 19, 1917 letter home Everett Hook mentioned how much the packages from home were appreciated. He also said that the Lake County boys were considered a praise-worthy group. Sailor Jake Pech said the one dollar sent from home allowed him to get a two week’s supply of cigars. He then wrote a detailed description of going through the Panama Canal. Charles Hutchinson said that he could buy eggs, milk and cheese from the farmers. He was even able to go to church and described its appearance. He asked that they keep sending the newspapers from home. Mark Neville talked about living in portable barracks, where the bunks resembled those in a Pullman car. He spent many an enjoyable evening at the YMCA. Harmon H. Smith mentioned that his outfit had been on the front line and expected to go up again to either join or relieve the regiment. He enjoyed the letters from home immensely. Maurice Murrie described the joy and feeling of security his group felt in their hearts when the Armistice actually took place. Even though they thought it might be ‘bunk’ because they’d heard that rumor for the past week. Kenneth Beake said his writing may not be legible because he tore up his finger trying to untangle the barbwire on which he had tripped while jumping for cover from enemy shelling. He described what life was like on the front. The program closed with William Basely’s lengthy letter from Verdun, France. He wrote about how the city looked after enduring 108 days of constant bombardment. He listed the many sites he had visited in the area.

Washington Street is under construction. Between Grayslake’s Lake Street and Round Lake’s Cedar Lake Road, it was once called Renehan Road. Knowing this the April 8 program of the Grayslake Historical Society focused on “The Renehan Road”.

In October 1968 the Lakeland Newspapers, which included the Grayslake Times, published this: “Effort of the Lake County Highway Dept. to eliminate confusion caused by a highway with more than one name (and sometimes three) are destined to cause much resentment. It’s a safe prediction that some of the names formally adopted by the Lake County Board of Supervisors will be accepted grudgingly at best. Some of the name changes are the height of bureaucratic effrontery. It is an insult to the citizens of west Lake County to have the names of a Waukegan street foisted on them as in the case of Washington St. which replaces Renehan, Duce and Grange Hall roads.”

With this, Charlotte Renehan began a presentation that was not only a geography lesson but a review of some of the first settlers of Avon Township and their descendants. The Renehan story begins in Ireland and continues by ship to North America before 1827 and then lands in the local area with Thomas Renehan senior traveling from Canada to the south shore of Round Lake by oxen in 1836, where he squatted. In 1843 he purchased the land, his patent signed by President Polk in 1845.

And so begins the Renehan story. His descendants were remarkable in many respects but the mid-1800s saw them gold digging and returning to the area to purchase land and farm. Devout Catholics, they worshipped initially in McHenry. Charlotte Renehan detailed four lines of Renehan descendants. They were farmers, state legislators, Hainesville village trustees, Olympic athletes, connected to the community and the south shore of Round Lake. They held various jobs locally and in Chicago. The descendent more accurately characterized as a “character” was known as G. P. In 1900 he built a hotel, barn and ice house. Known formally as Avon Park
Hotel, it was known locally, for the next forty years as Renehan's Resort. He later built a
dance pavilion and for many years the Grayslake firemen held their St. Patrick's Day
dances there. Closed in 1941, G. P.'s ownership generated controversy and even a
dearth threat. He passed in 1958 having held various local government positions. He
was active in the Republican Party. Renehan continued her detailed and precise family
tree with the third line of Ed, the only child of T. Renehan to have children.

Renehan Road no longer exists. The family name continues even though the
presentation ended with the fourth generation.

It was a chilly but pleasant evening for the May 13 program of the
Grayslake Historical Society. President Charlotte Renehan started the event by reading
excerpts from "Casy At The Bat" and Heritage Center Director Dave Oberg led the
audience in a singing "Take Me Out To The Ball Game. Society members Linda Willhite
and Chris Brenner then presented a program about baseball in Grayslake. They divided
the topic into three sections: players, fields and teams.

Hometown hero Jay Hook played major league ball from 1957 to 1964 after his
graduation from Grayslake Community High School. His career started with the
Cincinnati Reds and from there he went to the New York Mets. In 1969 Grayslake
honored Hook with a parade. It was exciting to the citizens of Grayslake to have major
league players in their town.

Gale Peregrin also graduated from Grayslake High School and was also a
pitcher. He played for the Macon Peaches, part of the Cincinnati farm system until he
developed an arm problem.

Red Faber did not leave Grayslake to play ball. Instead he played major league
ball and then came to Grayslake. Faber was a pitcher for the Chicago White Sox.
Although he was with the team at the time of the Black Sox scandal, he was not
involved. In Grayslake Faber was the manager of the Grayslake Bowling Alley. A
position he held from 1939 to 1946.

Gene Davis was the Grayslake Grade School superintendent starting in 1954.
He attended Northern Illinois University where he played college ball. His claim to fame
came when he struck out Eddie Gaetel, a midget who was employed by Bill Veeck of
the St. Louis Browns. Gaetel's strike zone was only one and a half inches and Davis
struck him out.

Jack Horenberger grew up in Grayslake where his mother owned and operated
the local deli. He played ball at Illinois Wesleyan. He tried out with the majors but
chose to stay with academics. He was a coach and athletic director at Wesleyan for
over thirty years. In 1999 the school's baseball field was named in his honor.

The baseball fields of Grayslake have progressed from a vacant lot with a rock
for a base to a professional looking high school field. Along the way local players have
played behind the former Methodist Church, at Shady Rest on Barron Boulevard and
in local fields.

In 1971 the Grayslake High School field was named in honor of Paul Subject.
Subject was the school's first baseball coach. He produced Jay Hook and Gale
Peregrin.

Falcon Field was built by Falcon Consulting Company. This company is owned
by David Peregrin, son of Gale. The Peregrins have supported baseball in Grayslake
for numerous years.
Softball City was a sports complex on Hainesville Road. The first known organized team in Grayslake was the Athletics of the 1890s era. By the 1930s the Merchants were the home team. In later years the Grayslake American Legion sponsored teams. Today, in addition to the local high school teams, the Rams and the Knights, there are teams for the youths of the community. Teams play on fields at schools and on those maintained by the Grayslake Park District. Grayslake continues to support and embrace the nation’s favorite pastime with Baseball in Grayslake.

**COMING**

**Wednesday, September 2** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 PM. Historical Society Archives. Open to Public. Free.

**Wednesday, September 9** - Grayslake Historical Society program. 7:30 PM. Robert Smyth. “Barron Boulevard - Paving The Way”. Program will explain why Route 83 is called Barron Boulevard, why it does not follow the path of the railroad and how it promoted Grayslake’s growth. Refreshments. Open to Public. Free.

**Thursday, September 10** - Lake County Civil War Roundtable. 7:00 PM. Frank Crawford presents “The Civil War in Missouri: Retribution of Execution”. Open to Public. Free.

**Saturday, September 26** - Grayslake Historical Society event. Homecoming open house for alumni. Penny Candy day.

**Saturday, September 27** - Grayslake History Museum. Last day of Sox vs. Cubs exhibit

**Sunday, October 4** - Grayslake Historical Society event. 18th annual Living History Tour of the Grayslake Cemetery. 1:30 and 2:30 People portrayed will include Ellen Whitehead Kuebker, Walter Godfrey, George Frazier, Charles Thomson, Hannah Holmes, Emily Hook Strang. All of these were connected with a business in downtown Grayslake at the turn of the previous century. Donations appreciated.

**Wednesday, October 7** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 PM. Historical Society Archives. Open to Public. Free.

**Thursday, October 8** - Lake County Civil War Roundtable. 7:00 PM. Rich Garling present “A Brief History of the 9th Virginia Cavalry”. Open to public. Free.

**Wednesday, October 14** - Grayslake Historical Society program. 7:30 PM. Linda Willhite presents “Marriage, Murder and Mayhem: The Joseph Schlosser Story”. This nationally known correspondence club put Grayslake on the map but not always in a positive way. Refreshments. Open to Public. Free.

**Saturday, October 24** - Grayslake History Museum exhibit opening. 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. Exhibit highlighting past and present restaurants of Grayslake and the people who made them a vibrant part of Grayslake’s history. Free samples of food made from Grayslake recipes. Open to Public. Donations appreciated.

**Saturday, October 31** - Grayslake Historical Society event. Halloween Trick or Treat. Costumed Society members will pass out candy in the Museum courtyard during Grayslake’s Business Trick or Treat.

**Wednesday, November 4** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 PM. Historical Society Archives. Open to Public. Free.

**Wednesday, November 11** - Grayslake Historical Society program. 7:30 PM. Charlotte Renehan presents “From Catalogs to Cuisine: The Story of the Sears Family. This
program includes the story of the Country Squire restaurant which was housed in the former Sears Mansion. Refreshments. Open to Public. Free.

**Saturday, November 14** - Grayslake Heritage Center program at the Grayslake Village Hall. 2:00 PM. Professional storyteller Brian “Fox” Ellis will give a presentation about American history as seen though the eyes of Native American leader Black Hawk. The Black Hawk War and its treaty opened up the settlement of Northern Illinois, including the Grayslake area.

**Friday, November 27** - Grayslake History Museum. Giving Trees exhibit opens. 5:00 to 8:00 PM. Grayslake Chamber of Commerce Holiday Market in Community Room. Open to Public. Free.

**Wednesday, December 2** - Search and Share genealogy discussion group. 2:00 PM. Historical Society Archives. Open to Public. Free.

**Sunday, December 13** - Grayslake Historical Society event. Holiday Open House 12:00 to 4:00 PM. Refreshments. Children’s Craft. Photo Op in vintage sleigh. Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus from 2:00 to 4:00 PM. Warren Township High School Alumni Choir at 2:00 PM. Open to Public. Free.

This calendar is subject to changes and additions. Consult www.grayslakehistory.org or visit Facebook page Grayslake Historical Society for updates.

**DONATIONS**

The Grayslake Historical Society wishes to thank the following people for their generous monetary donations between January 1, 2015 and July 31, 2015: Robert Barton, Bette Best, Barbara Brand, Dick & Maureen Blasius, Jack & Maureen Clooney, Clarence Collins, Frank & Darlene Dorfler, Bill Eiserman, Kitty Flary, Donna Freiburger, Mike Fritz, Marilyn Fraser, Marion Grinnell, Bill & Katy Hall, Larry Herzog, Jim & Marjie Jobes, Dick & Nancy Johannsen, Jim & Leslie Kaiser, Roy & Sue Kellogg, Eddie Krumery, Miss Mary’s Peppermint Pre-School, John & Elizabeth McDonald, Karl, Marci & Michael Molek, Ted & Barb Mueller, Marjorie Rasmussen, Joel & Nancy Reed, Charlotte Renahan, Nancy Rinker, Doug & Bonnie Rockenbach, Orrell and Marcia Ruth, St. Gilbert First Grade, John Smiskol, Helen Thielen, Janet Trieschmann, Jack Wightman, Harold Wilkensen, Linda Willhite.

The Grayslake Historical Society thanks the following people for adding to its collections between January 1, 2015 and July 31, 2015: Susan Missing - Summer Days parade photos, Lakeland newspaper bags; Joseph Ewald - Hertal threshing photo, Fremont Township Examinations of Title; Charles Clow Jr. - First State Bank pass book, 1964 Grayslake High School prom dance card, United Protestant Church plates, Stock share of Grayslake Yacht Club, American Legion shirts; Jim Rockwell - Grayslake Middle School yearbooks, Washington D.C. field trip photos, and class pictures; Lake Villa Historical Society - Country Squire match books, 1918 school histories, house photo, newspaper clippings; Marion Grinnell - Lake County Fair commemorative envelopes, pins and buttons, Grayslake Lions Club button, Pratser’s mini tool kit; Anonymous - advertising pencil, Lions Club mug; James Rogers - Indian Tribes book; Cynthia Lee - house photos and history; Bette Best - World War 1 uniform, pictures and military items; Kay Holden - Parkway Foods coupon cover, phone book cover, 1902 Grayslake Grade School book, Sheryl Druce Roche - Grayslake Middle School records;
Cara Lahti - Grayslake Gelatin container; Mary Jo Luizzo - aerial views of Grayslake; Gary Justus - Grayslake Dairy milk bottle.

In-kind donations were graciously accepted between January 1, 2015 and July 31, 2015 from Linda Fassbinder, Kitty Flary, Marie Frandsen, Mary Friis, Joanne Lawrence, Nancy Reed, Charlotte Renehan, Jane Tiffany-Hansen, Linda Willhite.

A MEMORY

Corky Bell lives in McHenry but he attended the local schools while growing up. He recently posted a memory of downtown Grayslake on the Facebook page “You Know You’re from Grayslake If...” Here is what he wrote:

“A lot has changed through the years, this is what I remember of the block (north side of Center between Whitney and Slusser Streets) during the 50s and 60s. On the NW corner of Whitney and Center was the hardware store. The next building down was Fisher’s Barber Shop. (The hardware store acquired the building and made it their paint shop.) Next was Hall’s Certified Foods which after Halls moved into their new building at 10 N Lake Street (Parkway Foods) became Olson’s Apparel. The next building was Rich Furniture which then became the Library. The next two buildings were owned by the Andersons, one being a shoe store and the other a woman’s apparel store. Then came the Grayslake Paint and Glass. Next was Billings Bakery which became Sonny’s Bakery in the mid to late 60s. Hazel’s Gift Shop was next. Then came the Lally house which back in the 50s was Dr. Fuentes and Milanes’ office in the front section. The house was up to Center Street and then moved back to its present day position. Then there was Well’s Appliance followed by George’s Barber which became Paul’s after George left. Miller Brothers Heating and Cooling was next. The next building, 102 Center Street had a little of everything from Staples Electronics to Roger Lutz Insurance. Last but not least on the NE corner of Center and Slusser was Charlie Clow Insurance with Dr. Weller DD in the rear section.”

A PAGE FROM THE PAST

Several Grayslake families have donated their family trees, scrapbooks and stories to the Grayslake Historical Society. The following is from a donated book of memories written by Douglas Shanks who was born in 1917 in Hainesville. The story is titled “Palm Sunday - 1920 - Tornado”.

“I remember being herded or shoved into the upstairs stairway. The piano rolled across the floor. There was a hanging light in that room it was swinging from the ceiling. Mother had seen it getting darker and the wind was very violent. Dorothy (editor’s note - later Mrs. Robert Smith of Lake Street, Grayslake) was on the back porch in the high chair. Mother got her and got back in the house as the wind removed the porch and all that was on it.

Afterwards the weather became very calm. We then packed up our possessions and needs and walked to Grandma Shanks house (Adelia Shanks and Ezra Shanks) at the end of Renehan Road (editor’s correction - Hainesville Road) and Route 120 in Hainesville, Illinois. We had to walk because of the mess of rubbish strewn all over. Mother and Bessie Ragsdale talk of the straw struck into the post.

Rags, as we called her, was a good friend of Mother (Belle Allen Shanks.)

Our house had stood south of Route 120 and east of the railroad with school house to the east about 7000-800 feet west of Grandma Shanks. It was moved about three feet off the foundation in a tilted position.
The barn at Grandpa Shanks was also blown-down with some horses and cows inside. They were pinned under some of the beams. I don't know how many were lost or permanently injured.

Later the house was put on wheels and was moved about a mile to the west, across the St. Paul Railroad track, a little distance east of the Squaw Creek, still south of Route 120.

There they build a barn also I believe it was with used lumber from the tornado. Plus the barns at Grandpa's place had to be replaced.

I don't know all that happened but as I grew and became older, it became very obvious that the finances were in severely troubled times. Insurance was practically unheard of at that time and they could not pull out of their loss. Over extension and take over evidently cause the loss of the farm.”

The Grayslake Historical Society is a treasure trove of information because of donations like this. Please consider writing your memories and having the Society preserve them for future generations to learn from and enjoy.

EXHIBITS

The “Sox vs. Cubs” exhibit will close on September 26. Near the end of October the temporary gallery will reopen with a new exhibit. The general theme of the new exhibit is food but it will concentrate on Grayslake restaurants, past and present, and the families who made them happen.

The Upper Gallery exhibit, “Grayslake Now and Then” has garnered many positive comments. Large black and white photos with smaller colored images show the changes in various structures around town. Each photo is appropriately identified. In late November this exhibit will be replaced by the Giving Tree project.

There are three lobby display cases. At least one is changed each month. Items from the Society's collections and from private collections are featured. At the present time two of the displays are related to food in some way to introduce the coming exhibit in the temporary gallery.

The kitchen display is the Annex is changed periodically, usually with the seasons.

OTHER NEWS

The Grayslake Heritage Center and Grayslake Historical Society received a Certificate of Excellence from the Illinois State Historical Society for its exhibit “Over There: Grayslake in the Great War”. It will be receiving the same award from the Illinois Association of Museums.

Wilbur, the fire truck, had its rear left fender repaired by students at the Lake County Vocational High School.

Society member Kay Holden died in August. For many years she worked at the Grayslake Library. Her husband Harold is the master carpenter who has made display cases and gallery benches for the Museum.

Memorials have been established for Helen H. Hall and Society member Carlyle Rasmussen.

On July 18 the streets of Grayslake received four inches of rain. Of which, three and one-half inches were in the lower level of the Heritage Center. The lower level is the office of the Grayslake Historical Society with its archives and collections storage areas. Fortunately staff members were in the building and witnessed the encroaching
water. With the help of the Grayslake Fire Department, Grayslake Historical Society board members and others who moved items to safety, very little was lost or damaged. The carpeting was saved but new dry wall is being installed. Many artifacts and books are temporarily stored in the Annex. The Fire Department is graciously garaging Wilbur, the fire truck, until restoration is complete.

A cut from a fallen tree in Grayslake’s Central Park is now an artifact of the Society and will be used to tell the story of the EF-1 tornado which tore a path through Grayslake on August 2. The Grayslake Park District obtained and donated the cut.

_WW I Letters to the Home Front_, a book of correspondence by Grayslake men, will soon be available for purchase at the Museum for $20.00. Nothing tells the stories of the Great War like the first-hand accounts of the soldiers. It is a treasure trove of information written by people of our community.