



the

Moorings

GROSSE POINTE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

established 1945

Winter 2015

Vol. 32 No. 4



Celebrating 70 years

The fourth in a series of ornaments that celebrate the spirit of Grosse Pointe features the Water Fountain in Grosse Pointe Shores.

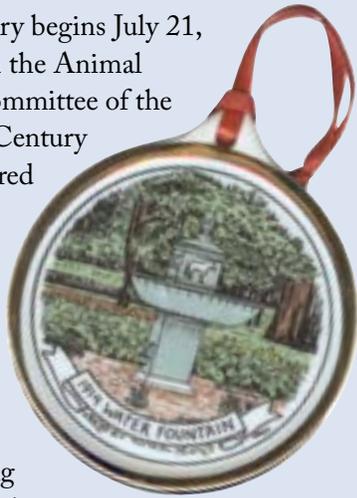
The story begins July 21, 1913, when the Animal Welfare Committee of the Twentieth Century Club appeared before the Grosse Pointe Shores Council to request installation of a drinking fountain for horses

and dogs. The group suggested the center of Vernier Road near Jefferson Avenue (later changed to Lake Shore Road) as a proper location for the fountain to be funded by the "Good Cheer Club" of the Girls Friendly Society.

The location was approved and the fountain installed on April 15, 1914. In addition to providing water for horses and dogs, it featured a bubbler on the side for pedestrians.

Vernier Road's widening left the fountain dangerously close to the roadway. An automobile struck it in 1940, breaking the supporting rods and causing the cast-iron fountain to "explode" into its component parts.

Somehow the parts were gathered and reassembled, and the completely restored fountain was relocated to the George Osius Municipal Park. When landscape design plans for the renovated city offices were drawn, the fountain was moved to a "place of honor" in front of the main entrance.



News of Grosse Pointe Past

Sure enough hurricane Jaoquin was strong enough to move *News of Grosse Pointe Past* indoors.

The rain began just as the outdoor play was scheduled to begin. Inside of the Provencal-Weir house, the cast settled in the bay window.

The play was a story about a live radio production, airing stories about actual residents and events that occurred in Grosse Pointe history.

The stories were enhanced with sound effects, managed and directed by Beth Teagan.

Holding the show together was announcer, Rick Burt-Willson. Mary Stelmark, Pat O'Brien, Izzy Donnelly, Sue Lewandowski and Fritz Burt were the reporters.

Special make-up for Le Lutein (the werewolf), played by Jeff Willson, was created by Melissa Kay Willson.

A film student at Oakland University, Melissa was also the videographer for the production.

News of Grosse Pointe Past will be aired by the Grosse Pointe War Memorial (WMTV) and available on the Grosse Pointe Historical Society website.

Second Saturdays Features

Second Saturday programs offer adults and children an opportunity to spend some time with our past.

Tours of the oldest farm house in the area are conducted between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

In addition, researching family, property, community events can be accomplished at the Moran Resource Center between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m.

At the same time, children can work on especially designed craft projects. Crafts have been used by our ancestors since the beginning of time. People prepared their handmade items for trading, selling, spiritual or artistic expression. They created personal and household articles like sewing clothes, making clay pots or creating toys for children.

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society Second Saturday Children's Workshop provides a unique opportunity for children to partake in some of these activities in an historic home.

"Making handmade projects not only gives children aesthetic pleasure, it gives them confidence in their abilities to make individual decisions and choices, said Izzy Donnelly, director of education. "It helps them use their imagination to create their own entertainment and add beauty to their lives and homes."

Working in the Provencal-Weir House is an added bonus that gives children a sense of our past. It reinforces how much work had to be done for day to day items. "Each of the projects is carefully selected so the children can do the work and proudly bring them home to display," said Donnelly, "They are working with their hands and are in control of their own outcomes. It is very empowering".



Thanksgiving 2014. Children made their own table runners for their Thanksgiving tables.

Grosse Pointe Historical Society

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Stories from the Collection...

For this issue, we have two related stories from and about the collections at the Moran Resource Center.

The Grosse Pointe Historical Society recognizes that partnerships are essential for realizing our mission to preserve, protect and promote the history of the area.

The relationship between the Society and St. Clair Shores Public Library has included sharing genealogies, maps and history. In addition we learn more about the area and add to our collections.

The first encounter occurred over the summer, when Izzy Donnelly, collections manager, received the following e-mail:

My name is Lornie McCormick-Goodhart and I live in Portland, OR. I have a deed in my possession that my father found at a White Elephant sale in Grosse Pointe many, many years ago. The deed is for property and it is signed by James Madison and James Monroe. I have no doubt the deed is authentic, but I was told by my father that the deed was the original land deed for where now sits the historic Edsel Ford home. I want to find out if this information is for sure and being that I am miles away, I was wondering if you would know where I can turn to have this deed researched so I can confirm this history which I have been told.

A family trip brought Ms. McCormick-Goodhart to Grosse Pointe in July. She showed the deed to Izzy and some of the volunteers.

The deed identifies the Renaud ribbon farm property which passed thru Wayne County and Erin County.

In checking the historic maps of Wayne County at the Moran Resource Center, Izzy discovered that part of the area identified in the deed could not be located. A call to Cynthia Bieniek, archivist and librarian at the St. Clair Shores Public Library proved fruitful – she had an early Erin County map.

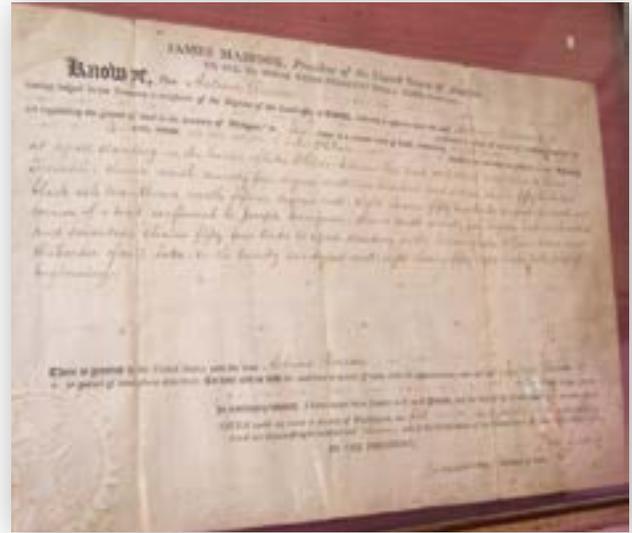
Mr. and Mrs. McCormick-Goodhart, Izzy and Cynthia met at the St. Clair Shores Public Library and confirmed that the Renaud farm had been on part of Gaukler Point, currently part of the Edsel & Eleanor Ford Estate.

The second story also involves Cynthia Bieniek. In October, Cynthia emailed the Society wanting to donate a book to our library.

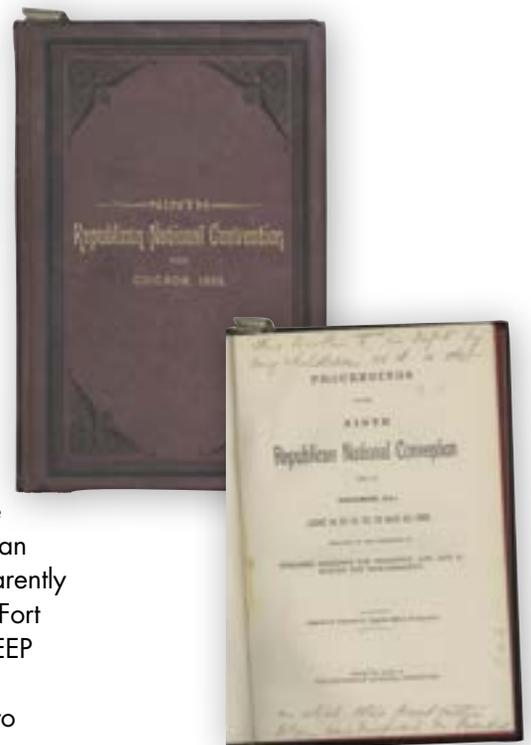
During a recent antique store visit I ran across a book with ties to the Russell A. Alger family that I personally purchased and would like to donate to Grosse Pointe Historical Society. The book is the 1888 Chicago Republican Convention when Russell A. Alger was nominated for President. It was apparently owned by his daughter who inscribed it with her name and address on W. Fort Street in Detroit. She married a Sheldon in 1887. She inscribed in pencil KEEP on the inside page and wrote a note to her children mentioning that their grandfather had been nominated for the presidency at this convention and to keep the book.

Apparently, one of the Sheldon descendants sold the book during an “estate sale” from their condo/apartment in St. Clair Shores and was purchased by the shop owner.

“This book is a wonderful addition to our library, said Izzy. It adds another layer of knowledge and understanding about the involvement of local residents in civic life, both local and national.”



Presidents James Madison and James Monroe signed this ribbon farm deed.



1888 Republican National Committee proceedings

Alfred B. and Ruth S. Moran Resource Center Update

During recent years, the Grosse Pointe Historical Society collections have grown. Members have generously given us family memorabilia and other items that have been meticulously cataloged and stored for others to use. But when we were rapidly reaching our storage capacity and there was no way to add space, we closed our doors for a few weeks to find solutions.

The result is a complete overhaul of The Moran Resource Center. It has been rearranged and reorganized to maximize use of space and storage.

Newly hired archivist Kit Greening worked with Trustee Cathy Walker of Arkay-Walker, who helped map the space so that every square inch could be used effectively. Cathy's expert movers carefully relocated large cabinets from one end of the Resource Center to the other. A storage unit was rented to temporarily house containers while we cleaned and reorganized the main floor and basement.

With the efforts of staff, neighbors, friends and family, we now have a welcoming reading area for visitors, and organized office space in the front of the Resource Center. The center of the room contains all of the archival storage units. The rear portion of the room is equipped with newly donated office furniture that provides quiet space for our volunteers and researchers.



Trustee Cathy Walker directs the movers during the rearrangement of the Moran Resource Center.

Second Saturdays Features

Continued from page 2

For December the children will sew a Christmas angel ornament that their families will treasure for years to come.

In January children will work with melt and pour soaps using molds of snowflakes, snowmen and gingerbread shapes for the 'powder room'.

In February the children will make heart shaped wreaths for Valentine's Day.

All Saturday events will take place from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Provençal-Weir House, 376 Kercheval. Cost is \$20.00 per session for members, \$25.00 for non-members.

Reservations must be made by the Thursday before each event. Call 313-884-7010.



1823 Society Members

Chip Berschback, Attorney At Law
chipberlaw@yahoo.com

Breckels Massage Therapy Inc.
www.breckelsmassagetherapy.com

Cathy Champion, Realtor
www.cchampion.com

Corbett Consulting
www.juliecorbett.com

Edsel & Eleanor Ford House
www.fordhouse.org

James R. Fikany Real Estate Co.
www.fikany.com

Fortuna Piano
www.fortunapiano.com

Grigg Graphic Services, Inc.
www.grigg.com

Grosse Pointe Florists, Inc.
www.grossepointeflorists.com

Grosse Pointe Rotary
www.grossepointerotary.org

Grosse Pointe War Memorial
www.warmemorial.org

Higbie Maxon Agney Agency
www.higbiemaxon.com

KM Financial
www.kmfinancialonline.com

Lakeland Manor
www.lakelandmanor.com

Ed Lazar Insurance Agency, Inc.
www.edlazarinsurance.com

Beline Obeid Realty
www.beline.com

The Little Blue Book
www.bluebooklocal.com

Pointe Magazine
www.grossepointemagazine.com

Rose Pest Solutions
www.rosepestsolutions.com

Cathy Walker, Interior Design
arkay01@aol.com

Wayne County Comm. College District
www.wccd.edu.com

Windmill Pointe Brewing Co.
www.windmillpointebrewing.com

NEW BOXWOODS: Improving our curb appeal

Television cameras were rolling at the Provencal-Weir House on Oct. 21, as Mil Hurley taped an episode of *Pointes of Horticulture* featuring the new landscape design for the Grosse Pointe Historical Society.

Along with Norah Williams, trustee, Mil created a look for the front and side yards of the oldest home in Grosse Pointe that reflects how the house may have looked in the 1860s.



On the porch Norah Williams and Izzy Donnelly talk with the videographer. Pam Meyer and Sherwin Bernardo prepare for planting.



Pam Meyer removing hostas.



Mil Hurley interviews Penny Soby and Izzy Donnelly for *Pointes of Horticulture* while the camera rolls.

Because it was a farm house, there “would have been a vegetable garden, maybe fruit trees and small farm animals in the yard,” said Mil, owner of A Southern Gardener.

Pointes of Horticulture airs regularly on WMTV on Comcast, AT&T and WOW.

Plaque Request

The annual process of reviewing historic properties that will be considered for historic plaque designation in May 2016 has begun.

Throughout the year, The Grosse Pointe Historical Society researches properties, both residential and commercial, to identify those worthy of recognition. Nominations are accepted from the community, property owners and Trustees.

“The property review process for historic plaques is non-competitive,” according to Greg Jakub, chairman, Historic Plaque Committee. “We are fortunate that there are so many historic properties in Grosse Pointe that deserve recognition. Our task is to discover the documentation, including ample photos, that helps us bring these properties into the spotlight, one property at a time.”



The Committee maintains a list of nominated properties and begins a series of meetings in the fall to select possible plaque recipients. The basic evaluation criteria are:

- a. The property must be at least 50 years old.
- b. The property must have some documented connection to the social, cultural, economic or political history of the Grosse Pointes.

Continued on page 6

La Belle Country Store features unique gifts



La Belle Country Store features unique gifts that celebrate Grosse Pointe and its heritage.

The fourth in a Christmas ornament series features the 1914 horse trough in Grosse Pointe Shores.

Tonnancour Volume I and Volume II are available.



Plaque Request

Continued from page 5.

- c. **The property must be architecturally interesting and significant and be highly maintained.**
- d. **There must exist adequate written or oral history and photographic documentation of the property including its interior and exterior architectural details. This documentation must be readily accessible to the committee.**

In the late fall/winter the Committee reviews the list of potential properties and selects several that meet the basic criteria.

The Committee also considers the geographic, historic and architectural diversity of the Grosse Pointes in the evaluation process. The candidate property owners are sent a letter requesting their participation in the property research, documentation and award presentation process.

Once the owner agrees to participate, the committee spends several months researching and documenting the property's historic integrity. By spring, the two or three properties that have the most complete and detailed documentation available are designated to receive plaques. The bronze plaque is affixed to the property by GPHS and an audio/visual presentation highlighting the award properties is created. The property owners are invited to the GPHS Pointes of History Celebration in May for public recognition.

One Room School House Association

In partnership, the Grosse Pointe Woods Historical Commission, the Grosse Pointe Historical Society and the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House will host the annual Michigan One Room Schoolhouse Association Conference (MORSA) in Grosse Pointe on Saturday, May 21, 2016.

The focal point of the conference will be the 1890 Cook Schoolhouse, which was moved in 2006 and restored during the past several years. Commission members will detail the history, acquisition and move to city property.

In addition, participants will go to the Provençal-Weir House where they can view and enjoy the charming home that the GPHS has lovingly restored and cared for, and visit the One Room Schoolhouse. Society members will give the background and current use of its facilities.

Then, it is on to the Edsel & Eleanor Ford House for a guided tour of the house and grounds including the newly constructed bridge to Bird Island and the recently installed ecosystem, which cleans and filters Ford House property storm water before it enters Lake St. Clair.

"This is a great opportunity to showcase our wonderful Grosse Pointe community to people from other areas of the state," said Izzy Donnelly, GPHS director of education.

Folks from MORSA will provide speakers on historic topics. Coffee, breakfast sweets and a light lunch will be served.

Details on the program will be provided as the date approaches. All GPHS members are invited to join MORSA for this event. The cost will be \$35.00 for the day.

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 Visit www.gphistorical.org
 for a convenient way to do both. Select
 the link "Join & Support GPHS."

Dr. Frank Bicknell Educational Lecture Series Spring 2016

Yamasaki In Detroit: A Search For Serenity John Gallagher

Wednesday, March 16, 2016 7:30p.m. Cook Schoolhouse, 25025 Mack Ave., GPW

Although his best-known project was New York's World Trade Center, architect Minoru Yamasaki (1912–1986) worked to create distinctive buildings around the world. Yamasaki lived and worked for the last half of his life in Detroit and produced many important designs that range from public buildings to offices and private residences.

In *Yamasaki in Detroit: A Search for Serenity*, author John Gallagher presents both a biography and an examination of Yamasaki's working practices, with an emphasis on the architect's search for a style that would express his artistic goals.

John Gallagher is a veteran journalist and author. Born in New York City, he joined the *Detroit Free Press* in 1987 to cover urban and economic redevelopment efforts, a post he still holds.

Detroit In World War I Elizabeth Clemens

Wednesday, April 20, 2016 7:30p.m. Cook Schoolhouse, 25025 Mack Ave., GPW

World War I was the catalyst that ushered in themes that would define the 20th century: industrialization, urbanization, and the struggle for equality between social classes, gender and race. During this time, Detroit was a city rapidly on the rise, with spectacular economic, industrial, and population growth. The war provided a unifying theme to a city struggling to define itself and caused its people to come together in new and unexpected ways to support the war effort at home and abroad.

Detroit in World War I offers a visual exploration of a city and a people caught in a time of dynamic change—from the men who served the cause to the communities they left behind

Elizabeth Clemens is an audiovisual archivist at the Walter P. Reuther Library, Archives of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University and a resident of Grosse Pointe Farms.

A Perfect Union: The Centennial of the Marriage of Eleanor Clay & Edsel Ford

Wednesday, May 18, 2016 Eleanor & Edsel Ford House, 1100 Lakeshore Road, Grosse Pte. Shores

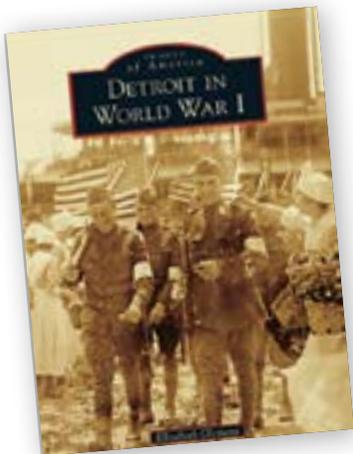
Eleanor Clay & Edsel Ford married a century ago on November 1, 1916.

A decade later they planned their estate at Gaukler Point Estate, which would become such an important part of the Grosse Pointe Community.

“These extraordinary people were generous during a time of economic depression; true connoisseurs when the art world was experimenting in new directions; and accomplished business people, helping to shape the auto industry as it is known today. But most importantly, they created a home for their children, grandchildren, and friends.” – Edsel & Eleanor Ford House web site

When Eleanor died in 1976 at the age of 80, the *Detroit Free Press* noted, “Mrs. Ford's greatest gift to the public, indeed, her greatest legacy, is her home, which she had transferred to a trust with the request that it be used for the benefit of the public.” With this final act of generosity, this home and furnishings remain intact, as a window to the past, and to enrich the lives of future generations

Mike Skinner is a Detroit and Ford History expert and Past President of Grosse Pointe Historical Society.



Edsel and Eleanor Ford
Photo courtesy of Benson Ford
Research Center at The Henry Ford.

ON THE COVER

In this issue, we offer a photograph we discovered in our archives while searching for a winter scene in our archives. This scene of a boy learning to skate is timeless. From that day to this, we continue to skate on Lake St. Clair. We plan to share an image from our archive collection in each issue.



Grosse Pointe Historical Society

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HOLIDAY PARTY

*Please join the Trustees and Staff of
The Grosse Pointe Historical Society*



Celebrate the holiday season,
Friday, Dec. 11 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
at the **Provencal-Weir House.**

Food
Beverage
Entertainment
LaBelle Country Store

