



Opening a New Door

Grand Opening on September 16th

Our members, donors, and the whole community are invited to the Grand Opening of our new museum on Saturday, September 16th, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. with refreshments, ribbon cuttings, tours, and family fun. The day will include the opening of the new special exhibit *From the Home Front to the Battle Front: Oak Park, River Forest and World War I*, which marks the 100th anniversary of the United States entering The Great War, as it was then known (see more on page 2).



We plan to dedicate the entire building and “cut the ribbon” on new features including a custom-made replica front door, building signage, and the second floor public spaces. Although we have been open with regular hours on the first floor since mid-June during our “soft opening” phase of the building (featuring our first exhibit, *OPRF from A*

to Z), the second floor cannot open to the public until an exterior staircase is installed, which is scheduled for late August. The second floor includes more exhibit room, as well as space for meetings, offices and storage.

The museum is open now from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Wednesday through Saturday. Admission is always free for members and is just \$5 for Oak Park and River Forest residents who are not members (\$3 for students ages 8 to 18; free for children age 7 and under). The

admission fee for non-resident adults is \$7. Expanded hours of operation are being considered for later in the fall and 2018.

The fun begins outside on September 16th at 10 a.m. with coffee and refreshments. At 10:30, there will be brief remarks, a building dedication, and a ribbon cutting. Visitors can take a self-guided tour of the building afterwards, and a raffle of merchandise and giveaways will be held later. From 2 until 4 p.m., the Oak Park Fire Department will park a modern fire engine in front of the building for children to tour, in remembrance of the building’s original service as a firehouse from 1898 until 1916. Families also will be invited to have fun with old-fashioned games and toys.

We’ll also be celebrating the birthday of bicycling photographer Philander Barclay (born September 16, 1878), whose legacy is reflected in the hundreds of his photos in our collection, his iconic bicycle that occupies a prominent place on the wall of the Museum, and his avocation as a one-man Historical Society for our villages.



"From the Home Front to the Battle Front"

Remembers the Local Impact of World War I

Special Exhibit Will Debut at Museum's Grand Opening

An African American soldier. A Red Cross nurse. A Gold Star mother. A Medal of Honor recipient. These and other stories of service and sacrifice by Oak Park and River Forest citizens during World War I are recalled in "From the Home Front to the Battle Front: Oak Park, River Forest and World War I," the inaugural special exhibit at the Oak Park River Forest Museum. This exhibit, marking the centenary of the United States entering "The War to End All Wars," will debut at our Grand Opening on September 16th and run until the end of the year.

The exhibit combines vintage artifacts and documents from our collection including photographs, uniforms, patriotic pins, and more to show how our community responded to the war; all set against a backdrop of extraordinary period posters, generously lent to us by private collector Jane Ranshaw especially for this exhibit.

In conjunction with the exhibition, two special lectures will be presented at the Museum, marking the first time we have been able to present programming like this in our own venue.

On Tuesday, October 24th at 7:30 pm, historian

and author Robert Mueller offers his multimedia presentation "American Doughboys in the First World War." Mueller takes us on a trip through the battlefields of Northern France, describing the events, people, and places and America's role in the defeat of



Germany. He reviews famous engagements such as Belleau Wood, Cantigny, and Meuse-Argonne with images of what the battlefields look like today. Mueller concludes with the enormous changes that the conflict brought to warfare, society, and populations around the world.

Then, on Veterans Day, Saturday, November 11th at 2:00 P.M., Historical Society volunteer and University of Illinois history professor emeritus Bob Messer presents "Seeing is Believing: Reading American WWI Posters 100 Years Later." Messer takes us through the posters on display as artifacts of what has been called "the poster war"; the first mass media campaign in history aimed at

mobilizing Americans to participate in the war, both over there and over here. He puts these remarkable images in their wartime context as both art and propaganda and encourages us to read them from our perspective a century later.

This exhibit and the lectures are cosponsored by the Oak Park River Forest Museum and the Oak Park Public Library and are made possible as part of "World War I and America," a 2-year national initiative of Library of America presented in partnership with The Gilder Lehrman

Institute of American History, the National World War I Museum and Memorial, and other organizations, with generous support from The National Endowment for the Humanities.



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE GREAT UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, October 22, 1:00 P.M.

26th Annual Cemetery Walk Puts Spotlight on Stories of the Immigrant Experience



This year's walking tour of Forest Home Cemetery puts the spotlight on immigrants who left their mark on the United States. The theme is *Immigrants: They Get the Job Done*, referencing the Broadway show *Hamilton* and the ongoing national debate about the role of immigrants in our society. The walk will include costumed actors telling the stories of labor leaders August Spies from Germany and Emma Goldman from the Russian Empire, who fought for workers' rights; Leila Moss Martin, a one-time Austin resident, who helped Czech immigrants in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood by founding the Gads Hill Settlement House, which is still serving the Pilsen community to this day; a gathering of a diverse group of immigrants who will "tell it like it was," and more. Between these stops, your guide will provide commentary on other notable monuments and people interred here.



Join us just inside the main gates of Forest Home Cemetery at 863 Des Plaines Avenue in Forest Park on Sunday October 22. Ticket sales begin at 12:30 p.m. with the first guided tour departing at 1:00 pm. Tour groups will leave approximately every 10 minutes until 2:00 p.m. The guided walking tour takes approximately 2 hours. Tickets are \$10 for members and \$15 for non-members and may be purchased on site at the cemetery on the day of the event or in advance online at www.oprfhistory.org or by telephone at (708) 848-6755.



More Events You Won't Want to Miss This Fall

- **Special Presentation** on the new Oak Park River Forest Museum by Jan Dressel, Museum President Monday, September 11 at 10 a.m. at the River Forest Public Library, 735 Lathrop Ave. **Free Event**
- **Open House Chicago** - Saturday & Sunday, October 14 & 15, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
The Oak Park River Forest Museum is pleased to be participating once again in the Chicago Architecture Foundation's free public festival that offers behind-the-scenes access to more than 200 buildings across Chicagoland. **Free Event**
- **What's It Worth?** - Saturday, November 4 (Location and times to be announced soon. Watch for updates.)
Treasure or trash? Bring those mysterious antiques, jewelry, and memorabilia to this "Roadshow"-style event where professional appraisers will examine your items and estimate their market value.
- **Holiday Open House** - Sunday, December 3, 1 to 4 p.m. at the Oak Park River Forest Museum.
Please join us as we celebrate our first Holiday Season in our new home! **Free Event**

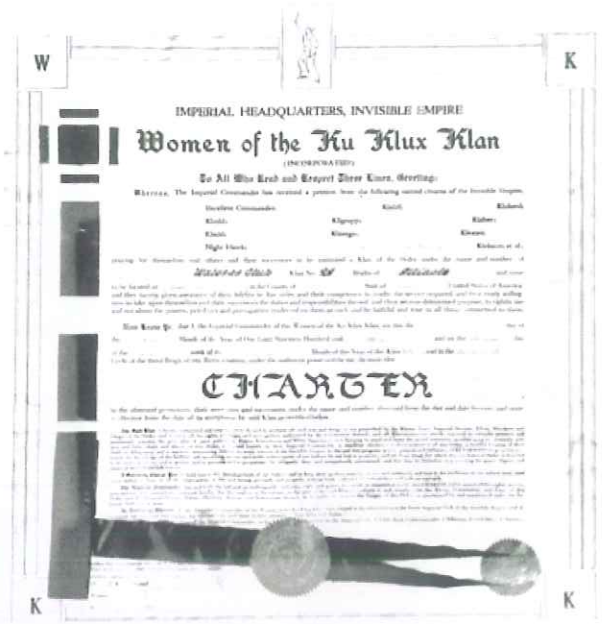


From the KKK to “Hate has no home here”

By Sarah Doherty, Assistant Professor of History, North Park University

As I take my son on daily strolls through our south Oak Park neighborhood, it is impossible to miss all the yard and window signs with some variation of the themes “All Are Welcome Here” or “Hate Has No Home Here.” Every time I read these signs I cannot help but think, “What would the Klanswoman who used to live in that house think of this?” Yes, it is a bit odd that I committed to memory the former addresses of dozens of members of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan (WKKK), but they have been my constant research companions for over a decade.

For those who have had the opportunity to check out the Oak Park River Forest Museum’s new home, you may have noticed a curious artifact mounted on the wall. Some visitors have questioned the inclusion of an official charter for the Oak Park chapter of the WKKK. The visceral reaction to such an artifact is warranted given the contemporary image that Oak Park projects as a community that is open and inclusive where all indeed are welcome. The WKKK charter serves as a reminder that the village of Oak Park one century ago was a very different place. It also begs the question: why include unflattering chapters in the history of Oak Park and River Forest?

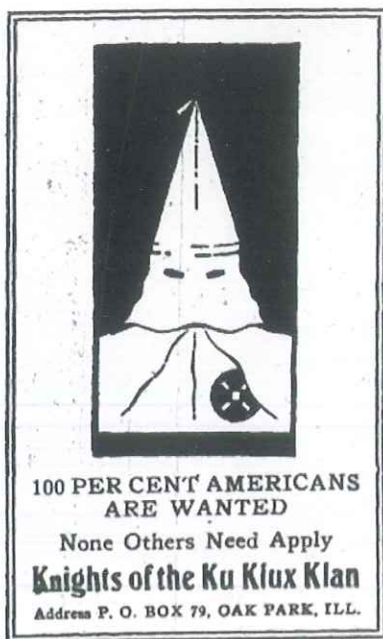


The 1926 charter of the Oak Park Chapter of the WKKK on display at the OPRF Museum

My relationship with the Historical Society of OPRF began in 2005 while I was studying for a master’s degree in public history and museum studies at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. While fact checking the book *Suburban Promised Land*, I came across a curious women’s group called the Walosas Club. When I checked the original documents, they seemed like the benign administrative records of any organization until I flipped to the WKKK official records-keeping letterhead. As an American historian I was simultaneously intrigued and repulsed by the presence of the Klan in the Chicagoland area. What started as a summer internship led me to pursue the topic of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan in my doctoral studies. I dedicated the better part of a decade to scouring archives and special collections throughout the Midwest for primary source material on the Klan. I began my research thinking I was simply writing a study of the WKKK, but over time I realized I was also telling a story about community identity.

Although the revived Ku Klux Klan of the 1910s to 1920s was born in the American South, its influence extended far beyond the former Confederate states. The Klan successfully adapted its message and expanded its dominion across the entire nation and particularly in the urban North. Forty percent of Klansmen hailed from the states of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. The revived Klan

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This ad was published in the *Oak Leaves* newspaper during July and August of 1921

From the KKK to "Hate has no home here" (continued)

was no longer a southern fringe extremist group that targeted African-Americans and the perceived invasion of Yankee carpetbaggers. The 1920s Klan was a mainstream movement that appealed en masse to average white native-born Protestant middle-class Americans. The revitalized KKK expanded its list of foes to include Roman Catholics, Jews, infrequent churchgoers, gamblers, prostitutes, divorced women, and bootleggers.

The KKK was ill-prepared to deal with the new female supporters of the Klan's work who sought an active role in a traditionally exclusive and ultra-masculine organization. Klan officials decided it was in their best interest to bring their female supporters into the organization under a limited role in an effort to bring "Klannishness" to home life and future generations of potential Klansmen. Previous to the creation of the WKKK in 1923, a few short-lived women's auxiliaries were created. During the summer of 1923 in Chicago the women's Klan grew out of the already existing National League of Protestant Women of America. Colonel William Joseph Simmons, revival of the men's Klan, envisioned a women's Klan under his direct control. However, the first national leader of WKKK had other ideas. When the WKKK filed papers of incorporation in Little Rock, Arkansas in 1923 Simmons unsuccessfully attempted to get a court injunction to stop the formation of an independent women's organization using the Klan name. The earliest evidence of the KKK in the Chicago area was in the summer of 1921. Though records do not begin until 1925, the Walosas Club was likely formed in 1923 or 1924 in reaction to an influx of new Catholic residents in Oak Park and Al Capone moving the headquarters of his bootlegging operation to Cicero. The Walosas Club received its official WKKK charter in 1926.

At its zenith, the revived Klan had a national membership of over five million men and the WKKK had over 500,000 registered participants. Oak Park's Walosas Club was one of the most active and influential WKKK chapters in the Chicagoland area boasting a membership of over 300. Visitors from other chapters frequently came to witness its rituals. At first glance the Walosas Club minutes read like many women's organizations with reports on fund-raising, recruitment, and committees. But upon closer examination they referenced "canvassing Catholic neighborhoods" and attempts to boycott or prohibit aspects of society they found morally repugnant. The WKKK was particularly adept at creating activities for the entire family such as Klan Juniors and Klan Babies with the idea that early exposure to Klan ideals would make them the social norm.

In our communities it is easy to get caught up in celebratory histories that glorify the positive aspects of the lives and work of notable residents such as Ernest Hemingway and Frank Lloyd Wright. The problem with doing these surface-level histories is that they cannot fully grasp the complexity of how communities are formed and change over time. If you want to completely tell Oak Park's long history of diversity it needs to include everything from the Klan of the 1920s and the fair housing movement of the 1960s to current issues at OPRF High School or Black Lives Matter. Inclusion of the Walosas Club Charter in the new museum's inaugural exhibit serves to complicate the notion of who we are as a community.

Over the years I have maintained a relationship with the OPRF Museum through continued research, membership, volunteering, serving on the Board of Directors, and bringing my students from North Park University on field trips. When I moved back to Oak Park last fall I chose to join the board of the museum. Amidst commitments to my young family and my career as an assistant professor with a ticking tenure-track clock, I decided to give some of my limited free time to serve on the board. Participation on the board affords me the opportunity to have a stake in the interpretation of some of the museum's artifacts and make sure stories like that of the Walosas Club Chapter of the Women of the Ku Klux Klan are told and discussed.



The KKK promoted its racist and xenophobic message at 6 shows in this 1,200 seat theater, advertised in the *Oak Leaves*



Annual Meeting Highlights Year's Activities

Garden Club and volunteers recognized

On June 21, 2017, members of the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest met to review the accomplishments of the past year, recognize outstanding efforts by local organizations and volunteers, and prepare for the future. Society President Jan Dressel welcomed all to the annual meeting, and Executive Director Frank Lipo provided an overview of the new exhibit, "Oak Park and River Forest: A to Z."

Three awards were presented. The Philander Barclay Award, which is given to the individual who "best exemplifies [Barclay's] love of local history," was awarded to Jean Guarino, author and long-time member of the Historical Society's Board of Directors.



OPRF Museum President Jan Dressel (left) presented the Philander Barclay Award to Jean Guarino

The Faye Devine Award, recognizing "outstanding volunteer service in the tradition of Faye Devine," a past president of the Historical Society, went to Mary Boyaris, who has co-chaired the House Walk for the past three years.



Mary Boyaris (right), co-chair of the annual House Walk, received the Faye Devine Award

Finally, the Carol Kelm Award, recognizing the organization or individual that "best exemplifies the former Executive Director's skill and professionalism in identifying, organizing, and preserving material related to the area's rich heritage," was presented to the Garden Club of Oak Park and River Forest. Club officers Sue Milojevic and Gina Senello accepted the award on behalf of the organization.



Sue Milojevic (left) and Gina Senello, seated on the bench the Garden Club donated to the Museum

Under new bylaws adopted last year, the slate of members for the board of directors was presented. For the coming year, the following

members will serve: Jan Dressel, president; Peggy Tuck Sinko, vice president; Mary Ann Porucznik, secretary; Jack Norton, treasurer; Connie Damon-Henderson, Sarah Doherty, Caitlin Dreger, Kurt Etchingham, Carlotta Lucchesi, James Mahoney, Gary Schwab, directors.

Jan thanked retiring board members Jean Guarino and Georgette Sinkler for their service. She reminded all about the grand opening on Sept. 16, Philander Barclay's birthday, and invited everyone to enjoy cookies and lemonade before leaving. 🍁

First International Guests Visit the New Museum



Komal and Deepak Bhurani from Mumbai, India, were our first international visitors since our June opening. They were visiting Chicago and came out to spend a day in Oak Park and River Forest. They spent well over an hour looking at our exhibits, playing our OPRF: A to Z "scavenger hunt" game, and learning about the history of our community. 🍁

Cummings & Goings in River Forest

The annual Historical Society House Walk put the spotlight on the beautiful homes of central River Forest on Sunday, May 7. Participants had a chance to visit seven homes, in the 700 blocks of William, Monroe, Clinton, and Bonnie Brae developed by E. A. Cummings and the River Forest Land Association. A special tent on William Street also featured information on that street's unique history.



The homes featured included a mix of Prairie-style influences, beautiful bungalows, and a special Tudor style. "We could not have had such a wonderful walk without the homeowners who generously allow the public through their front doors," said Executive Director Frank Lipo. "The walk is only possible because of the many volunteers, who research the homes, sell ads for the guidebook, and interact with the public."

More than 400 people participated in the walk, which was co-chaired by Mary Boyaris and Kathy Mahoney. "I'm so grateful to the homeowners, the volunteers, and all those who made this house walk a success," said Mary. "Mark your calendars now for the 15th annual house walk, which will focus on homes in Oak Park. It will be held on May 6, 2018!"

Talbot's Fund Raiser Raised Eyebrows

On April 27, 2017, shoppers at Talbot's in Oak Brook were greeted with a fashion show of sorts. Members of the Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest, garbed in historic dress, staffed a table with information about the society. Also on display were some costumes from the society's collection.

The event was held on the first day of Talbot's "Friends and Family" sale. For every shopper who mentioned the Historical Society's name at checkout, Talbot's would donate 10 percent of the total sale to the Society.

Historical Society members Lee Conte, Jan Dressel, and Mary Ann Poruczniak wore costumes reminiscent of the turn of the twentieth century. Mary Ann wore a sash for the "Illinois Equal Suffrage Campaign." Lee wore a costume she had made herself, authentic down to the petticoats!

Several members of the Historical Society stopped and shopped, and many other customers also stopped to talk and share stories of Oak Park or River Forest. And, shortly thereafter, Talbot's sent a check for \$875 to the Historical Society. "It was the largest amount they had ever raised for a charitable organization!" said Jan.

Rachel Berlinski Joins OPRF Museum Staff

Please join us in welcoming Rachel Berlinski, our new administrative assistant. She comes to us from Worth, Illinois, and is a recent graduate of North Park University where she studied History, Literature, and Theatre. Rachel hopes to continue her education in public history and library science. When she is not working, Rachel enjoys per-

forming in community theater productions and shopping for record albums.



"I'm honored to be meeting so many wonderful people at the Historical Society and learning all about Oak Park and River Forest!" she said.

University Student Interns at Museum

Elizabeth Nichols, a graduate student at Dominican University in Library Science, worked on a capstone practicum internship at



the new Oak Park River Forest Museum this summer. In addition to helping set up the first museum exhibit by researching and writing captions, she reorganized the Rotary Club of OPRF records in the archives in anticipation of the local club's 2019 centennial.



THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF
OAK PARK & RIVER FOREST
P.O. Box 771, OAK PARK, IL 60303-0771

CAROL STREAM IL 60421

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Volunteer Judy Thompson has been working hard on the landscaping of our new museum, donating her time and talents (and even materials!) for our facility to get ready for the Grand Opening on September 16th. Shown here (*middle photo*) with two new planters donated by President Jan Dressel, Judy has planted, pruned, weeded, and watered throughout July and August. The new bench in

front of the Museum was donated by the Garden Club of Oak Park and River Forest to mark the club's 100th anniversary in 2017. The Club's records are included in the Museum's archives.

Come Visit Your New Museum!
Grand Opening on Saturday, September 16th
Festivities begin at 10 a.m. - Open until 4 p.m.