

Long Grove Times

Long Grove Historical Society's Quarterly Newsletter

June 2012

Trivially Speaking...

The area we now call Long Grove was not always part of Lake County. In fact, it's transitioned through seven other counties in the years since Illinois was made a state in 1818. Want to guess how many you know?

An obvious guess might be Cook or McHenry - both of which would be correct. Long Grove was in Cook County for five years, starting in 1831, then McHenry County for the next three, before Lake County was organized in 1839. Beginning in 1818, it was in Crawford County, then Clark, then Pike, then Fulton, and by 1830 it was in Putnam County.



Auction!

Thursday Evening, June 21, 7pm
Long Grove Village Tavern

Ever been to a community auction? They usually take place at a local watering hole, and it seems like half the town shows up to eat, drink, and bid on each other's treasure. It's a big ol' barrel of fun. We used to have such a happening in Long Grove, but, like many things from days gone by, it hadn't been seen around these parts for many a moon.

Well, for the second year in a row... it's back, for one summer June night only, with the proceeds going to charity—The Long Grove Historical Society (that's us...). A nice mix of auctionable treasure has been donated so far—from antiques and jewelry to a Golf Foursome at Kemper Lakes. If you have something you'd be willing to donate to us for the auction, please contact either Marie Borg at (847) 438-7656 or Laurie Borawski at (847) 949-5264 and let us know.

Mark Your Calendars

- **Thursday, June 21st, 7pm**
Charity Auction at The Village Tavern
- **Summer Break!** - Back in September with more great programs!

All About Us...



The Long Grove Historical Society is a 501C3 non-profit organization whose purpose is to preserve and disseminate the history of the Long Grove area. Annual membership is available for a donation of \$30 (individual), \$50 (family), or \$100 (sustaining). Members receive our quarterly newsletter as well as access to a variety of events held throughout the year. To become a member, send your donation to Georgia Cawley, LGHS Membership, 4509 RFD, Long Grove, IL 60047, along with your name, address, telephone number, email. If you have any special interests, skills, or things you'd be interested in volunteering to help out with, be sure to let us know that as well.

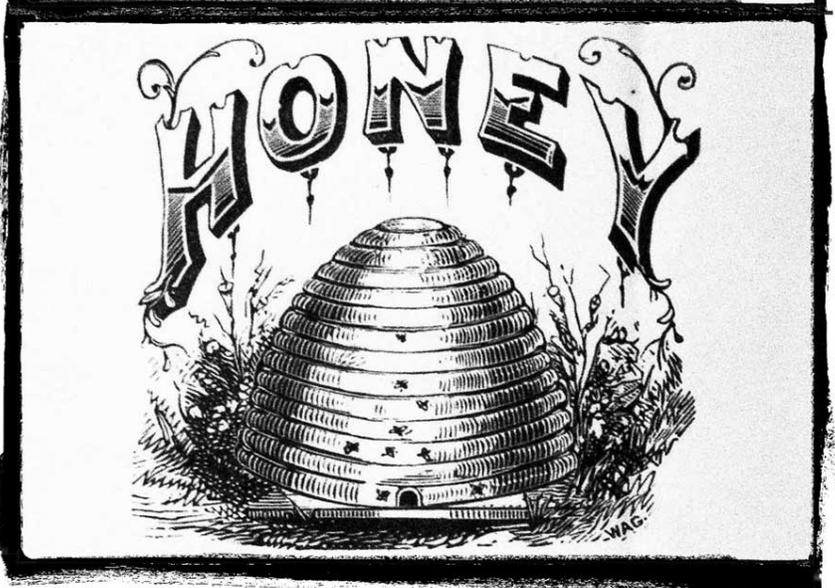
2011/2012 Board

- Laurie Borawski, President
- Barbara English, Vice President
- Diane Trickey, Treasurer
- Myra Buettner, Recording Secretary
- Angie Underwood, Past Pres/Vilg Brd Liason
- Aaron Underwood, Communications
- Bob Borg, Buildings & Maintenance
- Georgia Cawley, Membership
- Caroline Liebl, Outreach/Archer School Pgm
- Kathy Wiberg, Programs/Ways & Means
- Tina Mall, Curator
- Marie Borg, Ways & Means/Programs
- Lori Lyman, Landscape/Curator
- Lee Bassett, Buildings/Maintenance

The Society was formed in March, 1974, to accept the Drexler Tavern building as a gift. A joint project with the Village Board made possible the relocation of the tavern to a site behind the current Kildeer Country-side School. Today we know the building not as Drexler Tavern, but simply as Village Hall. Two additional structures have also been relocated to this area—one of the area's one room schoolhouses, Archer School, and a mid-1800's barn, Ruth Barn. The school and the barn form the core of the program we run each year for our local schools, so that our children can experience first hand what life used to be like in Long Grove. Last, but not least, a mid-1800's farm house was relocated to an area bordering the southwest corner of the Stemple Parking lot. "The Farmhouse", as we refer to it, houses our archives, a meeting room, and several restored "period" rooms that we open occasionally for tours. In addition to maintaining the above properties and our educational programs, we actively acquire items of local historic interest for our archives and conduct a variety of historical programs for current residents. We receive no tax dollars and exist solely from your contributions and our own fundraising efforts.

Thank you for your support!

Historical Society News... Pictorial highlights of some recent activities—Dose's Antique Appraisal, Caroline Liebl at our board potluck, and... just a nifty area beekeeper's logo from 1869.



Old Spies, Lies, and Vice

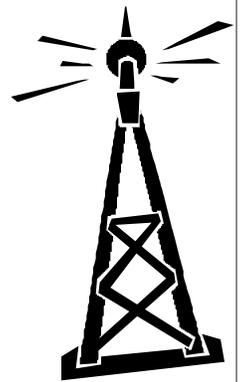
With the Long Grove area's deep German heritage, did you ever wonder if there was a question of allegiance during the World War's? Here's a tale from neighboring Prairie View...



On June 9th, 1942, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover notified Lake County authorities to immediately apprehend a German alien, Bruno Stiller, proprietor of "The Green Duck Inn" in Prairie View for suspected espionage. Authorities descended upon his home and imprisoned him. During the raid, they uncovered short wave radio equipment.



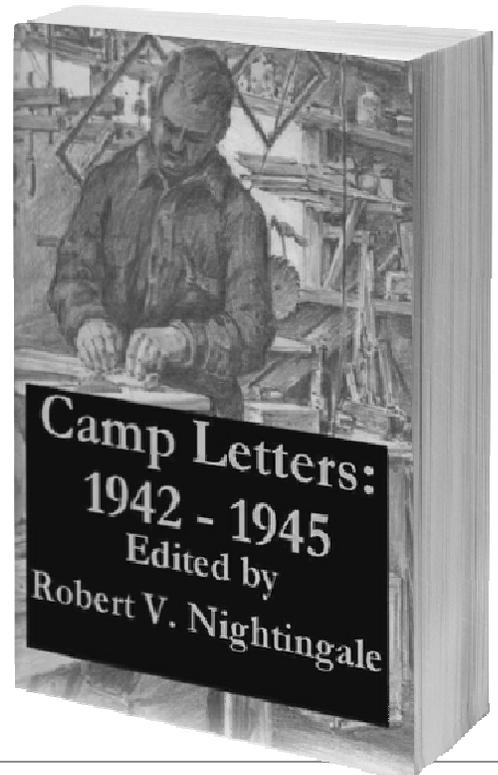
Bruno had been drafted into the German military at age 13 and fought for the Kaiser's army in World War I. He came to America in 1921 to work at his uncle's battery factory in Philadelphia and eventually moved west to Chicago where he made musical instruments – he was an accomplished concertina player (think accordion, if you're not familiar). He met his wife Alice, also a musician, at a company concert where they performed an impromptu duet. They married in the late 1920's and opened a music shop together in Cicero – the "Alice Music and Radio Shop".



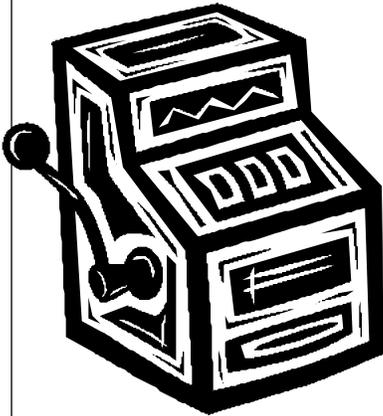
Relocating to Prairie View a few years later, they opened a road-side gas stop business which eventually became a tavern/restaurant called "The Green Duck Inn". They were "Green Ducks" (amateurs) when it came to this sort of business.



There was no trial - FBI agents had researched Bruno and determined that it was in the country's best interest to have him imprisoned and he was sent to Camp McCoy in Wisconsin. This Camp was one of several in the country set up to house prisoners of war – many of whom were Japanese or German citizens whose loyalties were questioned. Alice continued to operate The Green Duck by herself, as well as raise their three young children – quite an accomplishment, when you think about that era. She wrote letters almost daily during the war to Bruno. Sixty years later, Bruno and Alice's grandson, Robert Nightingale published these letters in the form of a book – "Camp Letters: 1942-1945" (available on Amazon.com if you're interested). The letters offer a fascinating glimpse of life in the area during the 1940's. The following page has a few observations...



Old Spies, Lies, and Vice(cont.)



Money – income for The Green Duck on an average day was \$10 (\$140 in 2012 \$'s), while the best days brought in \$60 (\$840 in 2012 \$'s). That was before expenses – the salary for a bartender was \$6 (\$84 in 2012 \$'s) per night.

Reliance on gambling to make ends meet – it's pretty clear from the letters that without the income produced from the slot machines in their Inn, Alice couldn't have survived. The slots took in around \$175/week (\$2500 in 2012 \$'s). They got to keep 40% of that – the “nickel man”, who provided the machine and serviced it took 60% of that.



Local corruption – there's an offhand reference to a Bowman's Dairy official offering to vote a certain way in exchange for a bribe.

Gaining weight is good – a few references to someone being considered healthy if they were gaining weight – and concern expressed when someone was losing weight. (Ah... if only we could get back to that attitude, I could enjoy tonight's supper a bit more...)

Local business names – names of long gone area businesses (mostly competing establishments, I suspect) are interesting... maybe a mental tickler for a few of you old-timers out there – “The 19th Hole”, “White House”, “Derby Inn”, and the “Black Cat”. “The Vernon Country Club” was huge – employing nearly 100 people, including a number of “trigger men” (guards) equipped with sawed off shotguns. Apparently the “outfit” that ran the Club, headed by Al Capone's cousin Rocco “Rocky” Fischetti, had also made inquiries into acquiring The Green Duck.



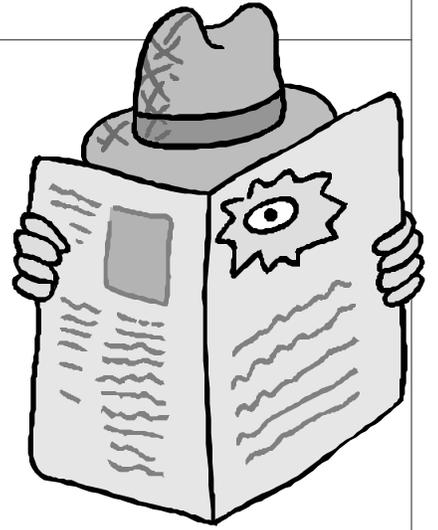
Prohibition – an interesting story about the night prohibition ended (in 1933). The Green Duck couldn't get real beer in time for that

night, but procured non-alcoholic beer and, at the stroke of midnight, mixed in grain alcohol to be able to provide patrons something appropriate to celebrate with.

A few interesting expressions – “he has the patience of a Chinaman”. It certainly sounds like a racist remark to today's ear.. An origin for the phrase isn't known, though it seems to date from the mid-1850's. The phrase is curious because positive racist phrases are somewhat rare.



What happened to these prisoners of war when the war ended in 1945? Each prisoner received a hearing where his or her conduct in the camp was judged, along with the evidence that originated the imprisonment. Most were judged to be no longer a threat, as Bruno was, and released. Was Bruno really a spy? Most certainly not – he was simply in the wrong circumstance at the wrong time... and maybe a hurtful patron or competitor slipped some falsehoods to the authorities to egg things on. The short wave radio? He was an avid electronics buff and was simply interested in hearing the news about what was happening to his family that still lived in Germany.



Bruno and Alice sold The Green Duck in 1955, the year Bruno officially became a US Citizen. They opened the Stiller Nursery and Gardens in Indian Creek, and it remained in operation until 1990. Alice passed away in 1993, and Bruno in 1998.

The Green Duck's infamy was just beginning. In the mid-70's it was known as The Roman House, and those slot machines that saw Alice through hard times were expanded – with nude dancing and prostitution. Our resident 60's era vice expert, who shall remain nameless, says the establishment was notorious for charging a hundred dollars a drink to unsuspecting customer's credit cards. The Roman House closed in 1985 when one of Chicago's top mobsters, Joseph "Mr. Clean" Ferriola, was convicted of running a prostitution ring out of the club.

According to local rumor, you can still find an homage to the old Roman House in the form of an abstract sculpture that sits in front of the Highland Park library. Apparently, the artist (Peter Voulkos) commissioned for the piece took a liking to one of the House's dancers, and used her as the inspiration for the art piece, entitled "Miss Nitro". The name plate mysteriously disappeared after city officials discovered the connection—you'll find it listed as "untitled" in the City's guide.

Alice and Bruno's daughter, also named Alice, shared their musical abilities – and was an accomplished organ player.

According to the above mentioned vice expert, at some

point in it's history, The Green Duck/Roman House property became music store known as "Alice at the Organ". There seems to be some confusion amongst old timers as to whether the music store proceeded or succeeded The Roman House (if the latter, one can only wonder if it caused confusion amongst the Roman House's former patrons...). The younger Alice passed away in 2010.



Peter Voulkos

ARTIFACT EXPLORED



It doesn't happen as much as it did 30 years ago, but when an area barn gets demolished... we're often contacted to see if we want any of the old tools or implements. We have limited space, so we pick through it and try to identify the historically interesting stuff from the simply "old and rusty". Sometimes we find things that we're not sure what they are, but they seem worth saving. Our resident tool expert, Bob Borg, is pictured above with such a piece. It's stamped in French "Goldenberg Acier Fondu". Translated that means "Goldenberg Steel Foundry", a tool maker which was founded in 1835 in now what is Dorlisheim, Alsace, France. You may recall that this region in the border area between France and Germany was where many of

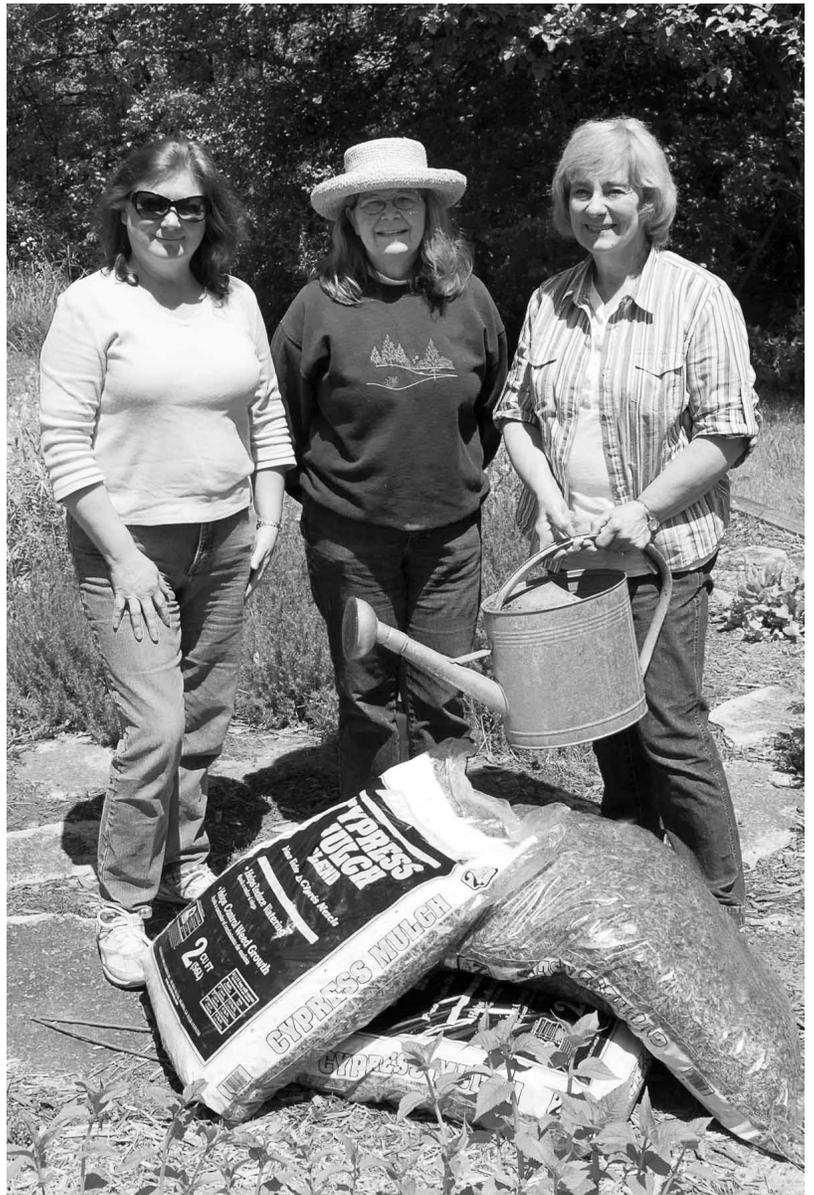
Long Grove's original settlers were from. So it seems likely this tool made the trip over with one of those families. But what is it? The company was known for its wood working tools—chisels and planes. It's pretty heavy to be used as Bob is holding it—the portion he is using as a grip appears to be designed to be affixed to a pole—sort of like a modern-day push broom head. Affixed to an end of a pole it would be very heavy/awkward/scary. Got an idea of what it might be used for? Email us at admin@LongGroveHistory.org

Herb Garden Update

Long Grove has an oasis of beauty and tranquility that most residents are not even aware of. The area—The Long Grove Historical Society Herb Garden—is located behind the LG Village Hall and has been in existence, with the help of volunteers, since 1983.

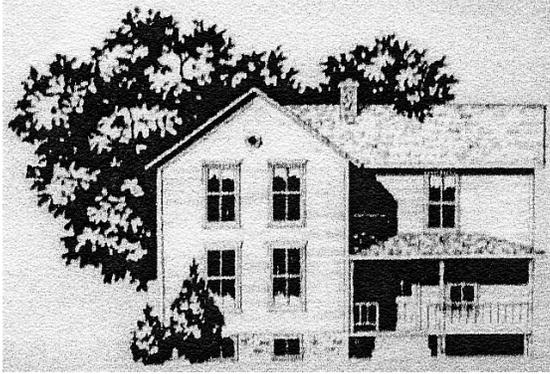
The Garden is part of a small complex of historic buildings (an old tavern, a one-room school house and a barn), used to teach area 3rd and 4th graders about what life was like in the 1800's. The garden helps the children see that without pharmacies, and with few stores, the people were able to grow their own medicines, cooking herbs, clothing dyes, and potpourris.

This volunteer opportunity will not take much of your time, an hour a week from late April to September. All that is needed is your interest in carrying on the tradition of the garden, and a willingness to weed, deadhead and water plants. We learn as we go, and welcome anyone willing to join us. The rewards are many, if you enjoy nature, want to learn more about herbs, and want to help save a tradition, that started over 15 years ago. Anyone with questions or interest, please call Tina Mall, 847-438-5775.

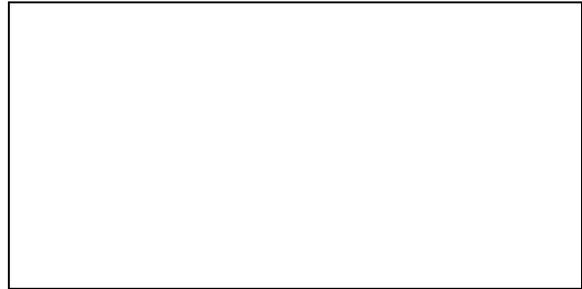


Society members (left to right) Laurie Borawski, Kathy Wiberg, and Tina Mall at a recent gardening session. The Herb Garden is located between Drexler Tavern (Village Hall) and Ruth Barn. Feel free to stop by and take a look anytime.





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HELP WANTED

It's not rocket science, but it can be good educational fun and an opportunity to make new friends. Have a skill you want to share? Have some extra time you

want to go to a good cause? We can always use an extra hand—here's just a few examples of ways you can volunteer:

- being a docent for school kids that come and visit our one room school house
- researching and writing articles about local history for this newsletter
- keeping our website, Facebook and Twitter up to date
- planning public programs
- working fund raisers
- giving public tours of our farmhouse museum
- tending our herb garden
- organizing, cataloging and tracking our historical artifacts

Interested? Contact Society President Laurie Borawski at (847) 949-5264 or email admin@LongGroveHistory.org

