James Turner (center) and Jack Hinz (behind Turner) on the steps of the occupied building, May 3, 1968. James S. Sweet Collection, Northwestern University Archives.

INSIDE

- The Sit-In at Northwestern
- End of an Era
- Listen Up!
As many of you know, at the end of February our dear friend and colleague Janet C. Messmer retired after 27½ years at the Evanston Historical Society/History Center. We are really going to miss seeing her weekly, but Janet promises not to be a stranger. I hope you will take a moment to read my article about Janet on page 8 of this issue.

Another highlight of February was the opening of Listen Up!: A History of Audio Technology in Evanston. This exhibit highlights artifacts from our collection. It is a lot of fun – and I bet you will learn something, so be sure to check it out.

It is Spring, so we are busier than ever here at the Evanston History Center. The 43rd annual Mother’s Day House Walk will be held on Sunday, May 13th from 12 – 5 and will feature historically and architecturally significant houses in the Dawes House neighborhood. Through the House Walk we will begin to tell the story of preservation and restoration in residential architecture.

You will be able to purchase House Walk tickets on our website at www.evanstonhistorycenter.org. You will also be able to renew your membership and make donations all year long. Don’t miss this wonderful, annual event!

Finally, be sure to save these dates. Our Ice Cream Social will take place Saturday, July 28, 1:00 – 4:00. And you won’t want to miss our annual end of summer party Melody in August, Saturday, August 25th, 7-10pm.

I hope you enjoy this edition of TimeLines. As always thank you so very much for your continued support, we couldn’t do what we do without you.

Best,
Eden Juron Pearlman
Executive Director

Hello Evanston History Center Members

OFFICERS
Sharon Ephraim
President
Hon. Judith Koehler
Vice-President Personnel & Administrative Matters; Vice President Governance
David Downen
Vice President, Development
Sally Lynch
Vice President, Programs and Collections
Mike Ford
Vice President, Facilities
Janet Neiman Reed
Secretary
Max Grebenschikov
Treasurer

TRUSTEES
Dale Bradley
Paul Burton
David Downen
Fred Glege
Roland (Jack) Hinz
Richard Hubbard
Blanca Lule
John Mancini
Lynn Russell
Wynn Shawver
Ann Weatherhead

EMERITUS
J. Robert Bar
Eston Gross
Doug Honnold
Matt Struve

STAFF
Eden Juron Pearlman, Executive Director
Jill Kirk, Director of Development
Kris Hartzell, Director of Facilities, Visitor Services and Collections
Grace Lehner, Director of Archives and Administration
Jenny Thompson, Director of Education
Lori Osborne, Historian, Director of Evanston Woman’s History Project
Erin F.H. Hughes, Website and Social Media Manager
Suzanne Farrand, Research Services
Steve Brunger, Building Manager
Susan Dunne and Matthew Marchione, Thomas W. Griffin Sunday Docents

Our Mission
The mission of the Evanston History Center is to collect, preserve and interpret the rich history of the City of Evanston and all its people through exhibits, educational programs and research facilities.
Fifty years ago, a group of Black students at Northwestern University made headlines. On May 3, 1968, they occupied the university’s business office (commonly known as the bursar’s office) and announced that they would not leave until their demands were met.

Their demands, submitted to university officials in April 1968, focused on a wide range of issues, campus conditions, and racist encounters they had experienced at Northwestern. Over the course of two momentous days, the whole world watched as events on the Evanston campus unfolded. The sit-in took place within a wider movement for political and social change that marked the 1960s, with the year 1968 arguably proving to be the decade’s most dramatic and transformative.

Four Paterson, and two of the sit-in’s key players, James Turner, former Northwestern graduate student and sit-in leader, and Jack Hinz, former Northwestern Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students. The book pieces together the events of May 3-4, 1968 as they unfolded, and it also takes a broader view, stepping back from those two crucial days to examine what led to the sit-in and what transpired in its aftermath.

Excerpt from *The Sit-In*:

**The Sit-In Begins: Friday, May 3, 1968**

Early Friday morning, May 3, 1968, Northwestern University Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students, Jack Hinz, was sitting down to breakfast at his home in Evanston, Illinois, when his phone rang. The campus chief of security was on the line: “We’ve got trouble,” he told Hinz. “You’d better come to campus right away.”

Earlier that morning, 26-year old Northwestern University graduate student James Turner left his Evanston home at 920 Main Street and headed to campus. He left his young son in the care of a babysitter. His wife, Janice, was attending a conference in Wisconsin. She was unaware of what was about to transpire. It would not be until later that evening, when one of her colleagues told her that there was a man on TV who looked just like her husband, that she would find out what James had planned for that day.

The 36-year old Hinz hurried to campus, embarking on what would be a 38-hour ordeal. The “trouble” had begun at roughly 7:30 that morning. The guard at the University Business Office at 619...
Clark Street had been approached by a student who told him he needed to enter the building to pick up a form. Once the student was inside, a small group of students began shouting outside, prompting the guard to come out to investigate. Within minutes, James Turner, along with 94 other Northwestern University students, had entered the building. They told the clerical staff inside to vacate the building. They then blocked the revolving front door with chairs, padlocked the back doors, chained the windows, and began their “sit-in,” to use the language of the time. They were, to use a more contemporary term, “occupying” Northwestern University’s central financial building, a building that housed the university’s computer system and financial operations. A spokesman for the group, who was soon reached by telephone, announced that the “action” had begun. They promised that they would do no harm to the building or its contents, and they pledged that they were prepared to continue their occupation “until the end of summer” if their demands were not met.

At about 8:00 am, Hinz arrived at the building, followed by his colleague, William S. Kerr, Northwestern’s business manager. Both men quickly surveyed the situation and “left shortly afterwards.” Students from the sit-in were now posted at the back and front doors of the building. A truck pulled up to the side of the building, and supplies were unloaded through a window. A sign was hung at the entrance that read: “Closed for business ‘til racism at NU is ended.”

Numerous Black students at Northwestern planned this action, and many took on leadership roles, particularly among the undergraduates. But two students would serve as the sit-in’s primary leaders: Kathryn Ogletree, an undergraduate student and president of the student group, “For Members Only,” and graduate student, James Turner, chairman of Northwestern’s Afro-American Student Union. The students had organized their action carefully, from planting a false rumor that an action was to take place that morning at the administration building, prompting police to show up there, to contacting WCFL radio host, Jeff Kamen, beforehand, so that he could stand-by to announce over the airwaves that the sit-in had begun.

The students had chosen the Business Office because it was a stand-alone building with first-floor access to the street, allowing students to come and go and for supplies to be delivered easily. More importantly, they felt that they would be protected by their proximity to the valuable materials inside should officials try to evict them by force. Their location would give them “countervailing leverage,” as James Turner explained in a 2012 interview; it would, in effect, “guard against white men using an irrational approach,” he said. If the administration “had to consider only our well-being,” Turner surmised, they would have “pounce[d] on us.”

By the time Hinz left the building early that morning, news of the sit-in had reached members of the university administration. Soon, Northwestern University president, J. Roscoe Miller, along with his staff of deans and administrators, including Hinz, gathered to strategize.

“The officers met in the president’s office,” Hinz recalled in a 2012 interview. “And I guess I wasn’t the only one anxious, but I think the president’s view
was we have to resolve this as quickly as possible. It’s not good for us. It’s damaging and so forth and so on.”

According to one source, Miller wanted all the students ejected from the building by police force immediately. In fact, administrators had already made progress toward that end, and had begun “marshaling Northwestern’s security force.” They had also alerted the mayor of Evanston, John Emery, and the city’s chief of police, Bert Giddens, who informed them that an eviction of the building’s occupants could be carried out “in just a few minutes.”

Soon after the initial take over, reporters and television crews began assembling outside the occupied building, along with crowds of onlookers. Local media and all three national networks, ABC, NBC, and CBS, would soon file reports, covering the sit-in on nightly newscasts and in papers nationwide. The New York Times would carry a story in its Saturday paper, complete with photographs; Now, a swat team stood at the ready, along with local and state police, and, according to one source, at least two FBI agents were deployed to the site (surreptitiously) that morning; “Rebellion at N.U.,” the Chicago Tribune announced dramatically.

Wary of the media circus that was now encamped on Clark Street, administrators knew that this story was of immense public interest. There was no chance it could be handled without sharp scrutiny from the curious public, not to mention parents and alumni. While they wanted to end the incident quickly, they were concerned with the larger safety of the campus. What might happen if they mishandled this event? What if anyone got hurt? What if an eviction of the students incited more protests and sit-ins, or even violence? This was, after all, a tense era in
the United States, with protests, uprisings, and strikes taking place on a seemingly weekly basis throughout the country.

At the time, student protests focused on a wide range of issues, from ending inequality to stopping the war in Vietnam, and the Black student movement in particular was growing exponentially, with efforts underway nationwide to protest discrimination, alter campus conditions, and assert Black cultural identity. “Since last fall, the Black cultural revolution has raged with unprecedented fury on high school and college campuses,” historian Lerone Bennett, Jr. had written just that month in *Ebony* magazine.19

Northwestern officials worried about making things worse through their actions. In fact, they later revealed that the university had received intelligence “indicating that certain organized off-campus, activist groups from throughout the Chicago area were prepared at the first opportunity to attach themselves to any developing incident, with a view to a swift and major magnification thereof, aimed at visiting disaster upon the university.”20

One recent disastrous incident stood out sharply: Just days earlier, in the early morning hours of April 30, 1968, Columbia University president Grayson Kirk had mobilized a thousand police officers to quash a weeklong student take-over of the New York City campus that had shut down the entire university. Using tear gas, police entered the occupied buildings and dragged many of the students out by the arms and legs. In the end, 132 students, 4 faculty members, and 12 police officers were injured, and more than 700 people were arrested.21 The university came to a standstill.

Having witnessed the chaos at Columbia, not to mention the recent uprisings following the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. just one month earlier, officials knew that the potential for violence was real. Polite and proper Northwestern, with its history of having a rather tepid counter-culture and very little protest in years prior, was facing the eye of the storm of the sixties.22

Footnote:

2 James Turner, interview with the author, May 25, 2012. While it was a surprise to see her husband on TV, Janice Turner was well aware of what was going on leading up to the sit-in and was active in the larger movement for civil rights in Evanston as well. Today, Turner is the founding Director of the Africana Studies and Research Center and professor emeritus at Cornell University.
3 That number would grow to 106 students as others joined in the sit-in throughout out the day. “619 Clark Street: N.U.’s Day of Decision,” Daily Northwestern, May 4, 1968.
4 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Biondi, 87.
16 J. Roscoe Miller, “Summary Statement Regarding the Basic Issues Involved in the Negro Student Incident of May 3-4, 1968,” Northwestern University Archives.
17 Ibid.
19 Lerone Bennett Jr., “Confrontation on the Campus,” *Ebony*, May 1968, 27. Bennett would go on to serve as the first chair of the African American studies department at Northwestern University.
20 “Summary Statement Regarding the Basic Issues Involved in the Negro Student Incident of May 3-4, 1968,” Northwestern University Archives.
22 In April 1967, an anti-war rally and a “teach in” were held on the Northwestern campus. Prior to these events there had been no real significant Northwestern student protest movement. Harold F. Williamson and Payson S. Wild, *Northwestern University, A History: 1850-1975*. Evanston IL: Northwestern University, 1976, 328.
People frequently use the phrase “that is the end of an era” but perhaps they don’t really mean it. In our case, the end of February truly signaled the end of an era. Our beloved Costume Curator Janet C. Messmer has retired after 27½ year of working for Evanston History Center.

Janet has actually been around what was at the time called the Evanston Historical Society (EHS) for even longer than 27 years. She began as a volunteer under then costume curator Virgil Johnson. Janet and Virgil were good friends and former colleagues at the Goodman School of Drama which was renamed the Theatre School at DePaul. (Janet retired as a full professor from DePaul in 2014.) After some time as a volunteer, Janet became a paid assistant and soon began giving lectures. Her first talk was called Paisley, Paraphernalia and Public Life discussed the exhibit by the same name, curated by Vigil Johnson. The exhibit highlighted clothing from the Harry Wells family from the mid 1800s through the mid 1900s. Harry Wells was active in Washington politics for many years. About a year later Janet was invited to curate an exhibit. She chose what was then considered a controversial topic, Mourning Customs. The exhibit was very popular and proved not to be controversial.

In 1989 Virgil decided to leave EHS to work full time at Northwestern University in their theatre school. It was about the same time that Rick Hartung was hired as Director of EHS. A search was mounted to hire a new Costume Curator and Janet applied. She was first hired as acting interim Costume Curator and on July 1, 1990 was appointed the Costume Curator. A title she has proudly held since.

For most of the many years Janet has been Costume Curator, she worked only on Saturdays, due to the demands of her full professorship at DePaul University. Around exhibit time, she would come in late in the afternoon and stay late hours to mount an exhibit. That all changed when Janet retired from her full time job and began coming to the Dawes House during the week.

Janet has always been a wonderful colleague but during these last few years, when her schedule has been more flexible, it has been the entire staff’s pleasure to get to know Janet better. Janet is funny, smart, dedicated, and generous with wonderful qualities too numerous to list. We are going to miss seeing Janet regularly, but luckily for us Janet plans to stay involved as a volunteer.

After being around EHS/EHC so long Janet has seen many changes and can count many accomplishments. Some of the highlights of which she is especially proud of are the complete and appropriate storage of the collection. All costumes are now out of bags and store boxes and stored safely and appropriately according to museum standards. This project was begun under Virgil and has been a 30 year endeavor.

Janet is also very proud that under her oversight the collection has expanded greatly, though we still are lean when it comes to ordinary clothing of everyday life (we receive a lot of special occasion wear) and men’s clothing of all types.

The biggest change Janet has seen in her years at EHS/EHC is that we have become a much more inclusive organization that is truly interested in telling the story of all Evanstonians, a trend Janet hopes will continue long into the future.

On behalf of the staff, Board of Trustees and members, I extend a very sincere thank you to Janet for her incredible service and dedication to EHC. We wish her a very happy retirement.
Take a trip to
Lake Geneva, Wisconsin
“Newport of the West”
Saturday, June 16, 2018, 8 am—5 pm

Itinerary
- Depart Dawes House by bus at 8 am
- Visit historic Black Point Estate for a private behind-the-scenes tour of the house and gardens
- Lunch on your own in downtown Lake Geneva
- 2-hr narrated architectural boat tour of Lake Geneva
- Return to Dawes House at 5 pm

Details
- Tickets: $90 EHC member, $100 non-member
- Price includes bus, house tour and boat tour
- Space is limited
- Register at evanstonhistorycenter.org/events/lakegeneva or call Jill Kirk at 847-475-3410
In 1896, The Evanston Review covered a noteworthy event, a telephone hook-up to a political rally in downtown Chicago. For the first time, people could hear actual events as they were occurring miles away. It was mind-bending.

Inventions such as the telephone and the gramophone were radical technologies that sparked a perceptual revolution, exploding existing scientific axioms of time and space. For their time, they were no less revolutionary than the invention of the internet, connecting people and information across vast distances.

This exhibit, with artifacts from the Evanston History Center collection, showcases the machinery of change and the ways in which Evanston participated in that revolution. The apparatus for recording and transmitting sound provides a fascinating record of evolving inventions. From Edison’s wax cylinders to wire and tape recorders and vinyl records, from candlestick telephones to microphones and radios, the media of sound pushed mass communication into a new dimension. It was a brave new world.

Evanston adapted to the new technologies. The first telephone exchange opened on Davis Street in 1882. People bought gramophones and radios. Many businesses dedicated to the production of new technologies were based in Evanston. The sprawling building
on Dempster Street west of Dodge Avenue was the Sentinel Radio Corporation factory, producing thousands of radios a day. Shure, Inc., creators of the iconic Unidyne microphone, was located on Hartrey near Howard. The Peirce Wire Recording Company operated in a warehouse on Sherman Avenue.

The technology of sound was a critical component of modern life, altering the conditions of daily life. The boundaries between our private and public lives, our commercial and political spheres, were compromised. As one author put it: “Everything suddenly changed” (from The Audible Past, Jonathan Sterne). Our exhibit Listen UP! provides an opportunity for a close-up look at the machinery that enabled the reproduction and transmission of sound over long distances. It prompts us to reflect on how we respond to technological change, that perhaps “the information age” started earlier than we believe. The Evanston Review observed of the long-distance telephone connection on that remarkable day in 1896: “The marvelous achievements of science infringe more and more upon fields only recently regarded as miraculous—nay, impossible.”

Pop Up Talk
“The Unidyne Story — The Legendary Shure Microphone” by Michael Petterson.
Friday, May 18, 12:00
Admission is free. Bring your lunch.

EHC Welcomes our Newest Members! Thank you for joining!

Thank you to our Merchants Club Members
2018 Walking Tour Schedule

All walking tours begin at 11:00 at the Dawes House UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. $20 per / $15 members. Reservations recommended. Email Kris Hartzell at khartzell@evanstonhistorycenter.org.

June 2, October 6 - Architectural Evanston
A walk through the original town of Evanston in the Lakeshore Historic District, with a view to the architectural styles of different eras and how they reflect the growth and change of the city.

June 16, August 18 - Burnham in Evanston
Stroll through the neighborhood where architect Daniel Burnham chose to live, work and build. We will see his property, houses and schools he designed, and hear about the man and his love of "bucolic Evanston."

July 7, September 1 - Evanston's Lakefront
Uncover the rich, varied history of Evanston’s lakefront. From lifesaving stations to shipwrecks, from boathouses to warehouses, from parks and private residences to piers, beaches, and landscaping: the stories are as varied as the lakefront itself.

July 21 - Evanston Women’s History
THIS TOUR BEGINS AT FRANCES WILLARD HOUSE
Explore the revolutionary history of Evanston’s women by viewing the houses and buildings where they worked to transform our cultural landscape.

August 4, October 20 - Downtown Evanston
THIS TOUR BEGINS at FOUNTAIN SQUARE
NEW!
Consider the distinctive character of downtown Evanston by taking a closer look at historic buildings and byways. Discover the hidden treasures and little known stories of our community.

EHC Annual Meeting
The EHC Annual Meeting will be held at the Dawes House on Wednesday, June 13, 6:30 pm. Join us for a special meeting with keynote speaker, Evanston’s own Frank Cicero, who will give a presentation entitled “Creating the Land of Lincoln: The State of Illinois’s First Fifty Years.”