Evanston History Center

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Dear Evanston History Center Members

As I write this letter, we are in the last days of Summer; our fabulous geo-thermal air conditioning system is keeping us comfortable and the artifacts safe and stable through climate control. Even in the heat, we are deep in planning for fall and winter.

As I think about this Summer a recurring theme arises; a theme so prevalent that we decided to devote this fall issue of TimeLines to research.

As you will notice, the lead article is written by an EHC member who has utilized the EHC archives for research for many years. Rhonda Craven has been the Historian at the Second Baptist Church of Evanston since 2009. Her goal, starting in 2008, was to uncover the church’s actual founding date, since their historical account had been contested by other researchers. Her article on page 3 shares suggestions on doing local research, based on lessons learned over the past ten years.

Our blog features an article by Frank Cicero, neighbor and supporter of the Evanston History Center. Frank Cicero is an attorney by vocation, and a historian by avocation. Frank wrote a fascinating article about the 150th anniversary of the platting of Block 34 on which his home and the Dawes House are built. Frank is also the author of two books, Creating the Land of Lincoln: The History and Constitutions of Illinois, 1778-1870 and Relative Strangers: Italian Protestants in the Catholic World. Check out Frank’s blog post at evanstonhistorycenter.org/150th.

Both Rhonda and Frank have relied heavily on the Frank B. Foster Research Room and Archives. We have been incredibly fortunate this summer to have amazing interns and volunteers. This summer our internship team also focused on research and collections related projects. Here are examples of their undertakings.

- Kate – Vickie Burke Women’s History Intern
- Maggie B. – processing collections
- Alec G. – research requests, oral history transcripts
- Alex S. – deaccession inventory
- Katie P. – deaccession inventory, tours
- Sofia W. – cross referencing biographical files
- Madeline C. – collections management, tours

So much of our work at the History Center is dependent on our volunteer core; they have made and continue to make careful and meaningful endeavors each day they are here. Like many organizations, there simply aren’t enough hours in the day to be proactive with our work. Interns and volunteers help us to move the History Center forward. If you are interested in volunteering at the History Center, please contact me ejpearlm@evanstonhistorycenter.org or 847-475-3410.

I hope you enjoy this issue of TimeLines and especially enjoy all the research our members, staff and interns have done to bring history to you.

We hope to see you often this season which promises to be full of interesting, new and unique EHC on the Go programming. Under the Buffalo lectures, updated exhibits, pop up history and of course our Holiday Open House on December 2nd 3:00 – 5:00 pm. (note time change!)

Best,
Eden Juron Pearlman
Executive Director

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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.
In 2008, when I decided to resolve the controversy over the Second Baptist Church of Evanston’s founding date, I didn’t know that I was about to start a journey. Who knew that, ten years later, I would still be doing local historical research, which is now my “drug”?

Whenever I can, I look for more pieces of the puzzle that not only flesh out the significance of my church home in the history of Evanston, but also put it in the context of what was happening locally and in the general society. Nothing happens in a vacuum, so I also investigate a wider range of topics. What I have gathered has proven useful for other research projects, and sometimes, I even get paid!

Over the past ten years, I have gained many history colleagues who have guided me through the process of finding what I was looking for and interpreting it. They include:

- Morris “Dino” Robinson, Shorefront Legacy Center, let me stay in his basement for hours (with his wife’s permission, of course!) looking at local black history materials.
- Anne O. Earle, a preservation researcher, shared notes collected many years ago that pointed me to people I needed to track and other vital information. Her research partner, Mary B. McWilliams, also provided important data.
- Janet G. Messenger taught me the value of painstakingly paging through old newspapers, a process that uncovered details included in her books and Evanston RoundTable articles about local history.
- Lori Osborne, Evanston History Center Historian, encouraged me to “cast a wide net” to seek out information.
- Kevin B. Leonard, University Archivist at the Northwestern University Archives, shared how easy it is to repeat bad data and pointed me towards resources I didn’t know existed.
- Dr. Larry G. Murphy, Professor of Church History and Christianity at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, was the consultant for our Church History Committee. He stressed the importance of finding reliable original source material that
could be corroborated.

- The “Churchavists” is an informal group of local church archivists and historians that meet quarterly to share resources and ideas.
- Mike Kelly is a passionate researcher I finally met last year who has a w-i-d-e base of knowledge. These and many others have made unique contributions to my ongoing research.

Second Baptist’s statement that it was established in November 1870 had been challenged many times, so my goal was to find the actual founding date. To establish a process, I paired my long-ago journalism training with my left-brained tendencies and asked, “Where should I look to get certain information?”

As I made discoveries and excitedly shared them with my growing “expert team”, I was surprised to find that occasionally, I had uncovered information that many of them hadn’t seen or didn’t know was available or accessible. In some cases, they weren’t aware of recently digitized documents, while in others, they had limited time (or patience) to look for materials that enhanced their earlier findings. Often, the items were not primary focal points for their current research, but they were on their “I’ll get to that later” list.

This journey inspired me to compile these tips and guidelines that have helped to uncover a vast amount of data from diverse resources. Local examples are given for illustrative purposes, but these principles can be applied anywhere and for any subject.

1. **Corroborate data with multiple sources as close to the dates of the stated event as possible.**

   The weekly **Evanston Index**, the earliest surviving newspaper (1872), included references to people recorded as church founders and other “colored” individuals (standard terminology of the era). I learned about their marriages, family tragedies, business start-ups, property purchases, school attendance, careers and community involvement. Initially, I recorded citations and summarized content but later decided to transcribe many items. In the summer of 1882, activities that led to the establishment of black churches in Evanston were well documented in the **Index** and other contemporary documents. As I tracked people and events, it was interesting to compare how or if they were mentioned in the media. In 1912, for example, there were at least seven papers to reference.

   2. **Suspend your 21st Century understanding of your research area, because things were very different back then.**

   The earliest **Evanston Directory** (1879) contained resident listings in three separate municipalities: Evanston, South Evanston and Rogers Park. Street names and numbering were a source of confusion! Rinn Street is now South Boulevard; Park Street is now University Place; and 124 Dempster is now 325 Dempster. Village boundaries were narrow; the “western limits” were roughly at Wesley. I thought a school at Lincoln and Benson was at the north end of town, but Lincoln Street in the 1800s was renamed Main Street. That is why the school at Forest and Main is called Lincoln School.

   3. **Everything you are looking for won’t be found online. “Old school” resources hold a wealth of information.**

   Sadly, a lot of documents will not be digitized. A reference librarian at the Evanston Public Library once told me that “Ironically, the Evanston Index will not be indexed.” It is a technical and expensive process, and funding is limited.

   As a result, you will often have to rely
on newspapers, clippings and card catalogs. These are treasure troves that highlight individuals and institutions seen as important at the time (albeit selectively), as well as obituary information, when available. Scrolling through microfilm or carefully turning through the pages of old newspapers is tedious, but you will uncover many gems that can’t be found easily in other places.

4. There are many other data repositories besides your local library.

These are my primary “hang-outs”:

- The Evanston History Center’s Research Room has photos, clippings files, newspapers, Sanborn Maps, directories. A key resource is the house files, which contain building permits and correspondence pertaining to homes, houses of worship and public buildings.
- The Shorefront Legacy Center is the go-to place to learn about the black community on the North Shore. You’ll find newspapers such as the Evanston Newsette, CCC Newsette and North Shore Examiner; archival information on churches, individuals, clubs, institutions and businesses; obituaries; and organization artifacts. Some of these are highlighted in Shorefront’s online journal.
- The third floor of the main branch of the Evanston Public Library. Besides microfilm for several local newspapers that existed over 100 years ago, a particular gem is the Evanstoniana Room, which has directories, yearbooks, newsletters, minutes and many local history books. There is onsite access to the library edition of ancestry.com/ and other electronic resources.
- The Northwestern University Archives in the Deering Library has information about land transactions between NU and individuals, businesses and houses of worship; student papers written about institutions and key historical figures; and archival student and academic department information.

Websites for out-of-town history museums, libraries and university archives often have finding aids that identify digital and/or on-site resources. I learned, for example, that the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library in Springfield, Illinois, has bound copies of Baptist minutes books that documented vital church details not found elsewhere.

Some houses of worship have archives. State and county records can be viewed at designated locations. There may be fee-based help if you can’t visit in person, but there is no guarantee that they have or can find what you seek. Sometimes, researchers are available for hire to assist you.

5. Things that weren’t online the last time you searched may now be available.

Universities and organizations subscribe to and unsubscribe from resources that are downloadable or at least viewable. Sites such as books.google.com, archive.org and idailinois.org have uploads of books or snippets that will help you find what you seek. When complete items aren’t available, citations on sites such as worldcat.org point you to where you can find them—perhaps at a library near you! Make Google (or your favorite search engine) your friend! Keep checking, because what wasn’t digitized several years ago may now be. Weblinks sometimes change or disappear, but another institution may provide access to the same materials. Bookmark content-rich sites for future reference.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps are valuable resources because they show the locations of businesses, dwellings and institutions in specific years. (EHC has several.)

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**EHC Historic Newspapers New Online Collection**

The Evanston History Center is excited to announce that a portion of its newspaper collection is now available and searchable online. The EHC Historic Newspaper Online Collection consists of digitized and edited images from the microfilm collection of newspapers in the EHC archives. The online collection spans the dates 1872-1922 and has images from three separate newspapers published during those years: the Evanston Index (June 6, 1912 to December 19, 1914), the Evanston Daily News (April 1, 1912 to December 31, 1914), and the Evanston News-Index (January 1, 1915 to December 30, 1922). Though the Evanston History Center (EHC) newspaper collection includes later years (both in hard copy and microfilm), only issues from before 1923 were digitized to avoid any copyright restrictions.

This digitization project was completed during the summers of 2015-2017 by graduate students of Northwestern University (NU) and was sponsored by the Chabraja Center for Historical Studies at NU. Project collaborators were: the Evanston History Center, the Northwestern Library, and the History Department at Northwestern. Substantial technical assistance was provided by the NU library and its staff, with special thanks to Peter Burtch and Josh Honn. NU graduate students who managed the project’s work were Sam Kling (who initiated the project), Bonnie Ernst, and Beth Healey.

You can view the collection on Hathi Trust at: https://babel.hathitrust.org. Or go to www.evanstonhistorycenter.org and search our online resources.
Rhonda’s Research Notes
Sample

CD 12/27/1930, A1—“Gamers Score at Second Baptist Church, Evanston”: one of the “popular monthly musicales” featuring George R. Garner, Jr., tenor; and wife Netta Paulyn Garner, pianist; Sophina [sic] Hudson, organist; Herman Billingsley, director; among others; also on the program was Dr. Ballou, pastor, assisted by Rev. E. C. Cobb. also, choir participated in service at Mount Zion commemorating founding of The Liberator and the Emancipation Proclamation

GAP!

CD 2/21/1931, 4—the NAACP planning a “mammoth interracial mass meeting” on 2/23 at ETHS, speaker Preston Bradley; plans to coordinate clubwork among the women were presented to the Iroquis League; Julia Gaston club held its weekly meeting at the Welfare center, 1115 Ayars coverage?

ER 3/26/1931, 7 & 4/2/1931, 59—listings of broad-based Jourdain endorsers and supporters; latter includes his bio; 4/2/1931, 6 (pic)—with note indicating he was managing editor of the Chicago Bee and had recently “received the endorsement of many prominent white residents”

EN-I 4/4/1931, 5—display ad for Ballou’s Gospel Tabernacle re: Easter service (content in his profile)

ER 4/4/1931, 10—in ad endorsing re-election of Mayor Charles H. Bartlett, the easily identified colored endorser

DR. ISABELA M. GARNETT
Superintendent of Evanston’s new Community hospital: “I have watched the growth and improvement in Evanston since my childhood and never has Evanston been more efficiently served than under the present mayor’s administration.”

CD 4/4/1931, 4—W. H. Gill, local realtor, running for justice of the peace; meeting held 4/2 at SBC to support his candidacy during the 4/7 election; he was endorsed by League of Women Voters; there were 3,000 “race votes” available

Rhonda K. Craven is the Historian at the Second Baptist Church of Evanston, Illinois. She has provided assistance for a number of research projects, written articles and profiles and done historical portrayals. Her goal is to publish books to share what she has collected since 2008.

6. Collaborate with others, even when their projects have a different focus.

Historians are a passionate bunch, and many are willing to freely share what they find that will be helpful to you when they know what you are trying to find. Having a conversation can be challenging because as one is excitedly talking about their recent finds, the other is waiting for an opportunity to share their own!

7. Give credit where credit is due.

Even though “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9), ensure that you don’t inadvertently take credit for work you didn’t do. Some good relationships have been strained because published works or earlier research efforts were not properly credited or attributed.

8. If you see information that you don’t think you will need now, record it anyway—you will probably regret not doing so later!

On several occasions, I have read an interesting item and debated about whether I should record it. I later found an article that reminded me of the one I now wish I had documented. I strongly recommend that, if you have the slightest inkling that it might provide context for something you (will!) find later, record the cite and summarize the content. Then, you will be able to go back to it if you need to.

9. There are free and legal ways to access many materials offered through subscription services.

Your library card often provides limited but free access to Proquest newspapers. This will allow you to download articles and pages from archival issues of the Chicago Tribune and Chicago Defender, among others. The Library of Congress website, chroniclingamerica.loc.gov is another valuable resource. Paid subscription services such as newspapers.com often include these free papers, but they also provide access to both popular and lesser-known periodicals that aren’t available elsewhere.

If you can’t invest in a full ancestry.com subscription, the Library Edition (only available on-site at many libraries) will probably give you access to most of what you want. Ancestry’s free sister site, familysearch.org, is available anywhere. I’ve downloaded many family and census records. These sites allow you to customize your searches to narrow your potential results, but you may get a lot of bad ones because of typos and bad handwriting that was deciphered incorrectly. Findagrave.com not only has pictures of gravestones but also may include biographical information and family connections.

10. Follow the repository’s rules, and treat archival materials with care.

Guidelines are posted on the institution’s website. You are often free to take reference photos or (for a fee) photocopy materials. If you plan to publish, confirm usage rules and pay fees when warranted, which might include acquisition of high quality image reproductions. Handle fragile newspapers and correspondence with care. Photos must be handled with provided gloves.

The Joseph Regenstein Library on the University of Chicago campus won’t let you just walk in off the street—you must be affiliated with the university. If you aren’t, and you find materials unique to its collection, apply for an InfoPass from another library to gain access.

I hope this brief guide helps both casual and professional researchers expand their view of where to look for anything they seek. Please share your tips and provide feedback on anything here that was helpful: rkraven54@gmail.com

Ah, yes… the date I sought that started me on this journey: November 17, 1882!
The Evanston History Center recently received a wonderful donation to our collection: The bed and dresser that had belonged to the family that built the Dawes house.

The Charles Gates Dawes House, home of the Evanston History Center, was originally the home of the Rev. Robert and Virginia Loring Sheppard family. Sheppard had obtained his divinity degree from Garrett Theological Seminary, then served many years as a minister throughout Illinois. The family returned to Evanston in 1888 when Sheppard joined Northwestern University’s faculty and board. Construction on the house began in 1894 and the family, including their four children, Robert Jr., Virginia, Margarethe, and Dorothea, moved into the completed house in 1896. They would live here until 1909.

Dorothea was eight years old when the family moved into the house. Her bedroom, at the far end of the long hall, was too isolated, and she was permitted to sleep on a small cot in the dressing room adjacent to her parents’ bedroom. She would later recount fond memories of playing on her parents’ massive canopied bed, pretending it was a ship on which she would sail around the world, often bringing her cat along for the trip in “a cozy basket.”

The Sheppards moved to Texas in 1910. In 1915, Dorothea married an Evanston acquaintance, Harold Wing. The Wings would raise their children at 1117 Asbury in Evanston, where they lived for nearly seven decades. The stately, carved mahogany bed and six-drawer dresser and mirror came to Dorothea. Her own daughter, also named Dorothea, was born in the bed in 1916. She gave it to her daughter Coventry, who gave it to her daughter, Courteney.

Back Home Again
Five Generations Later

by Kris Hartzell, Director of Facilities, Visitor Services and Collections
The bed and dresser have traveled to many familial homes throughout the United States. The furniture represented a continuity of identity for each succeeding generation of Sheppard descendants. The family’s decision to donate them to the collection of the Evanston History Center, located in the house that meant so much to the Sheppards, was both difficult and manifest. The EHC is happy to have these pieces that will help us better tell the story of this house.

Virginia Loring Sheppard pictured in the master bedroom at 225 Greenwood Street with the furniture in 1896. The four posts of the bed are heavily carved in a spiraling leaf pattern, a basket of flowers is centered in relief on the headboard. The size is archaic, called a three-quarter bed, its width between a twin and a double bed, designed at a time when the average person was much smaller than today. The dresser (pictured below) has turned “rope” posts and lions paw feet, with an attached oval mirror.

Virginia Sheppard died suddenly in 1910. The Evanston Index stated: “Her house was the scene of innumerable family reunions, where the spirit of good cheer reigned… Her beautiful house was her own thought, her own creation, the work of many years before a stone was laid. Each nook of the house contained some precious sentiment and held for her some sweet thought. She loved her home and her home life with an intensity which even those dearest to her could scarcely understand.”
Under The Buffalo Fall 2018 Season

“High Risers:” Cabrini-Green and the Fate of America’s Housing

Ben Austen
Thursday, October 18, 2018, 7pm (reception starts at 6:30pm)

The public housing facility, Cabrini-Green, once home to 20,000 Chicago residents, provides the basis for Ben Austen’s exploration of America’s public housing experiment and the changing fortunes of American cities. Told movingly through the lives of residents who struggled to make a home for their families as powerful forces converged to accelerate the housing complex’s demise, High Risers constitutes a sweeping exploration of race, class, popular culture, and politics in modern America. Join us for a presentation by Ben Austen as he examines what went wrong in the effort to provide affordable housing to the poor—and what can be learned from those mistakes.

“Redlined:” A Memoir of Race, Change, and Fractured Community on 1960s Chicago

Linda Gart\nThursday, November 8, 2018, 7pm (reception starts at 6:30pm)

Join us for a presentation by Linda Gart as she discusses her memoir, Redlined. Set against the backdrop of the Civil Rights Movement, the book tells the story of one white family on Chicago’s West Side, navigating the uncharted shoals of their neighborhood’s racial change. Based on long-hidden letters and diaries, Gart’s vivid memoir explores complicated truths of marriage, sexual freedom, and race relations in a devastated landscape, ravaged by racist mortgage policies and shifting amidst a nation undergoing revolutionary change.

Book signings will follow each presentation. Books will be available for sale at the events. A reception catered by Whole Foods Market kicks off each event at 6:30 PM.

Admission to each event: $10. Payable at the door. EHC Members: Free. Reservations recommended: email: jthompson@evanstonhistorycenter.org or go online: www.evanstonhistorycenter.org/all-events/

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Thank you to all who attended the Melody in August party on August 25th. Party guests dressed in their 1960s inspired, finest while dining on delicious food and dancing to 1960s music provided by Ken Arlen’s music introduction. Guests also were the first to enjoy our new exhibit Evanston 1968: Seasons of Change, all while supporting Evanston History Center’s mission to collect, preserve, exhibit and interpret the rich history of Evanston. Party goers had a wonderful time reveling in the stunning Charles Gates Dawes house and enjoying the magical atmosphere. Many thanks to our sponsors which include Porte Brown Accountants and Advisors, First Bank & Trust, Bradley Investment Center, Northwestern University and Heart Certified Auto Care and to the Melody in August committee, chaired by Janet Nieman Reed.

Dancers and vintage cars enhanced the 60s theme and overall fun! If you missed the party be sure to stop in soon to see the exhibit and Save the Date, August 24th, 2019 for our next Melody in August.

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J. Robert and Trish Barr, Eston and Sandy Gross, Doug and Linda Honnold, Sharon Ephraim and David Kite, Robert and Janet Neiman Reed, Rick Hubbard and Alaka Wali, Eden Juron and Neal Pearlman, David Downen and Kathryn Kniffen, Mike Ford and Spencer Beard, Sally Lynch, Ann Weatherhead, Jack Hinz and Cate Whitcomb
Party Committee: Janet Neiman Reed (chair), David Downen, Sally Lynch, Eston Gross, Eden Juron Pearlman, Jill Kirk
Preservation Statement

Recently preservation issues have been prevalent in the Evanston community and our role in the debates has been questioned. Our mission is to collect and preserve Evanston’s history, and we are concerned if that history is lost or placed at risk; however, the Evanston History Center does not become involved in local preservation debates for the following reasons.

First, the Evanston History Center is a 501 (C) (3) nonprofit organization and our protected status could be jeopardized if we appear to lobby for political causes. Second, preservation issues are complicated and should be the responsibility of government and community entities.

The Evanston History Center endeavors to support all parties interested in preservation by providing historical documentation about Evanston structures and other preservation matters from our publicly accessible Archives and non-circulating Library. Our Research Room is open four days per week (TWThS from 1-4 pm). Access is free for members, and there is a $5 fee for non-members. We will waive the fee is there is a problem with payment.

We also charge for copies and scanning services. These fees go directly to support the Evanston History Center, a privately funded organization that does not receive city or government funding.

Finally, we strive daily to preserve the National Historic Landmark Charles Gates Dawes House and all of Evanston’s unique history in our Archives and Collections.

We invite every Evanston community member to the Dawes House. We welcome your curiosity and energy about our city and its history. We encourage you to use our Archives and Library, to investigate your house or apartment building, to learn about community development, and to understand more about the life of Vice President Dawes and his Nobel Prize winning achievements.

Eden Juron Pearlman,
Executive Director, On behalf of the Evanston History Center
Board of Directors

2018 Summer Interns
Madeline Crispell
Alex Swanson
Katie Porwit
Alec Glazier
Elizabeth Hawley
Sophia Weglarz
Maggie Barney
Ben Crispell
Some have moved on, some will remain to assist us year round. Thank you.

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SASI Services for Adults Staying in Their Homes
Southeast Evanston Association
Stone Heritage Properties
S. Wolf and Associates
Whole Foods

Thank you to our Merchants Club Members
Final Walking Tour for the Season!
Saturday, October 20, 2018 — Downtown Evanston
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. This tour meets at FOUNTAIN SQUARE. Group walking tours can be scheduled by appointment. To get more information on group walking tour options, please contact us at (847) 475-3410 or e-mail Kris Hartzell.

Evanston On The Go!
Saturday, October 20, 2018 — Evanston Rides the Rails!
The Evanston History Center invites you to take a narrated tour of the CT’s Pink and Brown Elevated Train Lines on a chartered CTA train comprised of vintage 1970s equipment. We’ll see historic neighborhoods and sites from a new perspective -- United Center, Medical District, Pilsen, Ravenswood, and Lincoln Square.

While we’re riding, Graham Garfield, expert from the Shore Line Interurban Historical Society, will narrate Chicago’s rail-transit history and relate it to sites on the trip. Shore Line is the authoritative source for Chicagoland rail-transit history, publishing the journal First and Fastest and other special studies.

The trip will last from 9 a.m. to noon. We’ll start and end the trip at the Linden CTA station in Wilmette. The price of the trip is $75 for EHC members and $85 for non-members. For reservations, go to evanstonhistorycenter.org.

Evanston 1968: Seasons of Change
August 25, 2018 — May 13, 2019
Revisit the tumultuous year of 1968 in our new exhibit, Evanston 1968: Seasons of Change. Fifty years ago emerging dissatisfaction with the existing order spontaneously coalesced into a movement of protest and social activism. Before the development of social media, disparate voices of protest around the world emerged to challenge the established order. Evanston was a city in the process of evolving and its traditions, population, and politics underwent a major shift. Along with a building boom downtown and in the school system, Evanston’s cultural landscape was forever altered. Join EHC in examining how the year 1968 brought significant changes to Evanston.