



Oak Park River Forest High School Archives Move to OPRF Museum

Upcoming 150th school anniversary ideal time to showcase stories

Oak Park River Forest Museum is now the official repository of nearly 150 years of Oak Park River Forest High School history as part of a collaboration which will improve the care of and accessibility to this rich heritage linking together our sister villages.

In late December, a truck arrived at OPRF Museum loaded with more than 50 boxes, eight packed file cabinets, framed photos and artwork, student publications, scrapbooks, a large megaphone, two band uniforms, Huskie fan gear, dance bids, academic trophies, photos, and a wide range of other material. An inventory of the items to be transferred was prepared in summer and fall 2021 and Historical Society staff and volunteers have already begun to create a more detailed finding aid to ready the material for public access.

OPRF High School transferred its archives to OPRF Museum via a collaborative agreement between The Historical Society of Oak Park and River Forest and OPRF High School, unanimously approved by the boards of each institution in November 2021 after several years of discussion and planning.

The tiny room where the items were stored at OPRF High School was slated for demolition as part of a multi-million-dollar renovation which will re-purpose the prior library on the second floor overlooking the tennis courts into classroom space. A new library was created on the top floor of a three-story addition that opened last month on the site of the old South Cafeteria. In addition to a new cafeteria and library, the new construction includes a Student Resource Center with a tutoring center, technology help desk, large lecture hall, and flexible classrooms.

Oak Park High School opened in 1873, with its first graduating class in 1877, and a committee has been formed by OPRF High School to plan the best way to mark the Sesquicentennial. A referendum in 1899 formally created Oak Park River Forest High School, so the 125th anniversary of a shared high school between the two villages also is approaching. The material in the Archives will be a crucial resource to tell all of these stories and much more.



All packed up and ready to go— 150 years of OPRFHS history

(Continued on page 2)

Save the Date! OPRF Museum Gala and "Heart of Our Villages" Awards Ceremony Coming Thursday, March 24th *(See story on page 3)*

The material transferred to OPRF Museum does not contain any official student education records that are private and confidential as defined by state or federal laws and graduates will continue to apply to OPRF High School officials for such records and official transcripts. In addition, OPRF High School also will maintain in its library a set of paper copies of the *Tabula* yearbook and the *Trapeze* student newspaper for student reference.

“These historic materials, as well as subsequent materials that will be generated in the operation of OPRF High School for decades to come, need to be continually organized, cared for, preserved, and made accessible to the OPRF community, the broader Oak Park and River Forest community, and the world at large,” said Superintendent Dr. Greg Johnson in a memo about the transfer. “We appreciate the willingness of the Historical Society to ensure that the school’s rich history is preserved, organized, and made accessible to a wide audience at the Oak Park River Forest Museum, just a few blocks east of our campus.”

The transfer of the Archives was formalized in the agreement as a loan of the materials for a term of three years ending Dec. 31, 2024. “We anticipate converting the loan to a donation at that point by mutual agreement or extending the loan on mutually acceptable terms, similar to what is contained in this agreement,” said Johnson, who was promoted to Superintendent in spring 2021 and whose grandmother was a proud graduate of the Class of 1937.

Of course, since it was organized in 1968 the Historical Society has separately been collecting a wide range of materials related to OPRF High School and boasts a complete set of *Tabula* yearbooks, memorabilia, photographs, student publications, etc. that is added to each year via donations (see page 6

for more about a recent donation from a 1964 graduate).


“It is a great privilege and responsibility to collaborate with OPRF High School to provide care and allow better public access to these materials, and we are delighted to take on this new challenge,” said Historical Society Executive Director Frank Lipo. “Together with the materials we already have gathered

through the years, OPRF Museum will steward the official OPRF High School Archives in partnership with school staff, students and alumni. We are grateful that the agreement also acknowledges the tremendous work ahead of us to tap these materials for programming and public use, with a total of \$25,000 over the next three years coming from District 200 to offset costs associated with storing, organizing and making accessible these materials.”

In addition to being the repository and access point for the Archives, OPRF Museum will provide related services including research services to the public and high

school community, assisting in developing regular exhibits, providing content for publications, and developing presentations for the OPRF High School. A new OPRF High School Archives Committee also will be established to coordinate cooperation.

OPRF Museum will feature items related to the history of OPRF High School in exhibits, programs, and other activities on a regular and ongoing basis and will invite OPRFHS alumni to visit OPRF Museum and reconnect with these stories, including during reunions.

The High School Archives was established by the Class of 1978 and was expanded and shepherded by Don Vogel, considered by many to be a key part of the institutional memory of OPRF High School, even since his 2010 retirement. Vogel worked with Karin Sullivan, Executive Director of Communications at OPRF High School, on planning the transfer. 



Circle March 24 on Your Calendar for OPRF Museum Gala and 2022 "Heart of Our Villages" Awards

by Peggy Tucko Sinko, President of OPRF Museum

What better way to welcome spring, with its promise of new beginnings, than to celebrate with us at the Oak Park River Forest Museum Gala and *Heart of Our Villages* Award Ceremony on Thursday, March 24.

The *Heart of Our Villages* Award recognizes exceptional residents of Oak Park and River Forest whose lives of service are models for our two communities. The Museum Gala offers all of us the opportunity to publicly honor these remarkable people for their stalwart dedication to working for the betterment of our hometowns.

We are delighted to announce this year's honorees: Harriette and McLouis "Mac" Robinet and Family of Oak Park; and Carlotta Lucchesi of River Forest.

Their selfless engagement in the civic, cultural, and social life of our villages have helped shape Oak Park and River Forest for



Mac and Harriette Robinet of Oak Park

decades and continue to do so today.

The Robinet family moved to Oak Park in 1965 at a time when few Black families called Oak Park home and those seeking to move here met with active discrimination. The Robinets were leaders of the 1966 Fair Housing marches in the village, immediately working with others to improve their community, as they have continued to do for the next 50 plus years.

Harriette is the award-winning author of historical fiction books for children and Mac is a physicist, retired from Argonne National Laboratory. Several of their children continue to contribute to the well-being of our community including Linda Robinet, a teacher at Oak Park's

Beye Elementary School, and Oak Park Public Library staff member Stephen Robinet.

Carlotta Lucchesi is a lifelong area resident and graduate of Trinity High School. Her broad community involvement includes service as a president of the District 200 High School Board, and of the District 90 River Forest School Board. She has held leadership positions with the River Forest Tennis Club, and is currently a board member of OPRF Museum. She also serves on the DePaul



Carlotta Lucchesi of River Forest

University School of Music Advisory Board.

The celebration will take place at The Nineteenth Century Club in Oak Park from 6:30 to 9:00 p.m. Attendees will enjoy cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and a carving station, followed by the awards presentation at 7:30 pm. Cost is \$125 per person. A virtual option will be available for those unable to attend in person.

Proof of vaccination will be required for the in-person event, and all applicable local, state, and federal COVID mandates will be in place for the safety of those in attendance.

Invitations will be mailed this month. We look forward to raising a toast with our members and friends to support the work of Oak Park River Forest Museum and honor these outstanding community members who are truly the *Heart of Our Villages*.

Proceeds from the gala help fund Oak Park River Forest Museum's operating costs and future exhibits. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 708-848-6755 or go to oprfmuseum.org.



Betty White's Family Tree—Her Roots Brought Her Here

By Frank Lipo, Executive Director

(Remarks delivered outside Lake Theater on January 15, 2022)

All history is ultimately family history—the parents, extended families, close friends and communities that shape us.

And what do we really know about Betty White's family that brought her here 100 years ago to be born in Oak Park? And also about her return visits when she came to visit extended family? Digging through the archives and also with some help from genealogical expert and Historical Society volunteer Kurt Etchingham, here are a few stories.

Betty's parents were both born in 1899—just like Oak Park legends Percy Julian and Ernest Hemingway. Unlike Dr. Julian's roots in Alabama and Hemingway's in Oak Park, all of Betty's grandparents were first-generation immigrants.

Betty's father was Horace White and her mother was Catherine Cachikis—who went by Tess or Tessie.

Horace and his sister Ema were born in the upper peninsula of Michigan to Danish immigrant Christopher White and Canadian Etta Lundy, later moving to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Tess's parents were Greek immigrant Nick Cachikis and Canadian native Margaret Hobbs, who met and married in Chicago.

By 1918, when Betty's dad Horace joined the Army to serve in WWI, his family lived at 704 N. Central in Chicago, just south of Chicago Avenue. By that point, the Cachikis family lived at 4110 Washington Blvd., just west of Pulaski and within a short walk of Garfield Park.

We don't know details of their courtship, but West Siders Tess Cachikis and Horace White, only 22 years old, were married on February 19, 1921 in Chicago and they chose an apartment in Oak Park at 220 Pleasant to be their first home together. Eleven months later, Betty came along! After an eventful two

years, marriage and a new baby girl, the Whites moved to California as her father pursued his career as a salesman of industrial electrical parts.

But the Oak Park connection doesn't end there because of Betty's extended family. Betty's dad Horace had one sibling, Ema, who married Hugh James. Ema and her husband Hugh lived with her parents in Austin at the time Betty and her parents left for California. A few years later, in 1926, Betty's aunt and uncle bought the house at 214 N. Taylor in Oak

Park and within a few years her parents moved in with them. Both her grandparents and her aunt and uncle lived in that home until they died, with her uncle the last to die in 1965. They evidently were a close, extended family. They had deep roots with 40 years in Oak Park.

In a 1989 letter to the Historical Society, Betty White recalled visiting

and staying with her aunt, uncle and grandparents in a house on Taylor Avenue on multiple occasions as she was growing up. She didn't recall the exact address at that point but had fond memories of those visits back to Oak Park even incorrectly assuming that she lived there as a baby since in her mind it was "THE FAMILY HOME," associated with her childhood extended family visits.

In that letter, Betty graciously thanked my predecessor at the Historical Society who had written to ask her about her Oak Park memories. She wrote back quickly, saying she appreciated the interest, and enclosed a bio and photo for our files. Betty closed with a P.S. I will let her have the last words in her own words:

"P.S. I'm always careful to explain that I was born in Oak Park, not Chicago."



Be Like Betty celebration at Lake Theater, January 15, 2022

The Little Details: Real Estate Listing Sheets Hidden Gem

by Rachel Berlinski, Operations Manager

Thanks to some New Year's purging of old files, my dad recently unearthed snapshots of our family home in the south suburbs, taken by a realtor just before my parents bought it in the mid-80s. It was charming—nearly the same admirable abode except for a few significant details. I've always wondered why an unruly row of tulips pops up through the middle of our front yard every spring, and this polaroid gave me the answer: it showed a walkway lining up with that path of tulips and a set of stairs on the front of the porch, instead of the stairs on the side where I've always known them to be.

Real estate photos can easily be taken for granted. You know very well what a building looks like when you first fall in love with it. But after 40 years of living there with a steady stream of changes along the way, it's not so surprising that you'd forget the details (my dad had no memory of the original placement of our front steps).

That's why I have such fond feelings for what are the most frequently used resources in the Fields Research Center. These have the wow factor—everyone who is able to view one for their own property says the same thing: "Wow."

I'm talking about the Historical Society's collection of real estate listing sheets. These half-sheet slips or index cards are a crash course in the history of the buildings that make Oak Park and River Forest into the community that we know and love.

This collection of thousands of Multiple Listing Service sheets came to the Historical Society from two major local realty firms: W.R. James in Oak Park and Cusack Realty in River Forest.

Although this will underscore my status as a millennial, I'll just point out that this indeed was the way to learn of properties for sale before the internet

changed that game for everyone. You would visit the realtor's office where you were shown these sales listings, including a description and most often a photo of the property.

Otherwise, you could read through ads in the newspaper (and I do mean PAPER) or opt for driving around your neighborhood of choice looking for For-Sale signs, except of course in Oak Park where the use of these yard signs fell out of practice after the fair housing efforts of the early 1970s.

We use these listings in many different ways for research, including finding names of previous owners, descriptions of the property at a given time, and hopefully a good clear photo. There might be no better feeling than having a homeowner come to us needing to know what their house looked like decades

ago, usually because of restoration work where they are hoping to get the details back to the way they once were, and finding a listing sheet with a photo from fifty years ago or more. That to me is a holy-grail moment.

I use these sales listings not just for researching buildings, but for almost any research question I come across. They show the changing appearance of our community through the decades, and since they often list the name of the owner who is selling a property at the time they even help with family research to verify dates of residence and details on family history.

But property listings can also reflect some of the darker chapters of our village's past. One of the most startling examples that a researcher discovered while working with me to research their house was a simple line on the back of a listing from the 1950s that read, "GENTILES ONLY," meaning that the seller would

(Continued on page 7)

OAK PARK, ILL.		RESIDENCE—IMPROVED	
Location	651 Kenilworth Ave.	Description	Stucco & Frame
Price	\$55,000	Terms	
Material of Bldg.	Stucco & Frame	Comp.	Heating H.W., Gas—\$250.46
Rooms—1st Floor	LIX, BRICK, BOOK DECORATIONS		Walk, Basobrd., rad.
Rooms—2nd Floor	4 bdrms	Floors	Side
Rooms—3rd Floor	Trin		Garage 2 car
Porches	L.C. SCREENED PORCH	San Parlor	Improvements
Bath	1 Plastic tile, 4	Fireplace	REAL
Age		Age	
Statement		Size of Lot	40 x 155
Owner's Name	Walmsley D. G. P. W.	Use	Phone VI-8-5388
Address		Use	Phone
Mfrs.: 1st	Due	Rate	Monthly Rent
2nd	Due	Rate	Size on
Annual Taxes	\$217	Loan Expires	Date Listed 5/11/55
Specials		By Whom	ICH
Remarks	E-27x14—super vent windows, D-14x14, Kit-mod. cab., copper hood above stove, Brk.cook, 4 bdrms—3 twin size, 1 single—paroled, Remodeled by MARTLING, Dishwasher, disposal, elec. RANGE, STOVE, WASHTR., P.V.I. SEWER CAP.		
Location	651 Kenilworth Ave., O. P.	Property	Stucco & Frame
Price	\$55,000	Over	

This 1955 real estate listing is a snapshot of the state of the house at that time. It gives us a wealth of information about the home, including the owner's name followed by the buyer's name in pencil.

Rediscovered Memorabilia Sparks High School Memories

Editor's note: An email received by OPRF Museum last spring led to the donation of memorabilia from Jan Scott's days at Oak Park River Forest High School. Here is part of the correspondence with the California resident, who works as curator of her local historical society after retiring from a career in theater nurtured while a student at OPRF High School. It is the sort of inquiry staff receives regularly throughout the year. It has been edited for space.

The Inquiry:

Hi,

Going through some ancient boxes, I discovered a sweatshirt from my cheerleader days (see attached photos) at OPRFHS in 1961-62, as well as several 8x10 photos taken of the Sophomore and Varsity cheerleading squads. I was even wise enough to write everyone's names on the back.

You may already have such things. You may not be interested, but before I toss them, I thought I'd check and see if you'd like me to send them.

Thanks for doing what you do!

Jan Scott (Janis Leverenz,
Class of '64)

The Response:

Jan:

These are fantastic!

Thanks for thinking of us. We would love to add these items to our collection.

Are you in metro Chicago or plan to visit any time soon? If not, I could send you a shipping address?

I would also love to hear any stories about being a cheerleader at OPRF High School in the early 1960s.

Frank Lipo, Executive Director

The Stories:

Hi Frank,

I'm so glad you think they're worth taking. I held onto them all these years because I couldn't let them go. It's gratifying that at 73, I actually have kept things that might be of interest.

I live on the Central Coast of California. While I sometimes get back that way (my sister lives in Naperville) I have no immediate plans to be visiting. So if you'll send me a shipping address I will get them out to you. I'll also see if I can find the "OP" gold charm we all bought and wore as part of our uniform as a necklace. [Footnote from later email: Ah memory. The gold OP necklace turns out to be silver, and is included. Sophomore year we all special ordered them so we would

have an identifying necklace that we could wear whenever. Becoming a cheerleader felt like the biggest deal in the world!]

And today I ran into all 4 yearbooks '61,'62,'63. I still can't part with '64, but if you don't have the others, you're welcome to them. Let me know.

The '64 yearbook has too many memories, even now. I was in the fall play in '63- Katrin in "I Remember Mama" directed by James Eitrheim who is largely responsible for the 'new' theatre at the HS. I knew I

was going to have to quit cheerleading to do the show because our rehearsals always included Saturdays which would conflict with football games. So I did, and never regretted it.

I was in the first musical, *Brigadoon*, in the dance lead. Before *Brigadoon*, the school had only done Gilbert and Sullivan. Edna Ruth Wood who ran

(continued on page 7)



Jan Scott's cheerleader sweatshirt with one of the photos of the 1962 OPRFHS cheerleading squad

Cheerleader (continued from page 6)

a cappella choir closed out her career with a redo of it. We all took that as a great compliment years later.

I also talked Mr. Eitrheim into letting me join the technical crew for the spring show, a crew that was always all male. I ended up with a minor in technical theatre at Northwestern. Always grateful to him for letting me start there. I taught HS drama & technical theatre after graduating from NU at New Trier West.



Jan Leverenz Scott in the 1964 yearbook

They wanted me to stay on as their tech theatre person, but I had to move to NYC to try for a career in theatre. I worked almost exclusively out of town over the years, but I did retire with a pension from Actors Equity, the union representing performers.

What I remember most about cheerleading was the fun of not sitting in the stands, but having something to do. And it forced

me to learn about football, so we wouldn't end up cheering the wrong thing, which did happen. I still know (long distance) Marilyn Noonan Ames from those days.

When we began sophomore year on the squad, we were still required to wear 'saddle shoes' clunky, heavy, blue and white leather for football season, that we all hated. No one had worn saddle shoes in real life since the '50's. In the early '60's white tennis shoes were IT! Within a month, or a couple of weeks, we voted to change our uniform. We asked no one (I don't think) and just started showing up in our white shoes which are what you will see in the photos. No one told us to change back, so we won.

Anyway, I confess I'm pleased to send this stuff, whatever you want. I don't have kids who might have to pretend to care about all of this. I am also the curator of our local historical society and know how good it feels when something fills in a hole somewhere in our collection.

I look forward to hearing from you, and sending whatever you like.

Thanks for the validation,

Jan Scott



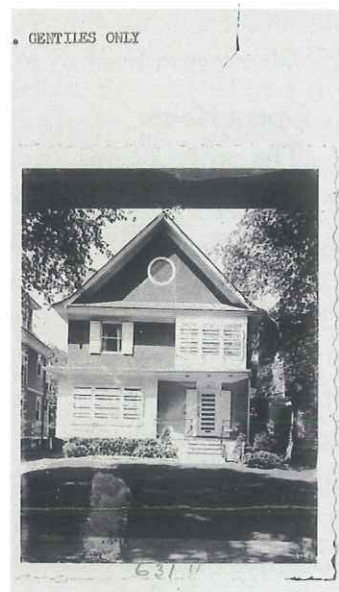
Real Estate Listings (continued from page 5)

not consider selling the home to Jews. This ties into the infamous M-listings—the ones where a homeowner could opt out of showing their home to minorities, thus the "M." And you may find other descriptive language that sugar-coats or masks the reality of a property, such as the age of a typical OPRF house being described as "Old." (If your house was old 40 years ago, where does that leave you now?)

Unfortunately, there is not a listing for every property in the area. This can happen for many reasons, like if the property was not listed through a local realtor. Or perhaps the property was owned by the same person or family for decades and therefore had no listing to begin with, which happens surprisingly often in our community of many families with long ties to the homestead. So

sometimes the lack of a listing tells a story, too. The opposite is also true: some homes have been turned over so many times that we have a stack of listing sheets for one house! You never can tell. These listings are an egalitarian representation of the history of a building, blind to the eye of the street-gaper. Even if your house doesn't look as captivating as some of the most glamorous homes in the neighborhood, it has a unique story.

For anyone who stops by the research center asking about a specific property, these listing sheets are what I reach for first. I think everyone who lives or has lived in OP and RF should see what listings we have for their property. Whether it is a single family home, an apartment, or a commercial building, listing sheets are my go-to starting point. But they're only the start. We have so much to offer for researching your OPRF home, business, or family. Contact me at the museum to learn more about how you can dig in.



The reverse of the 1955 listing from the previous page includes a photo of the home as well as the stunning notation "Gentiles Only"

The Nine Lives of the Warrington Opera House

By Mary Ann Porucznik

As a docent at OPRF Museum, I enjoy telling visitors about the many ways the building was used over the years. In fact, several buildings in Oak Park have had multiple lives, including one represented by a series of three folding chairs in the museum. These are seats from the Warrington Opera House, 104 S. Marion. From its construction in 1902 until today, the Warrington has had nine lives!

1. Opera House

The story begins in 1902, just as Oak Park incorporated as a village. At the time, many towns had "opera houses," which were more like theaters or auditoriums where a variety of entertainments could be presented. Oak Park's was designed by E.E. Roberts on land owned by Dr. Charles Warrington Dunlop. Local realtor Frank H. June managed the project.

In addition to the Opera House, the ground floor had spaces for nine stores, each with its own basement storage. The second floor held offices, and there were ten apartments on the third floor.

The Warrington Opera House opened on Oct. 16, 1902, to great fanfare and high hopes. Although about 1200 people comfortably filled the house, it wasn't a sold-out performance. The choral group, under the direction of Signor A. A. Jannotta, included soloists from Oak Park and Chicago.

2. Community Center

Attracting an audience for a strictly musical venue was difficult. The Warrington was often used as a community gathering place. In 1903, the high school glee club performed there, and high school graduation exercises were also held there.

The deadly Iroquois Theater fire in Chicago in December 1903 forced it to close for several weeks while new fireproof curtains were installed and exits added and upgraded. It was at this time that the seat section on display at the museum was likely removed

to create another aisle. The seats were stored in an attic, not to be rediscovered for decades.

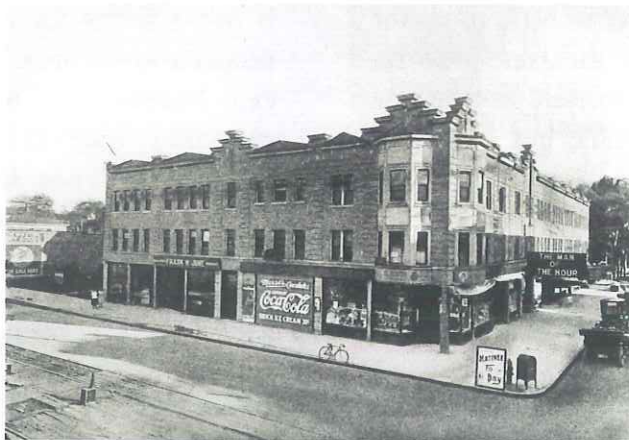
3. Repertory Theater

The Warrington eventually became home to a series of stock theater companies, due in part to competition from other venues and audience's desire for more varied entertainment. Programs included skits, travelogues, lectures, and melodramas. An evening's entertainment with a 20-cent admission fee featured a seven-act bill of assorted performers ranging from jugglers and acrobats to magicians and ethnic comics. The OPRF Museum has a number of programs from these early years.

In 1910, the Grace Hayward Stock Company took up residence at the Warrington and became quite popular. They performed at the Warrington for 5 years, from

1909 to 1914, presenting nine performances and a new show almost every week. The only day that there wasn't a performance was Sunday, due to a local ordinance ban. Hayward was not only an actress, but a playwright as well, and wrote several comedies for her troupe to perform.

According to one patron of the Warrington, instead of having popcorn and candies available in the lobby, "young men strolled the aisles carrying trays laden with candy, popcorn, peanuts, salt water taffy... [and] young ladies dressed in black with white lace headbands and aprons carried trays lined with glasses of ice water" between acts. Although the Warrington continued to mount musical performances, such as the light opera "Pinafore" in its early years, it also had to contend with competition from nearby playhouses and theaters. The Oak Park Theater, later called the Lamar, was built in 1913 to accommodate both movies and vaudeville acts and was practically right next door to the Warrington.



The Warrington Opera House building at Marion & South Blvd. captured in this 1903 photograph by Philander Barclay

4. Acting School

In 1929, the Earle Ross Players, a stock troupe that had been performing at the Warrington, opened a Professional School of the Theatre and Allied Arts. The school offered a dancing program with classes in toe technique, limbering, acrobatic, buck and soft shoe routines; evening and children's classes; coaching in opera, oratorio and concert singing; and acting lessons. They even guaranteed a screen test to those who took the course on "talking picture stagecraft."

5. Indoor Golf Course!

Soon, however, the Warrington went through a massive transformation, emerging as a miniature golf course! An article in the *Oak Parker* noted that this "marks a new trend of entertainment for Oak Park, combining miniature golf, shuffle board, and a modern sandwich shop and soda fountain." According to the article, the stage was camouflaged and a sky, complete with moon, sun, stars, and clouds, was installed. The foyer was lined with trees and shrubs, creating a "veritable fairyland." There was even a running stream and a balcony "clubhouse" in for those who preferred to watch rather than to play.

But perhaps opening an indoor golf course in the depths of the Great Depression wasn't the best idea. A year later, theater was back, with a repertoire company in residence, and the Warrington had been rechristened the "Tudor Theater."

6. Newspaper Office

By the time this photo was taken, the Warrington had been transformed again. Gone was the canopy, the roof decorations, and the golf course. Instead, the offices of *Oak Leaves* occupied the premises. Publisher Telfer MacArthur boasted that "We are morally certain that our paper is the one paper published in what was formerly (A) a theater and (B) a golf course. A wall has replaced the curtain, and the stage is the publisher's office. The circulation department occupies the balcony, and the business manager the orchestra pit. ...



The Warrington in the 1940s, as the *Oak Leaves* newspaper office.

We evacuated the fairways and hazards—and the dust of long disuse—and find it a fine, airy, high-ceiling shop."

7. Banquet Hall

After the Warrington closed yet again in the 1950s, Peter Pasquini decided to remake the theater as a banquet hall, and a new generation of Oak Parkers came to know the building as the Mar-Lac House. The week before Thanksgiving in 1961, a fire resulted in extensive damage to the stores and hall on the main floor and the 27 apartments on the second and third floors. Although no one died, six firemen were hospitalized due to smoke inhalation. After this, the building got a new façade and interior. Although both the stage and balcony were retained, the balcony was closed, and about 30 percent of the 70,000 square feet were unused.

The façade was completely redone in cement. A canopy was installed, but of a far different design than the original wrought-iron canopy. In 1969, Lou Fabbri joined Pasquini as a partner in Mar-Lac House, becoming the sole owner in 1986. In a nod to the building's past, he named the main banquet hall the Warrington Room. It was Fabbri who found the chair section in the building's attic and donated it to the Historical Society in 1994.

Although Mar-Lac House closed for good in 2001, the Fabbri family still runs its successor, Abbington Distinctive Banquets, in Glen Ellyn.

8. Condominiums

In 2004, the building that began as the Warrington Opera House was demolished and replaced by a condominium and retail complex. But the memory of the Warrington lives on, not only in the name of the complex, but also in the photos that decorate its lobby, reproductions from the Historical Society's collection.

But wait, you say, this article is titled the "Nine Lives of the Warrington," and only eight lives are listed. True, but in the memories of Oak Parkers, and in OPRF Museum, the Warrington continues to have a life of its own!



Annual Spring House Walk Returns to River Forest

Featuring Six Distinctive Homes That Reflect the Town's History

Tales Our Houses Tell, our annual Spring House Walk, returns to River Forest on Sunday, May 1, for the first time since 2019. This year we will feature six distinctive historic homes on Thatcher and Keystone



This 1870s house, one of the oldest in River Forest, was the home of the patriarch of one of the village's founding families.

Avenues between Lake Street and Chicago Avenue including one of the oldest houses in the village; one of the few (and one of the finest) E. E. Roberts homes in River Forest; and a home built by an early Village President as a wedding present for his daughter.

For those of you who have taken either our *West Side Stories* or *Street of Dreams* sidewalk tours through this neighborhood, here is a rare opportunity to get a



One of E. E. Roberts' grandest works, this is one of the few Roberts homes in River Forest



An extravagant wedding gift to his daughter and son-in-law, a former village president built this home next door to his own house.

glimpse inside a few of the houses we highlight on those tours. And if you haven't yet taken those tours, come join us on May 1 to see the inside of these six homes and then take our sidewalk tours this summer to learn more about the founding and growth of River Forest as it is reflected on these two streets.

Watch for more announcements and information in your email and on social media and visit oprfmuseum.org for the latest updates as we finalize plans for the 2022 edition of *Tales Our Houses Tell*. 🍁

History Matters

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We welcome your suggestions and comments. Please email us at: oprfhistorymatters@sbcglobal.net

Coming to OPRF Museum in February and March

Saturday, February 12 at 3:00 p.m.

Ai-jen Poo Offers a Guide to Help Navigate an Impending Demographic Crisis in the U.S.

In *The Age of Dignity: Preparing for the Elder Boom in a Changing America*, activist Ai-jen Poo offers a wake-up call about a demographic reality that will affect us all. “We have more senior citizens in America today than we’ve had at any time in our history,” Poo writes, pointing out that by 2030 one in every five Americans will be over sixty-five years old. This presents us with a new challenge: how do we care for and support quality of life for this unprecedented number of older Americans?



Ai-jen Poo

Despite the daunting numbers, Poo has written a profoundly hopeful book, offering a glimpse into the stories of the people whose lives will be reshaped by this demographic shift. She shows how we can become a more caring nation, providing solutions to fix our fraying safety net while also increasing opportunities for women, immigrants, and the unemployed. As Poo has said, “Care is the strategy and the solution toward a better future for all of us.”

Oak Park resident Ai-jen Poo is an award-winning organizer, author, and leading voice in the women’s movement. She is co-founder and Executive Director of the National Domestic Workers Alliance and Co-Director of Caring Across Generations, a coalition of 200 advocacy groups working to transform long-term care in the U.S. with a focus on the needs of aging Americans, people with disabilities, and their caregivers. A graduate of Columbia University, she was the recipient of a 2014 MacArthur Fellowship (the so-called “MacArthur Genius Grant”).



Tuesday, March 22 at 7:00 p.m.

Jeanne Schultz Angel Looks Back and Ahead on the Long Road to Universal Suffrage

2020 marked the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment which enfranchised women to vote in all U.S. elections. Since the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, many promoted, persuaded, and oftentimes bravely fought about equal rights under United States law. The road to enfranchisement and equal rights has had many roadblocks including Jim Crow, racism, and prejudice. It still remains under construction through gerrymandering, redistricting, voting access, and election tampering. Explore where we stand in 2022 and where we are going as we reflect on universal suffrage in American history and the ongoing struggle for voting rights for all Americans.



Jeanne Schultz Angel

Jeanne Schultz Angel is endlessly curious and often surprised by Illinois history. She shares that joy of inquiry through her research and presentations and explores how the context of history remains relevant in understanding the events of today. She is the Director of Learning Experiences & Historical Resources for Naper Settlement. She is a nonprofit administrator and museum professional with more than 24 years working within cultural institutions. Angel has been the executive director of three historical organizations: St. Charles Heritage Center, Lombard Historical Society/Sheldon Peck Homestead, and Oak Park and River Forest’s own Nineteenth Century Charitable Association.



Tickets for these events may be ordered online at oprfmuseum.org or by phone at (708) 848-6755. PLEASE NOTE: While these are currently planned as live appearances at OPRF Museum, the ongoing pandemic may force us to change them to online events. Please watch for further announcements or visit our website for the latest status updates during this time of uncertainty.



OAK PARK
RIVER FOREST
MUSEUM

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These theater seats from 1902 are among the artifacts in our collection that help us preserve the memory and tell the history of the Warrington Block, an Oak Park landmark that served our village for a century.

One of Oak Park's earliest "mixed use" buildings stood for 100 years at South and Marion – a pioneer in adaptive reuse.

Here are advertisements for just a few of the businesses that called the Warrington home over the years



WARRINGTON OPERA HOUSE

Dr. C. W. Dunlop Will Construct
a \$75,000 Building.

Oak Park to Be at Last Provided with a Much-
Needed Improvement.

From The Oak Park Argus newspaper,
March 7, 1902

Official Opening
Warrington
Indoor Golf

Saturday, October 25 at 8 p.m.
THIS IS A COMPLETE 18-HOLE COURSE

Every detail has been thought of to make this the most beautiful and restful course possible.

- Because of the naturalness of the scenic effects, you can play with the feeling of being outdoors, and not be disturbed by the many street noises.

OPEN DAILY FROM 10 A.M. to 12 P.M.

PLAY SCHEDULE BOARDS ON A REGULATION COURSE

Complete Frontalis Service in Bakery Sweets • Sandwich • Hot Drinks and Sundishes

From The Oak Park Argus newspaper,
October 24, 1930

READY to SERVE
(All Departments)
In Our New and Larger Offices
100 South Marion Street
(Corner of South Boulevard & White Street)

For Reservation:
The old Argus office on West 1st Street is available for rent at a price to suit your needs. The building is a fine example of modern construction. Suitable for office, store, or other business purposes. Call for particulars.

Heater in the Public:
The new heater has been installed in the basement of the new building. The heater is of the most modern type and will keep the building warm during the winter months. The heater is also equipped with a fan to circulate the air throughout the building.

Just a Step From the Street
The new building is located on the corner of South Marion Street and White Street. It is a fine example of modern construction and is well equipped for business purposes. Call for particulars.

This Way, Please
A single parking space has been reserved for the convenience of our customers. The space is located on the corner of South Marion Street and White Street. Call for particulars.

You Will Be Served in the Lobby of Oak Leaves Building
1000 LEXIE STREET

OAK LEAVES
A Community Hall for Over 10 Years

From Oak Leaves newspaper
May 2, 1940

**MAKE YOUR NEW YEAR'S EVE
RESERVATIONS NOW**

GROUPS—CLUBS—ORGANIZATIONS are invited to make advance reservations at the

MAR-LAC HOUSE
104 S. Marion St., Oak Park

for Saturday, December 31st—New Year's Eve
10:00 P.M. to 2:00 A.M.
to include Dinner, Dancing and Party Favors
Reservations and Information—call
VI 8-4636

From Oak Leaves newspaper,
November 23, 1961

Learn more about *The Nine Lives of the Warrington Opera House* beginning on page 8 of this issue

Editor's Note: We enjoy bringing you these quarterly newsletters and appreciate any feedback or ideas you have about *History Matters*. Send us an email or letter or reach out by phone with ideas or questions. But don't wait to hear from us only 4x a year! Oak Park River Forest Museum also sends emails every week or so to update you on breaking news, upcoming events, etc. That has been especially useful during the pandemic when we have needed to make some changes on the fly! If you're not receiving email from OPRF Museum, go to our website at oprfmuseum.org and click the "Join Our Email List" button at the bottom of the page or email us at oprffhistorymatters@sbcglobal.net We will never give or sell your email to any person, organization or business.