

Highwood Historical Society

MAKING HISTORY EVERYDAY

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>From the Archives</i>	2
<i>Recent Acquisitions</i>	2
<i>"Highwood Artists"</i>	3
<i>Romano Piacenza, Meeting Uptown since 1954</i>	4-5
<i>Fourth of July</i>	5

P.O. Box 132
Highwood, IL 60040
tel: 847-682-9039
highwoodhistory@gmail.com

Board Members

Tom Scopelliti, President
Shirley Fitzgerald, Vice President
Jack Johnson, Treasurer
Adrienne Inman, Secretary

Teta Minuzzo, Past President

Josephine Campagni
Leonora Cervac
Lisa Cervac
Aldo Crovetti
Angela Crovetti
Sheila Dean
Michael Koenitz-Hudac
Cynthia Krol
Diane LoPresti
Barbara Sherony Marianetti
Rick Sachen
John Sirotti
Carol Ugolini

Letter from the President

Happy Birthday Highwood! This year marks the 150th anniversary of the founding of Highwood. On August 22, 1868, William W. Everts and Reuben Jeffrey filed the first plat map of the Village of Highwood. This was followed by a second plat map filed by Cyrus Bentley, who represented several investors, including Everts. Copies of these maps are on display in our newly opened museum at 122 North Ave. (For some of us old timers, that's the old "Mike's" grocery store.

If you haven't been to our museum, stop by and take a look. A special thanks to those Board members who have been working so diligently to get it up and running. Donations of memorabilia and artifacts keep coming in and archiving is in full gear. For those who would like to donate funds toward our rent expenses, we will be discussing the implementation of a sponsorship program.

"Highwood in the 60's" is a Highwood Historical Society program that is in the planning stages. It will show what was happening in Highwood against a backdrop of what was happening in the U.S.A and the world during that decade. We will be interested in photos, old movies (Highwood Days parades?), and individuals who can help us recreate the Highwood business district during that period. More information to come.

Our organization is strong. We currently have over 260 members! Help us stay strong. If you have friends or family who are not members, we would love to have them join. Individual and Family memberships start as low as \$20.00.

Finally, our next event will be the Tomato Contest on Wednesday, August 15th, at the Evening Market at Everts Park. See the details on entering this fun contest within this newsletter.

Bon Pomodoro!

Tom Scopelliti, President

Interested in 134 year old anecdotes about Highwood? So are we!

Reprinted from the July, 1874 edition of the Highland Park News:

One day we got a free ride into the country, which was agreeable, and, although the ride was cheap, the company was dignified, which was a guaranty that high toned subjects would be discussed and nothing but Sunday school stories told. But old Mr. C. and R. (two well known Highland Parkers) who accompanied us seemed to be in an elevated state of mind, and they continually caused our sober features to break into irregularity, and gentle smiles to resound through the umbrageous woods. When we arrived among the classic shades of Highwood, old Mr. R— exclaimed, as we neared the site of the former and original Post office: "Say Elder did you hear about uncle Henry's sign?" We bowed and remarked that he had made no sign to us. Old Mr. C—, put his gentle hand on old Mr. R—, and told him to be calm and repress his levity. Well, said old Mr. R—, this is how it was. You observe that the site is rather back from the boulevard, and its location was difficult to strangers, so at the request of prominent citizens uncle Henry borrowed a pot of shoe—we mean lamp black—of brother Rowden and proceeded to mark on a white fence board "Post Office," in Highwood text, and as it happened a crusader of the granger persuasion from Half Day, came to town upon a load of hay. He was dry as all grangers are, and he kept his eye out for an eye opener, so when he saw the sign on the tree he called halt and proceeded to interpret the same. He spent full half an hour at the first sitting and gave it up. Then he jumped down and tried another angle, and at last the perspiration standing among the hay seed on his manly brow, he shouted "*Hot coffee by thunder,*" and drove on, a disappointed man.

Our 2018 Holiday Raffle is under way.

First Prize: \$750.00 Visa Gift Card
Second Prize: \$500.00 Visa Gift Card

Tickets are \$5.00 each

Drawing to be held in December. You can purchase tickets in person on Wednesdays during the Evening Market at our building, by calling 847-682-9039, or via our member mailing this Fall.
Good Luck Everyone!

Membership Update

If this newsletter contains a membership form, you have not yet renewed for 2017-2018. Please renew today!

RECENT ACQUISITIONS & SPECIAL THANKS

The Highwood Historical is most appreciative of the wonderful items received this period. Special thanks to the following for their donations:

- Dennis Giangiorgi — 1957 Little Guys Jacket
- Ken Lolli — 1957 Chicago Sun Times article, listing Highwood caddies
- Bob Pasquesi — framed picture of 1994 Caddie Reunion with autographed signatures
- Michael Koenitz-Hudac — bell that came from Wesley Methodist Church (This will go on loan to the Church of the Redeemer when the church is ready to install the bell.)
- Patricia Murphy Issel — On loan to HHS - A St. James Sister of Loretto doll in its case with accompanying DVD and brochures
- Daniel Andre — postcard from Illinois State Historical Museum depicting the artist and his painting of Abraham Lincoln — a framed lithograph of this painting will also be donated to HHS by the artist
- Annalisa and Larry DeVito — many items including an American Legion trophy, Army discharge papers for Ralph Scornavacco, and several framed news articles
- Diana Joren — Bartlett Theatre announcements and a 1933 flyer for the People's Taxpayer's Party (These items were found inside a wall in her home.)
- Marlene Gaggioli Borovka — 1952 copy of HW News about St. James Girl Scouts & Brownies and a can opener from the Highwood Laundromat
- Lois Dever — St. James Church Bulletins recognizing Father Ouletta and Father Curielli
- Donna Mocogni — Many items including information on sports, Highwood Women's Prosperity Club, USO, St. James Sacred Heart Guild and Oak Terrace graduation photos from 1942 and 1943
- Carol Ugolini — Many Items including photos of 1952 St. James and OTS Reunion, documents from Highwood Women's Prosperity Club, and news clippings and brochures on Aldo Piacenza
- Lucy P. Konsler — autographed copy of the book, Reflections, by William Christiansen
- Charles Fiore III — Many items including 1946 OTS commencement program for Clara Fiore, newspaper clippings, small framed slate blackboard and copy of bylaws from Italian Women's Prosperity Club

The Highwood Historical Society sponsored its first special art exhibit titled **“Spotlight on the Arts.”** It honored and recognized Highwood artists from the past to the present. The event was held at the Highwood Library on June 15th and 16th.

Over 70 attendees were privileged to view the artistic abilities of: Daniel Andre, Guido Azzi, Beth Wiley Boyd, Ellsworth Cordesman, Beverly Fabbri, Emilio Galassini, Esther (Davis) Jacobs, Kevin Loesch, Mark McMahon, Aldo Piacenza, Amber Rose O'Brien, Mary Lou Schwall-Komie, and Donald Ugolini. Such a wonderful array of artist talent was portrayed. Watch for more programs of this kind in the future. Highwood is a unique community with so many talented individuals.



Clockwise from the top: Canvas by Beth Wiley Boyd, members Marlene Gaggioli Borovka, Toni Farioli, & Patty Ugolini Price, Beverly Fabbri and her art, original Aldo Piacenza birdhouse, Mayor Charlie Pecaro and son Frankie admire the work of Mark McMahon.

Romano Piacenza . . . Meeting Uptown since 1954

My parents are Vittorio Piacenza and Rosina Picchetti. I was born in Sant' Anna Pelago in Pievepelago in the province of Modena, region of Emilia-Romagna. Me and my dad came over in 1954 and my mom and my brother, Emilio, came over sometime in 1956. My Uncle Virgilio was here a number of years before us. My dad got work as a carpenter after we arrived. Then he hurt his back so he had to change jobs and did 'terrazzo' (tile work). The town we came from had about 1,600 and lots of people were leaving right around the same time we left.

We came over with my Uncle Franco Piacenza, my Uncle Biagio Piacenzo and my cousin Mario Piacenza. We came over on the Independence; she was an American ship. She was refitted after World War II for use as a passenger ship. It was a beautiful boat and really huge. We had nice quarters there. I was lucky. I never felt seasick. It took 9-10 days for us to get to America. I don't remember that we had bad weather. We left from LeHavre, France. On the way to America we also stopped in England to pick up more passengers. When we arrived in New York we didn't dock right away. Someone from the Port Authority came over in a small boat and boarded our ship to go over passenger lists. Once all of our papers were checked and we went through customs we went by train from New York to Chicago and then came straight to Highwood.

We lived with our uncle Virgilio and then later my dad bought a house on Walker Avenue, before my mom and brother came over. The address was 366 Walker Avenue, in Highland Park, right on the edge of Highwood. I was 16 when I came to this country. I went straight to work. My cousin went to school for a few years because he was younger than me. When my mom and Emilio arrived a year later, mom looked for a job immediately. She worked for Willie Vole who owned My Favorite Inn. She worked there for 30 years as the cook. Emilio was 11 when he came over so he was enrolled in St. James School.

My first impression when I came to this country and then to Highwood — it was an adventure. I was young and it was an exciting time for me. And there were a lot of people from Sant' Anna who were already here. I really liked it right away. My mother's sister, Veronica, came to the U.S. a couple of years later. She and her husband, Berto Bertucci, were married in Italy.

The first friends that I had were Domenic and Laura Ugolini. Domenic and I went to carpentry school together at Highland Park High School on Tuesday and Thursday evenings so we could become carpenters. We hung out with a lot of kids our age in their parents' homes. We fixed up Domenic's basement and that was our place. We also went to PeeGee's pool hall



Piacenza Family from left to right:
Rosina Picchetti Piacenza, Emilio,
Vittorio, and Romano

Maura & Romano, February 16, 1963



once in awhile and to movies at the Highwood theatre. We really didn't go out for dinner except for special occasions. My dad would take us out in Chicago to the Villa Toscana every Easter as a special treat. I kept up that tradition and take my family out to dinner every Easter.

I never felt any kind of prejudice when I came to this country. I had Italian and American friends. We worked together and went out together. Everyone was very nice to me and very friendly. I never had problems with anyone and mixed with a lot of different people. I became a citizen August 2, 1960. I had to sign up for the draft when I was 18. I went into Chicago to fill out the paperwork but I was never called up.

When Maura and I got married I was 25 and she was 22. Maura's family came to this country around 1956. She went to a Catholic high school with Agnes Picchetti in Winnetka. Actually, I knew Maura from the time she was a little girl in Italy. Maura was born in Rome but in the summer her family would come to see the grandparents in Sant'Anna. Her maiden name was Vignocchi but the family name of her grandparents in Sant'Anna was Bernardi. Maura's father was Francesco Vignocchi and her mother was Annuziata Bernardi (Nunzia). Her grandparents remained in Italy and her family came to the US. Maura's mother had a sister named Agnese who lived in Highland Park. I met Maura for the second time in Highland Park. I didn't know that her family had moved to the United States.

We didn't get married in St. James Church because Maura had an uncle who was a priest and he had a parish in LaSalle, Illinois. Her uncle told us that because Maura's family

Romano Piacenza, cont.

belonged to Immaculate Conception Parish we had to be married there. So he drove up and married us at IC. Maura and I moved into a house on Michigan Avenue that I owned at the time. Later we bought a lot on Waukegan Avenue and built a house there.

We have three children, Luana, Daniela and David. My kids went to Indian Trail and Elm Place and then Highland Park High School. Maura worked at the bank until we had kids. After they were older she went to work for the travel agency owned by the Tomei's and then she went back to the bank. All of our kids live nearby. We have seven grandchildren. We belong to the Bocce Club and at one time, the Modenese Society.



The younger people really like the Bocce Club. We have some dances but for some reason the younger kids don't seem to dance that much. Years ago we had lots of dances at the Community Center in Highwood. That's where Maura and I had our wedding reception. The bocce club is nice. We can play cards there during the day. We have dinners, dances and play bocce. I met a lot of young people in Highwood. They were born here but some also spoke Italian. I met people like Anita Ori, she was a good dancer. I also met her cousin Wanda Manfredini and Jackie Bernardi. Most of the people I met spoke a dialect of one kind or another. In Italy there are lots of dialects.

My dad and his friends would meet uptown around Aldo's and Bernardi's. That's where lots of the young guys would also hang out. It was our unofficial meeting place where we caught up on the news and decided what we were going to do that night. I have always liked living in Highwood. If I go away in the winter it's only for maybe two weeks. I don't mind being here during the winter. I'm happy where I am and in the summer I go to Italy for a few months. I have an apartment there. My little town of Sant' Anna now has a population of about 500 people. I have a good time there but I always come home to Highwood.

As told to Adrienne Inman, HHS Oral Historian

Celebrating the Fourth of July, Highwood Style

I was recently fooling around in the microfilm stacks at HP Library and I came across an ad for Fort Sheridan Park's 1899 Fourth of July celebration. How timely, I thought.

As you may already know, Fort Sheridan Park was an amusement park at the northeast corner of Highwood (Clay Street and Sheridan Road). It originally opened on July 30, 1898, however it was destroyed by fire in 1908. According to historian Neil Gale, "The amusement park attracted hundreds of people for band concerts, vaudeville shows, dancing in an open-air pavilion, beer gardens and food concessions. It is unknown if there were any mechanical rides." Guests took advantage of the trolley cars on the Chicago and Milwaukee Electric Railway Company North Shore Line (AKA: Chicago North Shore and Milwaukee Railroad).

The July Fourth festivities in 1899 consisted of continuous entertainment from 10a.m. until midnight, culminating in a \$2000.00 Pyrotechnical Display. Spectators were given programs to follow the visual display, each numbered with descriptions such as: "Nests of Writhing Fiery Cobras", "Grand Exhibit of Rockets with Peacock Plumes", and an intriguing "Satan's Frolic in the Fountain."

Amazingly, Pain's Fireworks has been in business in the U.K. since the 1590's and continues today. They've entertained at Royal Coronations, Charles & Diana's wedding, and even the dedication of our Statue of Liberty. Not bad company for little ol' Highwood.

- Cynthia Krol

PAIN'S IMPERIAL FIREWORKS
ARTISTIC ILLUMINATIONS & DECORATIONS

FORT SHERIDAN PARK
HIGHWOOD, ILL.
Vaudeville Entertainment Saturday and Sunday, July 1 and 2--
FOURTH OF JULY!
Morning, Afternoon and Evening--Continuous Program from 10 a. m. until midnight.
PAIN'S
Grand Pyrotechnical Display and Fireworks
Under Direction of Prof. Joseph Gerald, expert from Manhattan Beach, N. Y.
The fireworks display consists of 30 Set Pieces, as follows:
1. Signal Salute of (2) Immense Aerial Guns, exploding in mid-air with tremendous report.
2. Ascent of Monster Meteorite Balloon, discharging at a great elevation superb Silver Showers.
3. Grand Illumination
4. Flight of Liberty
5. Nests of Writhing
6. Display of Pain's
7. Devise--Double
8. Flight of Pain's
9. Display of a 12
10. Eccentric Devise
11. Flight of Pain's
12. Various new

Fort Sheridan Park
(ADJOINING FORT SHERIDAN)
MILITARY BAND CONCERTS
AND
HIGH CLASS VAUDEVILLE
EVERY AFTERNOON AND EVENING
FIRST CLASS REFRESHMENTS
ADMISSION 10 CENTS
ALL CHICAGO & MILWAUKEE ELECTRIC RY. CARS
STOP AT ENTRANCE TO PARK.

MES PAIN & SONS,
LONDON.

Image courtesy of Highwood Historical Society, Illinois

HIGHWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY
PO BOX 132
HIGHWOOD, IL 60040-0132

**PLEASE STOP BY OUR
BUILDING ACROSS
FROM THE HIGHWOOD
EVENING MARKET,
WEDNESDAY NIGHTS
IN EVERTS PARK**

WANTED

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN THE
HIGHWOOD HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S

SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

ALL SPONSORSHIP FUNDS WILL BE
USED TO OFFSET THE EXPENSE OF
OPERATING OUR MUSEUM/OFFICE
SPACE AT 122 NORTH AVENUE.

Choose a particular day(s) at \$10.00 per day
or

Sponsor a month(s) at \$250.00 per month

Please contact the
Highwood Historical Society
to make your donation today.
tel: 847-682-9039
highwoodhistory@gmail.com

Thank You, Every Dollar Helps!

We're Back!!!!

Stop in and see our collection of many items that are now on display in scrapbooks, on the wall, on shelves and in cabinets. Come to learn about Highwood's unique history and share your stories with us.

On August 22 we will celebrate the 150th year of Highwood's founding—1868-2018. The first 150 visitors to the museum that day will receive a special treat.

Bring your friends. All are welcome. Happy Birthday Highwood!

122 North Avenue
Highwood, IL 60040

Hours: Wednesdays, 5 – 9 p.m.
and upon request
847-682-9039