

MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

KEEPING HOMETOWN MEMORIES ALIVE

MUSEUM



JOURNAL

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NOTABLE WOMEN IN MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORY

BY EMILY DATTILO

In honor of Women's History Month, I wanted to share the stories of a few women who have made a difference in Mount Prospect history. There are plenty more stories to tell, but I chose a few women whose work has stood out to me.

Meta Bittner

Meta Bittner moved to Mount Prospect in 1931 with her husband, Victor, and son, Victor Jr. She joined the Mount Prospect Woman's Club soon after her arrival, and served on the Woman's Club Library Committee. She was well-suited for the role since she had been an English teacher!

Through the Woman's Club she grew the Mount Prospect Public Library by purchasing books and magazines, finding furniture and library equipment, and organizing the first summer reading program. When the library became a tax-supported institution in April 1943, Meta served as a trustee.

Outside of Meta's library and Woman's Club work, she was active in other local organizations, like the Scrimshaw Club and the Archives Team at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Notably, she was a co-founder and president of the Mount Prospect Historical Society.

Dolores Haugh

Dolores and her family moved into a home on Edward Street in Mount Prospect in the early 1950s. She jumped right into community life not long after arriving in town, from helping establish Grace Lutheran Church to co-founding the Mount Prospect Historical Society.



Meta Bittner doing one of her favorite things—reading!

Mount Prospect residents also knew her as a journalist. Over her long career she wrote for the *Mount Prospect Journal*, the *Mount Prospect Times*, and the *Prospect Day*. One of her popular columns was "Haugh to Plan a Party," which offered readers guidelines for planning themed parties.

As Dolores continued to make a name for herself in town, she took on larger public roles. For instance, she became the village's first Public Information Officer and the executive director of the Mount Prospect Chamber of Commerce. While



Dolores Haugh holding one of the plaques that was placed on historic buildings in Mount Prospect during the Bicentennial in 1976.

in these roles she began two long-standing local traditions: the Teddy Bear Walk and the Farmer's Market.

In 2017 the Historical Society renamed the Education Center to honor her contributions to the town and to the Historical Society. Not only was she a founding member of the Historical Society, but she also served as its president for many years.

Dr. Louise Koester

Dr. Koester was born in Hanover, Germany and came to the United States to pursue medicine. She received her medical degree in 1923.

Three years later, in 1926, Dr. Koester became Mount

Prospect's first doctor. She set up her practice in an office on the second floor of the then-new Edward Busse building on the corner of Emerson Street and Northwest Highway. Women doctors were

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Dr. Koester dressed up for an outing with family in Oregon. Courtesy of Carol Seabrooke.

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FROM THE DESK OF THE DIRECTOR



Emily Dattilo
Director

I am proud to introduce two new staff members here at the Historical Society: Christine Marie and Jeff Hubert. Both colleagues started over the winter, and I am delighted to have them join us.

Christine Marie, Office Manager

Christine started the week of the Housewalk, the Historical Society's biggest fundraiser and arguably the busiest time of the year. She dove right into helping and, thankfully, that experience didn't scare her away. Since then she has been putting her marketing background to good use through the email blasts and switching our event registration system to Eventbrite.



Get to Know Christine:

Pets: Piper, a 4-year-old Cavalier King Charles Spaniel

Favorite Place in Mount Prospect: Home! I'm a homebody.

Favorite historical topic: I play the violin, so I love learning about the composers of whatever music I am playing!

Favorite Book: *All Creatures Great and Small* by James Herriot

Favorite Movie or TV Show: *The Haunting of Hill House*—the writing for the series is outstanding!

Favorite Pizza Topping: Mushrooms

Tea or coffee? Don't make me choose!

One thing you've learned about Mount Prospect history: I learned that the site of my house was a large rose garden before a structure was built on the property.

Fun Fact: I love traveling! I've been to 16 countries, and I'm adding 3 more later this year.

Jeff Hubert, Bookkeeper

Jeff arrived in early 2025 after retiring. He previously owned and operated Cardinal Fence Company. As both an experienced small business owner and a long-time Mount Prospect resident, he brings plenty

of expertise to the Historical Society.

Get to Know Jeff:

Pets: 2 cats, Lady and Birdy

Kids: Laura (37), James (27), & Ella (24)

Favorite Place in Mount Prospect: Trezeros, but I get take out from all the area restaurants.

Favorite historical topics: The ancient Romans and Abraham Lincoln

Favorite Book: Just starting to read, so no favorites yet!

Favorite Movie or TV Show: Movie: *The Godfather*; TV Show: *Yellowstone*

Favorite Pizza Topping: Sausage, onion, and green olives

Tea or coffee? Coffee

One thing you've learned about Mount Prospect history: The Meyn family



Fun Fact: I get up very early (4:30am) and love my morning coffee and quiet time!

FROM THE COLLECTION



Staff standing outside the Mount Prospect Creamery, 1910s-1920s.

This glass bottle once held milk from the Mount Prospect Creamery, which was originally located on Northwest Highway near the water tower. Edward Busse founded the Mount Prospect Creamery in 1910 and, since there were many dairy farms in town, the creamery proved to be a wise investment. Local dairy farmers sold milk to the creamery, and then the creamery produced milk, butter, and cheese for distribution around the Chicago area. Trucks advertising "milk bottled in the country" delivered bottled milk to neighborhoods all over the northwest suburbs and Chicago. A 1912 *Arlington Heights Herald* article notes that in approximately two years the creamery's production more than doubled. They initially worked with milk from 34 farms, but in two years they expanded to 78 farms.

In 1928 the Wolf Coal and Oil Company purchased the building and converted it to a coal yard and filling station. Over the following decades the coal and oil company changed owners several times. Some of these past owners included Braun Brothers Oil Company, Mount Prospect Oil Company, and Schimming Oil Company. The creamery building was demolished in 1986 and replaced with townhomes.



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uncommon in the 1920s, and she initially faced criticism from many who questioned the abilities of a female doctor.

Despite the skeptics, Dr. Koester enjoyed a long, successful career in Mount Prospect. In fact, she was so successful that in 1932 she moved her office to a larger space in her home on South Owen Street. She also worked with Dr. Alfred Wolfarth, another Mount Prospect doctor, to establish the Mount Prospect General Hospital on West Prospect Avenue. (That building is now Vista Linda Eye Care.)

In 1965 she was honored for almost 40 years of service to the community with a resolution from the Village Board and the "Women of Achievement Award" from the Mount Prospect Business and Professional Women's Club.

Dr. Koester retired and moved to Oregon in 1974. She spent her retirement enjoying time with her sister Bertha, brother Otto, and their families, as well as finally visiting Hawaii.

Thela "Idyl" Nipper

Thela "Idyl" Nipper was anything but idle! She and her mother moved to Mount Prospect in the 1940s to open an antique store, The Red Barn, but she became better known for her extensive volunteer work in the community.

Just some of Idyl's activities included serving as president of the Friends of the Library, coordinating volunteers for the Wheeling Republican Party, and fundraising for Maryville Academy and River Trails School District 26.

She served on many committees in District 26 and her efforts to pass various bond issues and referendums helped establish Euclid Elementary School, Indian Grove Elementary School, River Trails Middle School, Prairie Trails School (formerly Park View), and the former Bond School. In the mid-1970s, District 26 honored her work by naming Nipper School in Des Plaines after her.

Idyl passed away in April 2000 at the age of 92. Rimland, an organization that provides care for individuals with autism, now occupies the Nipper School building.



Idyl Nipper with her cat, Teddy, around 1917.

RAILS AND WRIGHT BUS TRIP

Join us at 9 a.m. on Saturday, May 3 when we travel by bus to Union, IL for a morning tour of the Illinois Railway Museum, followed by an afternoon tour of one of Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian homes in Hampshire. In between we will stop at Hampshire's Copper Barrel restaurant where participants may purchase their own lunch. You can check the menu at www.barrelonstate.com.

Tour-goers will have plenty of time at the Railway Museum to peruse and possibly ride (on your own) the many trains (both diesel and steam) and streetcars on display there. Then, after lunch we will tour Frank Lloyd's Wright's Muirhead Farmhouse, built in 1951. Unlike the Wright homes in Chicago, Oak Park and River Forest which display Wright's early "Prairie style" of architecture, this farmhouse shows his later Usonian architectural style. Wright built most of this style of homes outside of Illinois, so it is a treat to see one here.



Participants should be aware that the trip requires considerable walking and the ability to climb bus stairs.

The cost for the day is \$100 per person for Mount Prospect Historical Society members and \$115 for non-members.

To reserve your space, please register and pay online at mtphist.org. Email info@mtphistory.org or phone 847-392-9006 with questions.



MOUNT PROSPECT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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NEWSLETTER
UNDERWRITTEN BY:



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

UPCOMING EVENTS

Second Sundays at the Society

11:30am — 1:30pm
Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.) and the Dietrich Friedrichs House (101 S. Maple St.) will be open for tours.
Fee: Free!

April 13: Bird Feeders

May: NONE - Happy Mother's Day!

June 8: Old-Fashioned Games
•••••

Afternoon Tea

1:00pm—2:30pm
Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.)
Fee: \$25 members, \$30 non-members, registration required

May 31: Zelda Fitzgerald, presented by Lynn Rymarz

Bessie's Workbasket

7:00pm — 9:00pm
Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.)
Fee: \$10 donation, registration required
All experience levels are welcome.

April 9: Quilling

May 14: Spring Planters
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MPHS Book Club

7:00pm—8:00pm
Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.)

May 8: Pick your favorite of Mike Royko's work! Select one or more excerpts that you find hilarious, horrifying, still relevant, or didn't age well.

Evening Creations

7:00pm—8:00pm
Location: Central School (103 S. Maple St.)
Fee: \$10, registration required

May 7: Flower Arrangement "Frog"
•••••

Youth Programs

Location: Mount Prospect Historical Society campus

History Camp
9:00am—12:00pm
Fee: \$125 per session, registration required

Session 1: SOLD OUT
Session 2: July 7-11

Prairie Kid I: July 24 from 10am – 12pm
Prairie Kid II: July 24 from 1pm – 3pm
Fee: \$30 per session, registration required

The Science of History: All About Bubbles
July 31 from 10am-12pm
Fee: \$30, registration required

If You Lived in Ancient Egypt
July 31 from 1pm-3pm
Fee: \$30, registration required

Art Fusion: Creativity on Campus
August 4-8 from 9am-12pm
Fee: \$125, registration required

For more information, visit our website at www.mtphist.org or call us at (847) 392-9006. Find us on Eventbrite too!

