



November/December 2008

# Echoes

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Hinsdale, Illinois

*A Publication of the Hinsdale Historical Society*

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## From the President

Dear Society Members,

The times are bleak financially in the nation. The temptation for the average citizen, of course, is to cut back on expenses until the proverbial tunnel yields some daylight. We urge you not to include the Society among your reductions. From the first day the Hinsdale Historical Society began, it has relied heavily on donations from residents and friends for its sustenance.

Now more than ever is this true. The Society does not manufacture anything which it can sell for a profit. We own three historic properties, two of which are open and operating. The revenue stream from these two buildings has thus far been modest. The bills keep mounting to keep our properties running. One is still in the process of being preserved and rehabilitated. These buildings represent Hinsdale's past and celebrate the unique character of our Village. It is this charm that keeps our Village vibrant; they must be supported no matter what the climate of the economy. We need the continued financial support from all Society members and friends.

We hope you remember the Society at this year end and put something in our Christmas stocking.

*Sandy Walton*

President  
Hinsdale Historical Society

## The Society's Annual Appeal-A Different Story This Year

This year's annual appeal from the Society's Board of Trustees reflects the continued rapid evolution of the Society as the owner of three unique historic properties and the provider of major programs offering architecture resources, archives, access to the Society's prized collection, educational and volunteer opportunities and more.

The holiday card format of the appeal for the past four years is being replaced by a newspaper-style format with headlines, accompanied by photos, that describe highlights of the past year, such as the successful completion of the rehabilitation of Immanuel Hall, the opening of the Roger and Ruth Anderson Architecture Center at the Hall, the creation of the new Women's Board and ongoing preservation work at the R. Harold Zook Home and Studio.

The action presented in the appeal is unified by the theme, "Helping History Make a Difference," which complements the Society's mission (see *Echoes* masthead).

Board members Sandy Johnson and Salle Huber refined the headline concept and focused the appeal so it could be sent to many more supporters of the Society, rather than just members as in previous years.

Women's Board member and retired professional graphic designer Chris Minnella brought the appeal concept to life with a newspaper front-page look on a legal-size sheet of paper, which requests contributor information and features the Society's new logos and contact information for each of its major entities – the Museum, Immanuel Hall, the Zook Home and Studio and the Architecture Center – on the back side.

Mailing labels for nearly 400 members of the Society were provided by database manager Daisy Pletcher. Nearly 300 more labels for persons who supported the Society's annual Kitchen Walk and "Cook's Nite Out" events were provided by Treasurer Sharon Taylor, and an additional 270 labels were created by Board member Bob Saigh from lists of persons who supported the Immanuel Hall and Zook Home and Studio preservation projects and the "Treasures & Treats" fundraiser for the Museum.

This year's mailing to more than 950 persons is better than twice the size of past annual appeal mailings, and is yet another indication of the Society's amazing growth in terms of capital assets and program offerings.

Please look for the appeal in your mail.

# Hinsdale Historical Society

P.O. Box 336  
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630.789.2600  
www.hinsdalehistory.org

*The mission of the Hinsdale Historical Society is to collect, preserve and promote the history of Hinsdale, Illinois, and to foster an awareness and appreciation of its history and architecture through education, programs, exhibits and the maintenance of historical resources and properties in the Village.*

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## From the Museum Manager' Desk

### A Victorian Christmas...in 2008?

While thinking of a Victorian Christmas holiday, our thoughts tend to wander to a chapter from Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, or a scene from the movie adaptation of *Little Women*, but thoughts of the holiday traditions we do each year, perhaps not. Many of the Victorian holiday customs are common practices still today.



For example, the holiday greeting cards that many of us send and receive originated during the Victorian period because one prominent Englishman sent out colorful cards instead of writing detailed letters to his large number of family and friends. Many of the traditional carols we hear at this time of year also originated or were re-written during the Victorian period. Some of those carols include: "Silent Night", "O Christmas Tree", "Here We Come a' Wassailing", and "Jingle Bells".

Victorians brought great emphasis to the art of house decorating. As you can observe first hand at the Hinsdale History Museum, Victorians decorated their houses entirely and used many materials that are familiar to us. Common decorations consisted of evergreen wreaths, colored paper, ribbons, mistletoe, and holly sprigs, which is still used in our holiday decorating today.

The Christmas tree as we know it also began in the Victorian period. The concept was first started in Germany, and was copied by other European countries and eventually the trend found its way to America. Instead of placing the tree on the floor, as is common today, Victorians would have had a smaller tree which would be placed on a table. Of course they didn't use electric lights, but would very carefully light their trees with small candles, similar to the candles we put on birthday cakes.



Victoria & Albert Decorate the Christmas Tree  
Illustration from  
*"Godey's Lady's Book,"*  
December 1860

One of the most interesting and lost Victorian traditions is how they presented their gifts to one another. Wrapping paper and tape were not part of the process. Instead, the hosts would tie gifts on to the tree in the front parlor while the guests waited anxiously outside closed doors. Once the parlor doors were opened, everyone was allowed in and each person would untie their own gift from the tree.

To see more of these interesting holiday traditions, be sure to visit the Hinsdale History Museum during this holiday season!

*Anne Swenson*

Museum Manager, Hinsdale Historical Society

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# Volunteer Spotlight



Cindy Klima has been a wonderful addition to the volunteer core of the Hinsdale Historical Society. She started her volunteerism with the Society during the Immanuel Hall fundraising campaign in January of 2005. She followed through with the fundraising committee until the goal had been met and then, at that point, was asked to join the advisory board of the Roger and Ruth Anderson Architecture Center. As well as sitting on the

advisory board of the Anderson Center, Cindy is a member of the HHS Women's Board and is Co-Chairperson (along with Danielle Tuck) for the 2009 Kitchen Walk.

Cindy is a lifelong resident of Hinsdale. She attended elementary school at Madison and graduated high school at Hinsdale Central. So, it's no wonder that she is passionate about preserving and sharing Hinsdale history.

On a more personal note, Cindy enjoys biking, skiing and, of course, volunteering! After all she does at the Society; Cindy is also a very active volunteer in other community organizations such as HJWC, Family Shelter Services, the Center for Independence, and CoACH Cares. Cindy has an enthusiasm for volunteering that is inspiring. "I am thrilled to be able to give back to the community that has given me so much. The opportunity to be part of the past and the present through the Society and Immanuel Hall is a gift that I cherish."

The Society is grateful for Cindy's dedication and hard work! Thank you!

*Be sure to stop by and tour the Hinsdale History Museum during the Holiday season!*



Economic Awareness Council's annual "Money, Mom and Me" tea was held at Immanuel Hall on November 22<sup>nd</sup>.

## Hinsdale Historical Society

### Members' Corner

#### Welcome New Members

*Friends of the Society*

Dr. and Mrs. Robert Trefil

#### Attention All Members

The Society is in the process of collecting member emails. Please send your name and email to [newsletter@hinsdalehistory.org](mailto:newsletter@hinsdalehistory.org). Your information will only be used for Society-related messages.

#### Suggestions or Comments

If you have any suggestions or comments regarding articles in the Society's newsletter, email [newsletter@hinsdalehistory.org](mailto:newsletter@hinsdalehistory.org)

#### Need Space for an Event?

Immanuel Hall is now available for rent. Immanuel Hall would be the perfect place for a small gathering or event! For more information, contact Bob Saigh at (630) 887-9110 or [bsaigh@aol.com](mailto:bsaigh@aol.com)

#### Wish List

Children are not the only one's making a Christmas list this season! Below are a few items that the Society could certainly use. If interested in donating, please email us at [newsletter@hinsdalehistory.org](mailto:newsletter@hinsdalehistory.org)

electric tea kettle  
crock pot

Please contact us for specific information on each item, if interested in donating.

# R. Harold Zook Home and Studio

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## Eagle Scout Project at the Zook Home

Thanks to Hinsdale Central senior, Doug Hogenkamp, and Boy Scout Troop 8, a replica of the original flagstone patio now graces the entry of the Zook Home.

Doug approached the Society early in the year asking if there were any possible jobs at the Zook Home and Studio that he could complete for his Eagle Scout project. Becoming an Eagle Scout is quite an honor, as Eagle Scout is the highest rank attainable in the Boy Scouting program.

After some discussion, it was decided that the entry of the home would be a perfect project. Doug worked with Zook Committee member, Steve Boese and construction manager, Paul Primeau to research, plan, design, and execute the patio.

On October 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> Doug, his father, and the members of Boy Scout Troop 8 worked to prepare the space, lay the heavy flagstones, and fill in the areas between the flagstones. Now complete, the patio, along with the newly laid front stoop, bring the entrance to the home closer to its original design.

The Zook Committee and the Society Board congratulate Doug on a job well done and thank both him and his troop for their dedication to historic preservation.

If you are interested in supporting the Zook Home & Studio Preservation Project please contact us at [info@zookhomeandstudio.org](mailto:info@zookhomeandstudio.org).



## Roger and Ruth Anderson Architecture Center

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### New Additions to the Anderson Center

*The Not So Big House* and *Creating The Not So Big House*, by architect Sarah Susanka, are now available at the Anderson Center's lending library. These beautifully illustrated books offer design guidelines for construction that emphasize quality, openness and efficiency -- "blueprints for the way we *really* live." Incorporating ideas, plans and photographed results of noteworthy architects, the books detail not necessarily small but warm and inviting homes designed for today's lifestyle. If you're planning on remodeling or building new, these books are must reads! To borrow, contact the Society 630-789-2600 or [www.hinsdalearchitecture.org](http://www.hinsdalearchitecture.org).

We welcome new member, Pam White, to the Anderson Center Advisory Board. Pam will coordinate our educational efforts with an emphasis on supplementary architecture programs in the schools. The mother of two girls, fourth and sixth graders, Pam has devoted six years to the Art Volunteers in the Classroom (AVIC) program at Monroe School, five of those as chairman. Last year she also served as president of Monroe's PTO. No one knows grade schools, grade schoolers or AVIC better! We are always open to new ways to expand the awareness of architecture in our younger residents. If you have an idea or area of interest you'd like to see included, let us know!

### Part-Time Opportunity

The Society's Anderson Architecture Center is looking for a part-time administrator. We need someone who is creative, energetic, computer literate, and has a keen interest in architecture. A paid position, this individual would report to the Center's Advisory Board and work five hours each Saturday, 10-3 pm, at our 302 South Grant Street location.

Assisting us in our mission to advance interest and awareness in architecture, he/she would handle office functions and data entry, help with educational programming and assist those researching the history of their Hinsdale homes. Knowledge of basic computer programs is required.

Interested in hearing more? Contact the Center at [www.hinsdalearchitecture.org](http://www.hinsdalearchitecture.org) or call the Society at 630-789-2600.

## Immanuel Hall Celebrates Renovation with an Open House Dedication



Immanuel Hall, Hinsdale's first official historic community landmark, celebrated the completion of its restoration project by hosting a special preview party Sunday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

It seemed like only yesterday (1999) that the members of the Society, captained by Sandy Williams, toiled to lobby State and Village officials to save this historic edifice from certain destruction. Were it not for Sandy's persistence and the hard work of many Hinsdale residents, we would not be able to celebrate our special little jewel today. The lack of plumbing and a kitchen facility did not deter our valiant forces from orchestrating a variety of events and fund raising activities, which provided the funds to embark on our historic mission. Enthusiastic community members pressed their shoulders to the cause and joined our team to create a true community effort, not unlike the barn raisings of legend.

After spending endless hours and a fair amount of monies, our job is nearly completed. The Hinsdale Historical Society was proud to be able to host this inaugural preview party that honored the patrons and participants who have shepherded this project through the various stages of restoration. Our President, Sandy Walton, graciously welcomed and thanked everyone for their help. He applauded Immanuel Hall Fundraising Campaign Co-Chairs Ted and Mary Martha Mooney and John and Penny Bohnen for all of their hard work. The success of the fundraising campaign made the rehabilitation possible, with the largest contribution coming from the Roger and Ruth Anderson family. Sandy Williams, past President of the Society, who spearheaded the Roger and Ruth Anderson Architectural Center, housed in the lower level of the building, introduced Ruth Anderson and her sons, Geoffery and Ross. The Andersons graciously voiced their enthusiasm for the project and applauded the Society for a job well done. Bob Saigh, a Society Board member and major participant in the saving and restoration of Immanuel Hall, celebrated opening the doors for public use. Access to the building has been improved, along with an addition to the rear, a new, fully equipped kitchen facility, an elevator and a renovated lower level complete with bathroom facilities. President Walton also introduced Charles Pipal, a well known Chicago restoration architect, who provided the necessary guidance throughout the restoration project, working with the committee from the very beginning of the project to overseeing the successful completion.

The spirit of volunteerism filled the hall as people gathered and celebrated a job well done. In stark contrast to our current troubled times, there was a great feeling of accomplishment and community spirit that permeated the room and celebrated the classic charm of our little architectural gem that harkens back to a simpler time and place.

Immanuel Hall beckons to our Village to hold small intimate events; concerts, weddings, parties and the like. Thanks to the concern, the monies and the energy of the citizens of Hinsdale, Immanuel Hall stands ready to become an integral part of our community, once again, for the next hundred years.

## Immanuel Hall Hosts Initial Events

The first event held at the newly rehabilitated Immanuel Hall was a chamber music concert on the evening of November 14<sup>th</sup> by the well-known Evanston Chamber Ensemble. The performance was the first of three in a subscription series presented by the Hinsdale Center for the Arts. Thirty-two persons attended the two-hour concert, which featured compositions by Haydn, Faure and Shostakovitch played on violin, cello and piano.

The Economic Awareness Council's annual "Money, Mom and Me" tea was held at the Hall on November 22<sup>nd</sup>. The event uses historical persons and episodes to instruct girls on earning and managing money. More than 50 girls attended the tea, and also toured the Society's Hinsdale History Museum, at 15 S. Clay St.

The rental rate for the Hall's main floor is \$45 per hour Monday through 5 pm Friday, and \$60 per hour 5 pm Friday through Sunday. There are additional fees for use of the kitchen, tables and chairs, baby grand piano and other equipment. All fees are negotiable. A four-page contract covers requirements and regulations for use of the 108-year old Hall, who's unique and intimate 30x70-foot main floor comfortably hosts small- and mid-size groups. For more information, contact Bob Saigh, 630- 887-9110, bsaigh@aol.com.

## From the Collections: A Miniature Hinsdale Home

Just in time for Christmas, the Society has received a special donation. On November 7, 2008, Blaine and Veryle Lynn Cox, of Lake Lure, North Carolina, delivered a doll house to the Society which happens to be a replica of their former Hinsdale home. Blaine built this doll house in 1979 for their children, taking measurements and recreating the house using a scale of one inch to one foot. The dollhouse is made of plywood, with special siding and other miniature elements purchased from a doll house shop in Clarendon Hills. The façade sports yellow-painted siding with white trim and black shutters, a rough stone foundation and wooden shingled roof.



A miniature 123 West Walnut Street

Located at 123 W. Walnut, the original house was built for Caroline Fitch. She lived in the house until her death in 1887. In Timothy Bakken's book, *Hinsdale*, the house is referred to as a "plain cottage with pleasant grounds." Mrs. Fitch was something of a celebrity in Hinsdale because her son, Tom, who was a famous orator, newspaper editor, district attorney and eventually a member of the 41<sup>st</sup> Congress as a Representative from Nevada. Even better, he was a friend of Samuel Clemens and is mentioned in Mark Twain's *Autobiography*!

123 West Walnut was the home of more than nine families between Mrs. Fitch and Blaine and Veryle Lynn Cox. The Society has five photographs of this house, but this is the first time we have received a scale model of an early Hinsdale home. Although built as a toy, this miniature house now gives us a glimpse into the past. What makes this donation particularly poignant is that the original house built in 1872 was demolished sometime after 1998.

## Historic Highlights

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### From the Archives: A Brief History of the Hinsdale Public Library



Preceding the approval of the voters in 1892 to fund a public library, Hinsdale had a private association with paid subscribers. The initial collection was about 300 volumes which had grown to 900 by the time of the vote.

The library had been housed in a variety of locations downtown. The first was at a millinery shop at Third and Washington. Less than a year later, it moved to the Bucholz building on the north side of west First Street, and then finally to the stationery and newsstand store of H. George Prouty at 37 S. Washington. The now-public library officially opened there in August 1893, with the librarian, Mrs. Candee in charge.

By 1908, the collection had grown to over 5000 volumes and was housed on the second floor of 5 S. Washington Street. Unfortunately, most of these books were burned in a fire. A \$3000 insurance policy did not cover half of the loss. After the fire, the remaining collection was briefly moved to the village hall and then moved back there until 1917.

In 1911, Dr D. K. Pearsons died leaving his home at 122 N. Grant plus the entire block on which it stood to the Hinsdale Public Library. The idea was that the lots could be sold off and the proceeds used to build a new fireproof building for the library on the corner of Maple and Grant. By 1925, all the other lots had been sold with the total proceeds amounting to \$22,827.50. Tentative plans were drawn up by local architect William Barfield for the corner location, but it was decided that the estimated cost exceeded the funds.

With no decision made on the use of the property, the Village offered the library space in the Memorial Building and the library moved there in 1929, shortly after the building opened. The question of using Dr. Pearsons' bequest was not settled for some time. There was a lawsuit involving the Village, Dr. Pearsons' heirs and the Congregational Church concerning the disposition of the remaining lot, which was finally settled in the Village's favor. Finally in 1958, the funds were used to help pay for the cost of an addition which at that time housed the children's department and named David K. Pearsons Memorial Wing.

## Life in the Past Lane: Hinsdale 1933

☞ Digging deep into Uncle Sam's \$400,000,000 civil works program pocketbook, Hinsdale came up with \$17,460. This sum, which is the total labor cost for the improvement of Flagg Creek through the Village, painting the Memorial Building, and the trimming of trees in the parks and parkways, will afford gainful labor for eighty men in Civilian Works Administration (C.W.A.) projects. Thirty Hinsdale men have already started work, as requested by President Roosevelt, on county roads.

☞ The Village of Hinsdale has appealed to the Hinsdale *Doings* for assistance in securing names, addresses and other necessary information concerning the unemployed of the community wishing to apply for jobs which will become available when the public works program is begun under a recently passed \$35,000 bond issue. Those applying must be residents of the village and citizens of the United States or recipients of their first papers for naturalization.

☞ The Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.), located in the forest preserve just north of Spring Road, has 215 men in the camp at present and expects to have 250 before many more weeks. Work is progressing on their barracks with supplies being purchased from local dealers and a number of local men employed to help in the building. The barracks are expected to be completed by December 1<sup>st</sup>. The men are well fed and clothed but lack recreational activities as the government does not provide furnishings for their recreation hall. The American Legion Post feels the good citizens of Hinsdale would take both pride and pleasure in being able to aid in furnishing the hall and has undertaken the task of collecting and delivering articles such as old chairs, writing desks, reading lamps, card tables, books, etc., donated for this purpose. It is hoped that the items can be gathered promptly so they may be presented in the form of a Christmas greeting from the Village of Hinsdale to the men of the C.C.C. camp.

☞ Nationally prominent Hinsdale resident Alexander Legge, president of International Harvester and chairman of the Federal Farm Board under President Hoover, passed away suddenly at his home at 8 East Third Street. The 67-year-old Mr. Legge suffered a heart attack while working in his garden and died only 45 minutes later with several servants and a house guest present. Ex President Herbert Hoover had visited Mr. Legge several times in Hinsdale.

☞ Speaking before the Hinsdale Commercial and Civic Association, Professor Fred Merrifield of Hinsdale Unity Church declared Japan has been planning and preparing for a war with the United States ever since 1906. Prof. Merrifield gained his information first hand while teaching in Japan and contends the Japanese have a very definite war plan, the details of which are being worked out.

☞ Hinsdale celebrated its sixtieth anniversary with activities during the week of November 18<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup>.

☞ Lettuce at the Hinsdale Jewel was advertised at two heads for 13 cents with three pounds of coffee selling for 75 cents. Steben's ad listed leg of lamb at 18 cents per pound, a dozen grapefruit for 69 cents, and a 3-oz. tin of Romanoff caviar (good old Hinsdale!) for 63 cents. And the new modern Dodge "6" could be had for (an unbelievable) \$595.

☞ Flooding the fairgrounds in brilliant light for the last time in 1933, the Chicago "Century of Progress" World's Fair closed for the winter -- but the bright lights will return again next June 1 when the fair reopens. Over 22 million visitors from all over the world attended the fair this year.

☞ Nationally, prohibition in America ended at precisely 5:32.5 on December 5<sup>th</sup> with repeal of the 18<sup>th</sup> Amendment when Utah became the last of 36 states necessary to ratify the 21<sup>st</sup> Amendment. So what time was the first drink served?

☞ And President Roosevelt's announced recognition of the Communist government of the Soviet Union signified an international historic event.



## You call it -- 1933 or 2008?

From the American Bankers Association:

"People must be brought to realize that the welfare of our country depends upon its banking system, that the strength of the banking system depends upon the public's faith and understanding and the vast majority of banks, because of faithful service rendered, even through the whole of this general breakdown, had the right to expect the trust and confidence of the public. That there have been incompetence and dishonesty in banking is admitted. That we cannot legislate honesty and unselfishness into either a banker or a borrower must be conceded, but dishonesty, wherever found, should be punished. It is as true in banking as elsewhere that no matter how good the law, dishonest and incompetent men can make it ineffective. Good laws are essential. We must strive for ever better ones, but their enforcement will come only as the public recognizes that it is a matter not of laws or codes alone but of the men who administer them."

If you said 1933, you guessed right. Did someone say history tends to repeat itself? ...



HINSDALE  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

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Hinsdale, IL 60522-0336

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## Upcoming Programs: Hinsdale History Museum

### Victorian Christmas Crafts

*Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup>*

*11:00 am - 12:00 pm*

*Hinsdale History Museum*

*All ages*

*\$5 per family (members)*

*\$7 per family (non-members)*

Before electric lights and plastic ornaments, the traditional Christmas tree was decorated with crafts made by the woman of the household and her children. Ornaments made from food; walnuts, dried fruit, and spices, were common. Join us in making traditional Victorian cinnamon stick ornaments. Bring home a little piece of a Victorian Christmas to add to your family tree.

Please register by calling 630-789-2600

### Victorian Valentines

*Saturday, February 14<sup>th</sup>*

*10:00 - 11:30 am*

*Hinsdale History Museum*

*All ages*

*\$5 per family (members)*

*\$7 per family (non-members)*

Join the Hinsdale Historical Society in learning about Victorian Valentine traditions. Original Valentines from the 1880's will be available to view.



Please register by calling 630-789-2600

### Hinsdale Historical Society's

Hinsdale History Museum

15 South Clay Street

Hinsdale, Illinois

630-789-2600

The Museum is open

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Fridays

&

Saturdays

or by appointment