

Accession No. 2001.02, 2016.29

Shelf No. RC 30

The Village of River Forest History Collection

Oak Park River Forest Museum

December 20th, 2017

Finding Aid Prepared by Elizabeth Nichols, Archivist

Extent: 4 linear feet

Creators: Village of River Forest Residents, 1836 – *present*

Village of River Forest Government, 1880 – *present*

Organizational History: The Village of River Forest is located along the eastern bank of the Des Plaines River in Cook County, Illinois. In 1831, George Bickerdike (1806-1880) and Mark Noble constructed a steam-powered sawmill on the Aux Plaines (now the Des Plaines) River. In 1836, Ashbel Steele (1793-1861), coroner and later sheriff of Cook County, became the area's first permanent resident. A plank road was constructed along present-day Lake Street in 1842, and the opening of the Galena & Chicago Union Railroad in 1848 facilitated the Village's early growth.

In the 1850's, the Quick and Thatcher families arrived, and became the first sub-dividers of the area, which was known by various names, including Noyesville and Harlem. John Henry Stevens Quick (1837-1921) became a prominent landholder, and lent his name to the eastern portion of Noyesville and to Harlem Avenue. The Quick family also later donated land to the Episcopal Church. David Cunningham Thatcher (1810-1869) and his family settled in the west portion of Noyesville, and named their portion of the community Thatcher. Solomon Thatcher (1806-1894) donated land to the Methodist and Roman Catholic Churches. Over the next 30 years, the two communities continued to grow, helped by land sales after the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

The temperance movement provided the spark for River Forest's incorporation in the 1880. Fearing the possibility of alcohol-related problems if Harlem incorporated, community leaders held an election in which voters approved incorporation to make River Forest a "dry" community. Opponents questioned the hasty election's legality, but the Illinois Supreme Court upheld the results. Later, community trustees approved short-term licenses for two saloons to help provide revenue for city improvements, such as the bricking of streets, electric streetcars and lights, community waterworks, and telephone service.

With its urban amenities in place, River Forest swelled from a population of 1,000 in 1894 to 8,829 people in 1930. Reflecting this population growth, Concordia and Rosary Colleges were established in River Forest in 1913 and 1918, respectively. Rosary College was renamed Dominican University in 1997.

River Forest celebrated its first centennial in 1936, 100 years after Ashbel Steele settled in the area. It also celebrated the U.S. Bicentennial in 1976. The village held its municipal centennial in 1980, 100 years after its incorporation. In 2005, a 125th anniversary was held; the museum has these records kept separately from this collection.

Scope and Content Note: The Village of River Forest History Collection covers the history of the Village of River Forest, IL from approximately the 1830s to the 1980s. The Village of River Forest History Collection also contains biographical information on early and influential River Forest individuals and families. Materials from the government of River Forest and Village clubs and organizations are also included.

The Village of River Forest History Collection contains notable gaps in its scope. Materials from the 1830s, 1880s, the early 1900s, and the 1980s make up the bulk of the collection while intervening years are sparse or not represented, at all. Additionally, all albums in the collection pertain only to the 1980 Village of River Forest Centennial Celebration.

The contents of the collection include papers, books, minutes, correspondence, newspapers, newspaper clippings, magazines, photographs, negatives, and albums.

Immediate Sources of Acquisition: The materials in the Village of River Forest History Collection came in two separate donations. The donations are under the accession numbers 2001.02 and 2016.29: the Isabel Basset Wasson Papers and the River Forest Public Library Collection, respectively. Village of River Forest materials from each donation have been combined here for ease of access and use by researchers. For more details on each respective donation, these accession numbers are individually accessible in the Past Perfect archival management system in the Historical Society of OPRF's research center. Related River Forest materials from other donations may be added to this collection in the future at the discretion of the Director.

Conditions Governing Access: None

Physical Access: Paper and newspapers in The Village of River Forest History Collection are acidic in nature, and have degraded over time. This degradation includes yellowing and browning of paper, faded ink, and brittleness. These brittle papers and newspapers may only be copied by research center staff. Submit all copy requests at the research center.

Papers and photographs may be copied at the researcher's request. Undeveloped negatives can also be photographically developed at the researcher's request. Submit all requests at the research center.

Language of the Material: English

Series and Container Lists:

Folder #	Description
Box 1	
Series I. General Historical Overviews	
Folder 1	General History Documents
Folder 1a	"Four Paintings Depicting Early History" by Paul Strayer
Folder 2	1938 "History of River Forest" by Albert L. Hall (3)
Folder 3	1942 "Village of River Forest Volume I: Community" by Gladys Grieger and Nancy Hough
Folder 4	1942 "Village of River Forest Volume II" by Gladys Grieger and Nancy Hough
Folder 5	1942 "Village of River Forest Volume III" by Gladys Grieger and Nancy Hough
Shelf 2*	<i>College With a Cause: A History of Concordia Teachers College</i> by Alfred J. Freitag
	*Located in Research Center
Folder 6	1964 "The Prairie School Review: Guenzel and Drummond"
Folder 7	1964-1965 "Origin of Names and Histories of Places...in the Forest Preserve of Cook County, Illinois" by Roberts Mann (3)
Folder 8	1972 "Inventory of Historic Structures in River Forest, Cook County"

Folder 9	1972 National Register of Historic Places River Forest Nomination Form (2)
Folder 10	1979 "Some History of My Block, River Forest" by David Patzett
Folder 11	1980 Robert A. Stutz Trees on River Forest Parkways Eagle Scout Survey Project
Folder 12	1982 "Historical Resource Reconnaissance: Cook County Forest Preserve District, Indian Boundary Division" by Morin, Mendes, and Grant
Folder 13	1982 "History of Homes on 300 Block of Gale Avenue" by Duffy and Sugden (2)

Series II. River Forest Resident Histories

Subseries I. Family Histories

Folder 14	Blocki
Folder 15	Furbeck
Folder 16	Haase
Folder 17	Griffen
Folder 18	Murphy
Folder 19	Schlund
Folder 20	Steele
Folder 21	Thatcher
Folder 22	Westcott
Folder 22a	1966 "The Family History and Lineage of Peacock from England to America, 1835" by Gertrude W. Lundberg

Subseries II. Residents' Personal Reminiscences

Folder 23	1914 Karl M. Mitchell Letter
-----------	------------------------------

Folder 24	1918 "Personal Memoirs" by Chas H. Gabriel
Folder 25	1932 Mary Mann Graves Speech
Folder 26	1942 River Forest Prisoners of War (Fred Jannish and Ralph Niles) Articles
Folder 27	1980 Margareth Fisher Smith Interview
Folder 28	1980 John Grandland Article and Correspondence
Folder 29	Undated Delphine Knapp Reminiscences
Folder 30	Undated Ruth Rowe Reminiscences
Folder 31	Undated, Unsigned Reminiscences

Subseries III. Early Residents' Ephemera

Folder 32	1837 Copy of Deed for 173 Acres to Joseph Kettlestrings
Folder 33	1839 Copy of Deed for 160 Acres to Leon Bourassa
Folder 34	1887, 1889 Margaretta Shearburn and Elda Gertrude Terry Cost Funeral Momentos
Folder 35	1887, 1888, Undated Broughton, Broughton-Reeds, McDonald, Oliver Postal Envelopes
Folder 36	1800s, 1883, 1906, 1909 Broughton, Farqnarbar, Thatcher, Wood, Yalding Invitations
Folder 37	1800s, 1887 Cost, Schran, Strable, Thatcher Calling Cards

Folder 38	1800s, 1883, 1885, 1886, 1887 Coombs, Hallock, Humpreville, Maxwell, Thatcher New Year's Greeting Cards
Folder 39	1967 Dr. Arthur Joslyn Memorial Service Program

Series III. Village of River Forest Government

Folder 40	1880 Village of River Forest Incorporation Documents
Folder 41	1881, 1917-1918, 1922, 1980s, 1990s Government Documents
Folder 42	1880, 1900, 1910, 1989, 1990 Village of River Forest Board, Committee Meeting Minutes
Shelf 2*	<i>1996 Chronology of the Oak Park/River Forest Citizens Committee for Humans Rights 1964-1973</i> by Lee Brooke *Located in Research Center
Folder 43	1888, 1897 Copies of Village of River Forest Directory
Folder 44	1904, 1912 Village of River Forest Ordinances
Shelf 2*	<i>1912 Revised General Ordinances of the Village of River Forest</i> by Benjamin F. Langworthy *Located in Research Center
Shelf 2*	<i>The River Forest Code of 1931 (2)</i> *Located in Research Center

Box 2

Series III. Village of River Forest Government (Continued)

Folder 45	1931-1942 Village of River Forest Ordinances
-----------	---

Shelf 2* *Village of River Forest Code – 1957*
*Located in Research Center

Shelf 2* *1978 Village of River Forest Ordinance
Supplement Code Book*
*Located in Research Center

Folder 46 Demographic Information

Folder 47 Parks and Recreation

Folder 48 Polling Place Information

Folder 49 Village and Zoning Maps

Series IV. Village of River Forest Clubs and Organizations

Folder 50 Village of River Forest Clubs

Folder 50a 1936 River Forest Club and Organization
Histories (Loose papers)

Shelf 2* 1936 River Forest Club and Organization
Histories (2 bound copies)

Folder 51 First Presbyterian Church of River Forest

Folder 52 River Forest State Bank

Folder 53 River Forest Railroads

Folder 54 River Forest Schools

Folder 55 1960 River Forest Schools Centennial

~~Folder 56~~ *Transferred to Forest Home Cemetery
Papers*

Series V. Publications

Folder 57 Village Pamphlets and Booklets

Folder 58 1929 “River Forest Sunday Evening News”
Newsletters

Folder 59 1933, 1936 “River Forest Optimist”
Magazines

Folder 60	1936 "River Forest Leaves" Newspapers
Folder 61	2005 "The River Forester" Newsletters
Folder 62	River Forest Newspaper Clippings

Series VI. Village of River Forest Events

Folder 63	1936 River Forest Centennial Celebration
Folder 64	1936 "Pioneers of the Prairies" Centennial Play by Margaret Pack (3)
Folder 65	1976 River Forest U.S. Bicentennial Celebration
Folder 66	1975-1976 River Forest U.S. Bicentennial Commission Meeting Minutes
Folder 67	1976 River Forest U.S. Bicentennial Celebration Correspondence
Folder 68	1976 River Forest U.S. Bicentennial Celebration Newspaper Clippings
Folder 69	1980 River Forest Centennial Celebration
Folder 70	1980 River Forest Centennial Committee Meeting Minutes

Box 3

Series VI. Village of River Forest Events (Continued)

Folder 71	1980 River Forest Centennial Correspondence
Folder 72	1980 River Forest Centennial Memoranda
Folder 73	1980 River Forest Centennial Newspaper Clippings
Folder 74	1980 River Forest Centennial Essay Writer and Articles
Folder 74a	1980 "Spoon River Anthology" Centennial Play Performance

Folder 75 1980 River Forest Centennial Paraphernalia

Series VII. Village of River Forest Photographs

Folder 76 1800s Thatcher Portraits (David, George, Mrs. David Thatcher)

Folder 77 1836 Bickerdike Steam Saw Mill Photographs and Negatives (3)

Folder 78 1885 Harlem School Photograph

Folder 79 1898 Des Plaines Avenue Photograph

Folder 80 1906, 1921 Lake Street Bridge Photographs

Folder 81 1915 Blumenstock Home Photographs (2)

Folder 82 1919 River Forest Flooding Photographs by Ray M. Davies (10)

Folder 83 1919, 1920, 1950 Quick House Photographs (Heidi Roos also pictured) (5)

Folder 84 1976 River Forest U.S. Bicentennial Celebration Photographs

Folder 85 1979 River Forest House Photographs by H. Blesy

Folder 86 1980 River Forest Centennial House Research Program Photographs (4)

Folder 87 River Forest Women's Club Photographs (3)

Folder 88 Undated-1979 Miscellaneous River Forest Photographs (10)

Box 4

Series VIII. Albums

Shelf 3* c.1900 "Album I: Historic Scenes of River Forest taken by Philander W. Barclay"
*Located in Research Center

Shelf 3*	c.1900 "Album II: Historic Scenes of River Forest taken by Philander W. Barclay" *Located in Research Center
No folder*	1979 Centennial Activities *Loose in box
No folder*	1980 Centennial Activities *Loose in box
No folder*	1980 River Forest Centennial: Transportation Day *Loose in box
No folder*	1980 River Forest Centennial: 100 Blooming Years *Loose in box
No folder*	1980 River Forest Centennial House Walk *Loose in box
No folder*	1980 River Forest Centennial: All Village Picnic and Sports Day *Loose in box
No folder*	1980 River Forest Centennial: Arts & Crafts Festival *Loose in box
No folder*	1980 River Forest Centennial Ball *Loose in box