

Spring 2004

Special All-Village Mailing



www.olmstedsociety.org

FREDERICK LAW OL MSTED SOCIETY OF RIVERSIDE

# Newsletter

## Explore Maplewood: The Road, The River, The Rockefellers on May 23

Join the Olmsted Society as we explore *Maplewood: The Road, The River, The Rockefellers*. This year's Housewalk combines a variety of architectural styles with the legacy and generosity of Edith Rockefeller McCormick. The event is scheduled for Sunday, May 23, 2004 from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.

Maplewood Road, a quiet street that hugs the Des Plaines River, is more than the location of beautiful gardens and unique homes. It is a piece of history dating back to the turn-of-the-century generosity of John D. Rockefeller and his daughter, Edith Rockefeller McCormick.

Much of the land on the western edge of Riverside once belonged to Edith. Her father, Standard Oil magnate John D. Rockefeller, gifted the land to her in 1895 when she married Harold McCormick, son of reaper king Cyrus McCormick.

Edith's relationship with her father was stormy — she rebelled from his staunch frugality by living extravagantly and giving away millions to her favorite causes. Riverside is the happy beneficiary of Edith's generosity. She donated part of her holdings in Riverside for the

Chicago Zoological Gardens, more commonly known as Brookfield Zoo. Part of the remaining parcel —

The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside Presents...

### MAPLEWOOD

The Road. The River. The Rockefellers.

A special tour that weaves the magic of historic Riverside with the legacy of the Rockefellers.

Sunday, May 23, 2004  
12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.

today's Maplewood Road — was platted and opened to residential development in 1910.

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## The Rockefeller Legacy

"My object in this world is to think new thoughts." With this bold declaration, Edith Rockefeller McCormick served notice to the world that she

intended to leave her mark on it. She indeed left her mark, and as the queen of Chicago society at the turn of

the last century, her reach extended to the western suburbs, including Riverside's Maplewood Road subdivision.

Edith was born in Cleveland, Ohio on August 31, 1872, the fourth child

of John D. and Cettie Rockefeller. With her siblings, Edith was shielded from the outside world and raised in strict Baptist confor-

mity by governesses. The children were kept ignorant of the family's wealth — her father made all four children share a bicycle.

As a child and young woman, Edith displayed an interest in art, literature, and languages. These interests would remain with her throughout her life. When she

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For a look at the featured structures on the Housewalk, turn to the photos on pages 4-5.



[www.olmstedociety.org](http://www.olmstedociety.org)

## The Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside

# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2004

Founded in 1968, the Frederick Law Olmsted Society of Riverside is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and restoration of the original village plan, developed in 1868 by landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted and his partner Calvert Vaux. Membership is open to all interested individuals. Annual Membership is available for a \$15.00 (tax-deductible) contribution.

### Officers

**President,** Constance Guardi  
**Vice President,** Paula Gagliano  
**Treasurer:** Fred Kitch  
**Secretary:** Ralph Harast

### Committees

**Architecture,** Yvonne Lucero, Joe Cablk  
**Fall Festival,** Chandra Reynolds  
**Hoffman Dam,** Dean Eastman  
**Housewalk,** Constance Guardi, Jim Reynolds, Lonnie Sacchi  
**Library,** Jane Kunka  
**Long-Range Planning,** Mark Shevitz  
**Membership,** Joanna Beaumont  
**Newsletter,** Geri Tauber  
**Tours/Education,** Tony Pecelunas, Lonnie Sacchi  
**Website,** Scott Weiland

### Honorary Directors

Mike & Nancy DeLise

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## Letter From the President

Every other year when spring arrives, the Olmsted Society Housewalk bursts into bloom. Housewalks have been an integral part of the Society's activities from the beginning. We held our first housewalk in 1969, one year after the Society's founding.

Titles such as, "Wright here in Riverside," "Prairie on the River," "The Longcommon," "Riverside, Then and Now," "Early Riverside, Restored, Renewed, Revealed," and "...Through Porches & Portals" are representative of the various themes we've explored through the past 35 years.

Each housewalk requires two years of planning, the generosity of homeowners, and the tireless efforts of volunteers culminating in five hours of true Olmstedian relaxation. Housewalks help the society to fulfill a part of its mission "to educate the citizens in the heritage of the village." Our village is a unique space, designed by an icon of American landscape architecture, Frederick Law Olmsted, and it is our responsibility to preserve and protect it.

This year we will be closer to the Des Plaines River than during any past housewalk. We are accustomed to views of the river in public spaces, such as Swan Pond and the Barry-

point bridge, but in May we will be able to view the river from private spaces, homes on the river. The views are dramatic, awe inspiring and not available once the housewalk is completed. Join us for a wonderful experience Sunday, May 23, 2004.

### Francis Higgins

Francis Stewart Higgins died this year at age 91. She was a renowned artist who worked in the medium of glass. Together with her late husband

Michael, they established their glass studio in Riverside in 1966.

A native of Georgia, she fit in well with her Riverside neighbors. As directors of the Olmsted Society they contributed immensely to the betterment of the organization. Extremely talented and intelligent, they

contributed to all aspects of the work of the Society. After many years of service they were awarded "Honorary Directors" status.

A memorial service will be held in the Township Hall April 25, 2004 at 3:00p.m. A second book about Higgins Glass, *Higgins II: Poetry in Glass*, will be added to the Olmsted Collection in the Riverside library in Francis' honor.

**Constance Guardi**  
**President**

[thomasg7@ameritech.net](mailto:thomasg7@ameritech.net)

*Welcome to this special "All-Village" edition of the Olmsted Society newsletter. We are pleased to send this issue to all Riverside residents because it contains exciting information on the upcoming Housewalk. If you are not a member and want to learn more about the Olmsted Society, come to Maplewood Road on May 23. You can join on-site, or when you send in your order for Housewalk tickets. As a member, you will save \$5 on the cost of every ticket purchased.*

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Tickets are \$35 each (\$30 if purchased before May 15). Olmsted Society members receive an additional \$5 off each ticket purchased. Tickets will be limited, so advance purchase is recommended.

Tickets can be purchased at Aunt Diana's, 29 E. Burlington

Road, and Coveny Lane, 30 E. Burlington Road. Tickets are also available by mail: Send a check payable to the Olmsted Society, PO Box 65, Riverside, Illinois 60546. Please include \$1 per ticket for postage and handling.

For more information, call 708-442-0845 or 708-447-2311.

## Riverside's Rockefeller Legacy

(Continued from page 1)

reached her teens, the family moved to New York and Edith left the sheltered existence of childhood behind. She relished her new freedom and developed a taste for fine clothes and jewelry, much to the dismay of her frugal parents.

In 1893 the Rockefellers journeyed to Chicago for the Columbian Exposition, lodging at the home of industrial baron Cyrus McCormick, inventor of the mechanical reaper. Edith's brother John D. Jr. was a schoolmate of Cyrus' son Harold. Junior, quite the matchmaker, saw in Harold the ideal mate for his headstrong sister and a romance ensued. On November 26, 1895 the young couple married, but not before John D. Sr., having noticed Harold's fondness for drink, extracted a pledge from his daughter to never serve alcoholic beverages in her house.

The press loved the story of the "Prince of International Harvester" marrying the "Princess of Standard Oil." A commercial dynasty was

forged that would provide both business and society reporters material for decades to come.

After two years in Iowa, the couple returned to Chicago. Their 41-room mansion at 1000 Lake Shore Drive, complete with 20 servants, was a gift from her father. Edith spared no expense in decorating, acquiring the finest European antiques, rare books and fine art. She owned furniture that once belonged to Napoleon and Catherine the Great's emeralds. Her pearls were valued at \$2 million and her dog wore a diamond-studded collar.

In short, Edith occupied the pinnacle of Chicago society. However, as early as 1908, Harold and Edith were deeply in debt.

Tragedy plagued them in another way—two of their five children died in infancy. The precarious mental health of the McCormicks would not survive these blows. Edith was sent to various locations for "cures" and in 1908 Harold sought treatment for depression in Zurich from Carl Jung, the great disciple of Sigmund Freud. When Edith's depression reappeared

in 1912, Jung encouraged her to come to Zurich. A two-month stay evolved into an eight-year psychoanalytical course of study. She ultimately became an analyst in her own right.

Long periods of separation afforded ample opportunities for the couple to pursue romantic affairs, Harold with Polish opera singer Ganna Walska and Edith with fellow Jungian pupil Edwin Krenn.

Although they maintained a loving correspondence, Edith was becoming estranged from her father. With Krenn, Edith steamed back to New York in 1921. Conveniently finding an excuse to not see her father, whom she would never see again, she continued on to Chicago.

Edith continued her extravagant ways, funding author James Joyce among other artists, and building a 44-room Italianate villa in Lake Forest dubbed "Villa Turicum." The unoccupied villa was full of unopened crates of art and antiques and Edith envisioned it as Chicago's center for psychology.

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# Housewalk Ticket Order Form

## MAPLEWOOD

The Road. The River. The Rockefellers.



Please return this form with your check payable to: The Frederick Law Olmsted Society, P.O. Box 65, Riverside, Illinois 60546.

☐ I am a member of the Olmsted Society. Please send me the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ tickets @\$25 each (before May 15): \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ tickets @\$30 each (after May 15): \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\$1 postage/handling each: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Non-member ticket orders\*:

\_\_\_\_\_ tickets @\$30 each (before May 15): \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ tickets @\$35 each (after May 15): \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\$1 postage/handling each: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\*Not a member? Join today and save \$5 on every ticket purchased. Membership is \$15 per household.

☐ Please process my membership: \$ 15.00

Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

# MAPLEWOOD

The Road. The River. The Rockefellers.



Six homes and a house of worship will be open to Housewalk visitors on May 23. The homes are known by their historic names, typically the name of their first owner. The structures are located on a single street — Maplewood Road — and the tour begins at either intersection of Maplewood Road and Woodside Road. Additional street parking is available behind Hauser Junior High School and at Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Snacks and beverages from Grumpy's will be available at the "Housewalk Café" at Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Advance tickets can be purchased at Aunt Diana's, 29 E. Burlington, and Coveny Lane, 30 E. Burlington. Tickets will also be available during the Perennial Plant Sale at Ascension Lutheran Church, 400 Nuttall, on Saturday, May 22 from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.



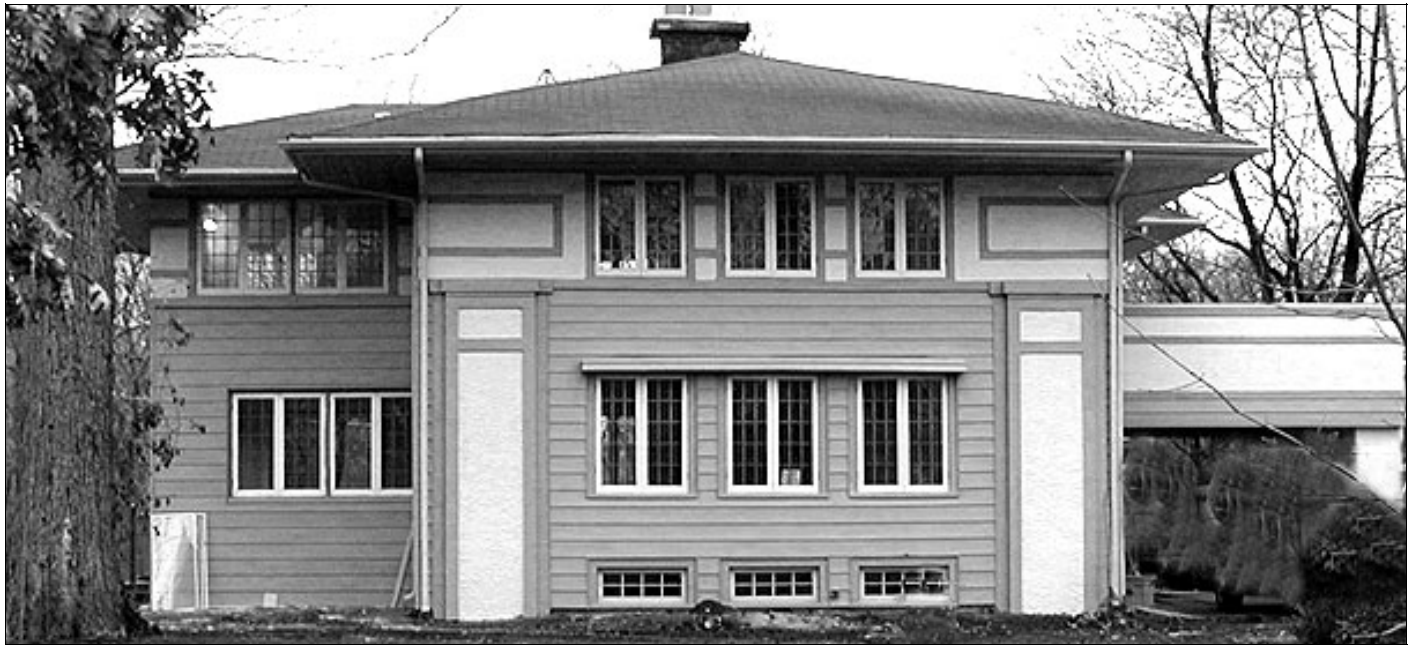
**Charles Zundalek Residence**  
172 Maplewood  
Circa 1936



**Dr. O.L. Rea Residence**  
230 Maplewood  
1922



**A.E. Williams Residence**  
"The Boathouse"  
246 Maplewood  
1955, 1996



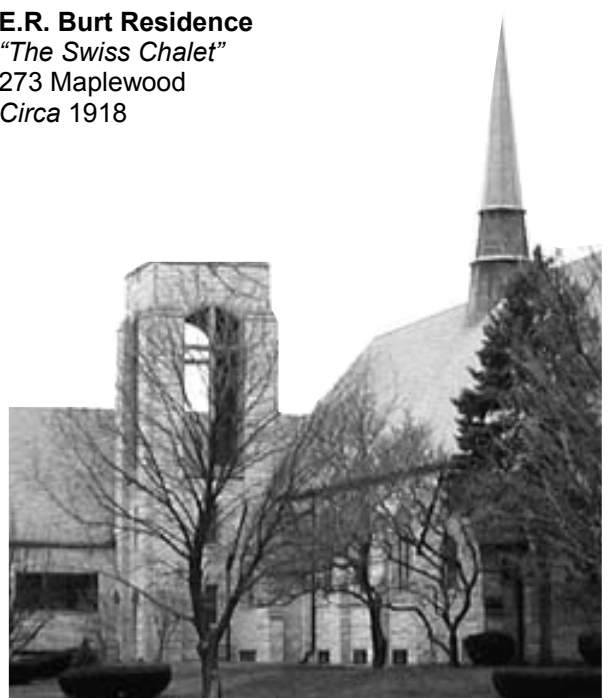
**J.C. Johnson Residence**  
260 Maplewood  
Circa 1916



**E.R. Burt Residence**  
*"The Swiss Chalet"*  
273 Maplewood  
Circa 1918



**Paul and Grace Rosenberg Residence**  
*"Grace Cottage"*  
280 Maplewood  
1975



**Sts. Peter and Paul  
Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
250 Woodside  
1956

Photos by Jim Reynolds



FREDERICK LAW OLMSTED SOCIETY  
OF RIVERSIDE

P.O. Box 65  
Riverside, IL 60546

### Calendar

**Housewalk**  
Sunday, May 23, 2004  
12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m.

**Sunday Walking Tours**  
May 30, 2004 (North)  
June 27, 2004 (South)  
July 25 (North)  
August 29 (South)  
2:00 p.m. @ Train Depot

**Milwaukee Garden Tour**  
Saturday, June 5, 2004

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
North Riverside, IL  
Permit #23

**Postal Customer**  
**Riverside, IL 60546**

*(Continued from page 3)*

Her troubled marriage to Harold ended in divorce in December, 1921 although they remained friends for the rest of her life.

Edith maintained an analysis practice in Chicago and funded Krenn in his real estate venture. She dabbled in séances and the occult. A debt of over \$800,000 was erased with a bail-out from her father, but nothing stopped Edith's spending; another piece of art needed to be acquired or Krenn needed more cash to keep solvent.

With the 1929 crash, Krenn's business was wiped out and 90-year-old John D. Rockefeller lost millions. Worrying that Edith's debts would jeopardize the entire family fortune, John D. Jr., was sent to Chicago to contain Edith. Although angry with her brother's meddling, she agreed to leave the Lake Shore Drive mansion for an

allowance and a suite at the Drake Hotel. In 1930 Edith was diagnosed with breast cancer and underwent a mastectomy and radiation therapy. With her father refusing to advance any more money, she sold over \$1 million in jewelry to pay her bills. A

*Perhaps we should not attempt to categorize Edith Rockefeller McCormick at all, and merely dwell on the words of James Joyce, who, upon hearing of her death, noted only that she died "a woman of considerable distinction."*

persistent cough in 1932 presaged the return of the cancer and Edith tried to cure it with psychological means. She died on August 25, 1932 in her suite at the Drake just days shy of her 60th birthday, surrounded by her children, Harold [with whom she always hoped to reconcile], and Edwin Krenn. To

settle her debts, her possessions were auctioned off at Depression-era prices for pennies on the dollar. Nearly 20 years later, her estate was still unsettled and still owed well over a million dollars.

Edith presents an enigmatic case for historians. Should we focus on her great intellect and philanthropic pursuits? Her pioneering support for psychological studies? Or was she merely the spoiled progeny of an American robber baron? Perhaps we should not attempt to categorize Edith Rockefeller McCormick at all, and merely dwell on the words of James Joyce, who, upon hearing of her death, noted only that she died "a woman of considerable distinction."

*—by Lonnie Sacchi,  
adapted from his column in  
The Landmark, April 7, 2004.*