Lake Forest Preservation Foundation NEWSLETTER

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Just restored 1909 Glen Rowan reflecting pool, fountain, sculpture and containers and rejuvenated planting seasonal schemes all carried out by collaborating local experts and funders. Photo by the author, October 2011.

DRAMATIC TERRACE RESTORATION SHOWCASES ESTATE-ERA GEM, GLEN ROWAN (1909)

by Arthur H. Miller

A small group of interested Lake Forest College and community members recently saw the need to restore an over-a-century-operating reflecting pool and its terrace at the College's Glen Rowan House. New local resident Craig Bergmann stepped in with a plan and generous pledge that brought together funding and in-kind contributions to make this happen. Hundreds have visited Bergmann's own spectacular new gardens at the restored A. Watson Armour Elawa estate (David Adler, 1910s-1930s), particularly during a Garden Conservancy Open Day this past summer. But few have seen the renewal of one of Lake Forest's oldest, continuously-operating and terrace-situated reflecting pools at Glen Rowan, located at 500 North Sheridan Road.

THE PROJECT

Of course, like many good preservation initiatives locally--Ragdale, the Walden-Bluff's Edge Bridge, Dickinson Hall, the Market Square train station--the Glen Rowan terrace restoration was a team effort and collaboration among groups. Joining Bergmann in this project were the Lake Forest Garden Club, encouraged by member Carol Blomquist; Lake Forest College, invigorated by the outstanding rejuvenation of Glen Rowan activities by director of special events Kaye Kelly; and Lake Forest's always first-choice stone masonry firm, Fernando.

WHAT'S THE LATEST ON FOREST PARK?

by Rommy Lopat



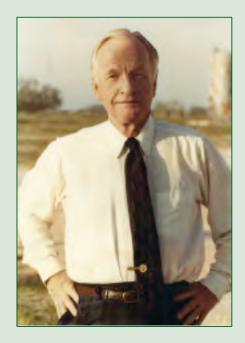
More detailed information about how best to rehabilitate Forest Park was presented by the Forest Park Project Board to a joint meeting of the Lake Forest Historic Preservation Commission and the Parks & Recreation Board on Wednesday, September 21. A "packed house" listened to reports prepared over the last year by volunteer committees assigned to study the history of the Park and engineering and horticultural aspects of the Park. A fourth committee, assigned to suggest amenities treatments, will report at a later date.

For a complete update on this meeting, please refer to the full

report posted on the Preservation Foundation's web site, www.lfpf. org. The full reports of the Forest Park Project Board Committees and direct updates from the FPPB may be viewed at www.forest-parkproject.com.

Forest Park is one of the City's most significant historic cultural landscapes. The Preservation Foundation will continue to follow the Forest Park Project, and looks forward to seeing more definite plans for the preservation and rehabilitation of this important O. C. Simonds-designed landscape.

HENRY P. WHEELER, 1919-2001, IN MEMORIAM



Another chapter in the history of Lake Forest came to an end this past August with the passing of Henry P. Wheeler.

Active in sports as a youth, as a major in the Marines during World War II and a reserve commander after, Mr. Wheeler went on to contribute to his community in a variety of ways. He served as an Alderman for six years on the Lake Forest City Council and carried his interest in community affairs over to his work with the Lake Forest Preservation Foundation, an organization chartered on August 4, 1976 "for the purpose of fostering the preservation of the sites, structures and amenities that comprise Lake Forest's historic visual character."

From 1986 -1988 Mr. Wheeler served as the sixth president of the Foundation. He led the organization at the time of the conclusion of the restoration and renovation of the Chicago and North Western Railway Station. It was also the beginning of the issue of "Balkanization," that is, property subdivision that had the potential to change the character of neighborhoods and the surrounding landscapes through the construction of large dominant structures on lots previously characterized by generous amounts of green space and landscaping. On July 29, 1986 Mr. Wheeler addressed the Plan Commission on the issue, resulting in discussions at the City level of bulk and mass limits in new construction. Other concerns at the time revolved around saving "Handy Green" and the green space adjacent to it, the gas lights, "infill" in general and the future of Fort Sheridan.

In the President's Message of Spring 1986, Mr. Wheeler ended with a quote by John Aull from the May *Audubon*: "Remember that this land is ours only to be held in trust, to pass on to the next generation as beautiful as it was given to us."

Following his service as President of the Foundation, Harry, as he was known, continued his interest in Lake Forest and the Foundation. He attended meetings and events regularly and could be counted on to appear annually on Lake Forest Day at the Foundation's parade site to cheer us on as we were assembling on Western Avenue.

Those of us who served under his leadership can hear the echo of his distinctive voice as he related tales of the Lake Forest of his youth and his "adventures" in City government. His style was often playful and humorous, quite unforgettable. We miss you, Harry.

-Sarah Wimmer & Pauline Mohr

NEW BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF LANDSCAPE DESIGNER O. C. SIMONDS (1855-1931)

by Arthur H. Miller

The new book, Low-Key Genius: The Life and Work of Landscape-Gardener O. C. Simonds (Urbpublisher for Ferme Orne Press; \$34.95), written by Barbara Geiger, combines a scholarly biography with the informal charm of botanical illustrations drawn by Simonds' granddaughter-in-law, Roberta Simonds. Geiger's study not only adds much new material to our understanding of this pioneer landscape designer but also successfully pulls together many disparate sources of information about Simonds and his extensive body of work (1,000 projects nationwide).

The softbound book is comprised of 343 pages, with many photographic and line-drawing illustrations (botanicals, plans, etc.). The final 33 pages include a Simonds' firm job list, a bibliography and an extensive index. The book's designer, William M. Walker, even adds his "Tracing O.C." to explain the development of the Simonds' plans shown. The book was published in May and "debuted" at the Foundation's summer garden visit event at Bill and Lynn Redfield's historic House of the Four Winds on Laurel Avenue in Lake Forest.

Landscape architect and IIT adjunct professor Barbara Geiger wrote her Master's thesis on Simonds, and ten years later reprised and expanded the thesis to create a highly useful, comprehensive biographical study. Her book greatly advances previous studies on Simonds, his designs, and his ideas. In this spirit, Geiger lists Simonds' local work on Lake Forest Cemetery (1901), the 1892 Lake Forest Academy and Lake Forest University landscape plans (most recently cited in this writer's article on Warren Manning's work at the institution a few years after Simonds' and published in the *View*, the periodical of the Library of American Landscape History), Fort Sheridan (1888), Forest Park (1896) and private estates (Colvin, Armour, Horace Martin, Byron Smith). His partner, J. Roy West, continued Simonds' work after his death in 1931 at Lake Forest High School and the Hafner residence. One more project is a 1912 Simonds plan for the Franklin P. Smith estate, on the southwest corner of Deerpath and Mayflower Road, from the collections of the Lake Forest-Lake Bluff Historical Society.

A first study, like this one, opens up a new topic and expands the range of participation beyond a group of scholars and archivists to a larger public of local historians, to later owners or occupiers of designed spaces, to preservationists, and to those who appreciate the richness of the Ossian Cole Simonds' story and his contributions to the field of landscape.

Readers will admire Geiger's accomplishment. It is a book to keep on the book-shelf for reference, but equally to be read for its warmth, easy flow, great illustrations, and its deep respect for this region's landscape.

From an old book purchased at the Friends of the Lake Forest Library Book Sale, September 2011:

Happy is a country, as to her present beauty and everlasting renown, when her men of high place and great wealth are, as it were, born artists; when, as in Athens of old, nothing offensive to the eye is tolerated or can be erected; when no commercial considerations are allowed to outweigh the supreme obligation of making every human work that is to be seen sightly and gracious and fit and of due proportion

Gertrude Jekyll, "Gardens Past and Present," *A Gardener's Testament: A Selection of Articles and Notes*, ed. Francis Jekyll and G. C. Taylor (London and New York: Country Life Ltd and Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. 12.

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STATION ROOF RESTORATION TO BE COMPLETE BY THANKSGIVING!

by Gail T. Hodges

Restoration of the original slate roof, dormers, and related exterior structural elements and trim on the Market Square train station began in late September. The roof is expected to be completed in time for the tree-lighting ceremony on Thanksgiving weekend.

In order to restore the original gable ends on the west platform canopies, it was necessary to remove the two trees flanking the west building. These trees were already causing deterioration of the existing wood-shingle roof. They will be replaced when construction permits, following a new conceptual landscape plan and future review.

Additional work to complete the exterior will resume next spring. This will include stucco, masonry reconstruction, tuckpointing, windows, and doors, limited only by available funding.

The goal of the project is to secure the station for the next 80-100 years, with long-lasting workmanship and materials comparable to those of the original 1900 station. The current work is being funded with an \$835,090 ITEP grant secured by the City

and the Preservation Foundation, plus a \$250,000 contribution from METRA and \$160,000 budgeted by the City.

The station restoration project is being overseen by the Foundation's preservation architect, Gunny Harboe of Harboe Associates, and Dan Martin, Director of Public Works of The City of Lake Forest. Ongoing updates are linked on the Foundation's web site to the City's "What's New" at www.cityo-flakeforest.com.

The project was initiated by the Preservation Foundation in response to overall structural failure first observed in 2008. The Foundation Board commissioned a \$50,000 Historic Structure Report by noted preservation architect, Gunny Harboe of Harboe Associates. Mr. Harboe was named "Chicagoan of the Year" in 2010 for his work restoring the historic façade of the Carson Pirie Scott building in Chicago.

This initiative by the Foundation, funded by the investment of our members' dues, initiated a two-year collaboration between the City and the Foundation, which resulted in securing over \$1.245 million to begin the project. An additional \$2+ million will have to be secured in order to complete restoration and renovation of the interior, including installation of a long-term, cost-effective HVAC system.

The Foundation and the City will continue to work together to secure grant funding, and the Foundation welcomes contributions to support this project.

With your help, the preservation of our iconic Market Square station will be ensured for future generations. Please contact the Foundation at 847-234-1230 or office@lfpf. org to contribute or to help raise funds. Donations are tax deductible and may be made online at www.lfpf.org. Naming opportunities will be available.

Left to right: Arthur H. Miller, past president of the Preservation Foundation; Suzanne Boren, President of the Preservation Foundation; Gail Hodges, a past president; Gunny Harboe, Preservation Architect; and Dan Martin, Director of Public Works for The City of Lake Forest.



A few years ago, Kelly received a senior class gift to restore the turf to the terrace, with modest other replanting. The source of the larger restoration idea and its persistent champion has been Carol Blomquist, who drew on this writer for historical information, on her decades-old relationship with the College, on her Lake Forest Garden Club membership and her own passion for gardens and Glen Rowan to keep the wish for the terrace restoration alive through the recent recession.

SOME GLEN ROWAN HISTORY

Glen Rowan was purchased from the Barnes family in 1968 and has been the entertaining and guest house focal point for Lake Forest College since 1979. It was built in 1909 as the country place of the Rev. Clifford W. and Alice Reid Barnes, and designed by Barnes' Yale contemporary, architect Howard Van Doren Shaw (Market Square, Ragdale, the College's Calvin Durand Hall). Barnes was a leading Chicago reformer (Sunday Evening Club, votes for women, etc.) and friend of Jane Addams of Hull House, where he had been a "resident" or on staff in the 1890s. Alice Reid was the older surviving daughter of Mrs. Simon S. Reid when she married Barnes in the later 1890s and heiress to the Reid's Chicago wholesale grocery firm also known for Monarch Foods. After the death of two of her siblings, including the only son, Arthur S. Reid (1899), the young Barneses became the couple that would project the family and its reform mission through much of the next century, until the death of their daughter Lilace Barnes in 1988. The house was built south of the Reids' 1872 frame Stick Style The Lilacs (demol. 1971), on the now-vacant southwest corner of Sheridan and College Roads.

Many of Shaw's houses had terraces, but Glen Rowan's is unique in its incorporation of the open terrace into a central-hall classic, or Beaux Arts, interior plan. Opposite the dining room and just beyond the library/living room, it enabled Shaw, the English Arts & Crafts American master of his era, to mold an informal, English traditional asymmetrical exterior with a symmetrically-arranged classic, elegant Stuart-period interior. The terrace's long east-side balustrade that runs parallel to the brick path from the north side garden entry and in turn the central hall, references the design of one by Shaw's English architectural contemporary Edwin Lutyens for his "Deanery" country place design (see *Lake Forest College: A Guide to the Campus*, 2007).

Family photos from the early 20th Century show the terrace, its classic ornaments, bubbling pool, plantings and convivial gatherings in enough detail to show that the space was 99% as originally built, though in seriously-deteriorating condition. The richness of the site and of the documentation inspired Blomquist, Kelly, and Bergmann.

CRAIG BERGMANN

Extraordinary garden designer Craig Bergmann, formerly of Wilmette and newly established on North Waukegan Road just south of the entry to Middlefork and Elawa, has been a key figure in the restoration of some of Lake Forest's most notable, world-class gardens. This writer showed his own photos of the 2002-restored House of the Four Winds Ibero-Moorish garden (Shaw, 1909, and

Rose Standish Nichols) to a packed group of Lake Forest ex-pats at New York's Sotheby's main auction room in 2003, at the end of a lecture on the local estate era. The crowd gasped at the beauty of the accomplishment, just as gardeners from Newport had been awed by the local garden art during the 1919 visit by the Garden Club of America, as reported gleefully in the *Lake Forester*.

Bergmann's historic "garden whispering," as it were, has brought new life to many overgrown and forgotten Lake Forest spaces. In this case, he has enhanced and paid forward--with his plan, his associates such as Fernando, and his pledge to keep the garden planted seasonally as long as he stays here--this overlook to the broad lawn and restored ravine edge that has hosted leaders from former president Theodore Roosevelt to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Additional funding by the College and the Lake Forest Garden Club has been crucial as well. The 1909 pump and electric motor for the fountain, rebuilt in 1970, have been replaced. The sculptures have been restored. The pool has been reconstructed, and the brick floor surface, reset. An apple tree is being espaliered against the north wall, shrubs have been planted, and the various containers, including those at the entrances to the interior and the terrace, already have been changing with the seasons this year.

COLLABORATION FOR PRESERVATION SUCCESS

Once again, this is a creative partnership, like those behind the preservation of Ragdale, of the east side train station, of the Grove School campus, and of some of the Elawa Farm buildings. Here, it was accomplished with the collaboration of a visionary local entrepreneur/artist, a not-for-profit (the College), the Lake Forest Garden Club's charitable entity, and one inspiring garden lover, Carol Blomquist. Together they have made a difficult preservation goal achievable.

For more about Lake Forest College's Glen Rowan and its history, please see http://www.lakeforest.edu/library/archives/lf-country-places/barnes.php and contact amiller@lakeforest.edu. To arrange an event there, please contact Faye Kelly, director of special events, fkelly@lakeforest.edu and 847-735-6030. To learn more about Craig Bergmann, his work, and his new atelier and home in Lake Forest, please see this website: http://www.craigbergmann.com. For Masonry by Fernando, Inc., Lake Bluff, call, or have your land-scape architect or architect call, 847-367-5280.



Members Susan Dedo and Bill Redfield with Executive Director Marcy Kerr on the right, at the reception for the Foundation's October 23rd "Historic Interiors Presentation and Wine Stroll" event. Interior Designer Frank Ponterio was the featured speaker.

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An early view of Lake Forest's east side train station.

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