

LG AHS ARCHIVES AND ARTIFACTS

Every year new items are added to our collections through the generosity the residents of our community. These donations help LG AHS fulfill its mission to share La Grange area history and stories. Managing and preserving LG AHS artifact and archive collections require careful planning and organization. How artifacts and archives are stored can significantly impact their longevity and preservation, LG AHS has more than **12,000** items in its archives.

Our collections are important to our community's cultural heritage and provide a tangible way for our community to learn about La Grange area history, provide a valuable resource for researchers, and contribute to our understanding of the past.

The following is a list of questions that have been frequently asked. Also sharing a glimpse into our collections and reference materials.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DONATIONS TO THE LG AHS COLLECTIONS



LG AHS SHOE COLLECTION consists of 87 pairs of womens, mens, and children shoes and boots spanning from 1880 to 1960. The satin shoes belonged to an early La Grange Park resident, Lucille Hess, 1890. She wore them with a pink ball gown. Lucille lived at 406 North Catherine.

How are items added to the collection?

Offered items are reviewed by the Collections Committee, where they are discussed prior to acceptance into the collection. Dropping an item off at LG AHS does not guarantee that the item will be accepted for the collection. Donors are encouraged to share with the LG AHS any history about the donated item that can enrich its story. Your donation, once it is accepted will be cataloged and stored in our collections, archives or reference library for use in displays, exhibits, research and publications.

What sort of items do you collect?

Generally, the item must be related in some way to the history of La Grange, La Grange Park or its people. Ideally, the item was made, found, used or owned by someone in the La Grange area.

LGHS WEDDING DRESS COLLECTION



Jane Vial Battery's
Wedding Day at
the Vial House on
November 29, 1935.

Our Wedding Gown
Collection consists of
over 50 gowns as well
as veils and accesso-
ries from 1890 to
1960.



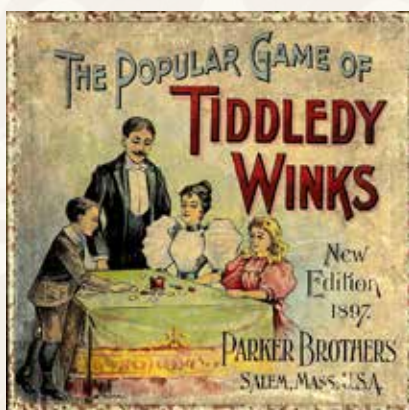
LG AHS DOLL COLLECTION

We have over 85 dolls and 124 pieces of doll clothing in our collection. One of our oldest and most often displayed dolls is called “Edith” She is a 16.5 inch doll purchased and outfitted by Nadine Newbill Jenner. Edith has a bisque head and kid leather body, brown glass eyes, painted lashes and brows, closed mouth, pierced ears and red hair wig. The wig was made from LTHS 1930’s art teacher Edith Murphy’s own hair. (a braid was cut off when she was a young girl and given to Nadine for this doll) The doll was called Edith in honor of Edith Murphy. Edith Murphy’s original art is featured in our Original Residents’ Artwork Collection.



LG AHS TOYS AND GAMES COLLECTION

150 games and toys



Can I just drop items off that I want to donate?

A donation is a legal process. It involves a legal transfer of title from you to LGAHS. You may drop an item off at LGAHS, but it doesn't legally belong to LGAHS until a donor form is signed completing a transaction.



LGAHS WARDROBE COLLECTION 1860 to 1960

Our wardrobe collection of men, women, children, and baby garments is our largest collection totaling over 500 pieces. Included in this collection are hats, purses, gloves, scarves, shawls, jewelry and other pieces of personal adornment.





Collapsible "Opera Top Hat"



Why isn't everything on exhibit?

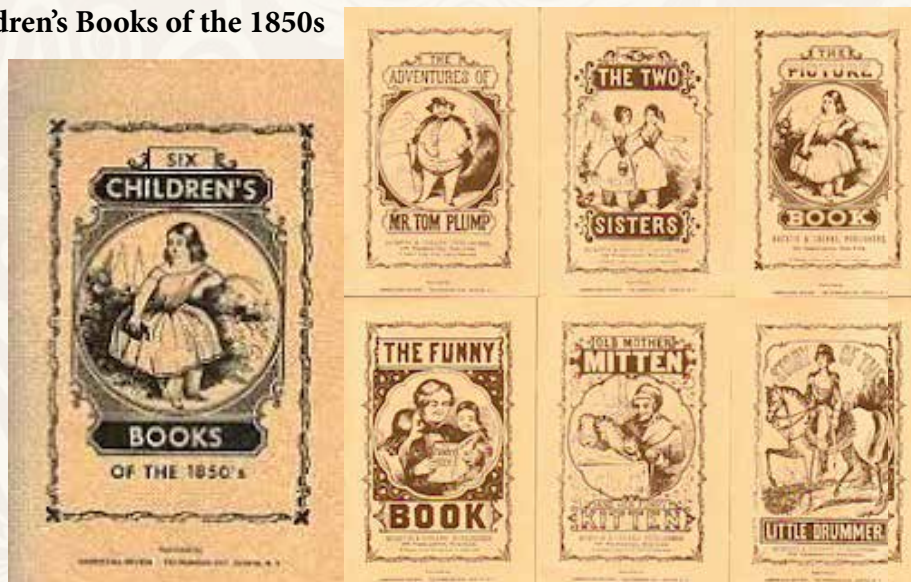
The museum has two main functions in regard to the collection. First, it preserves its donated items for perpetuity. Safe storage methods continue to be developed to make sure that what is donated today can be seen decades from now. Secondly, it makes items available for research. The museum may use the item in an exhibit or special display for a short time, but the item is always available for anyone to study.

OUR BOOK COLLECTION consists of 526 adult and children's books.

Louisa May Alcott Inscribed Copy
of "Eight Cousins" 1874



Children's Books of the 1850s



ARCHIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY

Sifting through actual documents and archives can be great fun. Our reference materials form historical narratives to help our residents understand the history of the La Grange area in a variety of ways. Whether you're interested in our "house files" that offer information associated with your house and its former residents, or "community files" including churches, clubs and organizations, social services, festivals and parades, politics, military, or sports. We have had students using archival information for a class project or for a special interest they may have such as the "history of scouts". Our reference library holds valuable materials that will help the entire family shape their understanding of the past.

- Vintage Maps La Grange and La Grange Park
- Architectural plans for over 75 homes in the La Grange Area
- Architectural drawings by J.C. Llewellyn
- Lyons Township High School Year Books from 1907 To 2014
- Local area telephone books from 1872 to 1969
- Personal papers and hand written daily diaries By A.H. Kemman, early LGP resident
- Abstracts Of Title for 22 homes
- Census For the years 1840, 1850, 1860, 1870, 1880, 1898, 1910, And 1911
- Sanborn Insurance Plats of Survey 1895, 1909, and 1919
- 1850 Glass And Tinplate photos
- Personal papers of Margaret Garrar 1826-1929
- Copy Of La Grange 1st Ordinances 1879 to 1885
- Mary Young Cookbook
- Mary Young Memory Book
- Jean Mavor Paper Doll Collection 1915
- Three Original Stories by Nadine Newbell
- Helen Templeton Prized Essay
- Covell Family Scrapbook (Early Settler)
- Civil War/ Hiram McClintock Letters To Sarah North From Many Locations While Fighting In The Civil War.
- Civil War Diary Of George L. Childress 1862-1865
- Memories Of The Great Depression Collected By Max Hoo, Eagle Scout Candidate
- 1500 original historic photographs
- Military Burial Places Book Of Honored Dead In Civil War /Buried In Oakwood Cemetery
- La Grange Area War Heroes 1893-2004
- Infant Welfare/La Grange Chapter Records
- Hand Written Town Auditors Records 1938-1940
- Interracial Fellowship Organization Scrapbook 1957-1963
- Civic Opera Guild/La Grange Chapter
- La Grange, La Grange Park Authors
- Citizens Council
- Diamond Jubilee La Grange Materials, 1954
- Nettie McKinnon Art/Ogden School
- Scrapbooks La Grange History
- Lyons Township Round Table of Admn Personnel
- Records of La Grange Chapter DAR 1927-1952
- Memoirs Red Cross Nurse/L. Marian Wallace 1917-1919
- Original Newspapers George Washington, Abraham Lincolns Death, WWI, WWII. Walk On The Moon, 911
- La Grange Citizen Newspapers 1906-1918
- Short Biographies Of Early Residents, Franklin D. Cossitt, Marias Covell, George M. Fox, Md, Henry And Alphonso Kemman, John Unold, Robert Vial and more.
- 28 Interviews with residents on subjects ranging from personal memories, Depression Era, Designing The La Grange Flag, Faculty Memories and teaching experiences At LTHS, and more.



**COPY OF FIRST
ORDINANCE OF
LA GRANGE**

LGAHS Digitization EFFORTS - PRESERVE THE PAST FOR THE FUTURE

Digitization is one of the important techniques used to protect unique archival material. Digital information can be easily stored, accessed and shared. Digital archiving eliminates the need for physical storage space and the associated costs of maintaining and managing paper-based records.

Our volunteers continue the process of converting existing archival materials to digital formats and their progress has been significant, however there is a lot of work to be done. We are exploring the “advanced” features of digitizing archives which would ensure the data is easily searchable and retrievable, even when high volumes of information are involved. We must consider potentially obsolete file formats, security and integrity of the information being retained and managing the sheer volume of information that has been accumulated over the years. The lack of funding often limits the scale of preservation efforts which has been a significant hurdle to overcome. We are seeking to make our files and records available on line through a built-in public portal.

WE COULD USE YOUR HELP

DIFFERENT WAYS TO GIVE

**Become a Member
Volunteer
Donate**



What happens to my items when they are taken off of an exhibit?

Exhibiting items inherently damages them, so periods of rest and rotation are necessary to extend the lifetime of the item. Once removed from an exhibit, items are returned to storage and are preserved, awaiting the next time they're needed for an exhibit.



The mirror that hangs over the once coal heated fireplace originated at Carol Kuehn's great aunt who lived in Pennsylvania. Later this mirror was later part of the Kuehn's home furnishings at 131 S. Waiola in La Grange. The fireplace mantle is the original, however the marble hearth was replaced in 1994.



The walnut secretary/bookcase with burled roll top desk was donated by the E.J.F. Young family. Mr. Young's mother purchased this piece and it remained in the Young family until daughter Marilyn Young Vitek donated it to the Historical Society in 2003.

I don't want to donate my item now, but may want to later. What should I do?

LGAHS does not want anyone to donate items that are still important family pieces or that a family member will continue to treasure. When the time comes that you or your family no longer wants to keep it, please contact LGAHS to discuss donating it.



The original banister at the Vial House is walnut, spindles are maple and there is a decorative carving on the side - Also niches along the staircase.. These are called "coffin niches" and enabled the fancy family coffin which was stored in the attic to be brought down for funerals in the parlor. The niches gave room to maneuver the curves, as well as places to rest the heavy coffin on its way to the first floor and back to the attic.



The crystal chandelier in the living room is from the Estate of Rhoda Evans, 144 Brewster Lane, La Grange Park. It is early Czechoslovakian crystal. The factory where this chandelier was made was bombed in WWII.

LGHS LET'S MAKE MUSIC COLLECTION



The piano is one of the earliest manufactured by W.W. Kimball and was purchased by the Geerlings family of Chicago in 1883 for their 6 year old daughter. Mabel Hansen Geerlings lived at 144 Malden, La Grange.



Mandolin



Accordion/Concertina



Harpsichord



**Theodore "Ted" Sward
Coronet**



AMERICAN FLAG

The framed American flag in our upstairs hall belonged to Mrs. Frances Carey, wife of early La Grange dentist Warren Carey. They lived in La Grange from 1878, one year before La Grange became a village, until their deaths; his in 1916 and hers in 1942 at the age of 87. Their home at 31 S. Madison, at the northeast corner of Cossitt and Madison, was razed.

This 20 star 9 stripe flag dates from the early months of 1818 before Illinois became our 21st state in December of that year and before April 2th, 1818 when Congress ordered that the U.S. Flag be redesigned, setting the number of stripes at 18 and the number of stars at 10. It was further ordered that "on admission of every new state into the union, one star should be added. The flag was donated by the Carey's grandson Eugene Baile of La Grange, Illinois.

LGAHS MILITARY UNIFORMS COLLECTION FROM CIVIL WAR TO VIET NAM



Do you perform appraisals?

No, LGAHS does not provide appraisals of the monetary value of proposed donations.





CLIPPO THE CLOWN MARIONETTE

**Clippo the clown marionette was made by fabled puppeteer Virginia Austin Curtis. Clippo was often said to be the most widely sold puppet of its kind during the 20th century. Mrs. Curtis sold the manufacturing rights to Effan-
bee Doll Company in the mid 1930's. Virginia was an accomplished artist and puppeteer. She sculpted the fabled Mortimer Snerd character for ventriloquist Edgar Burgen. Many aspiring puppeteers learned their trade with Clippo the Clown puppets. Strings to operate hands and feet as well as back and shoulders are intact.**



GAS HEATER

Laura and Charles Ebert lived at 444 S. Catherine Avenue from 1883 until sometime in the early 1900s. When the gas main was put along 47th street, the gas company asked the Eberts if they would let them use their house as a model to get other people interested in gas illumination and gas cooking. The gas company gave the Eberts this gas heater for them for using their house as a model.

Why donate ?

With your donation you become a guardian of your own history and help to preserve your community's historical and cultural identity. We hope all the many pieces that are contained our collections challenge enrich what we know of times, events, people past and present. Archives heighten our community's collective memory to help us all understand and appreciate our history.



THOMAS EDISON TALKING MACHINE

IN 1877, Thomas Edison invented the first-ever device to record and play back sound. This machine was purchased in 1911 by the donor's father. The donor Virgil James, lived for 46 years at 808 N. Stone Avenue in La Grange Park. This machine plays both 2 and 4 minute records (which is a plastic tube invented by Edison). See below

THOMAS EDISON TALKING MACHINE CYLINDERS

The machine uses cylindrical discs of wax and later vulcanized rubber to play back 2 to 4 minute recordings. Virgil James donated 40 discs including "Take this Letter to my Mama", "Grandma's Mustard Plaster, and "Casey at the Bat".





This fire bucket is from the 1890's and because of its fragility it is rarely displayed. A bucket of water was put inside this fire bucket as a precaution as candles were used to light the tree.



1935 porcelain flowered vase belonging to Jane Vial Battery.



Late 19th century Minton candelabra. Anniversary gift from Frederic H. Cossitt to wife Marieta

LGHS RESIDENT'S ORIGINAL ARTWORK COLLECTION



Portrait by JESSIE MINICH
1940, 429 South Sixth of JOHN
W. PATTERSON who lived at
334 So. 8th.



BOSTROM FARM
Home of William and Mathilda
Bostrom
NW corner of 5th and 31st Street,
La Grange Park in the forest pre-
serve district. This home was a
considered a landmark in its time.



IN THE HARBOR, oil painting done
with palette knife by art teacher
Edith B. Murphey at LTHS, during
the 1920's and 1930's. Donated by
Cynthia Jenner.



Original 1880 charcoal sketches of
CHARLES DICKENS CHARACTERS
by Joseph Henson who lived at 101 W.
Hillgrove in 1892.



7 piece Wedgwood Blue Parlor Set.



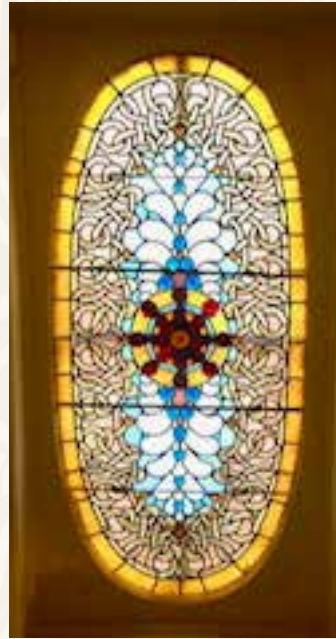
**Eastlake Victorian Settee
Carved walnut frame, re-upholstered in red velvet, button tufted back and arms.
Circa 1900**



**Mandel Clock
Mahogany Waterbury clock with 4 wooden swirls donated by the Mandel family, 315 N La Grange Road, La Grange Park.**



“Goddess Lady” is an Art Nouveau carved wood plant stand that was donated by MaryAnn Sward of La Grange Park.



Stained glass window on the 2nd floor is original to the Vial House



Tintypes donated by June and Joy Spaulding. Tintype is an old style photograph that creates a photographic image on a thin sheet of metal or iron that has been coated with dark lacquer or enamel.



**Remnants from Oak School at
515 N. Kensington, La Grange
Park, before it was razed**



Vintage La Grange Street Lamps



**Original molding from the La Grange Theatre before
the remodel.**

How can we help assure LGAHS collections remain safely archived?



We are consistently optimizing and creating museum storage solutions to maximize space efficiency. Museum collection storage is designed to protect items from light, humidity and temperature fluctuations which is crucial for preservation in the years to come. These storage solutions include specially designed cabinets for artifacts, shelving units, art racks, drawers designed to hold flat documents and maps and archival boxes that are acid-free and chemically stable that provide a protective environment.

We rely totally on donations, membership dues and program fees to sustain the LGAHS and the Vial House. The need for additional exhibition space as well as archival storage has been discussed for decades and continued and increased support from our patrons is needed to sustain our archives and artifact collections. We have been encouraged throughout the years by the generosity and support from our members and community.

We are always proud to support our community by continually deepening our collective understanding of the history of La Grange and La Grange Park. Donations large and small continue to be appreciated. We thank you whole heartedly as YOU remain the champions of our mission. With your continued support, the LGAHS will continue to be a vital and active resource for generations to come.



**SPECIAL RECOGNITION TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONATED
A LARGE NUMBER OF ARTIFACTS AND ARCHIVES
TO OUR COLLECTIONS**

**Edward J. F. Young
Gladys & Ivy Covell
Kevin Allodi
Carol Norling
Rhoda Evans
Dick and Marilyn Vitek
Marita Kingman
Charles and Margaret Mettler
John Murray
June and Joy Spaulding
Marilyn & John Murray
Cynthia Jenner
Marion Giles
Nancy Kenney
Ed Thoele**

**VIAL HOUSE MUSEUM AND ARCHIVE
444 S. LA GRANGE ROAD
708-482-4248
www.lagrangehistory.org
info@lagrangehistory.org**

**MUSEUM HOURS
Wednesday: 9:30 am - 12:00 p.m.
Thursday - Saturday 11:00 am - 2:00 p.m.
By Appointment
Outside these Hours**