

# TPA Quarterly Meeting

## October 5, 2015

Gage Building 7<sup>th</sup> Floor, 18 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago

There was a good turnout on a beautiful autumn evening for the October meeting. 56 total were in attendance, including CTPA members and a few guests.

### CTPA Business Meeting

Donna Primas began the business meeting and announced several upcoming events:

- On Oct 23, there will be a brief opportunity to view original art once on display at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, recently discovered – the Ho-O-Den Japanese panels.
- On October 10-11, Pullman will host an Open House with tours by residents.
- On **Tuesday, December 15** we are invited to see the new exhibit about Greece at the Field Museum.
- **Tuesday, February 23** will be the date of our second annual winter party, which will be strictly social. Many CTPA-ers enjoyed last year's event at Black Finn, having paid a reasonable amount of money for a great outlay of food and a free first-drink.
- Historic caricatures are on display in the Harold Washington Library, street level hallway.
- Sharon Sylvester talked about the first-ever Chicago Architecture Biennial to be held through January. She said the Cultural Center Exhibits are incredible and will continue during the three-month Biennial titled "The State Of The Art Of Architecture." Look also for other exhibits around the city.
- Ed Mazur told us about a Biennial event sponsored by S.C. Johnson in Racine, Wisconsin, home of the famed Frank Lloyd Wright-designed office and research tower. The company is sponsoring **free bus trips to Racine** several days a week!
- Open House Chicago will be held on October 17-18 this year.
- A few CTPA people enjoyed a "test run" of a new tour to be scheduled on several dates in 2016. **The special tours will visit the Board of Trade**, thanks to CTPA member Renee Hills who has a seat there. Only about five people at a time can tour the building and trading floor with Renee, thus requiring several dates depending on how many people sign up for the tours. For those who were on the test run, it was surprising to see such a quiet trading floor, even though we knew that most of the trading is electronic now. There is only one trading room remaining with open outcry. More information will be forthcoming later in the year.
- Our own Terry Hall spoke briefly about the National Federation of Tourist Guides-USA (NFTGA), as she steps down as Treasurer for the national guide organization, and introduced CTPA member Michael Levinson who will be the insurance administrator, a NFTGA appointed position. Michael spoke briefly about renewing insurance for those interested. Donna mentioned that other CTPA members have served the NFTGA in the past, including Beverly Livingston as Treasurer and Esther Banike as President. Holly Jensen will continue to be the CTPA Liability Insurance contact.
- Mention was made of the NFTGA conference to be held in Washington D.C. **January 20-22, 2016**. About six CTPA people have indicated they plan to attend. Wayne Galasek kept us posted on the progress of his Certification Committee.
- Esther Banike, who has devoted five years as a Executive Board Member of the World Federation of Tourist Guides, Esther explained why the WFTGA uses "Tourist Guides" (because a 'tour guide' is a book in many parts of the world). She also told us of her September attendance at a UNWTO conference in Medellin, Colombia, where she was the WFTGA delegate, representing the 80-member countries of the WFTGA.
- Several people passed the CTPA Certified Guide Test written exam. October meetings will help candidates prepare for the slide portion of the test, which some consider more difficult than the written test. Candidates are expected to talk intelligently for several minutes about 10 diverse images of Chicago buildings or sculptures or places.

- After all the announcements, Donna introduced those in attendance at the meeting representing CTPA member companies.
  - Antoinette Gonzales, Aries Charter Transportation
  - Gilbert Longoria, Chicago Tour Company
  - Alice Tell, My Kind of Town
  - Brian Whitaker, Chicagoland Transportation Solutions, Inc.
  - Patrick Steffes, Forgotten Chicago
  - Steve Sandford, Chicago Meetings & More, Inc.
  - Mark Robinson, Big Bus Tours

Donna introduced Bill Host of Roosevelt University who has partnered with us to arrange the beautiful meeting space we enjoy in the Gage Building. Bill had brought a guest from Spain.

Mike Levinson's guest, Ingrid Koepcke from the National Hellenic Museum, was also introduced.

## **THE PROGRAM**

A very personable and attractive **Susan O'Connor Davis** presented the book she authored which was published two years ago, titled "**Chicago's Historic Hyde Park.**" Some members purchased the book offered for sale. It's a substantial contribution to anyone's library, literally! The heft of the well illustrated book tells of the research that went into it. Susan said writing a book is a lonely endeavor, and for her it took seven years. The initial idea for Susan was to pick up where another author had left off, a 1978 book written by Jean Block. However, the editor suggested her endeavor cover the entire 150 years of history of Hyde Park.

Many of us are familiar with the beginnings of this famed Chicago location, but the details O'Connor Davis told us about were fascinating. Hyde Park's founder was Paul Cornell from upstate New York, an area that must have had a direct route to Chicago since so many of our movers and shakers came from upstate New York. Cornell asked advice of Stephen A. Douglas (do we need an introduction?) who suggested he put his money south of the city way down to the Calumet River. Cornell built something called the Hyde Park House on the lakefront near 53<sup>rd</sup> street. It became a magnet for guests, including the Prince of Wales! Houses began to be built out of house pattern books, some square boxes, some Gothic. At 53<sup>rd</sup> and Dorchester was a one-room cottage from an 1859 pattern book. Many houses were built of wood at least until after the Great Chicago Fire.

Many photographs and drawings from the book illustrated Susan's presentation. One image was of a house in the 4700 block of Kimbark, another on Drexel Boulevard. Not long after the fire, houses began to be designed by architects, and the Hyde Park area became known as "The Lake Forest of the South Side." Romanesque architecture was popular, as shown by the Ryerson home at 4851 South Drexel, the McGill residence at 4938 South Drexel, and homes by Henry Ives Cobb in Kenwood, at that time a community within Hyde Park.

In 1889, the City of Chicago annexed many outlying areas, including Hyde Park, after a low turnout allowed the vote annex to succeed. As we know, the area nearby in Jackson Park was chosen for the building of the Columbian Exposition. Other opportunities for growth occurred at the same time. The Illinois Central raised the grade of the railroad tracks, huge hotels were built including in 1892 the Chicago Beach Hotel. Structures for the University of Chicago began to rise, thanks to Rockefeller money on land donated by Marshall Field. The university's planning, however, was inward and Gothic, and professors were encouraged to live on nearby streets. In 1904 a line of "Professors' Row Houses" could be seen. Chicago architects like Holabird & Roche raised their level of recognition by building mansions in the area, and the commissions were lucrative. In 1892, Frank Lloyd Wright designed the "Blossom Residence" on Kenwood, and later the Heller House at 5132 South Woodlawn. O'Connor-Davis hinted that Wright may have enjoyed "a little thing" with Mrs. Heller. Dwight Perkins designed a house at 5711 South Woodlawn, George Maher in 1908 built the "Poppy House," and Pond & Pond architects contributed to the

built grandeur of the neighborhood. Inside the Lauren Apartment Building at 5441-5445 South Hyde Park Boulevard by Fromman & Jebson, is a “Jugendstil” interior with wood carving and arts and crafts décor.

Change came to the Hyde Park area, like any other neighborhood. Large shifts in demographics and overcrowding occurred in what became the “Black Belt,” due to segregation. We were shown an image of a mansion at 5120 South Kenwood surrounded by apartment buildings. Some Drexel Boulevard mansions became used for institutional purposes. Still, building continued, and much celebrated architecture remains, like Temple Isaiah Israel built in 1923, the Piccadilly Theater and Apartments by Rapp & Rapp in 1926, and in 1928 Rockefeller Chapel on the campus of the University of Chicago. However, as the university grew and needed more room for development, many houses were demolished. New building codes affected development. Many people lived in large apartment buildings which were like a home but without the burden of ownership, as the Windmere built in 1924, the Shoreland in 1926, and the Powhatan from 1929.

In terms of housing stock, The Great Depression affected the area. Some buildings had only a 40-year life span, and with no money to rehabilitate, many old buildings fell into disrepair. O’Connor-Davis quoted LeCorbusier in 1937 (*Land of the White Castles*) saying that “Chicago was cut in two.” Suffering restrictive covenants and the infamous “redlining,” people were stuck in poor housing. In the 1940s a movement to permit integration struggled. The famed Hansberry decision\* derived from the Hyde Park restrictive covenants. At the end of WWII, returning veterans filled temporary housing on the south side, old structures were subdivided, some into SROs (single room housing). Creeping blight ensued. Unfortunately, the University of Chicago did not help the outlying community until in 1952 a sexual assault on campus required action. The university established its own internal police force and looked at possibilities for urban renewal, while the only mechanism for urban planners was a suburban-type model.

Some architectural gems continued to be built, like the 1947 Promontory Apartments by Mies Van Der Rohe, the first high-rise “slab” construction. Later, Chicago cleared slum areas and built affordable housing, like Harry Weese’s Lake Village East in 1971. In 1978, the Kenwood area was landmarked because of the collection of historic mansions still standing.

O’Connor-Davis’ presentation was much more entertaining and colorful and delightful than this dull recitation of building addresses! At the conclusion, many people made comments or asked questions. CTPA Candidate member Enid Reiser said she had lived in Hyde Park for 70 years and had memories of the urban renewal period and community conferences which forced the University of Chicago to make changes. Enid lived at 46<sup>th</sup> and Lake Park, two doors down from a Louis Sullivan house.

Judith Randall  
CTPA Co-Secretary

*\*(excerpted from Wikipedia) Hansberry v. Lee dealt with a racially restrictive covenant that barred African Americans from purchasing or leasing land in a Chicago neighborhood. The covenant had been upheld in a prior class action lawsuit, which had included Lee, along with all the other neighborhood landowners, as members of the class. The defense in the present case argued that Hansberry could not contest the covenant because it had already been deemed valid by the courts in the prior lawsuit. The US Supreme Court disagreed and held that since some of the neighborhood landowners (46%) comprising the class of the prior lawsuit did not support the restrictive covenant, the previous decision that the covenant was valid could not apply to all members of that class. In other words, it was erroneous to allow the 54% of neighborhood landowners who had supported the restrictive covenant to represent the interests of the 46% who were against it. Therefore, the Supreme Court held that the restrictive covenant could be contested in court again, even though some of the parties involved may have been included in the prior class of neighborhood landowner.*