THE GATE

Libertyville-Mundelein Historical Society Meeting
March 18, 2013
Location
Outline

- Legend
  - What happened?
  - What have people seen?

- The Record
  - Pre-1925
  - Doddridge Farm, Katherine Kreigh Budd Memorial Home for Children, 1925-1936
  - Boy Scouts of America, Camp Doddridge, 1936-39
  - Catholic Youth Organization, 1940-1982
  - Lake County Forest Preserve District, 1982-
Legends – What happened?
Legends – What happened?

#1
- Entrance to girls finishing school early 1950’s
- Principal mental breakdown
- Killed 4 students and put heads on metal posts of The Gate

#2
- Entrance to summer camp or asylum
- Camp counselor or mad man escaped from asylum killed 4 children while in bed or
- A nun killed children at a summer camp

#3
- Entrance to asylum
- Ward attendant went insane and murdered 4 charges

According to legend, soon after local residents and officials razed buildings

“The killer was caught and, presumably, imprisoned or executed, the trauma shattered the school, which at once closed and which stood empty for years in the clearing beyond the trees. After talk of a ‘haunted’ school and memories the old building recalled became unbearable to residents and officials, a movement was begun to tear down the school and turn the area into a nature preserve.

This push for the preserve was a great success, and soon, it seemed, all traces of St. Francis School for Girls were gone from the site. The new preserve was christened ‘Independence Grove’ as a tribute to the survivors of the massacre who, through the demolition of the school, had been freed from the physical reminders of that awful night.”

Legends – What people have seen

- Blood dripping from iron posts
- Stroke of midnight on anniversary of murders (Halloween) phantom heads appear on the fence posts
- Headless nun roams the woods
- Ghost of a small boy spotted staring out from behind the iron posts
- Residents in the surrounding area describe seeing figures in 1930s era clothing either in their homes or the nearby farm fields
- Apparitions, eerie screams, mysterious sounds

http://lhsdoi.com/content/haunted-places-lake-county
The Record, pre-1925

- **William Boardman**
  - Born in Fayette, New York in 1805
  - Came to Little Fort (Waukegan) 1846
  - About 1846 purchased the property in Libertyville Township
    - Lived with his wife Betsy Ann Bockoven (1815-1854), their four children, and father-in-law
    - 1850 farm valued at $6,000 (approximately $160,000 today)
    - 1860 farm value had doubled to $12,000 ($296,000 today)

Source: Lake County Discovery Museum, Lake County Archives
The Record, pre-1925

- Youngest son, George Boardman (1848-1915) enlisted with the 17th Illinois Cavalry in January 1864
  - Occupation was listed as farmer
  - Mustered out as a private in November 1865
- William Boardman died August 30, 1864, age 59
  - Buried with his wife and three of the children at the Lakeside Cemetery
- Property sold sometime after 1864
  - George Boardman married and moved to Allen County, Indiana

Source: Lake County Discovery Museum, Lake County Archives
Solomon Kelsey

Born in Osego County, N.Y. 1825

Came west in 1853 and settled in Lake County
- 1860 census: Warren Twp
- 1870 census: Avon
- 1880 census: Libertyville

Married twice
- Helen A. Monroe (d. 1865), one daughter
- Lucy A. Thayer (d. 1903), no children

Died 1906
Doddridge Farm, 1925-1936
Katherine Kreigh Budd Memorial Home for Children

- Pioneer in extension of electricity to rural areas
- Trustee/executive committee member of Century of Progress Exposition 1933-34
- Founder of Chicago Boys Club
- Director/executive committee member American Red Cross
- President/director John Crerar library
- Trustee DePaul University, University of Chicago Cancer Research Foundation
- Britton I. Budd Medal for the Saving of Human Life
- CHA Britton Budd Apartments

Katherine Doddridge Kreigh Budd (1863-1925)

- Born in Illinois
- Married to Britton I. Budd c.1900
- Known for her “intellectual attainments”
- Treasurer of the Guild of the Associated Sister of Mary of the Episcopal Church
- Known for her work with poor and crippled children
- Died Jan. 18, 1925 after a protracted illness

1900 census
Chicago Daily Tribune, Jan 19, 1925, p. 12
Doddridge Farm, 1925-1936
Katherine Kreigh Budd Memorial Home for Children

- 1925: Budd acquires 200 acres along the Des Plaines River north of Libertyville
  - Plans to build summer “home”/camp for orphans of St. Mary’s orphanage, 2822 Jackson Blvd., Chicago
  - Buildings to be completed by Spring 1926
- 1926: 10 cottages will be ready by June 25
  - Hope to have swimming pool completed as well

Libertyville Independent, Sept. 17, 1925
Chicago Daily Tribune, Mar 3, 1926, p.29
Doddridge Farm, 1925-1936
Katherine Kreigh Budd Memorial Home for Children

Dedication June 27, 1926 – 15 cottages and temporary buildings completed

Chicago Daily Tribune, June 28, 1926, p.3
Doddridge Farm, 1925-1936
Katherine Kreigh Budd Memorial Home for Children

DODDRIDGE FARM
Dedicated June 27, 1926

Doddridge Farm, dedicated for all time to the use and care of children, is the realization of the life work of Katharine Doddridge Kreigh Budd.

From early girlhood, when she became an Associate of the Sisters of St. Mary [Episcopal], until her death on January 18, 1925, Mrs. Budd never faltered in her devotion to the work of the Sisters among the poor.

Two hundred acres, a large portion heavily wooded, following the winding banks of the Des Plaines river, form the site of Doddridge Farm. There are a total of fifteen buildings, erected for the special purpose of housing and caring for children. The buildings will accommodate 165 children.

In addition to the dormitories, the group of buildings includes a dining hall, chapel, recreation hall, bath house, infirmary, Sisters’ house, rectory, and buildings for housing the employees. There is a large outdoor swimming pool, and a playground equipped with swings, slides and other playground apparatus. An outdoor chapel, with an attractive stone altar, is a distinctive feature of the grounds.

The children from St. Mary’s Home, Chicago, girls ranging from 5 to 14 years of age, orphans, half orphans, or children without homes, were guests at Doddridge Farm during the summer of 1926.
Doddridge Farm, 1925-1936
Katherine Kreigh Budd Memorial Home for Children
Doddridge Farm, 1925-1936
Katherine Kreigh Budd Memorial Home for Children
Doddridge Farm, 1930-1936

- Annual retreat location for Episcopal clergymen
- 1931 – opened as emergency relief home for destitute children and families
- 1934 – loaned to Illinois Emergency Relief Commission for summer use as a camp for convalescent women on relief rolls
  - Women stay at least one month and must do about 2 hours of work each day to maintain camp

Chicago Daily Tribune, Feb 1, 1931, p.F2
Chicago Daily Tribune, June 24, 1934, p.4
1934 – Charles Taft II speaks at annual retreat

- Taft an Episcopal lay worker
- “The greatest weapon against them [radical political philosophies in Europe] is our Christian religion.”
- Called on Christian men to combat radical tendencies through church and religious activities
1936 agreement to lease Doddridge Farm to Boy Scouts of America, rent free, until January 1, 1938, then Boy Scouts to have option to renew for another 10 years.

Episcopal Bishop Stewart “…The trustees therefore decide to forego the use of Doddridge Farm for diocesan activities in order to meet a pressing need in a broader field.”
Boy Scouts, Camp Doddridge, 1936-1939

- 18 buildings with running water and “all modern sanitary facilities”
- Trustees are improving and preparing property
- Scouts will add tent equipment for several hundred boys
- May 1937 – St. Luke’s Episcopal Church (Chicago) first unit in city to register for a summer camping period at Camp Doddridge
- 1938 – swimming pool, 15 screen tents, 10 cabins, large recreation hall, 150 volume library
- Oct 1938 – Boy Scout Pow Wow – Rally of 1000 boys

Chicago Daily Tribune, Aug 23, 1936, P.W6
Chicago Daily Tribune, Aug 14, 1938, p.SW2
Chicago Daily Tribune, Oct 2, 1938, p.N4
Local Girl Scouts pictured above as they were taking their swimming lesson in the pool at the Dodridge Farm on Tuesday of this week are, from left to right, Joan Olson, Nancy Simmons, Barbara Gaddis, Linda Meyer, Doranne Penney and Mary Eva Lightbody. The annual two-week period of swimming and diving instruction for girls of local girl scout troops began on Monday of this week under supervision of Red Cross instructors.
Episcopal Diocese sells land to Catholic Youth Organization

“...resources of the Episcopal diocese did not permit the farm’s full use. He [Episcopal Bishop Stewart] explained that the CYO with its thousands of members would fully utilize the farm’s facilities.”

Chicago Daily Tribune, Jan 4, 1940, p17.
“Have acquired beautiful site with several buildings near Chicago. Will you arrange to start work at earliest convenience?”

--telegram from Bishop Bernard Sheil to Grail Training Center, Amsterdam, December 30, 1939 in reference to Doddridge farm
The Ladies of the Grail, 1940-1943

- The Grail began in Holland in 1921 as a Catholic lay organization, called The Women of Nazareth
- Founded by Jesuit priest, Jacques van Ginneken (1877-1949)
  - From beginning women directed the Grail
  - Staged massive, colorful rallies and enacted religious dramas
  - Working with young women in Holland, England, and Germany
- In May 1940, two Dutch Grail women, Lydwine van Kersbergen (1904-1998) and Joan Overboss (1910-1969), came to the United States at the invitation of Chicago’s archbishop
- They began their work as the Grail at Doddridge Farm, a summer camp in Libertyville, Illinois

The Ladies of the Grail, 1940-1943

Figure 1. Joan Overboss, Lydwine van Kersbergen, and Mary Louise Tully in a planning session at Doddridge Farm, Libertyville, Illinois, September 1940.

First task assigned was to prepare for the arrival of 500 refugee children from war-torn Europe.
War refugees

Independent Register, July 2, 1940, p.1
War refugees

- Dance fundraiser organized

http://calumet412.com/post/18738409546/the-boulevard-room-at-the-stevens-hotel-now-the

http://www.idaillinois.org/cdm/singleitem/collection/lakecou02z/id/397/rec/1
The Ladies of the Grail, 1940-1943

- No refugee children were forthcoming
- Sheil changed task to summer camps for children from inner city
  - Bishop volunteered for $5000 budget
  - Grail agreed to provide staff at no salary
  - Camp to open July 7, 1941
  - Multi-cultural group of children
- 20 boys from a Catholic institution to take care of landscaping under charge of CYO staff

“Laid out as a little village with chapel at one end, dining hall in the middle, the assembly hall and swimming pool at the other end, dormitories in between, all nicely landscaped and connected with winding paths.”

“Volunteers, under Grail direction had painted the buildings in bright colors, yellow, blue, green. All the colors of the rainbow adorned the rafters in the Assembly Hall.”

The Ladies of the Grail, 1940-1943

- 20 girls and 5 leaders in each of the cottages
- Each camping group stays 2 weeks
- Must pass both medical and dental exam to attend
- Part of budget used to supply needed clothes, ex bathing suits, that campers might not have
- Kids to help with camp chores
- Plans to have gardens and a cow “if plans work out”
- 5 dorms, dining hall, green and orange reception room, chapel
- Chapel center aisle flanked by pews and kneeling boards, 2 little, old-fashioned reed organs at either side of entrance
- Near the chapel, “built up upon a shrine-like stone structure is the Angelus bell” –rings for morning, noon and evening prayer
The Ladies of the Grail, 1940-1943

Buildings and tasks named according to the Grail legend

- Reception Building = Round Table
- Dormitories = Galahad, Percival, Gawain, and Gareth
- Playing field = Camelot
- Swimming pool = Swan
- Handicraft center = Magic Grove
- Garden = Promised Land
- Leaders in the dorms = Pages in the Service of the King
- Leaders in activities = Jesters
- Activities program = In Quest of Adventure
- Bedtime story hour = Witching Hour
- Cleaning = Slaying the Dragon

Doddrige farm, five miles southeast of Libertyville, which is being made ready for reception of European refugee children. Eighteen buildings have been prepared as dormitories for 500 children. Arrows indicate some of buildings. (Story on page 3.)
Once summer camp was over, small group stayed at Doddridge

Grail course at Christmas 1941, 2 week program in June 1943, second series of summer camps – 400 children from Chicago

2 week Rural Life School for young women with Professor Willis Nutting of Notre Dame, Mortimer Adler of U of Chicago, and Emerson Hynes

Winter 1943 – buildings had been built for summer, no foundations, space heaters that burnt oil
The Ladies of the Grail, 1940-1943

- Problems between CYO and The Ladies of the Grail
- Summer camps not a work which the Grail would have chosen
- 3 levels of activity going on at Doddridge Farm
  - Camp program
  - Apostolic training for counselors
  - Novitiate for Ladies of the Grail
  - Bishop Sheil never explicitly disagreed with Grail goals, often he simply ignored them

One of the first disagreements had been over initial repairs.

- Camp had been vacant a long time & was dirty and dilapidated.
- Repairs mismanaged according to Grail.
- Boys to help with work were also a hindrance - boys from “Our Lady of Missions” went joy riding in visitors’ cars, started a fire in the bath house, damaged farm truck, mowing machine.
- Untrustworthy caretaker (tried to sell tools from the farm in Libertyville).

CYO undermining Grail’s authority over camp program.

- CYO encouraged children and counselors to ignore Grail rules.
- Grail too strict and pious with regard to dress, smoking & drinking.

The Ladies of the Grail, 1940-1943

- Difficulties with mixed gender
  - Acres of grounds, hard to supervise keeping boys and girls separate
  - Brothers in charge allowed the boys to hang around the dormitories and take older girls for walks in the woods
  - Junior counselor stayed out in the woods with a boy until after midnight
    - Grail sent her home
    - Bishop Sheil disagreed saying The Grail didn’t understand American youth

- In spring 1943, Bishop Sheil announced Doddridge would be used by armed forces for recreation then turned in to a boys camp for summer 1943

- Time for Grail to go – moved to Childerley (country estate near Wheeling) for summer

- Moved to permanent home “Grailville” outside of Cincinnati, OH – grand opening July 17, 1944

CYO Takes Over

- CYO Boys Camp
  1943-1954
- Chicago Catholic Charities took over management of grounds 1955
- 1956-1973 conducted St. Francis Camp for Boys

St. Francis Boys Camp pamphlet, 1961.

ST. FRANCIS BOY'S CAMP

CONDUCTED BY:
FRANCISCAN FRIARS

MEMBER OF:
NATIONAL CATHOLIC CAMPING ASSOCIATION

PHONE NUMBER: Empire 2-3128

LIBERTYVILLE, ILLINOIS
St. Francis Camp for Boys, 1956-1973

- “To build men for Christ through play”
- 2 resident priests, director and chaplain
- 12 Seminarians serve as counselors and program advisors
- Brothers cook and first aid
- 94 acres, 40 are wooded, approx. 30 buildings
- 5 buildings living quarters, boys grouped by age
- Camp chapel, dining hall, infirmary, assembly hall, craft shop and main office
- Catholic boys 8 to 13
- 2 week periods June 16-Aug 17
St. Francis Camp for Boys, 1956-1973

- **Daily routine**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A.M.</th>
<th>P.M.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7:25 Rising</td>
<td>12:30 Rest period</td>
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<tr>
<td>8:00 Holy Mass</td>
<td>2:00 Second Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:40 Raising of Colors</td>
<td>3:30 Canteen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:50 Breakfast</td>
<td>4:00 Third Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 Cabin clean-up</td>
<td>5:30 Rosary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:45 Inspection</td>
<td>5:50 Lowering of Colors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 First Activity</td>
<td>6:00 Supper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 Clean-up before Lunch</td>
<td>7:30 Evening Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 Lunch</td>
<td>9:15 Night Prayers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:30 Lights Out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

St. Francis Boys Camp pamphlet, 1961.
Activities: swimming, first aid, crafts, nature lore, archery, athletics, outdoor life, camp outs – make belts, wallets, model planes and ships, work with tin craft, lanyard craft, wire craft, wood craft

CRAFTS
Faced with the variety of things to make, craft becomes an activity for the camper of which there is hardly enough. On hand at the craft shop are belts, wallets, model planes and ships, tin-craft, lanyard craft, wire craft, and wood craft. A qualified counselor is always on hand and ready to give helpful and encouraging advice to the boys in their creative attempts.

NATURE LORE
Special concern is taken to interest each boy in the wonders of nature. Supervised studies and nature trips are conducted each week.
St. Francis Camp for Boys, 1956-1973

- Nature museum built up by campers
- Softball, volleyball, basketball, field meet at end of each session

**ARCHERY**

The boys not only learn how to shoot properly with a bow and arrow but they are also anxious to compete with one another in getting the most bulls-eye, points or hits. The plan formed by the instructors presents an opportunity for all the boys to receive some award which will encourage them in their endeavors. The plan includes the following: for the boys staying at camp two weeks there is a contest; for those who stay a month, a Course and Tournament; for those who stay more than a month, a Course, Tournament and Archery Show. At the Archery Show they are able to display their skill to their visitors. The Course is sponsored by the National Field Archery Association.

**ATHLETICS**

Softball, volley-ball and basketball are part of the athletic program of the camp. To complete the program a Field Meet is had at the end of each period.
St. Francis Camp for Boys, 1956-1973

A suggested allowance to cover a boy’s canteen and crafts needs is $2.00-$2.50 a week. This sum is to be deposited with the CAMPER’S CABIN COUNSELOR. Unspent money will be refunded.

HEALTH AND ACCIDENT INSURANCE — Health and accident insurance is included in the camp fee. But minor medications dispensed by the camp nurse are not included in the insurance coverage. A small charge is made for such medications, to be paid at the end of the period.

Each camper must have a physical examination by a doctor not earlier than 6 days before coming to camp. No camper will be admitted to camp without a filled-in medical report. The camp assumes no responsibility for accidents and illness.

LAUNDRY — There are no laundry facilities at camp for the washing of boy’s clothing. To prevent loss, it is advisable to mark all clothes and personal articles. The camp will not assume responsibility for articles left at camp.

WHAT TO BRING (Check as you pack)

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE
(filled in by a doctor)

BEDDING
- 2 blankets
- 2 sheets per week
- pillow cases

PERSONAL NEEDS
- face towels
- bath towels
- wash cloths
- bars of soap
- tooth paste
- tooth brush
- 1 plastic drinking glass
- comb or hair brush
- handkerchiefs

CLOTHES
- jeans or slacks
- polo or T-shirts
- fresh change of socks for each day
- comfortable shoes
- underwear
- warm jacket or sweater (important)
- cap
- swimming trunks
- pajamas

INCIDENTALS
- rosary
- flashlight
- stationery
- laundry bag (Recommended)
- rain clothing (Recommended)
- personal sports equipment
St. Francis Camp for Boys, 1956-1973
St. Francis Camp for Boys, 1956-1973

- Closed 1973
- Aging facilities
- Shortage of capital funds
- Decreasing staff due to drop in seminary enrollment
Camp St. Francis, 1974-1979

- Reopened 1974 as Camp St. Francis for girls age 6 to 13 on 89 of the acres originally purchased – smaller scale than boys camp
- Mixture of inner city and suburban girls
- Functioning on shoestring budget
- October 1979 camp closed and demolished

Lake County Forest Preserve, 1982-

Parcel A – Acquired by LCFPD 1974

Parcel B – acquired November 1982 from Catholic Charities

1974 Plat of Survey
1979 Plat

Acquired by LCFPD 1979
St. Francis Woods - Lake County Forest Preserve

- Volunteer Stewards since 1985
  - Don Coate 1985-1995
  - Tom and Ethel Tincher, 1995-

- Volunteer workdays year round
  - Winter - cut buckthorn/ clear brush
  - Summer - pull garlic mustard
  - Fall 2012 – planted 300 native trees and shrubs with corporate Volunteer workdays last fall

- [http://www.lcfpd.org](http://www.lcfpd.org) – Get Involved ➔ Volunteer ➔ Habitat Restoration Volunteer
St. Francis Woods - Lake County Forest Preserve
What about the legend? – The Watchman

- Edward F. Thomas, “Negro”, 44 years old, watchman at CYO camp at Doddridge Farm
- Sept 12, 1943 arrested early morning in auto NE of Libertyville
  - Carrying a loaded revolver and a flashlight
  - Accompanied by “white man”, John Ratowski, 55, farm hand
- 11:30am refused to eat
- Escaped before 12:15pm
- 6 ft tall, 180 lbs climbed on bed, stripped away a bit of corrugated ceiling and went into attic at Lake County Jail in Waukegan
- Went into sheriff's residence next door and out a window
- Sherriff had been sitting in adjoining room

Chicago Daily Tribune, Sept 13, 1943, p.20
What about the legend? – The Watchman

Lake County Circuit Court, judgment docket Oct 4, 1943
Thomas in court Oct 11
Indictment for robbery and robbery with a gun
  Charge August 28, 1943 – armed robbery against Mitchell Kane, took watch, ring, money
  August 28, 1943 – robbery of Florence Kmet – railroad ticket, fountain pen, money
  Sept 6, 1943 – robbery of Henry Suhling – 21 rubles
Nov 14, 1943, Chicago Daily Tribune

Edward F. Thomas and Percy Dawson (54) complain about service

“These two fellows...regard themselves as star boarders at a summer resort...you should hear them scream for fresh sheets and real cream in their coffee.”

They were the only 2 inmates in the jail at the time

Ratio of jailors to inmates was 13 to 1

Lowest population at the Lake County Jail in 50 years
Boy, 2½, Drowns in River; Dog Shows Way to Body

Glen Bottorff, 2½, was found drowned in the Des Plaines river yesterday after more than a score of persons had begun a search for him. Lady, the boy’s German shepherd dog, eventually led searchers to his master’s body.

The boy, son of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Bottorff, who live on Meadow Grove farm, 3 miles northeast of Libertyville, was rection of the river, a half mile distant.

The river had not been searched because the family said Glen had had trouble with his feet and could not walk long distances.

The body was found floating face down in 10 feet of water.

- May 1961
- Glen Bottorff, 2 ½ drowned in river adjacent to St. Francis Boys grounds
- Son of Mrs. & Mr. Paul Bottorff, Meadow Grove farm, just south of Doddridge
- Bottorff, president of Trim, Inc., electronics manufacturers, 400 W. Lake St., Libertyville
What about the legend? - Murder

- June 2002: Dog unit discovers woman’s remains at Camp St. Francis preserve
- Identified as Graciela Guijarro of Waukegan
- Husband, Ruben Contreras, horse trainer at Daybreak Farm Stables charged with murder
- Spent six years on the run in Mexico until found and extradited in 2008
- Set to go to trial February 2013
When did the legend start?

- Best guess — early-mid 1980's
  - Buildings demolished 1979
  - Not mentioned in a 1983 Pioneer Press article about local ghost stories
  - Big stone gate, with a drive that leads to nowhere
The Legend Lives On

- 1999 – After seeing “The Blair Witch Project” 5 teens went to The Gate to investigate
- Woke up nearby homeowners and received $75 tickets for being in forest preserve after hours
- October 2010 LHS Drops of Ink article
- 3 patron questions at Cook Library in past 4 months

http://lhsdoi.com/content/haunted-places-lake-county
The Legend Lives On

Pumpkins thrown over The Gate, Nov 2012
READY FOR A COOL PLUNGE

Swimming Pool, c. 1926
INTERIOR OF BATH HOUSE

Bath House, c. 1926
Recreation Hall with water tower, c. 1926
The Gate, c. 1926
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