



THE GLENVIEW LANTERN™

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The Kennicott House now stands 10-inches tall, and the mad scientists responsible were last seen at Glenbrook South. But they didn't stop after only one experiment.

The Grove Interpretive Center. The Wetland Greenhouse. The Blacksmith Shop. The Grove Schoolhouse. The Native American Longhouse. Even the Redfield Estate. Since the beginning of summer, all 13 buildings at The Grove have been shrunk down to the size of gingerbread houses.

So how will Glenview residents enjoy The Grove Folk Fest this weekend?

designing them.

It all started back in 1836, 63 years before Glenview was incorporated, when John Kennicott claimed several hundred acres of land in mostly undeveloped Northfield Township. The only physician for miles, he raised his family on the property, which he named The Grove for the abundance of trees.

Robert Kennicott, John's second son, emerged as a renowned naturalist over his lifetime. An avid collector of plants and animals, he spent his youth exploring the plants and animals at The Grove, often sending specimens to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., to give its researchers a glimpse of the ecosystem on the frontier. His major accomplishments include identifying dozens of plants and animals; co-founding the Chicago Academy of Sciences in 1857; and taking part in the Western Union Telegraph Expedition, a \$3-million undertaking (equivalent to \$46.9-million in 2017) that played a crucial role in the United States' purchase of Alaska by providing valuable data on the territory in the mid-1860s.

Robert Kennicott died of heart failure during the expedition, but his legacy didn't. Alaska's Kennicott Glacier was named in his honor, and his accomplishments set the stage for the most successful referendum in Glenview's history more than a century after his death.

In 1973, when a real-estate company attempted to purchase a portion of The Grove's land for a residential development project, the Save The Grove Committee successfully lobbied the National Park Service to list the site as a National Historic Landmark to block the sale and consequent construction. Then, in 1974, Glenview residents voted 11-1 to allow the Glenview Park District to purchase and maintain the land.

In 1976, The Save the Grove Committee became the Grove Heritage Association, which has led efforts to maintain and grow the site to this very day.

The Grove now offers several historical, educational and environmental opportunities. Guests can learn about native plants and animals at the Interpretive Center year-round, enjoy hands-on programs and workshops for all ages, and walk nearly three miles of nature trails. The historic buildings, including the Kennicott House and the original one-room schoolhouse, are open to the public seasonally. The site also hosts multiple grade-school and high-school field trips each year.

"There are a lot of places in the state that have beautiful, old mansions owned by people who developed a widget that made them a lot of money," said Judy Beck, vice president of the Grove Heritage Association. "But we have something that's a double treat. Not only is [The Grove] a fantastic natural area, it's also a historic home that holds the story of a family that was really involved in settling the state. ... There are oak trees growing there that were growing when John [Kennicott] arrived in 1936. That is incredible, to have such a natural landscape so close to such an urban part of the world."

But not everyone in the community is aware of the site, hidden in a pocket of trees just south of West Lake Avenue with only one small entrance on Milwaukee Avenue.

So when Beck, a former high-school biology teacher, heard about a group of GBS students who were creating prosthetic arms for amputees, she realized Glenview's newest scientists could help preserve the memory of Glenview's first naturalist.

"I thought it would be wonderful if we could have, at the library or at Folk Fest, models of each historic building so more people ... [could] see what we have here in our own backyard," she said. "So I went to the GBS directory and found [engineering teacher] Mike Sinde and gave him a call. Luckily, he was interested."

During the Spring semester, Sinde and his Introduction to Engineering Design — a freshman-level course that explores design process, mathematical statistics, geometry, digital 3-D modeling and reverse engineering — headed to The Grove with ladders, tape measure and cameras to capture the dimensions of each structure. The Grove's maintenance department eventually found the blueprints, but summer hit before the students could begin printing the buildings.

"It was a very ambitious project and a great, real-world experience to measure all the buildings for the 3-D models," Sinde said. "Some of those buildings took a lot of time — inputting all the measurements and drawing it all on a computer."

"There were about 20 of them with a bunch of equipment," said Beck, who showed the students around the site during their first visit. "I think they were thinking that they would be working on foursquare-style buildings, but they're all historic buildings with a lot of quirks and indentations and beautiful windows. It was a really good opportunity for them to realize how difficult the project would be."

In total, the pair spent nearly 50 hours — working in three- or four-hour segments when GBS was open for summer school — designing 10 of the 13 buildings. But as the new school year began and Riley left for the University of Michigan, Solonko organized a group of seven students to finish the last three buildings — the Program Barn, Interpretive Center and Redfield Estate — before Folk Fest, where the models will be on display, on Sunday, Oct. 1, at The Grove. Mitch Ransdell, a maintenance worker and Redfield Estate caretaker at The Grove, even painted the models to more resemble the actual buildings.

“I took one of the models to our last Grove Heritage Association meeting and everyone was really excited,” Beck said.

Solonko, who plans to major in computer science in college, believes his 3-D printing skills improved during the project, and he’s open to pursuing similar ventures “if the community requires it.”

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GBS students use 3-D printer to replicate The Grove | The Glenview Lantern