

||| GLENVIEW

# Dine with the Kennicotts, original settlers of Glenview

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For an evening of dinner and outdoor theater, the Glenview Park District is inviting the public to learn more about the area's most prominent, historical family.

Dinner with the Kennicotts is Sept. 6 at The Grove nature and education center, 1421 Milwaukee Ave., where park district employees will perform a 40-minute play portraying the Kennicott family in the pavilion.

The dinner includes starters and beverages in the Kennicott house, a buffet dinner at the Redfield Estate and interaction with the actors.

Horticulturalist and medical doctor John Kennicott brought his family to Glenview from New Orleans in 1836.

They lived in a log cabin until he built his home in 1856 for his family.

Kennicott's son, Robert, was a noted naturalist and explorer who founded the Chicago Society Academy of Science in 1956 and served on the Illinois Natural History Society.

"We want to tell the story of what a wonderful place The Grove has become," said Beryl Bills, treasurer of The Grove Heritage Association.

"Our intent is to expose people to this area and show how important it is," she said.

Bills pointed out the Kennicott's farm grew to 880 acres, but today it was down to 123 due to commercial and residential development.

"We need to protect The Grove for future generations," said Chris Van Voorhis, Grove program supervisor.

The Grove was designated a National Historic Landmark by the U.S. Department of the Interior in 1976, and it is on the



Elizabeth Kopp helped research a play about the Kennicott family in 1850s Glenview. | TODD SHIELDS/SUN-TIMES MEDIA

National Registry of Historic Places.

The center draws nearly 200,000 people a year, including casual visitors, school groups, day camps, business meetings, college classes, weddings and private parties.

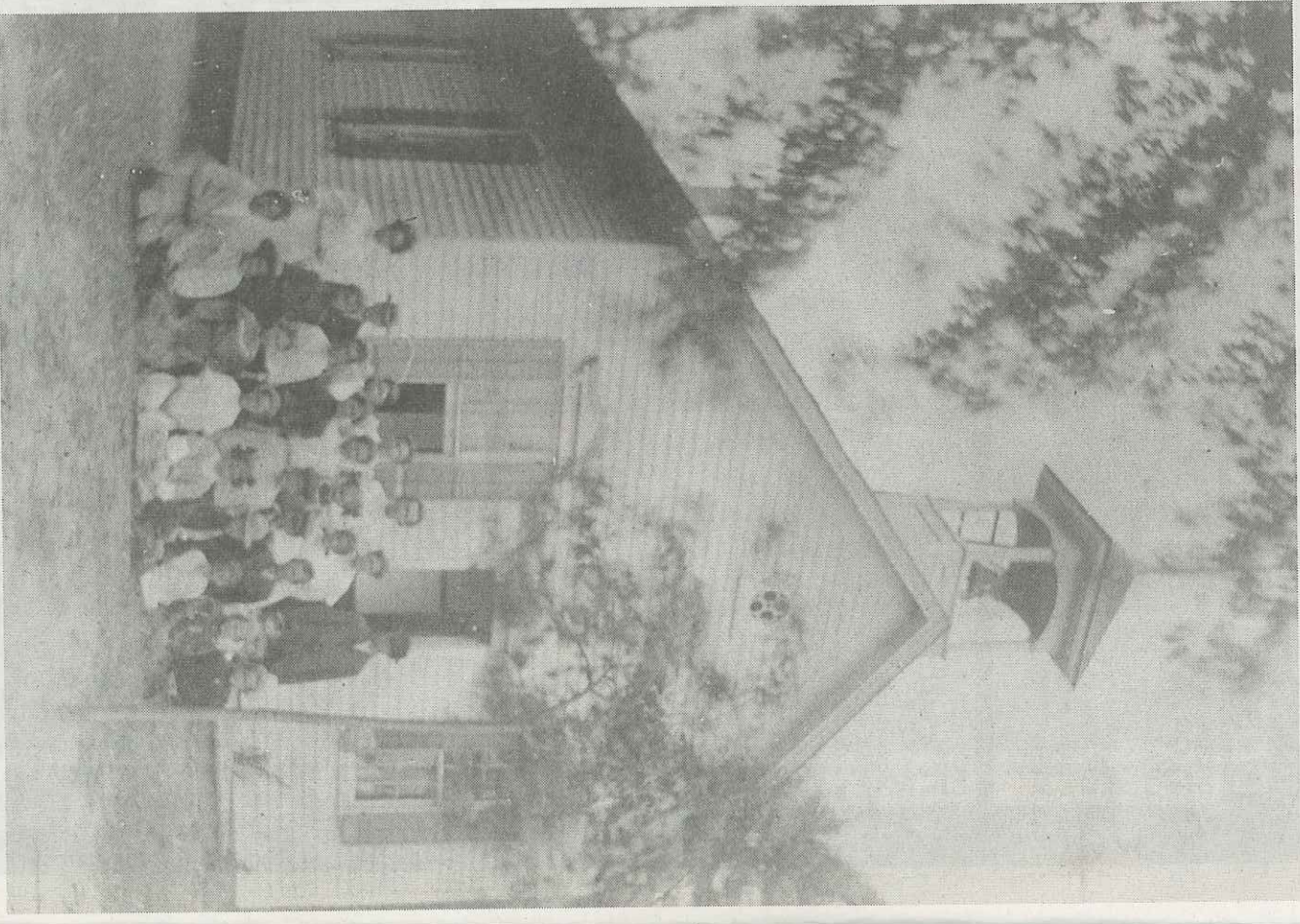
Elizabeth Kopp was one of the park district employees who researched and wrote the evening's play, titled "We are the Kennicotts."

Kopp said Kennicott's daughter, Alice, was married to a battlefield surgeon for the Union Army in the Civil War, during which Alice traveled with him.

"Alice wrote many letters home to her mother, Mary Kennicott, describing the war, food recipes and what the army camps were cooking.

"She also worked on a hospital ship for injured soldiers and she roomed with Mrs. Ulysses S. Grant, the wife of the Union General and future U.S. president," Kopp said, adding 2,800 pages of Kennicott family letters have been archived.

"The letters were observations of family life here in the mid-

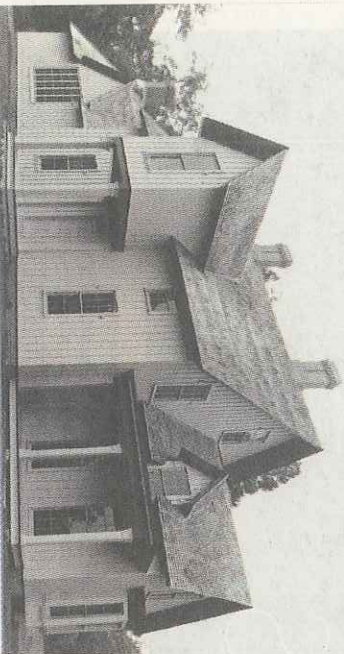


Sitting on the porch, Mrs. Mary Kennicott (center in black) with her daughter Cora Kennicott Redfield (seated to her right) and and Alice Kennicott Reilly is to her left. | COURTESY THE GROVE ARCHIVES, GLENVIEW PARK DISTRICT

1850s," she said.

"The land here was an oak and hickory savanna and people had their own gardens, hunted and attended to fruit orchards," Van Voorhis said.

Dinner with the Kennicotts is 6:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sept. 6 at The Grove. For ticket information, call (847) 299-6096 or register at Park Center, 2400 Chestnut Ave., Glenview.



The Kennicott home in Glenview | COURTESY THE GROVE, GLENVIEW PARK DISTRICT