



EAST ON CENTRAL

A Journal of Arts and Letters from Highland Park, Illinois

2019 HP150 Persona Poetry Project

What is the HP150 Persona Poetry Project? 2019 marks the City of Highland Park's Sesquicentennial or 150th Anniversary of incorporation. Highland Park Poetry & *East on Central* are collaborating to create an evening of poetry celebrating the community's history through personal portraits across the years. Time period may extend beyond the 150 years of Highland Park's incorporation to include Native, early explorer, pioneer and settler perspectives. Music performance and visual arts may also be incorporated. Thus, we seek submissions of 15 - 20 persona poems from local poets.



Who may participate: Amateurs, semi-professionals, professionals who live, work or study in Highland Park, Illinois. Former residents of Highland Park, Illinois are also invited to submit.

What is a Persona Poem? A persona, from the Latin for mask, is a character taken on by a poet to speak in a first-person poem. Each poem is to capture a moment of Highland Park history as told from the perspective of a resident (*either fictional or based on an actual person*). A good example of this is Marjorie Rissman's poem *Witness #3: Coroner's Inquest*, written from the point of view of a local boy who climbs in the Stupey Cabin window and discovers the body of a murder victim. Rissman used an actual historic event but crafted a fictional persona to share the narrative (*copy of poem attached*).



What is the timeline for this project?

- **October 4, 2018** - Participating poets are asked to submit a **preliminary statement of intent**. This will help organizers anticipate gaps in the history. Send email to jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org indicating the following – what event or person you plan to write about including approximate year or decade.
- **January 15, 2019 – Deadline for Poem Submissions** – This will allow for selection of final poems and shaping work into a dramatic presentation to be performed by ARTicuLIT Readers Theatre. Selected poets will be notified on or before March 1st.
- **APRIL 2019** – Selected poems to be published on the Muses' Gallery at www.HighlandParkPoetry.org. Performance in April TBD.

How do Poets Participate?

- **Research Highland Park History** – included is a suggested list of events, people, or topics and resources for your search. The poet is responsible for conducting own research.
- **Commitment Statement** – as mentioned above, program coordinators ask poets to send a statement of intent. This way we might avoid duplication of subjects and gaps in the overall picture of the community.
- **Poem Submission & Entry Form** – Submit poem and entry form either electronically or by U.S. Mail.
 - **Via Electronic Submission:** Send poem as text in the body of an e-mail or as a .doc or .pdf attachment to: Jennifer@highlandparkpoetry.org. Please put "2019 Persona Poetry" in the subject line of your e-mail.
 - **Submissions by U.S. Mail:** Send poem(s), completed/signed Entry/Release form to: Highland Park Poetry c/o Jennifer Dotson, 376 Park Avenue, Highland Park, IL 60035

How will poems be selected?

Poetry submissions will be reviewed & selected by special committee including representatives from *East on Central*, Highland Park Poetry and ARTicuLIT Readers Theatre.



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2019 HP150 Persona Poetry Entry Form

Poet's Name _____

Email Address _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

Poem Title(s) _____

Connection to Highland Park's History _____

Has work been previously published? ____ Yes ____ No

If Yes, please indicate where & when _____

Submissions:

- Should express the writer's experiences, thoughts or feelings related to Highland Park's history and should be written in the form of a persona poem
- Previously published works are accepted but please indicate where and when the work appeared
- Original poetry of 80 lines or fewer.

Release Form: Submissions must include a copy of the following completed form indicating your acknowledgement that (1) your submission is original and is not a copy or derivative of any other work and (2) Highland Park Poetry and *East on Central* have your irrevocable permission, without restriction, to use your work in original form or reproduction for exhibition, advertising, educational and promotional materials for this event as well as other events as Highland Park Poetry and *East on Central* may determine in its sole and absolute discretion. Reasonable care will be taken in handling submissions but Highland Park Poetry is not responsible for accidental damage or loss.

PLEASE PRINT

Poet's Signature: _____ Date: _____



The horses in the barn were raising a ruckus starving and wanting out of the barn I was left to care for them so I fed them, gave them water then led them out to pasture came back to muck their stalls but Pa was waiting for me all distressed and anxious wanting me to climb through a window to enter the Stupey Cabin to unlock the door.

I did as asked and let Pa and a neighbor inside then we walked around and found nothing amiss on the first floor but no one was there either so we climbed up to the attic second floor and found him on his bed. Pa told me to go back down but I was too keen on the scene to do as I was told and I am so sorry I disobeyed my Pa but a boy has to be a boy or why be one at all so I stayed in the doorway watching and listening to the men.

And it was then that I saw a dead man for the very first time half covered by a blanket with his old coat on top of that. I could see his eyes staring at the ceiling and smelled dried blood and see the puddle of it glistening on the floor board next to the bed but the blood was no longer dripping. I could see the gun in his right hand but that made no sense as he was left-handed and the hole in his head was also on the right side. I knew at once that he had not killed himself but that I was at the doorway of a murder site, And I got a little shaky in the knees wondering who would kill the harness salesman, the man who took his meals at my Pa's house and always had a great story to tell about this farmer or that, this horse or that, the farm on the other side of the river...oh, well, no more stories from him.

He told me once in confidence that he loved a lady from Highland Park and that he was courting her with the intent of marriage. He was living in the Cabin to save money to buy her a ring and rent a suitable house for them. He was very worried however because another man was also pursuing her hand and he was thus unsure of the outcome. There was no ring or money to be found in the attic and even his pocket watch was missing so there appeared to be more than murder amiss in the Cabin.

That is all I have to say about the mystery I witnessed but I hope the person responsible for these deeds will be found so I can sleep better at night and stop dreaming about the lady with the broken heart and no ring on her finger and about the next boarder at Stupey Cabin and what will happen to him. There is a ghost living there for sure.

WITNESS # 3: Coroner's Inquest

By Marjorie Rissman

*1st Prize Winner of
2017 Stupey Cabin Poetry
Contest*

Recommended Resources –

<https://www.hplib.org/archivesandlocalhistory>

<http://highlandparkhistory.com/>

There are several books and DVDs available at the Highland Park Library related to various aspects of Highland Park History.

Suggested Topics / Events / People / Places This is not intended as a complete or comprehensive list but just an assortment of possible inspiration from Highland Park's past.

People	Places & Organizations	Events
John Van Bergen , Architect	Alcyon Theater / HP Theatre	September 8, 1860 - Wreck of <i>The Lady Elgin</i>
Fire Chief Andrew Bock (1895)	Braeside School	November 1, 1888 – Fire at the Northwestern Military Academy at Ravine Drive & St. Johns Avenue
Mary Block , sculptor, <i>Boy on a Swing</i>	Brick Yard	1896 - August Peters. "The Mysterious Disappearance of August Peters, including the particulars of his discovery eight days later by a psychic."
Mayor William W. Boyington	City Hall – built 1929	1909 – Bank Robbery – Bank robber (and lawyer) Lamar Harris who attempted to rob the Erskine Bank in 1909. Marshal John Sheahen who responded to the call and was wounded as a result of gunfire. The bank tellers John Duffy and Miss Nellie Fitzgerald who were "held up" by the nervous robber. The hapless chauffeur, Fred Schwab , hired in Evanston to drive Harris to Highland Park with no idea that he was about to participate in a robbery - except that he couldn't get the engine cranked when Harris fled the bank.
Orson Brand , Photographer	Electric Power Plant (corner of Elm Place & St. Johns – built 1890)	1912 – Highland Park gets La France Fire Engine purchased for \$5,500
Jason Brown , Olympic Figure Skater	Edgewood School	Young Men going to War (could be Civil War, World War I, or after). Dumaresq Spencer was a Yale graduate who went to France and joined the Lafayette Escadrille. The early years of aviation were thrilling. Joy Bournique is another young HP man who trained to be an WW I aviator. Both were killed.
Billy Corgan , <i>Smashing Pumpkins</i>	Elm Place School	1912 Flu Epidemic. The HP hospital, which opened earlier that year, was overflowing with influenza patients. The Exmoor Country Club opened its club house and served as a temporary hospital for patients. People were quarantined, the schools were closed, movie theaters closed, churches didn't hold services for fear of contagion. In the first weeks of October 1918, the local newspaper was filled with obituaries.
Walt Durbahn , Highland Park High School teacher leading "Boy Built Homes" Program is featured in first do-it-yourself television program called "Walt's Workshop" on WMAQ (NBC5) from 1949-1957	Erskine Bank	May 1, 1915 – Second fire at the Northwestern Military Academy; entire building lost at a cost of \$75,000. School relocates to Lake Geneva, WI
Miss Mary Everts – school teacher when town was incorporated	Highland Park Fire Station #1 / Firehouse Youth Center – operational on January 1, 1940 on Green Bay Road; moved down the hill closer to Sunset Park in 1976	1919 – City Code of Highland Park
Miss Marsalene Green – First Librarian with a salary of \$75 per annum.	Highland Park Historical Society	
Miss Ellen Guiny – school teacher who completed 3 decades of service at Highland Park Grammer School is honored with a telescope by former students in 1931	Highland Park Hospital	
Mayor Frank P. Hawkins – First Mayor	Highland Park Hotel	
Jens Jensen , Landscape Architect	Highland Park Public Library	
Elizabeth Orton Jones , Children's Book Author and Illustrator of <i>Big Susan & Twig</i>	Highland Park Suburban Fine Arts Center / The Art Center of Highland Park	
Sylvia Shaw Judson , sculptor, of <i>Harbor Seal, Boy Reading & Benediction</i>	Highland Park Train Station	
Mayor John Oliver – elected in 1912 and introduces fire alarm "bell" system	Fort Sheridan	
Owen Monahan , Port Clinton lighthouse keeper	The Karger Center	
Julius Rosenwald – early President of Sears, Roebuck & Company; philanthropist	Lincoln School	
Mayor Nancy R. Rotering	Moraine Hotel - Another turn of the 19th Century time period. The Hotel Moraine on the Lake opened in 1900 as a resort hotel, the summer hotel for wealthy Chicagoans.	
Julie Rottblatt Amrany , sculptor, <i>Compassion Moves a World</i>	Northwestern Military Academy	
Robert Seyfarth , Architect	Port Clinton	
The Sheahan Family	Ravinia Festival & Ravinia Park - in its early days "A Night at the Opera" in the 1910 and 1920s. The opera stars who rented bungalows in Ravinia for the summer.	
Frank Lloyd Wright , Architect	Ravinia School	
	Shelton's Diner	
The Ben Greet Woodland Players at Ravinia Theatre	Francis Stupey Cabin – built in 1847 on property now part of Exmoor Country Club. Cabin is donated to Historical Society and moved to present location between Library & City Hall for the City's 100 year anniversary	
Native and indigenous people	Water Treatment Plant	
Pioneers & First Families	West Ridge	
	Yerkes Fountain	