



ROGERS PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"Preserving the Roots of Rogers Park"

NEWSLETTER

Vol. I No. II

Summer 1986

From the President

Our first newsletter is now history and we received quite a few compliments. One said it looked more like the 51st rather than the first issue.

This July marks our 11th anniversary and if there is one thing that will always be important to me, it is the people that I have met during this time. The society has a list of over 200 people who have donated items, mainly photographs, and we thank each one of them. I was fortunate to personally get to know most of them and am sad that some are now deceased.

In the first issue, I listed some of the functions that we have had over the years, but I did not mention the video tapings and oral histories that we have done. We need assistance in this very worthwhile endeavor. There is someone who is going to instruct some of us in the proper way to conduct an oral interview, so if you are interested in this, please get in touch with us. Also, if you know of anyone you feel should be interviewed, perhaps you could make the contact and then let us know.

All of the activities of the society require time and funds and it is most important to have a large membership base so that this work can continue. I realize that all of you are busy with various functions and that you may not be able to attend meetings each month. What is necessary is to support us by your membership. It is possible that we may be able to obtain some funding or matching gifts from several sources, so the more members we have the better it will be.

Our hope is that you continue to enjoy the newsletter and if you feel there is something we should cover, please let us know.

Mary Jo Doyle

What We've Been Doing

Howard Street Alive! — The first of the annual summer street fairs in Rogers Park and, unfortunately, one of the last was held on Sunday, June 29th. Several members volunteered to staff our exhibit and a lot of interest was shown by the fairgoers. In fact, our display was one of the most popular at the affair.

Chicagoland Historical Exposition — This event was held at Northeastern Illinois University on Saturday, June 14th and was a huge success thanks in a great part to the organizing abilities and tireless effort of the coordinator, our own president. Good job, Mary Jo, we are proud of you.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Fri. Aug. 1-
Sat. Sept. 15 | RPHS Exhibit at the
Northtown Branch Library
'Indian Boundary Line' |
| Sun. Aug. 17 | Indian Boundary-Day in
the Park |
| Sun. Aug. 24 | Norwood Park Historical
Society House Walk (774-7440) |
| Month of
September | RPHS Exhibit at the Rogers
Park Branch Library
'Photos of Old Rogers Park' |
| Sat. Sept. 13 | Irving Park Historical Society
House Tour (282-9553) |
| Sun. Sept. 21 | RP Historical Society
House Tour (see page 5) |
| Sat. Sept. 27 | Loyola/Sheridan Street Fair
Come see RPHS booth! |
| Wed. Oct. 22
7:15pm | 'Introducing Sherlock Holmes'
a program by Norman Davis
at the Rogers Park Library |
| Sat. Dec. 27 | RPHS Annual Holiday Party
members only)
(watch for details) |

We are very sorry to announce that the Rogers Park Street Fair, shown on our last calendar, scheduled for Sunday, September 7, has been cancelled.

The Rogers Park Branch Library is sponsoring a series of Genealogy Workshops starting later this year. For additional information or suggestions, contact Lyn Garrick-Weil at the library. Phone 764-0156.

Historic Memorabilia

Any visitor to the Rogers Park Library-main meeting room generally comments on the Society's permanent display.

It offers a varied collection of memorabilia from the past. We periodically update the exhibit, so we are always looking for additions.

Take a look around your home or attic for any old photos or small items that may be of interest to the Society.

We will gladly copy the photos and return them to you, if you do not wish to donate them.

Famous Rogers Parkers

Here is a good story sent in about one of the first 'Famous Rogers Parkers' we saluted last issue. Norman Ross, who had attended Gale School, was invited back to give the commencement address at a June graduation. During the proceedings, he was presented with proof that no matter what you do, some things are just not forgotten.

Back in his patrol boy days (at Rogers and Sheridan), he came up with a limerick that lived on whether he wanted it to or not.

"Poor Miss Sleezer
Broke her beezor
Trying to milk a cow
With a lemon squeezer."

A twelve year old, who could handle language as adroitly (if irreverently) as that, was a sure bet to become a most respected author, as well as a civic mountain-mover.

This time, we salute another one of our native Rogers Parkers who became famous while living here and we hope that some persons can fill in parts of the story that go way back in time.

We recently read of the passing of **Frederick 'Fritz' Pollard Sr.** Not only was he **our own** first All-American football hero, but the first black in the entire country to achieve that rank of excellence and the first to play in the Rose Bowl Game, where he led Brown University to a victory over Washington State.

As a professional football player, he was elected to the NFL Hall of Fame. Another first.

Did anyone attend school with him or remember him? At one of our earliest meetings there was a story about the Pollard family. We were told that the original Mr. Pollard (Fritz's father), came here sometime after the Civil War. If there was a Fourth of July parade, he had to lead it because he was a Union Army veteran and always wore his uniform in honor of the day! Don't you wish cameras had been handy back then?

Does anyone know, or remember hearing, what branch of the service (infantry, artillery, engineers, cavalry, etc.) in which he served?

Also, if anyone remembers hearing any stories about the Fourth of July parades, please pass along these recollections. That goes for all kinds of stories. Rogers Park has a long heritage and such a broad range of interesting people from all across the globe in its past, that there is just no telling what can be added to our historical files. It comes down to the fact that what you remember may not be common knowledge. Better to have it more than once than not at all.

Just jot down your recollections and mail them or drop them off at the library.

The same goes for suggestions on other famous people for this section of the newsletter. Thanks!

Jackie McNicol

Historic Rogers Park Locations



*Photo donated by Mrs. David McCammon

Rogers Park Woman's Club

Laying the cornerstone, June 4, 1916.

The Rogers Park Woman's Club was founded in the Fall of 1891 at the home of Mrs. E.D. Coxe with an initial membership of ten. In later years, at its height, there were 900 members.

At its inception, the Club was mainly literary. Later, the concerns of the members were devoted to Civics, Public Welfare and the Arts.

RPWC has a long record of service to the community beginning with the first project, which was the establishment of a public library and reading room in Rogers Park. It was achieved with considerable effort and a very creditable library resulted with members serving as librarians and even janitor. A traveling library was also provided by members who drove around the community with a horse and buggy bringing books to those who were unable to go to the library.

Many of the members assisted at Northwestern University Settlement House, particularly in Americanization courses and in teaching English to immigrants. They also arranged summer outings in Rogers Park for women and children from the tenements.

In the community, the Club was instrumental in placing Domestic Science in the schools and campaigned vigorously for a kindergarten.

The members fought for pure food legislation and insisted that the regional dairy put milk in bottles and that the bakeries sell bread in paper covers.

In 1905, the idea for a club house took form when \$300 was set aside for the start of a building fund. In

Continued on page 3

*Mrs. David McCammon was president of RPWC from 1929 to 1931.

1910, the lot on the southeast corner of Estes and Ashland was purchased.

Club members started the first school lunchroom at Nicholas Senn High School in 1913 to raise money and 27 members maintained it for many years to build the clubhouse and to pay off the mortgage.

On June 14, 1916 the cornerstone was laid and on the following January 1, the RPWC members and friends celebrated the 25th anniversary of the club with a New Year's Reception and Open House in their own clubhouse. On January 1, 1927, at another New Year's Reception, the mortgage was burned.

During World War I the RPWC was headquarters for all Rogers Park Red Cross work. Upon our entry into World War II, RPWC Red Cross workers set an excellent record of supplies delivered. All possible help was given to service men and women, to discharged veterans and to those in hospitals.

A quarter of a million dollars in War Bonds were sold by RPWC members during the years of 1943-1945 and the club was awarded a Citation of Merit.

In addition to all the assistance extended to our country and to our community during the Depression and during the war years, all of the regular services and philanthropy of the RPWC were still provided.

The 90th birthday of the Rogers Park Woman's Club was celebrated in the clubhouse in 1981. However, 1983 was a very traumatic time for members because heavy Cook County real estate taxes, coupled with higher cost in maintenance and a smaller membership, finally necessitated the sale of the beautiful clubhouse.

After investigating several possible quarters for the club, the Board decided on Banner Hall in the parish house of St. Paul's Church By The Lake located right across the street at 7100 N. Ashland, where the RPWC continues to serve the community.

Evelyn Page

Above article suggested by Eleanor Mars, 50+ year resident and a member of our society.

There are still some available copies of the first newsletter (Vol. I No. 1). If you would like one, call, write or indicate it on the mail-in form.



Special Thanks to the following:
McDonald's-Clark & Pratt
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Rogers Park Branch Library
S & C Electric Company

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Charter Members of the Rogers Park Historical Society and long-time residents of Rogers Park.

The Way It Was

ROGERS PARK BEACHES IN THE 1920'S

It should be remembered that, in the era depicted, the beaches extended forty to fifty feet further out into the water than they do today.

Let's look at the beaches as we travel north from Sheridan Road (Devon Ave.) to the city limits.

Loyola University Beach — Two blocks of unsurpassed beauty; no clutter or trash. Used only by priests and brothers, with no access for the public. It was comparable to a Michigan lakeside hotel.

Loyola Avenue Beach — Small adequate beach at the street end, later practically usurped by the construction of the 1000 West Loyola Building.

Albion Avenue Beach — A large elongated beach aided by the lack of home construction in the area east of Winthrop Avenue. It was soon to become a favorite with the younger crowd, the 'Rush Street' of all beaches and, I understand, still is today.

North Shore Beach — Though somewhat stunted by construction on the south side of the street, it was a rather nice beach in that it was sheltered from the winds by a cement promenade that enhanced the use of illegal fires for wiener roasts and the like on warm summer evenings.

Pratt and Columbia Beaches — Both of these streets extended practically to the water's edge with a lot of seawall construction thereabouts that constricted the formation of natural beaches. Sometime around the turn of the century, breakwaters were installed extending out into the lake and placed about every three hundred feet. By now they are badly disintegrated and water-logged, with only an occasional steel baffle hanging by one or two rivets.

Farwell, Morse and Lunt Beaches — All three combined to form a long expanse of an exceptional recreational facility. There were parklike settings backing up the great beaches, with refreshment stands, playground equipment, benches and restrooms, so that families could picnic and spend the entire day there. Vandalism and like problems were practically nonexistent, even in the evenings.

On the Fourth of July, two huge barges were anchored about three hundred feet out in the lake and, as soon as darkness prevailed, really good firework displays were shot off to the delight of all.

Greenleaf and Estes Beach — This expanse, with no construction on the east side of Sheridan Road, presented a two block long, deep flat beach of about one hundred yards, clean and white, and flanked on the west by a two block long growth of white birch trees that extended to the sidewalk. This was known as "Devine's Woods" and it was very scenic.

Touhy Beach — This area was always a magnet, with its recreational facilities and the Coast Guard Station and the Lifeguard Headquarters.

Continued on page 4

86-07

Rest of the Beaches — Chase, Sherwin, Jarvis and the curing Eastlake Terrace expanse reaching to the Evanston city limits were all adequate family-oriented stretches that served the ever increasing population in the new apartment buildings being built side by side just to the west.

Thanks to the **Rogers Park Community Council**, in the early 1950's legislation was enacted that forever prohibited construction on any useable beach site in this area.

Only Morse Avenue had a concession stand, per se. The needs of the bathers were often taken care of by 'Old John', a large untiring Grecian gentleman who propelled a long pushcart to each street end and set it up. With uncanny reasoning, he could tell when all available moneys were expended and he would then move on to the next beach.

In the evenings, the horse-drawn so called 'waffle wagons' took over. Very picturesque, especially after dark, as lanterns illuminated the interiors, showing the stock, with the proprietor busy popping pop corn over a gas flame in the front part of the wagon. They also sold candy bars, gum, peanuts, pop, hot dogs, coffee and the like. The best seller was the Bunte 'Tango Bar'. They moved from street end to street end and found time to deviate from their rounds to serve the crowds at any of the softball games that

were going on. Often the operator would blow an attention-getting, albeit tuneless, melody on his bugle.

A good friend of mine, Carolton Huppert, and I found time to each build ourselves a row boat of sorts. For two summers we left the boats, locked with chains, at the North Shore beach each night, after taking the oars to his neighbor's home, and they were never tampered with. Carl, who had a terrific 'love for boating' and for the water, sadly met his end in 1943 when the Navy destroyer, of which he was in command, went down in the South Pacific during a battle with the Japanese.

This period also saw the end of the cumbersome bloomer type swim suits for the ladies, often being replaced by the daring one piece suits with the red, diving Jantzen girl on the left thigh. The men and the young fellows who were 'with it', traded their outlandish regalia for the two piece basketball uniform style suits with white uppers and navy blue trunks with white web belts. Cool!

Looking back, I would prefer groups of guys and girls strumming ukelelies and intoning such melodies as "Yes Sir, That's My Baby" and "Yes We have No Bananas" rather than the loud music on radios today.

Norm Coughlin

Photo donated by Jean Price

Touhy Ave. Beach



86-07

Rogers Park Historical Society

ANNUAL HOUSE TOUR

Sunday, September 21, 1986
from 12:00nn - 5:00pm

There will be five houses for you to wander through and learn some interesting history of the Rogers Park area.

Tickets can be purchased in advance or on the day of the tour at the starting point which is:

1629 W. Morse

A limited number of tickets will be sold.

A writeup on each of the houses will be distributed on the day of the tour.

Watch the Lerner Paper for more information during the few weeks prior to the house tour.

For additional information, call one of the following people:

Mary Jo Doyle	764-2401	Larry Calhoun	274-0798
Marty Schmidt	262-2913	Jeanette Statland	869-9317

Thanks for helping to preserve the rich heritage of our wonderful neighborhood.

Please tell everyone and come with a friend!

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND/OR HOUSE TOUR

Annual dues are \$6.00 per person and the membership period is from January 1st thru December 31st.

Membership House Tour No. of Tickets _____

House tour tickets are \$5.00 per person and include five houses.

Enclosed is a check for \$_____ made payable to Rogers Park Historical Society

Name _____

Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____

Zip _____

Mail to: Rogers Park Historical Society
2555 W. Farwell
Rogers Park, IL 60645

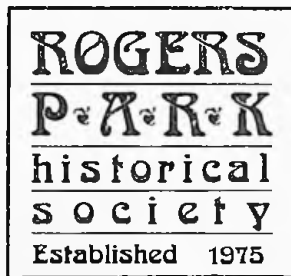
I would like to help the Society when I am available.

86-07

CHICAGOLAND HISTORICAL EXPOSITION UPDATE

The first Chicagoland Historical Exposition sponsored by the Rogers Park, Irving Park, Norwood Park, Ravenswood-Lake View and Uptown Historical Societies and by the History Department of Northeastern Illinois University (UNI) was a BIG success. Between 300-400 people attended the function which was held at the University. More than thirty historical societies and related organizations displayed their collections and the programs of general interest (house research, genealogy, history of the Chicago Fire Department, Landmark Preservation, etc.) were fairly well attended. Several students from the Chicago Metro History Fair displayed their projects and the arts and crafts were very interesting. We hope to have the Exposition again next year, especially to help celebrate the 150th Birthday of the City of Chicago.

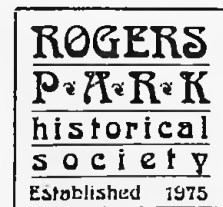
The next issue is due out the third week in October. If you have anything to suggest or contribute, the deadline is October 10th. We welcome guest columnists.



MEETINGS

1st and 3rd Saturdays
11:30am-1:00pm

Rogers Park Library
6911 North Clark St.
Chicago, IL 60626
764-0156



Rogers Park Historical Society
2555 W. Farwell
Chicago, IL 60645

MEMBERSHIP

Any viable organization thrives on a growing membership. Your annual dues assist greatly in supporting our programs, copying photos and creating this newsletter. We have several projects still on hold due to a lack of volunteers. Would you pledge just an hour a month to help in one of these projects? Please contact Mary Jo at 764-2401.

NOTICE

This newsletter is published by the Rogers Park Historical Society, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1975 to preserve the roots of our community. Correspondence may be directed to the editor: Laurence A. Calhoun, 1629 W. Morse, Chicago, IL 60626. Contributors: Larry Calhoun, Norm Coughlin, Mary Jo Doyle, Jackie McNicol, Evelyn Page and Martin Schmidt.

* This is the final issue that will be mailed to individuals unless the person is a member. To insure your continuing receipt of the newsletter and other society announcements and activities, forward your membership in now.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Mildred Amschl
Mary Brosman
Lauren Crawford
Joan Edwards
Eva Llanera Egan
Patricia Fieser
Arnie Goodwin
Vicki Goodwin
Helen Hammerman
Wally Hopp
Janet Kavc
Charles Killman
Tom McGann

J. Curtis Mitchell
Louise Viehoff Molkup
Art Newman
Melanie Parrish
Phyllis Paulo
Don Sack
Maureen Spring
Ceal Thinnis
Sally Vinci
Vincent Vinci
Martin Waig
Robert Winters

86-07