

**From the President**

In order for the Rogers Park Historical Society to continue to be a successful organization, many of our members feel that it is essential to recruit new people who are willing to be involved in just one of our projects. It would not be a difficult task; in fact after you got started and found out how good you felt, you would probably thank us. It is very rewarding to talk to someone who has been in this area for a long time, to listen to recollections and sometimes even help a person remember something special about an event because another little piece of the story had already been told.

We would also be extremely elated if more young people would participate. Grammar school, high school, and even college students, could benefit from the use of our files for various school projects and could share their knowledge with us.

The Chicago Metro History Fair has taken place in the city and suburbs for the past eight years. But quite some time prior to that, the Ravenswood-Lakeview Historical Association was conducting a contest for students who would do projects on local history. Perhaps in the future, our Society would be in a position to sponsor a similar competition.

Would you be willing to assist in one of the above undertakings or help index the memorabilia that has been donated to the Society? If so, please contact us.

Mary Jo Doyle



**What We've Been Doing**

**Day In the Park** — The neighborhood festival at Indian Boundary Park was a success and the visitors enjoyed the Society's display of photos. We are happy to join in this annual affair which helps support the park and our own local "zoo".

**Northtown Library** — A display of local memorabilia, focusing on the Indian Boundary Line, was created by the Society and featured during the months of August and September at the California Avenue Branch.

**Loyola/Sheridan Country Fair** — This was the second of the two local street fairs we participated in this year (Howard Street Alive was the first). A pleasant day and a good turnout brought a nice group of visitors to our display and we welcomed some new members.

**Rogers Park Library** — A portion of the Society's collection of photos of grand old Rogers Park homes was exhibited in the main display case and in the auditorium during the month of September. This display was in conjunction with our annual house tour.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

- Sat. Nov. 8  
2:00pm  
Tapestry Our Neighborhood  
Rogers Park Branch Library  
Skits & Readings of Rogers Park  
(see page 4)
- Sat. Nov. 15  
11:30am-1:00pm  
Historical Society Meeting  
Rogers Park Branch Library
- Month of  
November  
RPHS Exhibit at the Rogers Park  
Branch Library  
'Photos of Rogers Park Homes'  
(continuing exhibit)
- Sat. Dec. 6 & 20  
11:30am-1:00pm  
Historical Society Meeting  
Rogers Park Branch Library
- Sat. Dec. 6  
2:00-4:00pm  
Oral History Workshop  
Rogers Park Branch Library  
(see page 6)
- Sat. Dec. 27  
RPHS Annual Holiday Party  
(members & guests only)  
(application form-page 5)
- Sat. Jan. 3 & 17  
11:30am-1:00pm  
Historical Society Meeting  
Rogers Park Branch Library
- January, 1987  
Holiday Mini House Tours  
(members & guests only)

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



**CHICAGO'S BIRTHDAY**

Don't forget that 1987 is the 150th Birthday of the City of Chicago. Watch for all kinds of happenings throughout next year and help celebrate this great event.



**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 new 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 any photos and return them to you, if you do not wish to donate them.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

I am doing "Spotlight" under protest. I suggested that it should concern a "real person," and not the "Way It Was" author.

So let's go back to January of 1913, when my folks moved into a two-flat at 6555 N. Bosworth. I still live there and will recall some things that stand out in my memory as I grew up.

For one thing, it was easy to amuse ourselves with simple pastimes, contrasted with today's game rooms, McDonald's and the like. There were the beaches in the summer, hikes to the drainage canal to hunt for "fool's gold," trips to Bowman Dairy, at Columbia and the Northwestern R. R. tracks, to "watch them unhitch," or visits to the various horseshoeing shops, or to the firehouses to ogle the engines, with the horses' harnesses poised at the ready in front of the equipment, to be dropped onto them in the amazing routine of getting under way to race to a fire.

The car barns, that stretched from Clark St. to Ravenswood Ave. on the present site of the 24th District Police Station, with its repair and cleaning facilities and counting room upstairs, offered an educational view of a large operation.

The playground, on the present site of Sullivan High School, afforded a variety of things to do. Games of "Indoor" as it was known (today it's softball) and track events, involving the cinder paths and gym bars and jumping standards, under director "Gus" Mueller's tutelage, produced some good young athletes. The winter ice skating was unmatched.

Construction sites for the many apartment buildings that were supplanting the older houses also supplied rewarding hours of mischief and experimentation. Of course, this was after the tradesmen had gone home and there was no watchman on duty.

Instead of being razed, some of the old houses were moved to new sites. This involved the use of horse-propelled capstans that were set up in front of the house and moved two to four feet at a time as the horse went around in a circle at the side.

It would often take a week to move a house one block on the street. There were no overhead wires as extend today, and very few cars and trucks. And no one was worried about a thing.

In the summer of 1916 a fierce fire engulfed the Thomas Ink factory in the 7000 block of Clark Street on the present site of the Couplings Company. The building was a four-story frame, perfect for a 4-11 alarm. Attracted by the constant bell clanging of the engines, we gravitated up the hill to Clark Street. We started north on Clark, but my older brother and his friend decided to ditch me and they sent me tearfully back towards home.

But, coming to the intersection of Clark and Albion, heading north, was a never-to-be-forgotten sight. It was that of a smoking pumper, drawn by three magnificent black horses, reined in by an engineer who must have weighed four hundred pounds. The horses' nostrils were dilated and they were spewing foam from their mouths, so they had to have come

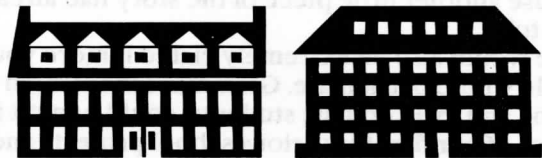
from a long distance away, possibly Lakeview, but they were still willing to give their best.

Another epic fire in this era was the "car barns" fire in the early 1920's. It started around midnight, waking everyone, and soon had the skies and clouds a dazzling orange as far as one could see. But, my folks wisely would not allow my brothers and me to go out.

The steel fire doors midway into the long structure were dropped, thus saving the front half and many streetcars. But the west half, which housed the paint shops with inflammables, was totally demolished, with a loss of some sixty cars, burned down to their trucks, and adjoining property also suffered.

Keep watching our future issues; there is a lot more where this came from.

Norm Coughlin



## HOUSE TOUR

Our Second Annual Fall House Tour was held on Sunday, September 21. Threatening skies in the morning gave way to a beautiful afternoon, thus insuring the success of the walk.

The successful tour would not have been possible without the unselfish generosity of those who opened their homes and their hospitality to our annual fund raiser. Each house, in its own special way, seemed to welcome everyone who came by.

### A BIG HEARTY THANK YOU TO

Ed and Dottie Ehmann	1509 W. Lunt
John and Patricia O'Neal	1435 W. Chase
Soto and Phyllis Colovos	1526 W. Sherwin
Nick and Eunice Cervantes	1614 W. Jarvis
Johnathan & Deborah Robinson	1440 W. Birchwood

### Special Thanks to the Sponsors:

Ace Hardware-Clark & Morse  
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Ashland Addison Florist Co.  
Clark-Rogers Flower Shop  
De's Meat Market  
Graphic House, Inc.-Skokie  
Kadel Drugs  
Norshore Camera  
David Orr-Alderman 49th Ward  
Rogers Park Community Council  
St. Paul Federal Bank-Howard & Western  
Washington National Insurance Company

Appreciation is also extended to those who sold tickets, did publicity, volunteered as guides at the various houses and to the donators.

## Historic Rogers Park Locations

Around 1835 when Phillip Rogers arrived in Rogers Park, he wanted to establish a profitable trading post with the Indians. He built a log cabin right near the intersection of what is now Lunt Avenue and the Indian Boundary Line, right in the heart of Indian Boundary Park.

The Park was established on September 13, 1915 with the purchase of a plot of land in what is now called West Rogers Park. Subsequent purchases of land, at the cost of \$3,000 an acre, expanded the area until by September 15, 1922 it reached its current size of 13.06 acres. It is a real treasure in the midst of a bustling, heavily populated urban community.

Park improvement work was started in 1918 when poplar trees, shrubs and plants were planted. Tennis courts were constructed in 1924 and a small portable shelter was installed for the comfort of the skaters near the current children's playground.

During the 1920's, animal lovers from the area decided that a zoo should be established featuring small animals and contributions of goats, raccoons, monkeys, easter chicks, and ducks became the original habitants of the small zoo.

The pond was always there, naturally, as a marshy water run-off. At one time, it was used as a wading pool. When two wading pools were added to the park, the pond was improved into a lagoon which housed ducks and swans. In 1928 and 1929, the Field House was erected and playground facilities were added. In 1934, all neighborhood parks were incorporated into the Chicago Park District and the Lincoln Park Zoo took over management of the Indian Boundary Park Zoo and additional animal stock and variety were added.

In 1920, several large apartment houses were built next to the park and they are still a delight to this area.

Since 1979, the Indian Boundary Area Council has co-sponsored the annual "Day in the Park" for residents to come out to meet their neighbors and enjoy the park.

In August 1985, a \$300,000 remodeling project was completed. The old zoo cages were removed and

replaced by natural habitat barriers for the animals.

There are currently five stone monuments throughout the park commemorating various historic dates. In addition, the North Town Garden Society has been active in improving the beautiful plantings and landscaping in the park and pond areas.

What we now have to enjoy is idyllic surroundings when we feel the need to get away from the everyday hustle and bustle of city life.

Sharon Lubin



There are still some available copies of the first two newsletters. If you would like one, call, write or indicate it on the mail-in form.

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

This newsletter is designed, typeset and printed by Denis and Kathie Paluch, Graphic House Inc., Skokie, IL. Charter Members of the Rogers Park Historical Society and long-time residents of Rogers Park.



## LETTERS. . . . .COMMENTS

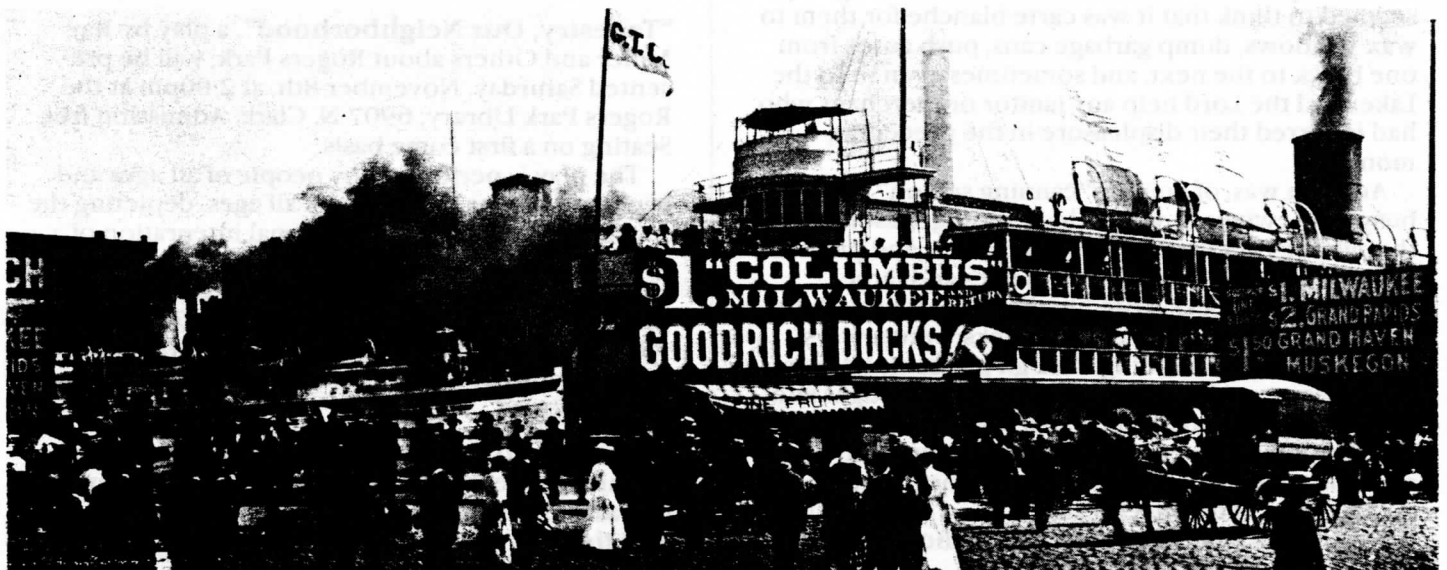
A new feature to our emerging quarterly publication is "LETTERS. . . . .COMMENTS".

This is your opportunity to tell us what you like or dislike about the NEWSLETTER. How can we improve it. . . . .make it more readable and interesting. Additionally, this section allows you to comment. . . . .correct, or add to the articles based on your own recollections. Also, you may wish to reminisce about Rogers Park events or places that were of particular importance to you.

WRITE TO

Larry Calhoun, Editor  
NEWSLETTER

1629 West Morse Avenue  
Chicago, Illinois 60626



The Christopher Columbus at dock at Rush Street, c. 1905  
Photo: Chicago Historical Society, Barnes-Crosby Collection.

## The Way It Was

### ROGERS PARK-AUTUMN IN THE 1920'S

A poet once put it — “The melancholy days are here, the saddest of the year,” in describing the advent of Fall. I say “yes” and “no,” as I think back.

“Yes,” perhaps, for the children and the young people, as they face up to reality and the confinement of returning to school. For the average young Rogers Parker, summer vacation was a pretty nice happening, as they could always “go to the beach” whenever they pleased. Then there were possibly three or four trips to Riverview Amusement Park, and if they got there on “William Hale Thompson Two Cent Days,” it was quite affordable. (W. H. Thompson was the mayor.) Also, they could generally manage two or three trips on the excursion steamers either across the Lake or up to Milwaukee. They could go in groups or with their families and there were always wonderful memories from these events. (See picture on Page 3.)

For the lucky few that found summer employment, it was traumatic to once again start to live on their allowances.

For the older people, to whom summer meant a rewarding experience when it came to landscaping, gardening of flowers, shrubs and food stuffs, and maintaining their lawns and homes, the first cool breezes foretold the countdown to the first frost. It also signaled the cleaning and preparation of the old wooden storm windows for installation.

“No,” for the young boys who were “going out for football” at their various schools, with the accompanying cuts and bruises, and heartaches for those who didn't make the team. Each grammar school had its large groups of weirdly uniformed hopefuls gathered together in their version of play, with clouds of dust, shrill cries, and much whistle blowing, on the closest vacant lots to the school.

“No,” of course, for the merchants to whom fall meant sales of clothing and school supplies, and Halloween and Thanksgiving Day merchandise and foodstuffs.

Halloween was, in those days, a lot rougher by far than today's versions of ‘trick and treat’. Young boys seemed to think that it was carte blanche for them to wax windows, dump garbage cans, push autos from one block to the next, and sometimes even in to the Lake. And the Lord help any janitor or merchant who had incurred their displeasure in the preceding months.

Autumn was, of course, “canning season” for the busy housewives. It was called canning season even though the processed fruits, vegetables, and pickles wound up in Mason jars, jelly glasses and large earthenware crocks stored in the coolest part of the home's basement. These busy weeks were always identified with pervading, though pleasant, odors of hot vinegar and hot vinegar with sugar, or sugar and clove combinations, or green pepper, which meant that Mrs. O'Brien was putting up chili sauce, in addition to her peaches, pears, tomatoes, green beans, pickles, jelly and mincemeat.

During this period, it was rather difficult to make

one's way along the business streets since the groceries and fruit markets had huge displays out in front of their stores. All kinds of items to be preserved were in bushel baskets, bags and boxes, embellished with bunches of dillweed, piled on empty crates and reaching almost to the curbs.

For the people who rode the excursion steamers to Michigan during the last two weeks of August and on up to Labor Day, there was an extra bonus. This came from the heavenly odors that arose from the hold on the return trip. It was that of grapes, peaches and pears that had been picked that morning, loaded onto the ship while it was in port, and hauled to Chicago for dispersal to the waiting commission men. (See picture on Page 3.)

About the last of October, the real hard nose home-owners, who took their lawns and gardening seriously, would invest in a load of manure from one of the nearby livery stables or dairies. They would spread it on their lawns and in their gardens as a fertilizing agent and were adamant as to its efficiency.

Among the merchants who did not like to see the colder weather approaching, were the hurdy-gurdy operators and the “organ grinders” who, accompanied by the inevitable monkey, sent forth plaintive renditions on their instruments, most of which narrowed down to “O Sole Mio”.

Though few people had garages behind their homes and did not need access to the alleys, the large loads of coal that were dumped at the heads of the alley to be later shoveled into the chutes of the large apartment buildings, did prove a problem to the milkmen, ice men, peddlers and junk men, who had to turn their horses around and go on to the next block to cover their appointed rounds.

And while the sights, sounds and smells of the era are herein inscribed, and the people's behavior duly noted, it all blends in to many great memories.

Norm Coughlin



“**Tapestry, Our Neighborhood**”, a play by Ray Miller and Others about Rogers Park, will be presented Saturday, November 8th, at 2:00pm at the Rogers Park Library, 6907 N. Clark. Admission free. Seating on a first come basis.

The play is performed by people of all ages and backgrounds for audiences of all ages, depicting the successful racial and international integration of a neighborhood. A reading about the Rogers Park Historical Society is one of the more than twenty skits/readings. Our photographer, Martin Schmidt, will do the slide projections. (See picture on page 3.)

Come and see another wonderful happening in our own backyard.

**Tapestry will be presented at other locations around Rogers Park. Watch the Lerner Newspaper and the Rogers Park Library for future dates and times.**

Rogers Park Historical Society

# ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY

(current & new members & guests only)

**Saturday, December 27, 1986  
from 7:30pm - 11:00pm**

at Larry Calhoun's house  
1629 W. Morse  
Chicago, IL 60626

**\*\* Holiday Party Reservations must be received by December 20th. \*\***

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.

Society Membership includes Mini House Tours throughout the year.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP AND/OR HOLIDAY PARTY

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

Membership       Holiday Party       No. of Persons

Holiday Party is \$5.00 per person and includes buffet, snacks and dessert.

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.

## ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP

Our Society is planning to do more oral histories in the future months. We are very fortunate to have Sr. Mary Cramer of Mundelein College conduct a workshop for anyone who is interested in this kind of a project. It will cover some of the "Do's and Don't's," which are the basic guidelines of oral interviews. Handouts will be given to each participant. The workshop will be held at the Rogers Park Library on Saturday, December 6, from 2:00-4:00pm. For reservations or additional information, call 764-2401, 869-9317, 262-2913 or 274-0798.

If you are receiving this newsletter in the mail for the first time, it may be because you filled out an index card at one of our events during the past few months. To insure your continuing receipt of the Newsletter and other Society announcements, forward your membership application soon.

## 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 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. Ph. 274-0798.

Contributors: Larry Calhoun, Norm Coughlin, Mary Jo Doyle and Sharon Lubin.

Thanks also to Cathy Keenan and Martin Schmidt.

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Dorothy Adams  
Margaret Breit  
Millicent Cooper  
Susan Crawford  
Mary Crowley  
Mary Davlantes  
Nicole Davoust

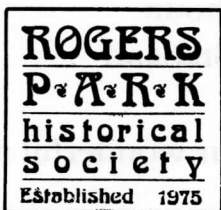
Joseph Donnelly  
Nancy Donnelly  
Eveleyn Elisius  
Judy Eyring  
John Fitzgerald  
Arthur Gilfand  
Ann Glapa

Frank Glapa  
Bill Haig  
Josette Haig  
Nancy Harnett  
Patrick Harnett  
Oliver Henry  
Grady Humphrey

Bettie Jasper  
Marilyn Karsh  
Cathy Keenan  
Fred Lindsey, Jr.  
Emily Lopez  
Betsy Palder  
Stan Palder

Theresa Peifer  
Jean Price  
Alice Revelski  
Marie Schamberger  
Ed Schneider  
Sue Sosin  
William Steinfeld

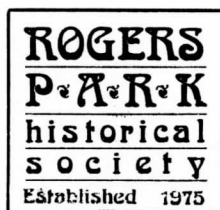
Helyn Tortorello  
Charles Vernon  
Mark Zaltman



## 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