

The Way It Is, Way It Was, Way It Is,
Way It Was: From 1912 to the Present

Old Rogers Park Moving Picture Theatres

This variation of the usual title: "The Way It Was," is brought about by the need to move in and out of time warps as we make a chronological geographical tour from the extreme southeast corner of Rogers Park and proceed north on Sheridan Road. Please bear with us.

On our right at 6427 is the now closed Granada Theatre, subject of much discussion and litigation lately by those who would try to preserve it as an historical landmark and those who seek other uses of the valued property.

It was built in 1928 by the Marks Brothers, who owned other small neighborhood theatres, and capped off their chain with the construction of a twin of the Granada at Crawford and Madison calling it "The Marbro."

Both were of Spanish motif and quite large as was the trend of the new theatres of the day. Not only were they symmetrically beautiful and spacious, but they were ornately appointed in every detail. They symbolized elegance, and their pipe organs were of the latest design.

The formats of these large theatres were pretty much alike. First run pictures plus a stage show, became the norm. The stage show was changed weekly, running generally from Friday through the ensuing Thursday.

An accomplished leader and his band had singers, dancers and vaudeville acts that were generally quite good. All in all, one got his money's worth most of the time, to be sure.

The Granada and its counterpart, the Marbro, had two orchestra leaders and their bands: Charles Kaley and Benny Meroff, who alternated each week, with new stage shows, and became quite accepted and often eagerly anticipated each week.

(The author, taking advantage of the statute of limitations, will now freely confess that he was one of the boorish students from a nearby seat of learning who made each Friday matinee a rough experience for the two orchestra leaders, as they pitched pennies up on the stage as each act was being introduced.)

We now move north on Sheridan Road to 6610, just north of Albion. Here, constructed about 1912 and set a way back from the sidewalk, was the Northshore Theatre. It was a typical tiny theatre of the times, with the front arch and close-by stores being constructed from red and green terra cotta glazed bricks, differing from the usual green and white terra cotta bricks that, to this day, mark the sites of many old theatres around Chicago.

Moving north a block and a half, we arrive at 6742 and the old Regent Theatre, which varied in construction in that it was much larger than the run of the mill theatre, and the lobby extended horizontally the entire width of the building. In the 1930s its name

was changed to "The 400" and, I understand, it is being modified to accommodate two or three screens. At one time, if one figured he had "missed" a particular picture, it was always said, "It hasn't been to the 400 yet, I am sure."

It is now in the late 1930s, and we go north to Morse Avenue and west to 1330, and stop in to an unpretentious Coed Theatre. It is quite acceptable, and helps to accommodate the many new tenants now residing in what buildings had been completed and in those slowly starting in the wake of the Depression. It is now the site of Cobblers Mall.

Back to Sheridan Road, north to Howard Street, west on Howard Street to about 1635, where the old Howard Theatre flourished for many years. It was very spacious and had an imposing exterior. It seemed to always have a reasonable listing of fairly late run pictures for many years and had its many devotees. It closed about the middle seventies, I would guess. (See photo.)

Continuing west on Howard Street, under the Elevated, and to where demolition of several old stores in the 1700 block spawned the site of the Northshore Theatre. It was another fine effort of the Balaban and Katz enterprises, but, by no means was it comparable to their flagships elsewhere in the city. It was big and comfortable and had stage shows and was considered above average by the clientele. It featured Al Kvale and his band, and, if I am not misinformed, it was here that Ginger Rogers got her start as a vocalist. I do know that I did see her here in person more than once. The story was that she had been a dancer in the chorus who made the most of an opportunity. The building was demolished in the sixties and gave way to the present site of the Benefit Trust Life Insurance Company building.

All aboard, west on Howard and south on Clark Street to the corner of Estes. It is the locale of the Adelphi Theatre on the southwest corner at 7074. It operated for many years as a good clean neighborhood theatre. I would guess it was built about 1912, or a little later. I do not know who opened it, but the second owner, Ludwig Sussman, was the finest operator that I have known. His motto seemed to embrace: the patrons' comfort was of the utmost concern.

In the heart of the Depression, he remodeled the interior, taking out some seats and spacing and placing a new comfortable type seat in lieu of the rock hard torture wracks that had been there and were still prevalent in most old shows.

Also, he had the first of what must have been an attempt at air conditioning. The large "Rube Goldberg"* type of machine stood out in the back of the theatre and its base of cement is still there. I cannot vouch for my accuracy, but it looked to me as though several four-hundred pound cakes of ice were placed at the top of a frame and a large suction arm of a fan pulled what cold air arose above the ice into the theatre through ducts. It wasn't too bad.

Mr. Klein, who presently runs the theatre under its new name, the North Shore, was surprised when I told him of the original Northshore on Sheridan Road in the long ago.

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Continuing south on Clark, we revert to the World War One era and stop at the Grand Casino at about 7031, and then move to the Park at 6916. Both shows were quite similar in construction and appearance and were both probably built about 1912, or even earlier. Each had its companion candy store alongside, as did all theatres. Both closed in the 1920s, victims of the superior draw of the Adelphi, I would hazard a guess.

Now we move to Devon Avenue, turn left a few stores and view the medium large, modern Ellentee Theatre at 1550, constructed during World War One and ready to open on the plot of land that had once grown vegetables for Mr. Hollison. It, too, became a good neighborhood theatre for many decades. Later, its name was changed to "The Ridge." It closed in the late sixties and is presently the home of the Clark-Devon Hardware.

Close by, at 1618, the New Devon opened in the early 1920s, but did not last very long. It is now the site of the Assyrian Church. Finally, going west again, at about Rockwell, the Cine opened in the 1940s, and was somewhat of a modernly constructed theatre, but, it too closed after a short life. I guess the full impact of television was now being felt by the movie industry.

One memorable event that was born of the Depression was "Discovery Night." All the theatres soon fell in with this phenomena. On a certain night each week, to spur attendance, theatres began offering cash prizes for people who would come forth and entertain in their own way. Many sang, many danced, and at least one person per night would play the saw with a violin bow. What some people would do, to try to win \$5.00, didn't seem to remain in the boundaries of reality! But there were laughs unlimited. Also some theatres used dishes and silverware to spur attendance.

Norm Coughlin

* Rube Goldberg was a syndicated cartoonist renowned for "ridiculous inventions".

What We've Been Doing

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equipment for the park. Children, teens and adults made some very clever displays with their coins. Marty was there most of the day taking photos of this exciting event. Over 900,000 pennies were donated and many volunteers assisted in this project. Society members took up a collection at the Saturday meeting and several other members contributed. Thanks to all of you. More details later.

Armstrong School 75th Anniversary — Fri. June 10 — Marty set up our display stands (one for the Society and two for the school). Mary Jo attended in the afternoon during a break from work. (She and her brother and sister attended kindergarten here). The Society received several donations from former students; photos and two graduation pins. Mary Jo was able to see some friends from long ago (Jim and Bruce Glass) and finally meet Bob Vehe and some members of his family. Many photos were taken for our archives.

North Shore School 50th Anniversary — Fri. June 17 — Mary Jo, Marty and Anita and Jacob Kneifel attended this wonderful celebration. First was visiting and "Refreshments on the Beach" followed by a program put on by the students and teachers. Mrs. Ann Dix, co-founder of the school with her late husband, was the Honoree of the Evening. (See Spotlight On article).

St. Ignatius School 75th Anniversary — Sat. June 25 — Mary Jo and Marty set up our tables at Loyola University where a big reunion was held (700 attended). Former students, dating back to the class of 1919, enjoyed looking through the pictures and reminiscing. Marty took many photos of the event.

St. Ignatius School 75th Anniversary Mass and Picnic — Sun. June 26 — Mary Jo and Marty again set up our tables, but unfortunately we had to be inside the school due to the wind. Former students and parishoners enjoyed looking through the pictures and reminiscing once again.



FAMOUS ROGERS PARK LOCATIONS

Limehouse/Wisdom Bridge Theatre Building

As a stranger visiting the Howard Street area, have you ever mentioned the beauty of any of the buildings? If you did, then by chance, someone would have pointed out the Howard Theatre, the Broadmoor at 7600 N. Bosworth, the Bishop Building at 1511 Howard and surely the 1559 Howard Building. The latter building has experienced the changes of popularity over the years just as the Howard Street area itself.

In the 1930's, the Howard Street area was booming with popularity and one of the places that contributed to this boom was the "Limehouse" located at the 1559 address, now the home of the resident theatre, "Wisdom Bridge."

The Limehouse was a very popular restaurant and dancing facility owned by the late mayor of Chinatown, Benjamin Jo. He operated the facility from 1931-1954 when it was closed down because of decline in business and higher rental charges. This well-known family get-away offered famous Cantonese dishes prepared according to Oriental recipes along with well-liked American foods. This was "Desserted" or "Served" with the wonderful sounds of the Duane Woodruff Orchestra. You could have your choice of listening to favorite tunes or dance to the ever melodious sounds on a huge dance floor. Whatever your choice of musical dessert was, on a weekend, you could have it at the Limehouse. Do you love fashion shows? Then this location would have been one of your favorite spots. The "Della Frock" fashion show was held there by Barney Richards, owner of the Della Frock Store. The show would feature a wide variety of styles for various occasions and in 1936, he held the most famous of all shows, "The Bridal Show" complete with bride, groom, best man, etc.

The Limehouse was also a place where the students from Gale School would come over and have their lunches at a minimal price.

As the years went by, this 53 year old building changed ownerships several times — some were: James Rampas, a Mr. Pfesser, Samuel Sherwin of Sherwin Management Inc. and present owner, Wisdom Bridge Theatre. Some of the past residents of this two-flat structure were; a day care center, Reach Out Youth center, Ace Hardware, now North Shore Hardware located opposite 1559, Frank's Place, an occult book store, The Wisdom Bridge, who rented for 14 years, and Fritz Reuter & Sons who took up residence in the 1960s and is still at the same location. After the closing of the Limehouse, its space was occupied by a Masonic Lodge for a couple of years.

Age causes decline in physical fitness and it was true of this famous 1559 structure. Before the building was sold to Wisdom Bridge in 1987, there were code violations all of which were corrected by the Wisdom Bridge group. Just when it seemed that

the popularity of this once famous structure was going to be buried, in similarity to the Howard area, it was brought back to life that extended itself on an international as well as local level. This building and adjacent parking lot was purchased for \$250,000.00. "The purchasing of the property on Howard Street is the best way possible for our board to demonstrate its commitment to Wisdom Bridge Theatre in Rogers Park" were the words of its Executive Director, Jeffrey Ortmann. Living up to this commitment on a local level, the group participated in setting a sail the task force which led to the development of the Howard Paulina Development Corporation. This group has adopted the Hayt School under the Chicago Board of Education "Adopt-a-School" program and it has also adopted the Gale Academy which has an after-school theatre program. This extraordinary group has also made it possible for over 7,000 Chicago school children to see plays at Wisdom Bridge for free or reduced rates. The group unconsciously provides students from other neighborhoods the opportunity to get a premier experience of the Howard area, the city limits of Chicago, and to see the building where the famous W.B.B.M. Radio station first started in Chicago.

The generosity of this group further extends itself by making available its space for various public meetings sponsored by Rogers Park organizations.

Staying local, but away from its home base, the group has set up a magnificent touring program, which has magnified Chicago's reputation as Number 1 Theatre Town. This group was praised by Richard Christiansen of the Chicago Tribune for the Encore Series who said that other performances can be labeled "A Benchmark in Chicago Theatre history."

Keeping the fame and popularity of the location alive, this time the group went international where the fame has been recognizably magnified. In May and June of 1985, the shows "In the Belly of the Beast" and "Letters From Prison" were taken to the Glasgow May Fest and London's American Festival. In June of 1986, the group participated in the Israel Festival in Jerusalem.

As the multi-aged clientele traffic east to west and vice versa on Howard Street, there are quite a few who are very happy that the 1559 building, at this age of its existence, can still live up to the once acclaimed popularity and satisfaction that was given to the public in its hey-day.

Wisdom Bridge, you are like the candle that lit the way in a stormy night. The glow, though distant, can be seen with much delight by those who were looking for that very minute glimmer to raise their hopes above the towering dark clouds. Your work is greatly appreciated. It is like giving birth to a new born baby. The Rogers Park Historical Society salutes you!

Glenda Hyde, A.C.P.

The Edgewater Historical Society will sponsor its "Brand New Historical Society Auction" on Sunday, October 23, 12:30 to 5:00 p.m. Auction items include antiques and collectibles. For more information call 338-8022.

Recent Donations:

Rudy Baensch — Park Gables resident for many years
Copy of a writeup "Park Gables Remembers" for its 60th Anniversary in 1988

Mary Brennan McGraw, Agnes I. and Adelaide F. Brennan — daughters of Edward Paul Brennan and former RP residents
Christening dress worn by Edward and his six brothers from 1866 to 1882 and by Edward's daughters from 1911 to 1914 and material relating to the Chicago street numbering system which the City Council passed in 1908 based on Mr. Brennan's suggestion.

Marjorie Carson — RP resident
Newspaper articles concerning cemetery in Northfield where some of the Ceperly family members are buried.

Edward & Rava (Just) Coussens — former RP residents
Metal box that contained six dozen fresh eggs and was mailed from Wisconsin to her parents who lived on Birchwood during the 1930s.

Frederick P. Dose Sr. — former RP resident
Met at the Armstrong 75th Anniversary — copy of old photo of the 8th grade graduating class of February 1931

Doshia Gates — West Ridge resident
Met at Armstrong 75th Anniversary — a couple of old family photos

Ken Goldberg — Armstrong School
Back issues of the new Armstrong School Newsletter dated 1987

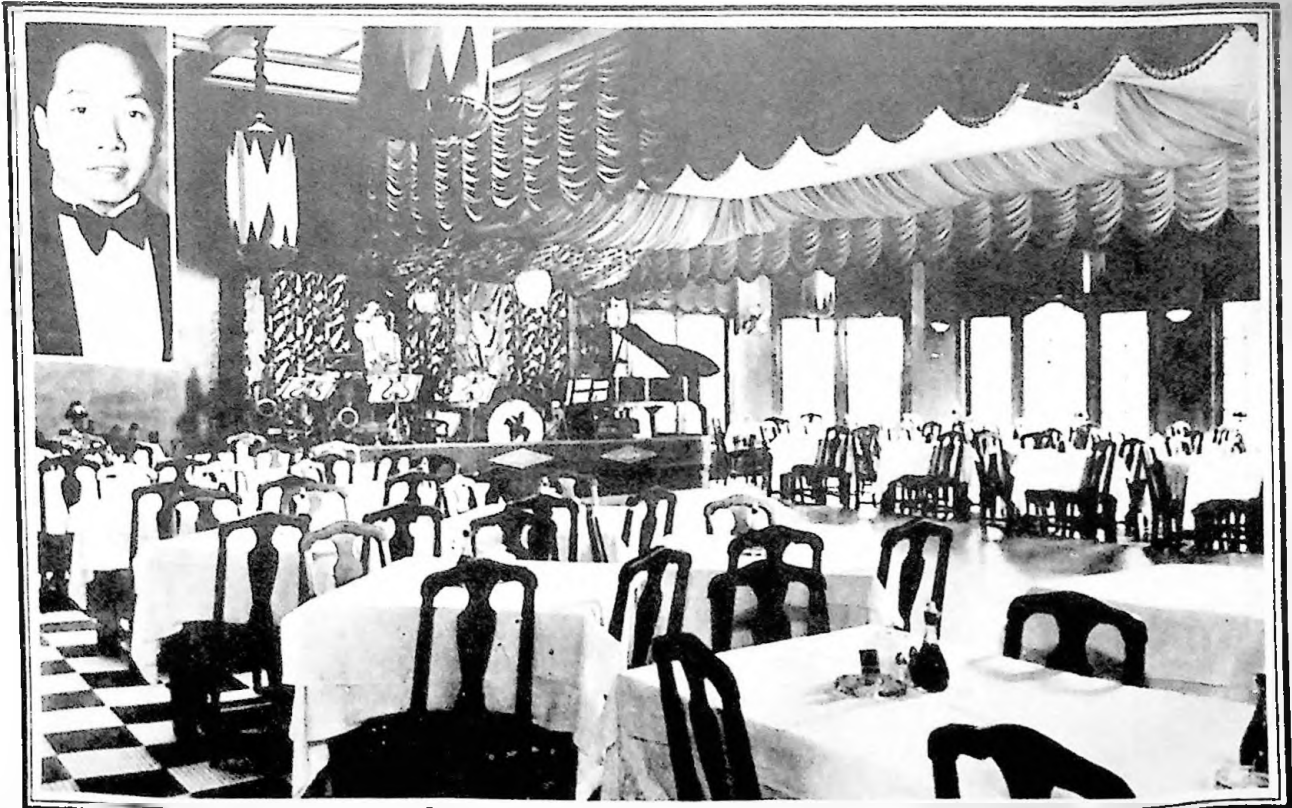
Brother Michael Grace — Loyola University archivist
Two hard bound books: "Lineage: A Biographical History of the Chicago Province" by Edmund J. Fortman, S.J. — 1987 and "The Loyola Book of Verse" compiled and annotated by John F. Quinn — 1987

Ken Gustafson — RPHS member/owner of Gustafson Antiques
Information and photos of Nathaniel Lyons, RP businessman, photos of the RP Kiwanis from 1950s, booklets from Rogers Park Baptist Church, Loyola University year books from 1926 and 1931 and a horse bridle weight dated early 1900s

Fritz Huchting — RPHS member
Issue of the Barat College Newsletter, Spring 1988, showing wonderful old photos and an interesting historical article on the school dating to 1903

Bob Isbell — former RP resident
A book about his father entitled "Marion", the story of Marion Isbell's life. He retired as chairman of the board of Ramada Inns in 1972.

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THE LIMEHOUSE

Full Course Dinner
85c and \$1
Luncheon Fifty Cents
Sunday Dinner
\$1 to \$1.25

Dine and Dance

Briargate 0364

No Cover Charge

Jerry Potter Orchestra
1561 HOWARD STREET

Special
Entertainment
Saturday
Evening

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Spotlight On

Mrs. Ann Davis Dix — North Shore School Founder

North Shore School, a private school in Rogers Park, has always maintained a very high sense of tradition. To quote Mrs. Dix, the foundress, "Almost everything we do, we have done from the beginning." North Shore School first opened its doors in an old mansion on the 7700 block of Sheridan Road in 1938. On Friday, June 17, North Shore School, 1217 Chase Avenue, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary of educating children.

The school opened during the Depression at a time when three private schools in the area were closing. Because of the Depression and the onset of World War II, there was a distinct need for preschools. Women needed to work, if they possibly could, to lend financial support to their families and sometimes because their husbands were in the service. The founders of North Shore recognized this need. At first, they opened the school by enrolling preschool, kindergarten, and first and second grade students. Some boarding students were accepted at the time, a few under three years of age. The school has always maintained its policy of accommodating working parents. During the regular school year, North Shore opens at 7 am and closes at 6 pm. Hot lunches are prepared at the school every day and there is a well-organized afterschool program.

At the time of its opening, North Shore School had an enrollment total of 22 students ranging in age from three to seven years. One grade at a time was added and, when a gymnasium facility was finally acquired in 1943, seventh and eighth grade students were also enrolled. Up until 1950, the institution was known as the North Shore School of Childhood, but was subsequently chartered as North Shore School. The school is currently licensed for an enrollment of 150 pupils.

The home of North Shore School is the old Birchwood Country Club which became defunct during the Depression. The vacant Country Club was rented, at first, to accommodate the increasing enrollment of grade school children. In 1943, the Country Club was purchased and renovated for the school. The Country Club has been noted for canoeing, bowling and dances. The lower floor of the building contained three bowling lanes for its members use, one of which remains to this day. For some time, many of the students enrolled at North Shore were grandchildren of former members of the Birchwood Country Club.

The school was founded by Mr. and Mrs. Dix who came from Tennessee and Cadiz, Kentucky respectively. Mr. Dix was a music teacher and had formerly been a director of a radio station. He taught music during all of his years at North Shore School. His influence predominated, hence the strong emphasis on the fine arts, drama and music. Mrs. Dix came from an educated family. Her father had attained a college degree in 1899 and was one of only

about 250,000 people in the United States who could proclaim such an achievement. He was an educator and a school superintendent. Her mother had been a teacher. Mrs. Dix inherited her parents' respect for education. She knew when she was growing up that she wanted to be a kindergarten teacher. During her years at North Shore she has had the opportunity to teach all grades at one time or another. In 1977, when Mr. Dix passed away, the primary responsibility for the administration of the school was taken over by Mrs. Dix' daughter, Fran, and her husband David Wilkinson. The two of them are presently the Directors of North Shore School.

Within its fifty year history, North Shore School boasts several firsts:

- the first school in the city of Chicago to graduate its kindergarten class in white caps and gowns. This decision was made with the very first graduating class.
- the first American children to perform at UNESCO in 1966. Because of the strong French language program at North Shore, twenty students were able to perform for teachers from 57 different countries. During their performance, the children wore Western costumes and sang Western songs. They tossed balls with red, white and blue ribbons to the audience. On this same trip one of the first grade students amazed a teacher from England with her ability to read at the second grade level. The belief in Europe was that American schools did not offer a very high quality education.
- a summer camp program that has taken place almost from the beginning. The first summer camp was to the Blue Ridge Mountains of Tennessee for which a train was chartered to transport the children. After WW II began, it was impossible to reserve a train, therefore the summer camp program was conducted on the grounds of the school.

North Shore has always employed highly structured methods in teaching and discipline. Classes are small enough so that all individual interests are taken into account. Teachers and administrators pride themselves on being able to build upon individual interests of students so that they may be developed into careers.

Anita Kneifel

President's Note:

At the 50th Anniversary celebration, Mrs. Dix was presented with the letters and proclamations from the following dignitaries honoring her dedication to the field of education: Mayor Sawyer and the Chicago City Council, Senator Alan Dixon, Senator Paul Simon, Congressman Sidney Yates, who also presented her with a flag flown in her honor over the United States Capitol Building in Washington, DC, Governor James Thompson and President Ronald and Mrs. Nancy Reagan.

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The festivities were of a very historical nature starting with refreshments and visiting on the beach followed by a wonderful program with speeches by former students, songs by the students and a skit by the teachers all in honor of Mrs. Dix.

The Rogers Park Historical Society is proud to know Ann Dix and recently conducted an oral history interview with her. Our archives now hold her story of her life at the school and in Rogers Park.



Recent Donations:

Continued from page 5

Marion K. Johnson — Largo, Florida resident

Two wonderful post cards of her uncle who was a milk wagon driver

Helen McLaren McMahon — former RP resident

Met at Armstrong 75th Anniversary — 8th grade graduation pin from Armstrong — Class of 1936

Jill Meter — student at Northwestern

Copy of her school paper entitled "A History of The Rogers Park Community Council" dated June 1988

Elmer Passow — Des Plaines HS member

Two old family photos — one a beautiful picture of the Louis Fuellgraff home (his family) located at Damen and Rogers (present site of the Rogers Park Pantry) dated 1900 and the other, the Confirmation class of Rogers Park Lutheran Church in 1911

Elinor Kline Reed — long-time RP resident and member

Historical information regarding Armstrong School on its 75th Anniversary, family photo and an American flag key chain from Grassfield's Restaurant formerly located at 6666 N. Ridge

Florence Selko — RPHS member/Glenola Past President

Articles of Incorporation from the State of Illinois to Glenola Club of Loyola Center dated Sept. 23, 1921

Betty Sherman — RPHS member

Two lovely afgans to be raffled off as a Society fund raiser. Some tickets were sold at the Spring House Tour with additional ones to be sold at summer and fall events. Raffle will take place on Sunday, Sept. 25, Fall House Tour Day

Mary Mertens Thiry — oldest RPHS Member

Seventh grade booklet from St. Henry's School containing examinations in geography, grammar, and arithmetic dated 1901

Bill Tyre — Irving Park Historical Society

Yellow tin whistle marked Bowman Milk and Ice Cream

Edith McLaren Vehe (Mrs. Karl) — former RP resident

Met at Armstrong 75th Anniversary — Karl's 8th grade graduation pin from Armstrong — class of 1935

Beverly von Winckler — RPHS member

Copy of a letter from her great-grandmother, Anna Adelia Dodd, dated July 14, 1888 from Rogers Park (will appear in future Newsletter)

Duane Woodruff — former RP resident and band leader at the Limehouse Restaurant

Photos of himself and his band and several newspaper items — 1940s and 50s

John Zender — RPHS member

Photos and additional information pertaining to the Zender and Muno families dated 1880s — early 1900s



Birchwood Country Club (now North Shore School)

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Spring House Tour

Imagine how delighted I was to discover that the members of the Rogers Park Historical Society were not a bunch of stuffed shirts sitting around the country club, looking down their noses at the 'riff raff.' I remember waltzing into that first meeting last December just a little afraid that the air in the back room of the library might be too rarefied for me. I had seen similar groups in New York and elsewhere and I knew that too often local history becomes the private preserve of the idle rich and the plaything of the lily white.

Anyway, I dared to go to that first meeting. I shook a few hands and was pleased to find breathing room for myself and in short order I became a member, full-fledged. I was new to Rogers Park and I was eager to immerse myself in the local color. I also wanted to break out of my cocoon; that dusty, dreamy little room which writers occupy.

January and February came along. I began to attend meetings, but it wasn't until March that I got seriously involved. It was then that all the heavy preparation for the Spring House Tour began. I remember when the fever began to build for the big event. I couldn't understand what the excitement was all about. I was embarrassed to admit that I had never heard of a house tour — only to discover that it was an old American tradition (nearly sacred in Chicago) for homeowners to open their doors to perfect strangers. Personally, I had never paid any particular attention to houses or cared anything much about real estate before. Much of my life I have lived as a gypsy, moving here, moving there, always pulling up stakes every other year or so. The thought of buying a house was always the furthest thing from my mind. ...But not lately.

Anyway, with the coming of spring and the blooming of lilacs, the great fanfare surrounding the House Tour began in earnest. I volunteered for one small writing job, but pretty soon my responsibilities mushroomed and before I knew it, I had press releases to write, home owners to interview, houses to research, a program to prepare, and a thousand and one tiny little tasks to tend to. Suddenly, I had all these deadlines to meet, places to go, people to see. I went to the Chicago Commission on Landmarks, to the Cook County Office of Records and Deeds at City Hall, to the Bureau of Maps and Plats, and to three or four different libraries. There were many moments when I felt like I was in way over my head.

But several gratifying things happened as I was scurrying here and there. First I began to learn things about real estate, about houses and the law, about architecture. I learned how to trace the ownership of a house, for example and the significance of the legal descriptions of houses. And then there were all these niceties I picked up along the way: how to tell Italian Renaissance from Neo-Classical or Spanish colonial from Dutch; not to mention a thousand and one details concerning windows and doors, symmetrical roofs and asymmetrical ones, parapets and gables, dormers and arches and A-frames.

But most important of all was the opening of my closed eyes. It is impossible for me to walk the streets of the city anymore without paying close attention to things that used to pass me right by — like the rich

variety in the styles of houses and the subtle ways that homes reflect the personalities of their owners. I am reminded of the old days when I used to pass by trees and birds and flowers and did not notice them either. I couldn't tell an oak from a sycamore or a robin from a blue jay. Eyes we have, but they see not.

All of this is a long-winded way of recommending to you that you get involved in some reasearch project or another as soon as possible. Some of you, of course, are already knee-deep in various projects of your own and you hardly need a Johnnie-come-lately like me to tell you what's what. But I know there are others of you, who for one reason or another, have shied away from research 'work'. I think you're missing a lot of fun. From a distance the work may seem like drudgery, but I promise you, it will quickly turn to a labor of love. It's a great joy seeing history come alive and walk from the pages of dusty old books. We've been conditioned, most of us, to think of history as a drab recital of dates and deaths. Start climbing into those family trees. Start digging into righteous roots. It's the only way to fly....

Gilbert Moore

Much Appreciation Goes To:

Ann and Ken Indermark	6531 N. Talman
Tom McLoughlin & daughters	6701 N. Campbell
Colleen and Ashish Sen	2557 W. Farwell
Eileen and Ed Soderstrom	2204 W. Greenleaf
Jane Sullivan & William Wilke	2650 W. Albion

Thanks are also extended to Bob Doepp of the Park Castles for acting as host/tour guide at their swimming pool.

Our spring tour would not have been possible without the generosity of the hosts who opened their homes for this special fund raiser. Rave reviews about the tour were heard all over the West Ridge and Rogers Park area.

Others Not To Be Forgotten:

Lynne Malone for her design on the poster and booklet cover and for the architectural sketches of the houses that appeared in the booklet

Gilbert Moore for his enthusiastic description of each of the houses, for his interesting article on the early history of West Ridge and for his marvelous poem all of which appeared in our booklet and, most of all, for his encouragement and help on last minute details

Lisa Porter for her assistance on so many of the tasks (publicity, posters, signs, memorabilia table, etc.)

Marty Schmidt for his outstanding photographs of the houses which were presented to the owners

Lee Schroeder for delivering over 1000 flyers

Special Thanks to our House Tour Sponsors:

Angus Restaurant	Lerner Newspaper
Ashland Addison Florist	Lost Eras Antiques
Baird & Warner Real Estate	Magic Karpel Travel Agency
Bell Book & Candle	My Place For ?
De's Meat Market	Nicole's Bake Shop
Devon Bank	Pinewood Inn
Fish Keg	Ridge-Howard Pharmacy
Fluky's	S & C Electric Company
Freedy's	St. Paul Federal Bank —
Mary Friedman —	Howard & Western
Beauty Consultant	Stevens Interiors
Graphic House, Inc. —	Thillens, Inc.
Skokie	Washington National
Gulliver's Restaurant	Insurance Company
Leona's Restaurant —	Welcome Inn
Rogers Park & Lakeview	West Ridge News Agency



Special Thanks To:

Glenda Hyde for her continuing research on significant buildings for her Newsletter articles.

Susan Lukatch for her assistance at the Armstrong School 75th Anniversary.

Marty Schmidt for all the photos he has been taking at various events and of neighborhood buildings.

All of the people who continue to make contributions to the Newsletter and the Building Fund.



Recent Acquisitions:

Two acid-free storage boxes

Hard cover book entitled "Quest" an Anthology of Verse by the students of Mundelein College dated 1939

Booklet on Madonna Della Stada Chapel at Loyola University — An Apostolate of Love by James J. Mertz, S.J. dated 1975

Centennial Booklet on the History of the United Church of Rogers Park dated 1972

Bell Telephone System Telephone Almanac for 1959

Editor's Note:

Are you still in touch with an old neighbor or relative whose roots are in Rogers Park? How about sending in a membership to the RPHS Newsletter in their name to keep them posted on current happenings or jogging their memories on old events, via the Newsletter? It will be mailed to anyone anywhere in the world.

Address comments to:

Norm Coughlin, Editor
RPHS NEWSLETTER
6555 N. Bosworth Ave.
Chicago, Illinois 60626

LETTERS.....COMMENTS

....In going over old pictures I did not find a Bowman wagon, but the enclosed.The man on these pictures was an uncle of mine. I guess dad never had his picture taken. We are moving back to Mt. Prospect this fall. I may see you again sometime at one of their meetings.

Sincerely,
Marion K. Johnson
Largo, Florida

I received the Newsletter — as usual, it is very good!enclosed is a contribution toward some of the house tour expenses. Hope it is a beautiful day and a very successful tour.

Sincerely,
Cathy Keenan

What a class act! We were so impressed with the beautiful way you organized the tour. The buildings were outstanding and the hosts and hostesses were so hospitable and warm. Again, thank you for a beautiful day worthwhile spent. Good luck in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,
Naomi Rushakof
(Skokie Historical Society)



Rogers Park Fights Crime

The Rogers Park Historical Society will be one of the sponsors of the First "Rogers Park Against Crime" Rally on Thursday, August 11, at 7:30 pm at Loyola Park. The event is hosted by the RP Community Council, the 24th District Beat Rep Program and the 24th District Steering Committee. Members will walk in unison from 1629 W. Morse to the fieldhouse and participate in this historic event. The purpose is to show that the streets belong to the neighborhood and as a community we can reduce crime by providing support to one another. Members, please bring a flashlight and join us!



Thanks a Lot:

Norm Coughlin and Marty Schmidt have shown their Horse and Wagon slide presentation to the Morton Grove HS, Niles HS and Wheeling High School. They have donated their fees to our historical society and this is deeply appreciated. They have another event coming up soon.



Here is our Wish List:

Book cases
Copy machine
File cabinets
Shelving
Video recorder (VHS)

All items can be new or used.

Thillens Stadium 50th Anniversary

In the midst of prairies, greenhouses, and truck farms with mud roads, the first two-flat on the block was erected at 2832 W. Chase. Alice Taylor, who preferred to be called "Syd", and who would later become Mrs. Ferdinand Thillens, grew up there.

Across the street was a vacant lot, really a prairie, a little east of where the former St. Margaret Mary's Chapel now stands. In the mid 30s, this prairie was the first "Thillens Stadium" because this is where the ball field was. Ferdy, as he was called, and, who at the time lived at 2126 W. Peterson, mowed the grass and made the bases. Bill Freeding sponsored the first team. His son Richie, along with Alice, two of the Thillens brothers, and Bud and Bill Welter all joined the "hit 'em in the rhubarb!" call. Mel Thillens sponsored the next team.

The Chase Avenue ballgames came to an end, however, when the landowner showed up one day to ask what they were doing on his property. Mel must have gone nose to nose with the owner, who demanded that the children pay his taxes if they wanted to play ball there. This is an important historical event because it revealed how enterprising and persistent the Thillens boys were and would be. Mel obtained permission for the games to be played on Kedzie north of Devon along the Sanitary Canal. Alice hit the first home run there and later went on to manage a girl's team with Sis (Welter) Cunningham and to marry her ardent admirer, Ferdinand Thillens.

Mel, who is married to the former Doris Marmy, and Ferdy were two of the four sons born to John and Therese (Heiar) Thillens. John came to this country from Luxembourg in the 1890s and started a greenhouse business on Peterson, near Damen. Mel was working as a bank clerk when the Depression hit and the bank closed. He then went to work at a currency exchange and shortly thereafter thwarted five bandits. After this episode, the owner sold the business to Mel and the Thillens Checashers was born. From the success of his business enterprise, in 1938 he was able to build the ballpark we now know at a cost of \$75,000. The fences, bleacher seats, lights, the scoreboard and the concessions stand were all installed.

In the 1950s, Mel started a little league program. A call went out and 10,000 boys showed up for the tryouts. There were professional coaches, but originally only six teams. This eventually grew to 28, with 18 coaches, and the games continued through 1964. During the early years, a few of the teams made it to the little league finals at Williamsport.

Thousands of West Ridge and Roger Park residents, along with countless people from all over Chicago and the suburbs, spent many an enjoyable night watching the interesting attractions that came to this famous park. The King and His Court, the Queen and Her Court, Donkey Baseball, and countless softball games are only a few that the people will look back on with fond memories.

Congratulations to the entire Thillens Family on the 50th Anniversary of their beloved stadium!

Sharon Lubin

We are very saddened to report the death of Josephine Wilkins, 99, one of our earliest members and donators. She lived in Rogers Park for the past 89 years and her grandfather donated much of the land now used for the tennis courts at Farwell Beach.



Special Notice of Election:

The Rogers Park Historical Society announces that at the regular Saturday meeting on September 17th, there will be an election held for the two at-large members of the Board of Directors. Nominations will be accepted from the floor.



Funding for the Landmark Commission

The Historical Society sent a letter to Mayor Sawyer, with copies to others, regarding the funding for the Chicago Landmark Commission stating that we are opposed to budget cuts. We received a letter from David Orr, Alderman, 49th Ward, stating that he shares our concern and the we have his assurance that he will do whatever he can to preserve the funding at the current level.



Oral History Project

Gilbert Moore, our new acting oral history coordinator, is busy collecting material on the subject. Information will be given to anyone who wishes to assist the Society in this project. For information, call 743-0657 or 764-2401.



Animal Information

One Reminder from the last Newsletter:

- Danger! A few minutes in a hot car could kill your pet!

Even when the temperature is in the low 80s, a parked car can reach 102 degrees in just 10 minutes and 120 in just 30 minutes.



Help Wanted

Volunteer co-chairs Joan Thiry and Myrel Cooke-Titra would like to invite all RPHS Members to consider joining-in for at least one of the upcoming projects. It is time to update our volunteer lists and help is needed to work on mailings, proofread the newsletter, gather oral history, catalogue the collection, make telephone calls, greet housewalkers, and many, many other things. All levels of expertise are welcome. Some jobs are stay-at-home, others are for getting out and greeting people. If you think you might be able to donate an hour or two of your time in the next month please check off the "help" box at the bottom of the membership form and send it to the RPHS or call Mary Jo, 764-2401.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Edythe Balster	Bernard Mitchell (West Ridge)
Paul Bluestone	Denise Orlando
Myrel Cooke-Titra	Natalie Peterson (West Ridge)
Elizabeth Gelfund (West Ridge)	Robert Petersson (West Ridge)
Kathy Duskey Gemperle (Edgewater)	Philip Ryan
Samuel Gilmore	Robert G. Sampson (Arlington Heights)
Paul Glassco (Bethany Beach, Del)	Sue Schneider (Evanston)
Ken Goldberg (West Ridge)	Robert E. Stanley (West Ridge)
Mindy Heidekat (West Ridge)	Stephen Titra
Lorraine Heyart (Seminole, Fl)	Roy Urbauer (West Ridge)
Howard/Sarah Kern (West Ridge)	John Willoughby
Ed Lukatch (West Ridge)	Duane Woodruff (Lake Forest)
Ramon McLaughlin	Ethel Peterson Woodruff (Lake Forest)

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: Norman Coughlin, 6555 N. Bosworth, Chicago, IL 60626. Phone 262-3190. Managing Editor: Mary Jo Doyle.

Contributors: Norman Coughlin, Mary Jo Doyle, Glenda Hyde, Anita Kneifel, Sharon Lubin and Gilbert Moore.

Thanks also to Emily Lopez, Jackie McNicol, Gilbert Moore and Marty Schmidt for their services.

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Thanks for Renewing:

Beverly Brockhagen (West Ridge)	Virginia Light (West Ridge)
Veronica Campbell	Susan Lukatch (West Ridge)
Millicent Cooper (West Ridge)	Jackie McNicol (Wilmette)
Robert Cooper (West Ridge)	Deborah Nerness
Dottie Ehmann	Phyllis Paulo
Ed Ehmann	Jean Price
Bob Glass	Franklin Rosemont
Mitzi Golden	Penny Rosemont
Irma Hogan	Jon Willarson
Cathy Keenan (West Ridge)	



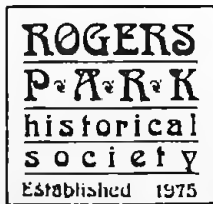
MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

A few of you members out there still have not sent in your 1988 dues. When you get a chance to do so, please do not forget us. The response to the appeal in the last two issues was most gratifying and encouraging. We picked up quite a few new members and many renewals with a lot of them adding in the two optional \$2.00 items for a total of \$10.00. Remember these fees are tax deductible.

The next Newsletter issue is due out the fourth week of October 1988. If you have anything to suggest or contribute, the deadline is October 11.

WE WELCOME GUEST COLUMNISTS AT ANY TIME.

If you are receiving this newsletter in the mail for the first time, it is probably because you asked to be on the mailing list at one of our events during the spring or early summer. To insure your continuing receipt of the Newsletter and other Society announcements, please forward your membership application soon. We need you.



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

MEETINGS

1st and 3rd Saturdays
11:15am-1:00pm



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