

ROGERS PARK HISTORICAL SOCIETY

"Preserving the Roots of Rogers Park/West Ridge"

N · E · W · S · L · E · T · T · E · R

Vol. VII No. III

Summer 1992

From the President

The sun shone brightly on our annual summer picnic! Over 90 RPHS members and friends came together on the lovely grounds of the historic Unity Church for fun, music and food. (See story on page 4.) Thanks to all the good people who made the day a stunning success!

Our Commemorative Calendar sales have gone over the halfway point of the 2,500 limited edition. Some people have purchased extra copies for family members, friends and former community residents. They have gone as far away as California and Washington.

Join us for our 8th Annual Fall House Tour on Sunday, September 27. There are five homes, a few gardens, St. Ignatius Church and surprises. For the first time the Society has asked each member to buy two tickets for this major fund raising event.

I hope everyone can be with us and support us by making this a special day.

Martin J. Schmidt

House Tour Sept. 27

Take a Peek Inside

Interested in seeing the house that used to have six kitchens? How about the place where the owners knocked out 10 walls and planted 20 trees? Or something else intriguing in three other equally unique homes?

You can see these and learn a little piece of Rogers Park history to boot on Sunday, September 27, from noon to 5 p.m. during our Eighth Annual Fall House Tour. Tickets are \$8 in advance, \$9 at the door, and include door prizes and refreshments.

Some of the finest gardens in the city also will be on display.

The tour starting point again will be at Larry Calhoun's home and



garden, 1629 W. Morse. The Society will have its photo collection on display there for those interested in looking at some of the wonderful old scenes of this area.

Take a moment to view the special exhibit of photographs we have acquired over the past year.

A special attraction this year is a tour of St. Ignatius Church on Glenwood Avenue. Again this year, you can look forward to bidding on some wonderful silent auction items, purchase raffle tickets and enjoy delicious refreshments. All proceeds go to our building fund. We hope that many of our members and friends will join us and make this day a special occasion.

The Way It Was Lead Off

In accordance with our policy of welcoming all contributors to the Newsletter, this issue will mark a change. Eleanor Breiter Davis has written a column reminiscing about old Clark Street. So you will only be subjected to a minimum of my drivel this time!

Does anyone recall a sophisticated game of "Chicken" practiced in my era? It necessitated climbing to the

steel cross members of the frame of the signal towers that skirted the width of the Northwestern tracks every half mile. When a steam locomotive rushed beneath you, the idea was to stand in the chimney updraft without flinching. That none of us lost our eyesight was a miracle. But machoism was alive and well, even in those days!

Norm C.

The Way It Was Clark Street in the 1920s

By Eleanor Breiter Davis

In the late '20s and '30s, a Mr. White owned the property at the northwest corner of Hermitage and Rogers. On the corner was a sunken garden, which he planted and tended. It was much admired by those of us who walked to the Howard El station. The lot was eventually sold and an apartment building was erected, leaving just the house and the lawn.

To the north of the building were about five nice residences that were torn down. Vacant lots still exist there, although for a number of years they were planted with vegetable and flower gardens.

Of course, I remember Howard Street as it used to be — the Norshore Theater where Al Kvale and his orchestra held us all spellbound; the beautiful Broadmoor Hotel; the Howard Theater; the Limehouse Restaurant, which was quite the gathering place for the young folk; Oberman's delicatessen, which was there for many, many years; and Zender, the florist, and after that the Howard Florist, owned and operated by Mrs. Elizabeth Eischen and her family, later sold to Rudd Sabey.

In the late '20s, the southeast corner of Clark and Howard was a Walgreen Drug Store; it has been the Gold Coin Restaurant for a long time now. For many years about that time, the northeast corner of Clark and Rogers was a drug store owned by the Weber family, whose sons were Hector and Bruno. (This information is from my husband, who used to play with the boys when they all lived in the apartment building at that corner.)

At the triangle of Clark-Rogers-Jarvis, Margaret and George Johnson established a small gas station in 1943, where they were for three

years. In 1946 they moved to the northwest corner of Clark and Rogers, put a small trailer on the lot, and were in the auto-equipment-rental business. In 1952 they bought the property on Clark just north of Rogers and operated it until Margaret sold it in 1983, after George passed away. Some years prior to that time, a grocery store was on the corner; it is now a Walgreen Drug Store.

In about 1920, the southeast corner of Clark and Rogers was a Royal Blue grocery store, then a National Tea. George Moore had his real estate office to the south — it is now Captain Nemo's Restaurant.

For many years in the late '20s, the Marquis Grocery and Market was on the south side of Jarvis, just west of the El and it was owned and operated by Mr. Marquis and his son. His daughter Ruth and I were in Armstrong together. A number of years ago we visited her in Sarasota, Fla., where she was in charge of a mobile home park. An A&P Grocery Store was on the south side of Jarvis just east of the El — it is now a series of smaller stores.

In the early '20s on the west side of Clark just south of Jarvis there was

(Continued on page 4)

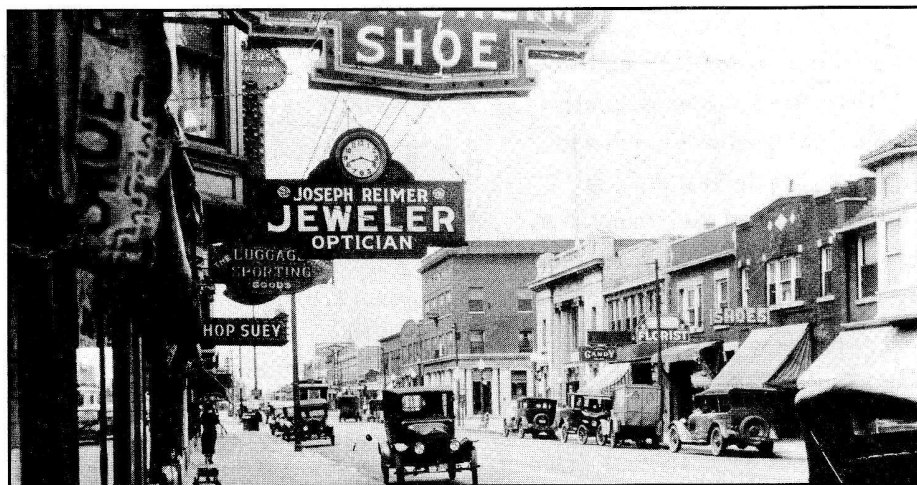
About the author:

My brother, Ernst J. (Ernie) and I were born at 1913 Kenilworth Ave., later changed to Touby Ave. In 1912, our parents bought the property at 1845 Kenilworth Ave., (previously numbered about 420) and Ernie lived there continuously for 71 years, until he passed away early in 1983.

When Ken Davis and I married in 1949, I moved to his home on Rogers near Ridge. But in 1965 we moved back to 1845 Kenilworth, where we lived until we pulled up stakes and came to Schaumburg in 1983.

Our grandfather bought a 10-acre plot at 2643 Touby in 1890 which became the family's livelihood; truck gardens and greenhouses. It was sold a number of times after my grandmother died.

When Ken and I left Touby to move to Friendship Village, it was the first time in 93 years that no one by the name of Breiter lived on Touby Avenue. Rogers Park/West Ridge encompassed the area between the lake and the canal (the North Shore Channel) and Devon and Howard. Ernie's recollection of that area was recorded on tape for the Rogers Park Historical Society, but my memories are centered more on the area east of Ridge Boulevard.



Clark Street — looking north toward Lunt Avenue — mid 1920s

Calendar of Events

Sat. Sept. 5

11:45 am - 12:30 pm
RPHS Program
Show & Guess! Prizes
will be offered for
identifying old items.

Sun. Sept. 13

11:00 am to 3:30 pm
Prairie Days
Indian Boundary Park

Sun. Oct. 4

1:00 - 4:00 pm
Open House for the
100th Anniversary
Chicago Fire Dept.
California & Rosemont

Sun. & Mon. Sept. 6 & 7

11:00 am to dusk
50 Fest at Warren Park
Look for the RPHS
booth, old photos, etc.

Sun. Sept. 27

Noon - 5:00 pm
RPHS 8th Annual
Fall House Tour
(see application
on page 9.)

Sat. Oct. 17

8:00 - 10:00 pm
RP/WR Cent. Comm.
Barbershop
Harmonizer
Show & Afterglow
(see article on page 4)

Sat. Oct. 3

11:45 am - 12:30 pm
RPHS Program
Camp Douglas
Civil War Talk
Retired Capt.
Ernest Griffin
RP Library

Tue. Oct. 20

7:00 - 9:00 pm
Local Oral History
Northtown Library
6435 N. California

Sat. Sept. 12

10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Rogers Park Library
Summer Book Sale

Establishment of High School Scholarship Fund

A scholarship fund of \$500 was recently established in the name of the Rogers Park Historical Society by an anonymous donor. The fund was opened in recognition of the goals of the Society, the diligent work of the officers, board of directors and volunteers and the support of our membership. Cash awards will be presented to one or more deserving high school history students each year. The initial award will be given at the end of the 1992-93 academic year.

The donor suggests that the history of Rogers Park and West Ridge be studied and enjoyed by youths in our area. The Society appreciates this special donation. Additional contributions are being accepted for this worthwhile cause. Make check payable to RPHS: Scholarship Fund.

What We've Been Doing

Jackson-Thomas Open House —

Sun. June 14: Owners, Gary and Sean Brown, and Cyrus Realty held an open house for this historic landmark. RPHS board members and Centennial Commission members attended this lovely event.

Green Briar Park Community Day —

Sat. June 27: Mary Jo and John represented the RPHS at this fun-filled day. Society & Centennial materials were distributed to spread our message to residents in the southwest corner of our area.

Nortown Civic League 4th Annual West Rogers Park Open —

Sun. June 28: Lots of members and neighbors played golf in many backyards. This year's theme was Goofy Goes Hollywood. It was

enjoyed by many, including some of our members. Thanks to Barb Shields who sat watch over our table and sold calendars, bus tickets, etc.

RP/WR Centennial

Double-decker Bus Tours —

Sun. June 28 and Aug. 9th: Over 150 people participated in the one-hour historical bus tours. Everyone learned something new about our neighborhood. Thanks to Kathy Krokhar and Diane Taylor for their comments as tour guides. Next summer we will repeat these popular tours.

49th Ward Community Health Fair —

Sat. July 25: Mary Jo, John and Loretta Bamman displayed RPHS and Centennial materials at our table in bright sunshine. After a brief rain

shower, they talked to many people about our upcoming events.

RPHS Program: Comiskey Park RIP —

Sat. Aug. 1: Member Herb Fagen gave an impressive program on old Comiskey Park, may it rest in peace! Everyone present thoroughly enjoyed Herb's insight and knowledge about this topic.

Especially Ethnic —

Sun. Aug. 9: This festival, hosted by the Indo-American Center and co-sponsored by the Centennial Commission, took place at Warren Park on a sultry afternoon. RPHS volunteers headed for a shady spot as they manned our table.

Thanks to John Arcand, Mary Friedman and Mitzi Golden for their assistance.



Rogers Park/ West Ridge Centennial Update

The Centennial Commission is continuing its hard work, spreading the news about the 100th Anniversary of Rogers Park and West Ridge. Both villages were annexed to the City of Chicago on April 4, 1893.

POSTER CONTEST

Many young artists showed their artistic flair in the Centennial Commission Poster Contest. The winners are: Nancy Camacho, second grader at Gale Community Academy; Tiffany Franklin, sixth grader at Gale and Glenda Jackson, eighth grader at Gale.

Our thanks again to the schools and to all the students who participated in this Centennial contest.

DOUBLE-DECKER BUS TOURS

The 1992 double-decker bus tours are over for this summer. The rides proved to be quite an adventure for all those who attended. A wonderful and fun time, if not unique, was enjoyed by all. Tour dates are scheduled for next June, July and August — Summer of 1993. A souvenir tour booklet with valuable coupons and a chance in a \$100 raffle can now be purchased for \$3, which will help defray printing costs. Raffle will take place before the end of this year.

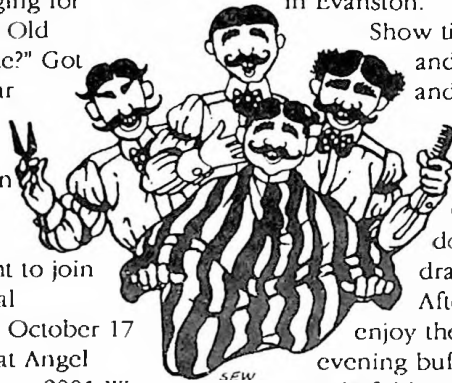
GREAT FACIAL EXPERIMENT

Bring back that 1890s look and have a chance to win \$100 in the Great Facial Experiment contest! Start growing that handlebar moustache, mutton chops or a fancy beard — or maybe even all three. Judging will take place at the Gay '90s Picnic on Sunday, July 25, 1993. Let hirsute rule!

Centennial Crooners Will Be Singin' Along

Are you longing for "The Good Old Summertime?" Got a hankering to hear "Sweet Adeline?" Or how about some more modern standards sung in sweet harmony?

Then you'll want to join us at the Centennial Crooners Show on October 17 from 8 to 10 p.m. at Angel Guardian Auditorium, 2001 W. Devon, Chicago. Featured singers will be the Arlingtones Men's Barbershop Chorus, the North Shore Harmonizers, with their women's chorus and quartet, and two quartets from the North Shore Men's Chorus



in Evanston.

Show tickets are \$8 for adults and \$6 for seniors (65 and older) and students and are available through the Centennial Commission. Cash door prizes will be drawn at intermission. After the show, stay and enjoy the Afterglow, a late evening buffet with more wonderful harmonizing. Due to limited seating, advance reservations are required for this part of the event, scheduled for 10 p.m. to midnight. Tickets are \$6. For information or reservations, call (312) 764-4079 or 764-2401.

Clark Street

(Continued from page 2)

a very fine home bakery called Ye Old Time Bake Shop, owned and operated by Mr. and Mrs. Streich, a lovely German couple.

Then there was Thomson's garage, later turned into a good-sized bowling alley. What is now the Clark St. Mall (the old Zayre Store) was a Jewel Tea. It was built when the large courtyard apartment building was demolished to make room for it.

The northwest corner of Clark and Touhy was a big, wooded lot when I was growing up. Then the current building went up and housed an A&P store which, at that time, seemed huge compared with other grocery stores. However, larger supermarkets came along and that corner is now the Romanian Kosher Sausage Co.

At the northeast corner of Clark and Touhy was the Standard Oil Station sometime around the mid- and late '20s. When Ernie graduated from Senn, jobs were scarce and he pumped gas there for \$10 a week. To the south, was the Kerr Moving and Storage Co. where the very

attractive Mrs. Kerr sat at her desk and ran the business.

Then there was the Kolmes Laundry. And way back when I was a little girl about 1918, Mr. and Mrs. George Smith ran the Smith Variety Store in that area. At one time there was a Piggly Wiggly Grocery Store there, and the Palace Cash Market, where Irv Baumhardt and John were the butchers.

A National Tea also opened in that area at one time and a very handsome man by the name of Howard was the manager. The Kammesch Market was at the northwest corner of Clark and Estes for many years. The family was quite well known in the area.

Phil Kammesch later owned and operated The Quality Market on Western just north of Lunt for many years.

On Estes Avenue, just west of Clark, a little cottage was owned by Jimmie O'Connell, the area's well-known sewer/plumbing man — he cut quite a figure. His son, Johnnie, now deceased, was a postman out of Rogers Park for a long time and was known by many.

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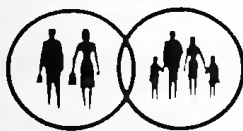
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Having lots of fun at the RPHS 1992 Summer Picnic

Hot Fun In The Summer Time

Take a beautiful Sunday afternoon, add laughing children, many happy families, delicious food, a gorgeous setting and what do you get?

The essential ingredients for a wildly successful summer picnic!

More than 90 members and friends of the Rogers Park Historical Society helped celebrate our 17th anniversary Founder's Day Picnic on the grounds of the Unity Church on July 26th. Hard volleyball play, a rousing game of croquet, good conversation and lively music by musician Eric Mueller helped make the day special.

Caterer Clark Williamson of Food Glorious in Evanston provided a different twist on picnic pickin's with

grilled chicken on a skewer, honey cured ham, delicious salads and chocolate mousse. Many of our own members provided wonderful appetizers and desserts to complement the main entrees.

Raffle prizes were donated by local businesses and well appreciated by all the winners. Thanks to our generous donors. A special thanks goes to the Unity Church and several of their members for graciously hosting and assisting with the event.

If you think this outing sounds great, wait until next summer for our Gay '90s Picnic to be celebrated during our Centennial year. Mark your calendar for Sunday, July 25th, 1993!

History Committee

Chris Kringle, History Chair, recently conducted an oral history with Anna Schingten, 89, a long-time resident of Rogers Park. Anna, who is recovering from surgery, reminisced about Christmases from days gone by, when real candles took the place of blinking electric

lights. But only for a few minutes, she said, lest the house burn down! Anna also recalled how her husband was an ice man in the summer and used to deliver coal in the winter. He was truly a man for all seasons! Anna worked for over 30 years as a telephone operator in Rogers Park.

CRAZE Continues

The Centennial Commemorative Calendar craze continues as sales have now passed the half way mark. The limited edition (2,500) is being sold through local groups and at selected locations in our two communities.

This calendar keepsake contains a map of Rogers Park and West Ridge and a short history of the two areas. It showcases 31 historical black and white photographs from the Society archives, as well as over 125 facts of the area. The calendar spans 21 months, ending in December of 1993.

A history of the Rogers Park Historical Society is also included. A Calendar of Events shows the planned activities for our celebration which runs through the Centennial year.

Be sure to pick up one or more copies since they make an excellent gift for any occasion, especially the upcoming holidays. Stop in at the Centennial office or call 764-4079.

Reserve yours today — while they last!



LOCAL ANNIVERSARIES:

Rogers Park Community Council - 40th
Rogers Park Kiwanis - 50th
Rogers Park Lutheran Church - 90th

CHICAGO AREA ANNIVERSARIES:

Chalet - Wilmette - 75th
CTA (from Congress to 39th) - 100th
Edward Hines Lumber Company - 100th
Jewel Food Stores - 60th
North Shore Harmonizers - 40th
(Women's Barbershop Chorus)
Edward 'Butch' O'Hare - 50th
(World War II Navy Flier Hero)

NATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES:

Alaskan Highway - 75th
American Bandstand - 40th
Bottle Caps - 100th
Girl Scouts of America - 80th

INTERNATIONAL ANNIVERSARIES:

Canada - 125th
Discovery of the Americas - 500th
Lions Club - 75th
World Book Encyclopedia - 75th

Recent Donations

Claire Alport -

Booklet from the Re-dedication Services of Temple Mizpah - dated April 1952 plus photographs and a short history of the temple

Anne Dix and Fran Wilkinson - North Shore School

Memorabilia from Birchwood Country Club including photographs, a 1922-23 membership book, a china place setting and several furniture items; an old address sign from North Shore School

Robert Goldsmith - RPHS member and owner of the former Ridge-Howard Pharmacy

The Schwinn Cycle, built in the early 1940s, that was used as the pharmacy delivery bike (pictured in Summer 1991 Newsletter)

Patricia Mooney-Melvin - RPHS board member

Booklet from the Rogers Park Montessori School 25th Anniversary - dated 1991

Winnie Paul - RPHS member

Old photos of her home on Birchwood and of her family - dated 1920s and a few newspaper articles



Special Thanks To:

All of our members and friends who are making a special effort to sell calendars at their block club meetings, parties and door-to-door throughout the area.

The volunteers from Trilogy who continue to assist our Society with their hard work and support.

Florence Steppner - long-time West Ridge resident

Many photos of her family, Boone School, Temple Menorah, Temple Beth El and many items of interest, including report cards and diplomas

Steve Tres - RPHS member

Large volumes of old real estate listings from Long-Kogen Realty - dated 1920s and later

John Zender - RPHS member

A copy of an 1891 directory that includes West Ridge and a copy of his uncle's diploma

Office Location and Hours

The Rogers Park Historical Society and the Rogers Park/West Ridge Centennial Commission maintain offices at 6424 N. Western. We are open Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and every Thursday evening from 7 to 9 p.m. The RPHS phone number is 764-4078 and the Centennial Commission is 764-4079.

Membership Memos

The information on the top line of your mailing label indicates your member number(s), your category (see below), N for New or R for Renewal and the month and year that your membership expires. A postcard will be sent as a final reminder and then names will be removed from the mailing list. 12-91 indicates that dues have not been paid for 1992.

For future renewals, we ask that you consider a 3-year membership available in the Family and Individual categories (see rates below). We encourage you to consider this money-saving option which will also save the Society precious time. We ask all of our members and friends who have not yet renewed even for some time to rejoin the Society.

MEMBER CATEGORY	PERIOD	MEMBERSHIP DUES
Life Member (L)	—	\$ 500.00
Donor (D)	Annual	100.00
Sustaining (Su)	Annual	50.00
Sponsor (Sp)	Annual	30.00
Family (F)	Annual	5.00
Individual (I)	Annual	10.00
Family (F)	Tri-annual	40.00
Individual (I)	Tri-annual	27.00

(See application on page 9.)

Rogers Park Historical Society

announces its

8th Annual Fall

H O U S E T O U R

Sunday, September 27, 1992

from 12 noon – 5 p.m.

Learn some interesting Rogers Park history as you wander through the homes on our tour. Tickets can be purchased in advance or on the day of the tour at the starting point, 1629 W. Morse.

A booklet containing information on each of the sites will be distributed on the day of the tour. Watch the Learner Newspaper and other sources for more information during the weeks prior to the house tour.

(see article on page 1)

For additional information, call one of the following people:

Mary Jo Doyle 764-2401 / Barbara Shields 274-6284 / Glenna Eaves 973-7994

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

Membership includes quarterly Newsletter, discounts and mini tours.

Application for Membership and/or House Tour and/or Centennial Calendar

1992 annual dues are \$10.00 per person and the membership period is from January 1st thru December 31st. (See additional categories on page 8.)

Membership: New Renewal **House Tour** No. of Tickets | | **Cent. Calendar** (\$12.00 each)

House Tour Tickets are \$8.00 in advance or \$9.00 at the door.

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

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

Thanks for Renewing

INDIVIDUAL:

Edythe Balster
Dolores Collins
• Arthur Gillfand
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WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

INDIVIDUAL:

Julie Arcand
(West Ridge)
• Wilmah Berry
(West Ridge)
Mary C. Hogan
(West Ridge)
Michael Moreth
(North Center)

Lenore Sesner
(Edgewater)

• Hilary Ward

FAMILY:

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SPONSOR:

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(West Ridge)

* 3-Year Members

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Welcome to Patricia Mooney-Melvin who was recently elected to the RPHS Board of Directors.

Pat and her husband Eric and two daughters, Claire and Grace, live in Rogers Park. Pat is a professor of history at Loyola University and is on the board of the Illinois State Historical Society.

Good-bye and good luck to Rev. John Auer of the United Church, Fr. Daniel Banner of St. Paul-by-the-Lake and Fr. David Bowman of St. Ignatius. All three of you will be in our prayers and memories.

Congratulations to 1992 paid member 710, Sue M. Selker, who was the winner of our recent drawing, a dinner for two at Glenway Inn.

NEWSLETTER NOTICES

This newsletter is published by the Rogers Park Historical Society, a not-for-profit organization founded in July of 1975 to preserve the roots of our community. Correspondence may be directed to the Editor: Kevin J. O'Neil, 1442 W. Farwell, Chicago, IL 60626; Managing Editor: Mary Jo Doyle; Feature editor: Norm Coughlin, 6555 N. Bosworth, Phone 262-3190. Circulation 1200 copies. Printed on recycled paper. Newsletter designed & typeset by Tiberi Graphics
WE WELCOME GUEST COLUMNISTS AT ANY TIME.
Contributors: John Arcand, Kathy Krokar, Marty Schmidt and Susan Wise.



Rogers Park
Historical Society
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MEETINGS

1st and 3rd Saturdays
11:15 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

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