



Edgewater Scrapbook

"Notes from the Past, News from the Present"

Vol. XXI, No. 1

Spring 2010

Tragedy at Granville November 24, 1936

By LeRoy Blommaert

The "L," so long a vital transportation artery for Edgewater, became a source of tragedy one November early evening in 1936, when a north bound North Shore electric train smashed into the rear of a north bound Evanston express train stopped north of Granville. Nine people died almost immediately and two died several days later. The total - 11 dead - caused it to be deadliest accident on the elevated system ever recorded, until an accident more than 40 years later at Wabash and Lake on February 4, 1977, eclipsed it by one death to snatch the unwanted title.

Here is a contemporary - and very lively - Chicago Tribune account the day after [November 24, 1936]:

The Evanston train was standing at a switch 50 feet north of the Granville avenue station of the elevated lines, a half block east of Broadway, in the Edgewater district.

The first steel car of the North Shore train plowed all the way through the wooden rear coach of the Evanston train, shearing off its roof and splintering it like a match box. It was the worst elevated lines accident in Chicago history.

All of the dead and all except one of the injured were in the wrecked wooden coach.

Both trains were on the east, or express track. The Evanston train, which switches over to the local tracks at this point in order to make

a stop at Loyola avenue, was blocked at the switch by a northbound train on the local track.

Behind the Evanston train of eight cars came the three car North Shore Line train bound for Mundelein, which was scheduled to continue north on the express track and to pass the Evanston train after the latter switched over west to the local track.

Just north of the Granville station is a signal tower which regulates the switch.

The elevated tracks at this point are perfectly straight for a distance of a mile and a half to the south. It was pitch dark, but two red lights glimmered on the rear of the Evanston train. Its passengers, Homewood bound, noticed the train come to a halt for the switch and chafed at the delay.

Suddenly they heard a whistle scream behind them, then a terrifying crash as the North Shore Line train struck the rear coach.

This old wooden car had no chance. Crushed between the plowing steel coach behind and the steel coach just ahead of it in the Evanston train, the light wooden frame crumpled into sudden wreckage. Sides, seats and floor splintered into a myriad pieces.

The steel car from behind drove through and stopped only a few feet from the steel car ahead. The old wooden coach was shattered - part of its roof rested on the top of the car which struck it. The steel cars, except for broken windows, were almost undamaged.

The scene was instantly one of terror and confusion. Darkness cast a blanket over the shapeless mass of steel and wood splinters, twisted seats, shattered glass and, more

shocking than all this, the 75 passengers thrown into huddles of screaming, moaning and desolately silent victims of a thousand hurts.

Residents of the neighborhood heard the whistle of the North Shore train, then the crash. They saw the passengers flung from the telescoped coach, saw them falling into the alley that runs along the east side of the tracks.



Edward Price, who lives in an apartment overlooking the elevated embankment at 6150 Winthrop avenue, was one of those first to reach the scene.

"The North Shore whistle sounded three or four times," he said. "The train was moving at a lively clip and I could see it was going to crash into the Evanston train. I heard the screech of the brakes."

"The North Shore train swayed back and forth as it slowed down. The lights went out. Just before the crash they came on again, then they went out. There were flames in the wreckage. I ran to the telephone and called the fire department. Then I ran downstairs as fast as I could. I

(Continued on page 4)



From the President

Inserted in this issue is our Annual Report for 2009. The board of directors agreed to start publishing this regular report so we can acknowledge our many supporters and to give you the members and supporters some useful information about how we are doing. This is an important step in our development and I would particularly like to thank Jim Puralewski for taking the lead on getting this going, and special mention goes to Kathy Gemperle, Betty Mayian and Larry Rosen who did the heavy lifting in preparing the document.

As part of our efforts to reach out more to the community, the board agreed upon an important document about our long range plans and how we would like to look on

our 25th anniversary year; called Vision 2013, this planning document will be available for inspection on our website. We invite your review and comments.

In keeping with this vision, we will be seeking funding and resources so we can "take the show on the road," so to speak, and take Edgewater's history to schools, community organizations, and religious institutions, while also inviting them to use the archiving and storage resources of our museum to preserve their histories.

We will also seek to make the museum more accessible by expanding hours; to this end we will be beefing up our volunteer docent program and recruiting more volunteers and members.

As we go to press, the U.S. Census for 2010 is in full gear. We urge the community to fully participate as the census is good for Edgewater in so many ways, not least of which is a treasure trove of information to

help us understand our history and heritage.

Also, as we go to press, we learned of the designation of the Andersonville Business District as an official National Historic District. We are all so grateful to the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce and our own board member, Thom Greene, for their many years of hard work to make this possible. Thanks, Thom!

Finally, I would like to thank our new and returning Board members who were elected by the membership at our annual meeting in March. They give a great deal of time and they really enjoy celebrating Edgewater history. They form the backbone of EHS and the community owes them a debt of gratitude.

Robert Remer

March General Meeting, 2010

EHS President Robert Remer opened the meeting with a review of the successes of the Edgewater Historical Society in the past year. After a membership report from Elizabeth Mayian and a brief financial report from Leroy Blommaert, the Board Development chair, Reggie Griffin announced the nominations for the new board of directors for 2010. Four new board members were nominated and elected. They are: Al Borenstine, Dorothy Nygren, Will Rye and Barbara Strauss. We welcome them with our thanks.

Our featured speaker at the 22nd annual meeting of the Edgewater Historical Society was Gary Johnson, President of the Chicago History Museum. His talk about Abraham Lincoln and his relationship to Chicago focused on Lincoln's

reading material and his political activities. Mr. Johnson was an animated speaker as he reported to us that Lincoln had very little formal education and that this made his reading material very important. His first book was the King James Bible. Beyond that he had a book that reprinted a variety of stories from a variety of authors. But perhaps the most significant thing in his early years was when his father married Nancy Hicks who had been a teacher, and she came with a trunk full of books. This greatly expanded his access to ideas in print.

As Mr. Johnson evoked a picture of Lincoln traveling the circuit on horseback for his legal work he reported on the books Lincoln carried in his saddle bag.

Once Lincoln expanded his career to politics he was a frequent visitor to Chicago. In 1860 he was nominated to the Presidency in Chicago, though he was not present at the convention and prior to the nomination had never met his running

mate. Mr. Johnson's reports gave all in the audience pause to think about how different life and politics was in the 1860s.

The meeting also featured a speaker from the Census Bureau who encouraged all to spread the word about how important the census data is for getting funds to our communities. The meeting was closed and refreshments were served.



We get letters

We received the following letter about one of the teasers concerning the store at 1671 W. Hollywood. Terry Burke sent this additional information. "My cousins were Alice and Margaret Murtagh who ran the store. I have enclosed a couple of photos. This was taken in approximately 1942. A second photo was taken in 1954.

Arthur and Lucy McDonnell lived directly across the street from the store. Lucy was Alice's aunt as outlined in the article. My mother, Maritose was the only child of Arthur and Lucy and was raised there. Alice and Margaret took over the store in the late thirties, probably after Edwin Brandeliner's death. My mother guesses that Alice must have rented it at first and then finally purchased it in 1950 as the County Recorder records show.

My mother married Thomas Burke, who grew up on Olive Avenue. They had 4 boys and one girl and we were all born in Edgewater Hospital. Although the kids never lived in the neighborhood, we visited very frequently to see our grandparents and Alice and Margaret and the rest of our relatives still living in the

neighborhood. Mary Garrity, who helped with some of the background, is our cousin.

The Teaser article mentions that these neighborhood stores were rare in Edgewater. I am not sure if you are aware but there was another store in the neighborhood at the end of Hollywood Avenue at Hermitage. There are apartments or homes in the place where the store was originally. That store was called John's. John was Alice and Margaret's competition. So while a rarity, there were two stores within a few hundred yards of each other on the same block.

Our family has many fond memories of Alice and Margaret's store. It was an important part of our lives and we still talk about it to this day. In the early 70s my grandfather Arthur passed away, and my grandmother Lucy moved to Phoenix. They passed away a few years apart in the late 80s.

I thank you for the article. My mother who still lives here in Phoenix was also very pleased to read about it. Sincerely, Terry Burke."

1954 photo of in front of 1671 Hollywood. Grandfather Arthur McDonnell with Grandson Kevin Burke and his cousin Tim Teister, who lived on Hollywood



Margaret (left) and Alice (right) in their store at 1671 Hollywood in 1942



POSTCARD



Edgewater newest City of Chicago landmark is the Swedish Merchants Savings Bank, which is now known as Hamberger Mary's. It was built in 1913 by architects Ottenheimer, Stern and Reichert. This Andersonville building was landmarked as part of a group of buildings all over the city that were among the first neighborhood banks. The building is clad in white terra cotta with great decorative details.

Notice that this is an historic photo of former Andersonville businesses, Cafe Boost, TomBoy and the Griffin Theater that have closed or moved on. History in the making.

The Historic Sites Committee

Tragedy at Granville (Continued from page 1)

found people lying in the alley. I helped to pull them to an adjoining automobile driveway."

A curious footnote to human reactions in the presence of tragedy was added by Joseph Iaculla, 17 years old, 1429 Thome avenue, who sells newspapers under the elevated at Granville avenue. When he heard the crash he took out his watch.

"It was exactly four minutes when the first fire apparatus got here," he said. "The first police ambulance arrived nine minutes after the crash."

With the arrival of police and firemen a great throng gathered at the scene. Private automobiles and trucks were commandeered to take the injured to the Edgewater, Swedish Covenant, Ravenswood, Rogers-Fost, Evanston and St. Francis hospitals.

Firemen raised ladders along the elevated embankment and carried injured passengers down. Others were carried along the tracks to the Granville station and down the steps there. When stretchers ran out the rescuers used seats from the wrecked car to carry the victims.

Police Commissioner Altman, notified of the tragedy, ordered all available police from north and northwest side stations to help in the rescue work and keep back the crowds.

There were more than 500 police at the scene, two companies of firemen, twenty police ambulances, and three fire department ambulances.

After all the injured had been removed to hospitals, police details were stationed at each of these to control the crowds which swarmed at the doors.

Among the first to reach the scene were three Catholic priests. They administered the last rites of the church to injured persons who appeared to be dying. The clergymen were the Very Reverend J.G. Kieley and the Rev. Thomas Doherty, of St. Gertrude's church, and

the Rev. Howard Ahern, a member of the faculty at De Paul university.

A story of the first rescue work came from William Biesel of Libertyville, who was riding in the first coach of the North Shore train, sitting with Champ Carry, vice-president of the Pullman company, who lives in Mundelein.

"We hardly felt the crash," Biesel said, "but there was a tremendous noise. We climbed down onto the track, and saw a woman lying close to the third rail. Her skirt was beginning to burn. We pulled her away, beat out the flames and got her over to the station platform. Next we picked up two men. Both had been thrown all the way across the adjoining tracks."

William Helm ... an investment broker ... said he was not surprised the accident had occurred.

"I have been taking the train almost regularly for a number of years," he said. "Each evening a few moments after the express switches onto the local track the North Shore roars by on the express track. I have often thought that the timing of the two trains was too close for safety."

Postscript:

The North Shore Line, formally named the Chicago, North Shore and Milwaukee Electric Railway, operated over the elevated into the loop from August 6, 1919, until January 21, 1963, when it abandoned

operations. It operated a branch line west to Mundelein, but its main line was along the Skokie Valley line to Milwaukee. Its original line in Illinois, later called the "shore line," went through the North Shore suburbs and generally paralleled the Chicago and North Western. After the introduction of the Skokie Valley by-pass in 1926, the original line was devoted to local service. It was abandoned first, in 1955. North Shore Line trains never stopped in Edgewater. However, Edgewater residents could board trains at either the Wilson or Howard "L" station. Service was very frequent and express trains made the trip from downtown Chicago to downtown Milwaukee in two hours. Given the limited speed it could attain on the elevated south of Wilson and in running on the streets of Milwaukee, this was an impressive performance. There is still Evanston express service [the purple line], but now it is express all the way to Howard along the express tracks and does not stop at Loyola and Morse.

Editors Note: As stated in the article, the source is the Chicago Tribune. The citing is as follows:

"L" Crash Kills 9, Hurts 58
Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)
Nov. 25, 1936

ProQuest Historical Newspapers
Chicago Tribune 1849-1986) pg. 1



North Shore Electric train crushes rear car of Loyola Express on Evanston "L" line at Granville Station in 1936 (same source as above)

News from the Front: Committee Communiqués

HISTORIC SITES

Co-Chairs: Thom Greene and LeRoy Blommaert



The committee continues to work on listing the top historic sites in Edgewater including commercial and residential and

mixed use.

The latest report on the Andersonville Historic District is that the application has been sent to the Department of the Interior for final review and it has been approved. Also, please note the message on the postcard on page three.

PROGRAM

Chair: Linda Komosa



We continue to add activities to the 2010 calendar and hope you will join us for some. Three programs have been lined up. The first on March 20th was at the Edgewater Library at 10 a.m. The second is on April 17 at 12 noon at the Museum, when Greg Borzo will speak about the Chicago "L" and have a book signing. The third program for the spring will be John R. Schmidt, who is an expert on Mayor Dever. That will be at the museum on June 19th at 10 a.m. It will be part of a few programs on politics in the Edgewater Wards over the summer.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Chair: Reggie Griffin



At our March Annual Meeting on March 20, new board members were elected. We have made an effort to find people who will help guide this organization in the future.

MEMBERSHIP

Co-Chairs: Betty Mayian and LeRoy Blommaert



Renewal letters were sent out in January and many memberships have been sent in. Now a reminder letter is going out for those busy people who just didn't get to it yet.

PROPERTY

Chair: Tom Murphy



The snow is gone but it's not exactly spring. The snowy winter of 2010 is only a memory, we hope. The garden committee is looking forward to starting up again.

The museum itself is in good shape and we are looking forward to rearranging some of the exhibits in the next month or so. Stop by and see us

FINANCE

Chair: Jim Puralewski



The 2009 Annual Report is enclosed with the Scrapbook.

COLLECTIONS

Co-Chairs: LeRoy Blommaert and Tom Murphy



Progress is being made and our archiving team has uncovered some interesting photos that were once dutifully filed in the all encompassing photo box. Now they will be acquisitioned and numbered. Many challenges ahead.

We are looking for memorabilia related to past elections in Edgewater's 40th, 49th and 48th wards. This is for the Political exhibit which will be up over the summer.

Anyone have a Marty Tuchow poster or a Marilou Hedlund poster? We do have a great one of Mayor Dever. We'd like to borrow your treasure for the exhibit. It will be put up in a frame or in a case.

COMMUNICATIONS

Chair: Kathy Gemperle



We have a new format for this newsletter since it now includes the Annual Report.

In the next newsletter we'll have more space for some recollections sent in by our members and friends who are far from Edgewater but have not forgotten how it was in the good old days.

FUNDRAISING

Chair: Betty Mayian



Our Event on April 21 at the Broadway Cellars promises to be great fun. Get your reservations in early. The food will be the greatest, more like a meal, and the Silent Auction will have a number of collectible postcards.

ECC celebrates Fifty Years

In January 2010 the Edgewater Community Council kicked off its celebration of 50 years of service in Edgewater with a luncheon honoring the Edgewater Community Religious Association, (ECRA) at the Edgewater Historical Society Museum. The honored guests represented the community leaders whose efforts led to the founding of ECC in 1960.

Leading the program was EHS President Robert Remer, who is also a past president of ECC. He reminded the group about the community efforts to get the City of Chicago to open a library in Edgewater and how much effort this took on behalf of the volunteers to prove the need for a facility. Now the facility is overcrowded and few can remember what effort it took to get the current building built.

Marion Volini, co-leader of the ECC 50th Anniversary Committee and a past president of ECC, spoke about the vision of ECC at the beginning and the support and encouragement that came from the religious leaders in the community. Other committee members and past presidents also made presentations about the various initiatives and programs developed in the community by the Edgewater Community Council.

In a slide program, Ken Brucks pointed out the housing initiatives of the late 1970s and early 1980s along Kenmore and Winthrop, which came to be known as Operation Winthrop Kenmore and which resulted in 5,200 housing units being rehabbed and available for limited income residents.

Other community initiatives under the direction of ECC included the rehab of the Broadway Armory and the eventual sale of the building to the Chicago Park District to provide the only Park facility building in Edgewater. ECC also lead the way in preservation of the



Gathering at the EHS museum to kick off the celebration of the ECC 50th Anniversary are (from the left) Reggie Griffin, President, of ECC and co-chairman of the Anniversary Committee; Robert Remer, President of EHS; Marion K. Volini, Co-Chairman of the Anniversary Committee; Jason Liechty Executive Director of ECC; Lynn Pierce, member of ECC board and 50th Anniversary Committee; Ken Brucks, past ECC Executive Director. Not in Photo are Dawn Wyman, Chair of the Gala Committee and Helen Murtaugh, Chair of the Art Fair Committee.

last open land on the lakefront with the saving of the two mansions north of Granville and the dedication of Berger Park. Since Edgewater has so little park land, ECC joined with ONE to see further beautification and improved design at Sem park.

Some of the other programs run by ECC include the After School Arts program and the Program for Bosnian refugees. ECC and the religious leaders initiated a food pantry called Care For Real in the 1960s, when so many in the community were in need. This program continues to this day, under the direction of Tom Robb, with help from hundreds of community members. Reggie Griffin, current ECC president, served for years as the chairman of Care For Real.

Another initiative that is brand new for ECC is developing the services for the Senior Center at the Broadway Armory.

For the 50th Anniversary, ECC has been working on a cookbook with recipes from people all over the

community. Barb Sloan and Rae Ann Cecrle have been leading that project with Lynn Pierce doing the editing.

Another initiative has been to get the neighborhood organizations and religious organizations to write a brief history of their activities in the community. EHS president Bob Remer has been heading up that project.

ECRA was represented by Sister Mary Jeanne Hayes, from St Ita's parish, and Peter Buttitta, pastoral associate at St. Gertrude's. Many religious organizations were represented and many expressed interest in learning more about ECC's history.

The event was hosted by EHS president Robert Remer, who ordered a fabulous lunch from Charlie's Ale House. Following the presentations, ECRA members opened a discussion of what new initiative could be taken in the Edgewater community. The attitude of all was "what more can we do?"

Collectibles Corner



The EHS appreciates the contributions made to date of money and items of historic value.

Marjory Kweneland Adams- photos of the owners of the Fred Busch Sausage company 1946-1973 on Ravenswood.

LeRoy Blommaert- Transit Fare counter from the CTA or similar org. Made in Chicago (see it in the current exhibit)

Kathy Gemperle- original program for the opening of the Broadway Armory in 1985.

Roula Alakoitou Borenstine- framed drawing of the Berger Park Plan 1980, 2 folders of documents from Berger Park project

Jim Hausfeld- documents related to titles search from 1895 for two flat at 1431 W. Argyle

Betty Mayian- program for Semm Campus auditorium dedication March 5, 2010

Edgewater Teaser

(11) In our last issue, we noted that grocer Christ Kamberos and his brother and uncle founded the Sure Save grocery chain in 1947 and that their first store was in Edgewater. We also noted that the Kamberos group went on to found the Treasure Island chain and that at one time Edgewater had a Treasure Island grocery store. We asked two questions: (1) Where was the Kamberos brothers' first Sure Save grocery store? And (2) where was Edgewater's Treasure Island grocery store?

Answer

The first Sure Save grocery store was on Bryn Mawr - 1055 to be exact. It was located in what has become known as the "old Walgreen's store" that was recently rebuilt. That Little Mexican Café occupies the corner where Walgreen's had its entrance. The Chase branch bank, LensCrafters, 7-Eleven

and the Admiral at the Lake sales office share the 1055 Bryn Mawr address. (Congratulations to the person who sent in this answer. Unfortunately your letter has been misplaced. Contact us!

Edgewater's first and only Treasure Island grocery store was located at 5245 N. Broadway.

It was open from at least April 5, 1973 until at least March 20, 1986.

Source: Chicago Tribune



New Teaser

(12) Where was the Edgewater Athletic Club located?

Edgewater Historical Society - 2010 Membership Application

I would like to support the **Edgewater Historical Society** by becoming a member for **2010**.

Type of Annual Membership (Check One):

- | | | | |
|--|-------|--|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$20* | <input type="checkbox"/> Senior (over 65) | \$10 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$30* | <input type="checkbox"/> Business Org. | \$75 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Patron | \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Lifetime | \$1000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Organization (Not for Profit) | | | \$25 |

(* fee assistance is available upon written application)

Museum donation: \$ _____

_____ DVDs (mailed at \$20/copy): \$ _____

Make checks payable to:

Edgewater Historical Society

Mail the completed form with your check to:

Elizabeth Mayian
6033 N. Sheridan Road #36K
Chicago, IL 60660

For further information, call: (773) 506-4849

I am interested in learning more about the following committees and activities:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Historic Sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Collections | <input type="checkbox"/> Program | <input type="checkbox"/> Property |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance | <input type="checkbox"/> Bd. Development | <input type="checkbox"/> Communications |

Special activities:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Garden Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Museum Volunteer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Exhibit Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Research Volunteer |

Name: _____

Address: _____

City:State:Zip: _____

Telephone: () _____

Email: _____

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Date paid (office use only): / /

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Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Public Notice

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Correspondence may be directed to the editor: Kathy Gemperle; 5358 N. Ashland Ave.; Chicago, IL 60640.

Or EHS voice mail: 773-506-4849

Newsletter Staff: Larry Rosen, David Gemperle, Gloria Evenson and Tom Murphy.

**We Welcome Guest
Columnists At Any Time**



For the Family Tree

At the 2010 General Meeting the following new members were elected to the Board of Directors.

- Al Borenstine
- Dorothy Nygren
- Will Rye
- Barbara Strauss

Thanks also to the board members who continue to serve. We appreciate all your interest and support.

If you have not yet sent in your renewal, please remember to do so soon. We count on your support to keep the museum open.

Visit our Website at:
www.EdgewaterHistory.org

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