



Edgewater Scrapbook

“Notes from the Past, News from the Present”

Vol. XXX, No. 3

Summer 2019

Chicago's Unlikeliest Armory

By Jake Hamann

The 1870s and 1880s were a violent, unruly period for America's cities, and Chicago was no exception. A series of labor strikes, riots and disturbances – most famously 1886's Haymarket Affair – struck fear into the hearts of the nation's rich elites, who feared these incidents portended a coming class war. They knew that the police, poorly-equipped, poorly-trained, and often from the same neighborhoods as the workers they were supposed to control, were ill-equipped to handle the coming clash. So upper classes pinned their hopes on the state National Guards for defense of their persons and properties. But, if these National Guard units were going to be effective, they needed a place to train, drill, and store their weapons, not to mention a secure place to use as a base of operations in case a riot really did break out.

As a result, cities across the country began building National Guard armories designed to strike fear into any would-be radical. Chicago's First Regiment Armory, which stood on S. Michigan Ave. until 1968, is a perfect example. Built at the behest of Marshal Field, Potter Palmer and the other residents of Prairie Avenue's "Millionaire's Row," the armory featured 35-foot high stone walls, massive steel doors, a portcullis and rifle slits designed for enfilading fire. The Armory "impresses the beholder as if it were an impregnable fortress." Likewise, the Chicago Avenue Armory, demolished to make way for the Museum of Contemporary Art, resembled a fortified mediæval abbey.

Edgewater's Broadway Armory, however, couldn't be more different. With its grand, glass-filled entrance, decorative lights, warm red brick, and graceful balconies, the Broadway Armory looks more like a ballroom than a fortress. For good reason. The Broadway Armory wasn't built to house weapons. It was an ice-skating rink. And, at least for the winter of 1917, it was the grandest rink in the world.

The Armory was built by Harry C. Wood, a Cincinnati ice maker with big ambitions. Wood teamed up with Chicago lawyer W.E. Springer to form the Springer-Wood



31st Annual
Edgewater Home Tour

Featuring the interiors of homes in
Edgewater Glen

Sunday, September 15, 2019



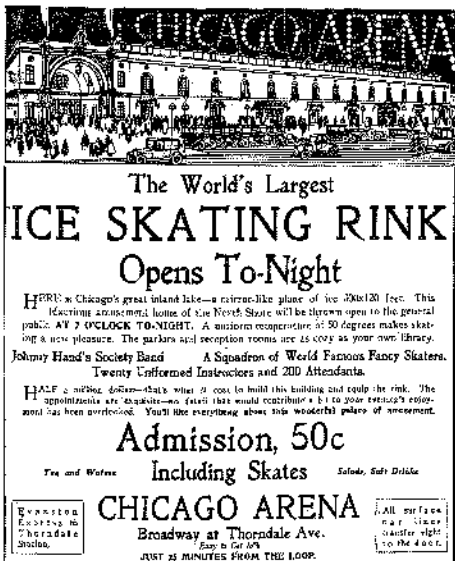
Tour begins at: ★
St. Gertrude Catholic Church
6200 North Glenwood Ave.

Registration: 12 noon - 4 p.m.
\$25 per person

www.EdgewaterHistory.org

Edgewater Glen Tour

Mark your calendars for what promises to be a wonderful tour. We will be able to see the famous Nicholas Kransz, Jr. house on Glenlake and several other homes in the Kransz addition to Edgewater. In addition there will be one home from the J.L. Cochran 4th addition to Edgewater. All the homes have lovely interiors and the owners have made an effort to preserve the rich history of Edgewater Glen. So don't miss this event which raises funds to keep the museum open and free to the public. If you've never been on an Edgewater Home tour, isn't it time you did?



**The World's Largest
ICE SKATING RINK
Opens To-Night**

HURRY! Chicago's great inland lake—a rink-like plane of ice 20x120 feet. This skating arena—the home of the North State—will be thrown open to the general public **AT 7 O'CLOCK TO-NIGHT.** A uniform temperature of 50 degrees makes skating a new pleasure. The parlors and reception rooms are as cozy as your own library.

Johnny Hand's Society Band **A Squadron of World Famous Fancy Skaters.**
Twenty Uniformed Instructors and 200 Attendants.

HALF a million dollars—state wide it cost to build this building and equip the rink. The appointments are exquisite—no fault that would detract a bit from your skating enjoyment and has been perfected. You'll like everything about this wonderful place of amusement.

Admission, 50c
Including Skates *Salads, Soft Drinks*

CHICAGO ARENA
Broadway at Thorndale Ave.
Just 25 minutes from the Loop.

Evening
Excess in
Thorndale
Station. All surfaces
are clean
and well
lighted.

(Continued on page 4)



From the President

EHS Needs You – Volunteering Part I

The fragrant and fulsome hydrangeas were on my mind while writing this letter few days after the EHS annual volunteer picnic in our lovely museum garden. We had to close off Balmoral for half the day to accommodate our scores of hungry and chatty volunteers. It was a perfect afternoon, full of friendship, stories, big appetites and enjoyment of all those blooming flowers. We are blessed to have many dedicated volunteers to keep our museum open, run our programs, raise needed funds, conduct research, advocate for preservation, prepare fabulous exhibits, archive our terrific collections of Edgewater history, and cultivate that beautiful garden. As the sun set that warm and wonderful day, I realized that suns also set on the availability of volunteers as we get older, our interests change, or other priorities intervene in our lives.

I am happy to report that your museum/historical society is in pretty good shape now, which gives me pause that it cannot continue unless we continue to replenish our volunteer ranks. Some of us have been around as long as dirt, and to dust we must eventually return (speak for yourself, Bob.)

In short, we need you to help us prepare for our future as your local historical society and museum. My message this issue is to tell you about the kinds of volunteer duties we have available, and to ask you to consider volunteering your valuable time. Below you will find some of the major volunteer opportunities. If you think you might be interested, we are more than happy to talk to you about this. Email us at EdgewaterHistoricalSociety@yahoo.com, or to me directly at chibooks@aol.com, and let us know where you might have an interest. We will get back to you as soon as possible.

Leadership and Board of Directors

EHS has been fortunate to have an active Board of Directors, whose members contribute their time, energies, ideas and/or money. Many non-profits often have only a few Board members who do the heavy lifting, but that is not the case with us. Since we don't have full time staff, the Board members often take on operational responsibility for our many functions. They also often come up with new ideas for new activities and programs. We are more than willing to entertain new ideas. For example, our Edgewater Living Treasures project came from one of our Board members, Marty Stewart, who put it together and implemented, and now it is very much an ongoing part of what we do. I can't imagine our not continuing this wonderful program. Now a Vice President, Marty is working to get new members of the committee to help identify worthy recipients in Edgewater.

You don't need to be an historian or archivist. What we want are folks who have a love for Edgewater and want to see the community, its spirit and its history kept alive, and want to actively make that happen.

Besides asking Board members to find a niche in the organization, we also ask that everyone do their part in raising funds. We have a modest operating budget of about \$36,000-\$40,000 a year, and we are fortunate to have a modest endowment for sustaining our museum building. The main operating funds come from our annual Spring Benefit, our Fall Home Tour, and membership dues. Unlike some nonprofits, we do not have a "buy in" donation to become a Board member, but we do ask that the Board members help support our fund raising efforts by working on the events, selling ads for the home tour, soliciting silent auction items, buying tickets, bringing friends to the fund raisers and by encouraging or obtaining new memberships. If you would like to make a substantial donation, however, we will not object.

Museum Docents

The mainstay of our operations is our fabulous group of docents who put in one 3-hour shift per month, welcoming visitors to the museum during our Saturday and Sunday hours, from 1-4 p.m., running the orientation video, and answering questions about current exhibits. You don't need to be an expert on Edgewater history, but you will find you develop an interest very quickly. We offer plenty of orientation and a "buddy system" for new docents.

Home Tour Docents

This year's Fall Home Tour will be held September 15 in Edgewater Glen. Each year we recruit and present 6-10 interesting homes, conduct research, and publish the annual booklet about those homes and the particular neighborhood. On the day of the tour, lasting five hours, we have docents located in each of the residences to control the flow of visitors, and to tell about the history of the home. We have a dress rehearsal pot luck dinner the preceding Saturday evening, where docents can learn about their particular home, and visit with the owners of all the other homes on the tour. It is great fun and many docents come back every year. We also have volunteers who solicit ads for the Home Tour booklet, canvass neighborhoods to identify willing homeowners for future home tours, or do the historic research.

In the interest of space, I will continue the list of volunteer opportunities in the next issue, where I will write about preservation advocacy, our Spring Benefit, our archives and collections, exhibit preparation, research and writing, our garden, and our museum facility. I hope this process will give you a better understanding of how your historical society and museum operates and I hope it will encourage you to volunteer. Thank you in advance,

Robert Remer

Luxembourger History in Chicago Explored

By John Holden

Though Luxembourg is one of the smallest countries in Europe and it sent more than a quarter of its population to the New World in the 19th Century, more than any other city or state in America, Chicago – and Edgewater in particular – was their destination of choice.

More than 80 people, many descendants of those 19th Century immigrants, crammed a July 13 lecture at the Edgewater Library to learn how thousands of plucky Luxembourgers leveraged their farming skills to transform the shores of Lake Michigan from a sandy wasteland into premier farmland, and eventually into very valuable real estate.

The speaker was Kevin Wester, a pure-bred Luxembourger, who hails from Port Washington, Wisconsin, another major center of Luxembourger immigrants. He is the former executive director of the Luxembourger American Cultural Center. Wester's talk ranged from

the very origins of the Luxembourg nation in 963, to its turbulent history of invasion, occupation and liberation, to its current socio-economic status as one of Europe's wealthiest nations.

The first waves of Luxembourgers arrived, alongside immigrants from neighboring German lands, in what is now Edgewater in the early 1850s. They immediately began turning the land from swampy wasteland into productive farming communities in areas that include the current site of Senn High School, Wester said.

Celery, and other vegetables that were ideally suited to the sandy soil, were their initial crop of choice. For decades, these vegetables were transported via horse-drawn carts to food markets on the Near South Side. Each cart making the return trip typically transported loads of manure to further enhance the productivity of these early North Side farms. Many of these farmers also began building greenhouses, which allowed them to ply their farming trade year round.

One of the more successful Luxembourger farming families was the Reinbergs, whose son Peter would go on become one of the biggest urban farmers of his time.

He eventually built a small empire which included more than 2.5 million square feet of greenhouses, which eventually housed a very successful floral business, earning Reinberg the title of Chicago's "rose and carnation king."

Reinberg was also a successful politician having a 12-year career in the Chicago City Council, that began in 1893, representing the area that is now Edgewater. He later was elected president of the Cook County Board in the 1910s, and was instrumental in launching the Cook County Forest Preserve system.

A major philanthropist, Reinberg also had a grand house on the 5600 block of Sheridan Road, on land that is now occupied by St. Andrews Greek Orthodox Church.

Among those who attended the lecture were one of Peter Reinberg's great granddaughters, and an extended family of Luxembourger Americans who traveled from Arkansas for Wester's talk. Such a plethora of stories were shared after the lecture that Wester began to see the makings of a future book on the Luxembourgers in Chicago. Stay tuned!

POSTCARD



Dear friends of Broadway preservation,

Here's an early photo, probably a glass slide, of the Broadway Armory in the late nineteen teens. It was called the Chicago Arena first. To find out more, read the lead article in this newsletter. And then by all means visit the place which now is owned by the Chicago Park District, and has many exciting programs, including the Edgewater Village and a City of Chicago Senior center. See you there.

Kathy

Chicago's Unlikeliest Armory (Continued from page 1)

Company in 1916, after a rival bought out Wood's Cincinnati Ice Company. Springer and Wood had grand plans. They announced they were going to build huge, state-of-the-art, ice skating rinks in Cincinnati, Chicago and St. Louis.

The rinks were essentially a loss leader for ice manufacturing businesses. Demand for ice was high in the summer and virtually non-existent in the winter. Manufacturing ice for the rinks would give the company a reason to operate its ice-plants year-round.

In Chicago, Springer and Wood moved quickly. Wood bought a large tract of land at 5859-5917 North Broadway, near the corner of Broadway and Thorndale, from John R. Boyle, a fellow ice-making magnate, for \$98,000. It was a great spot for a rink. Conveniently located next to the Thorndale Avenue train station, which had opened in February, 1915, and to the Boyle Ice Company, which could supply the requisite ice.

In an August 13, 1916 article titled "Where the Ice Blades Will Glide," the *Chicago Tribune* breathlessly reported that Springer-Wood intended to build the "Largest Skating Rink in the World" by New Year's Day, 1917. The accompanying illustration of the planned "Winter Garden Arena" looks pretty close to the finished product, although with two grand entrances instead of one.

The rink, renamed the Chicago Arena, opened a few months late, on March 1, 1917. Springer and Wood had spent around \$500,000 just over six months to build it. At opening, the Chicago Arena, with a surface of 115 x 300 feet, was one of the largest indoor skating rink in the world, and one of only two indoor rinks in the city. An ad touted the Arena as "Chicago's great inland lake," with a "mirror-like plane of ice." In addition to skating, the ad promised parlor and reception rooms "as cozy as your own library."

The Arena was an immediate hit.

Five thousand Chicagoans made the trek up to the North Side for the grand opening. It was quite the affair. For 50 cents, including skate rental, Chicagoans got to see "several well-known knights of the steel blades" perform to the music of Johnny Hand's Society Band. There were 20 instructors and 200 attendants on-hand to teach "Chicago's society" how to skate.

The Arena tried to capitalize on (or manufacture) its success with Chicago's elite. It ran ads proclaiming every Tuesday "Club Night," when the rink was reserved for members of Chicago's prestigious social clubs. The ad noted that "the gentlemen are wearing tuxedos and evening dress" for skating while "the ladies cling to sports suits..." A few weeks after the opening, the *Tribune's* Society page reported that Chicago was in the "grip of ice skating." Rinks were "filled every evening with those wearing all the elaborate wintry trappings of the skate, whether they have to wobble along between two strong assistants or whether they shoot away from the ringside bench with the grace of a sea gull." Chicago's high and mighty had even formed their own "Arena Skating Club," made up of members of the Casino, Saddle & Cycle and Forty clubs. After skating at the Chicago Arena, club members would retire to the balcony for supper parties.

In addition to serving as a playground for the rich and famous, the Chicago Arena also put on regular shows featuring touring performers like the Boston Society Skaters, the "Human Aeroplane" and Three Skittish Skates, "nearly" the greatest skaters on earth. Apparently, it was all a hit. The *Tribune* reported that the Arena stayed open until May 20 due to popular demand.

The Chicago Arena reopened in late October, 1917, with a War Relief Benefit. (The United States had declared war on Germany in April.) Over the winter of 1917-18, the Arena hosted high-profile hockey games as well as professional ice racing tournaments. Despite this,

the record suggests business had begun to decline. For one thing, the Arena no longer showed up in the gossip columns. Perhaps the fad for skating was beginning to wane. Perhaps ice skating was considered too frivolous for a nation at war.

Whatever the reason, by January, 1919, Harry Wood was forced to declare bankruptcy, and his interest in the Chicago Arena was repossessed by creditors. The new management limped through the remainder of the 1918-1919 season, notably hosting the annual city-wide *Chicago Tribune* skating tournament, before closing in the Spring of 1919. The Arena never reopened.

In October, 1919, the *Tribune* reported that the owners had leased the Arena to the U.S. War Department for use as an armory. By February, the ice had been torn out, and the newly-christened Broadway Armory was hosting basketball tournaments and track meets. Illinois Governor Frank Lowden officially dedicated the "Broadway Armory" on February 7, 1920. His speech candidly acknowledged the National Guard's central role as protector of urban order and property, praising the Guard's loyal service "on the South Side during the race riots" of 1919. The Armory remained property of the U.S. War Department until the mid-1990s.

As for would-be Ice King Harry Wood, he didn't have much luck outside Chicago either. The Cincinnati rink never got off the drawing board. In St. Louis, Wood managed to open a skating rink in the Jai Alai building, left over from the 1904 World's Fair, but, as in Chicago, the venture quickly went bankrupt. Nevertheless, after new management took over, the Winter Garden Skating Rink continued to operate until the 1960s. His ice dreams dashed, Harry moved down to San Antonio, Texas, and got involved in real estate. He died in a car crash in Santa Fe, New Mexico, in 1954.

A list of sources can be found on the Edgewater Historical Society Website when the article is posted.

Teaser #43

In our last issue we asked: What was Broadway's first name; when did the change take place; and why was the name Broadway selected?

Answer: Today's Broadway was originally named Evanston Avenue. The change came August 15, 1913, and was part of a major group of street name changes in Chicago. The major purpose was to eliminate duplicate names. But of course that was not the reason for the change to Broadway, as Evanston Ave was a unique name in the City of Chicago.

So what was the reason for the change and what did Broadway signify? There are two possible reasons: One, that residents wanted the name to reflect the physical aspect of the street: its broad width. Broadway is indeed broad, but only north of Montrose. South, it is just as narrow as Clark Street south of Rosehill Drive and north of Devon.

The other possibility is that residents had high, indeed grand, aspirations. They wanted their street to reflect the glamor of New York's Broadway district. While the street did later become a major entertainment district, it was only between just south of Wilson to just north of Lawrence, and even that short stretch paled by comparison to New York's Broadway.

Don Hayne and Tom McNamee, in their comprehensive history of Chicago street names, *Streetwise Chicago: A History of Chicago Street Names*, assert that Broadway was named for New York's Theater district, but provide no source.

The answer was found in volume 2 of Edward P. Brennan's scrapbooks at the Chicago History Museum. In it was an item from the March 18, 1913, issue of the *Chicago News*. There it was reported that a petition drive to change the street from Evanston Avenue had gotten signatures from property owners of 5,000 feet of frontage on Broadway. The movement was led by W.J. Keingenberg, president of the Sheridan Trust and Savings Bank. The item quoted from a letter he

sent to the merchants on Broadway. It reads in part as follows:

"Mail delivered plainly to Evanston Avenue often goes to Evanston Ill causing a delay of two days in reaching its proper destination... Evanston Avenue from Montrose to Devon is one of the widest streets in the outlying districts of Chicago and it will be hard to find a more fitting name than Broadway."

So there we have the answer from a contemporary source. And it is contrary to the prevailing understanding that our Broadway's name was taken from Broadway in New York City.

Edward Brennan was a layman who was the person who single-handedly convinced the City Council to adopt, in 1908, the logical street address system we have today, based on the center being State and Madison. And Edgewater can claim him: In 1913 he lived at 1351 W. Catalpa, but not for long. He had moved to Rogers Park by 1920, but just a block north of the border - in Greater Edgewater!

For more about Brennan and his work, search Google for "Edward P. Brennan, Chicago" (without quotes).



Cochran's sales office on Evanston Ave

Teaser #44

What was Edgewater's first residential building to be under the cooperative form of ownership?

Membership Dues

If you have received two renewal notices this year, and have not renewed, your dues are due. We would hate to lose you as part of the team, so please take the time to send in your dues. You can do so online. Go to our website and click the Membership button:

www.EdgewaterHistory.org

Mark your calendars

September, October and November are busy months in Edgewater.

September 7: the Lakewood Balmoral Yard sale 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

September 15: The Edgewater Home Tour in Edgewater Glen \$25. Begins at St. Gertrude Church. Refreshments included with an inside tour of eight homes.

September 24: The Lakewood Balmoral Residence Council celebrates 50 years as a neighborhood organization.

September 28 and 29: Edgewater Arts Festival on Granville. Two days of artists showing their work. Small admission fee.

October 12: Chicago History Book club meets at the Edgewater Library at 10 a.m. to discuss housing issues in Chicago. A variety of books is available at the Library.

October 19 and 20: Open House Chicago, with the Edgewater Museum open all day both days. Everything open is free of charge.

November 9 at 2 p.m. at the Edgewater Library:

Join Rob Paral, Chicago's keenest demographic observer, for a lively and thought-provoking examination on "who we are as a community; where we've been and where we are going."

Edgewater and Chicago's larger north lakefront have undergone dramatic economic and demographic shifts over the past half century. What are the driving forces behind these changes and what do they portend for the area's future?

Edgewater mid-century reminiscences

First published in the Malibu East Dialogue
By Ron Cohn

In 1948, when I was 12, my family made the ten-minute move from Rogers Park to Edgewater. I lived at Hollywood and Kenmore through my teen years, attending Senn High School. After college at the U of I downstate, I didn't return to Edgewater, but my family remained, and I maintained ties to the community. In the 70s I headed the ad agency that promoted the sale of Malibu East's condos for Dunbar Builders. Ironically, in 2016, my 80th year, my wife and I became residents of that building, and I wrote the series of reminiscences for the Malibu East *Dialogue* newsletter that are reprinted here as a contribution to Edgewater's oral history series.

Community exudes aura of sophistication (November 2018)

If I ever get around to writing my life story (which would be best undertaken sooner rather than later), it would begin like this:

In the sunless Depression summer of 1935, overlooking the elevated tracks in a dodgy part of Chicago, I was conceived in grandeur.

I would go on to explain that The Grandeur Hotel, a transient establishment on the nightlife strip of Granville Avenue in Edgewater, was the first stop that year for my honeymooning parents. Little could they have imagined that, 83 years later, The Grandeur would still be standing, albeit somewhat seedier, and their fetus would have progressed only about a block and a half.

It took me over 13 more summers to get back to Edgewater, however. In the interim, I took up residence in a one-room furnished apartment with an alley view in the Austin neighborhood, which was soon traded for a one-room furnished apartment with an alley view in East

Rogers Park. I tell friends that I influenced that relocation, urging my parents to move north because the West Side was headed for trouble. "Shut up," my parents say in my telling, "you're only 13 months old."

The move, perhaps more lateral than upward, nonetheless had a profound effect on my life. It brought me within two blocks of the lake, which has exerted a magnetic influence on my lifestyle and choice of residences to this day. I once wrote someone that "living in Chicago without a view of the lake was like living in Des Moines."

As a kid riding the "L" back and forth from Jarvis to the Loop or to Wrigley Field in the '40s, Edgewater had an aura of romance and sophistication for me that Rogers Park lacked. The buildings were bigger, the stations at Granville and Bryn Mawr overlooked nightclubs and posh restaurants and, of course, a glimpse could be gotten of the great hotel towering like Xanadu at the foot of Berwyn.

I have read that the working title "Edgewater" was chosen for our neighborhood by a real estate developer 25 years before the Edgewater Beach Hotel was started, but in my impressionable, young mind, it had to be the other way around. For me, the hotel's magic name had brought all the blocks around it into existence. It was the landmark of my youth, symbolizing a life to which I aspired and ultimately achieved - but ironically, after all that it once meant, it was fading its way to oblivion.

My earliest memories of the hotel were as a visual cue that we were halfway home to Sherwin Avenue when I could get a glimpse of the pale yellow topmost tower from the Outer Drive. At night it was tastefully illuminated, looking faintly gold, with a crimson glow at its center. As one crested the Lawrence Avenue overpass, it was the only light visible to the north except for a dim highlight at the top of the Edgewater Beach Apartments and a string of bulbs set on a diagonal

atop a somewhat shorter building well beyond those two imposing towers. That third structure, tallest in Chicago north of Bryn Mawr for many years, is our neighbor to the north, Park Edgewater, 6101 N. Sheridan Road. Its distinctive lighting was probably taken down when Malibu Condominium was built, screening it from view.

Landmark Hotel Captures Imagination (February 2019)

I was twelve when we moved from Rogers Park to Edgewater. For six months I commuted by bike or bus to Gale Elementary School, just north of Howard Street on Ashland, so I could graduate with my friends. If I gained any status with them for a move from three furnished rooms to a grand (by comparison) apartment at Hollywood and Kenmore, it was not for getting a piano and a room of my own. It was for the magic inherent in the word "Edgewater," which conjured for my gang the nearly half mile of pastel towers and manicured gardens of the great hotel that defined the neighborhood.

When we took the double deck bus downtown, usually from the front seats upstairs, the Edgewater Beach Hotel was the first of a series of avidly anticipated landmarks that stoked our building excitement on the long ride down Sheridan Road and Lake Shore Drive. The next were the clock tower at Waveland, followed almost immediately by the totem pole and the yachts docked (in season) at Belmont Harbor. Then came the first glimpse of the Palmol-

(Continued on page 7)



Mid-Century reminiscences (Continued from page 6)

ive Building, usually from the Belmont Avenue overpass, and finally the fantastic Potter Palmer Castle at Schiller Street, where we hoped heavy traffic would slow the bus to give us a lingering look.

My personal relationship to the Edgewater Beach Hotel was intense, perhaps because of the fascination it held for my father. Although I never ate a meal there with my parents, and doubt if they ever did on their own, my father took me around the building and grounds like a tour guide. He showed me the Marine Dining Room, already imbedded in my imagination from the weekly network radio show originating there and featuring whatever famous band was in residence. Outside was the Beach Walk, another dining and show venue, overlooking the quarter-mile of beach commanded by the hotel. In high school and college, my dates and I could get close enough on summer nights to see and hear the Ames Brothers, Mills Brothers and other top acts, free of charge.

A favorite spot just off the lobby and Marine Dining Room was the cocktail lounge, called, as I remember, The Yacht Club. Dimly lit through portholes, it was reached through a dark, canvas-enclosed tunnel via a bouncy, rope-railed gangplank over an underlit, water-filled moat. Kind of scary, like a Riverview ride, when first experienced as an 8-year old, it became the feature of adventure tours I conducted myself for grammar school friends - until we were escorted to the door.

The mystique of the hotel as a storybook setting for drama and romance was enhanced, for us, by two bombshell events of my high school years. The first was the shooting of Eddie Waitkus, Philadelphia Phillies first baseman and former Cub, in June of 1949. He was gunned down and seriously wounded by a crazed 19-year old groupie, Ruth Ann Steinhagen, as he entered

her room at the hotel - a scene that became an important plot point years later, in the movie *The Natural*, based on the novel by Bernard Malamud. The second, a year or two later, occurred when private detectives employed by his wife broke down the door to bandleader Xavier Cugat's suite to catch him in flagrante with his young singer Abbe Lane. She famously covered herself from the photographer by clutching a robe to herself, not realizing she was standing in front of a full-length mirror.

Watch for more stories from Ron in our next issue.

The Chicago Conspiracy Trial: One Juror's Ordeal

An exhibit based on the journals of Jean Brown Fritz, who served on the Conspiracy Trial jury from September, 1969 to February, 1970



Edgewater Historical Society Museum
5358 N. Ashland, Chicago, IL



An early photo of the Ken Nordine home on Kenmore that was originally published in the Book of the North Shore. Designed in 1902 by architects Pond and Pond, it is one of the few remaining mansions on Kenmore.

Early Edgewater Research Adventures

by LeRoy Blommaert

I began researching Edgewater history before there was an Edgewater Historical Society, and while I was on the board of the Edgewater Community Council. It was the late 1970s. There was very little written about Edgewater's history then, and the internet was something far off in the future.

Somehow and somewhere, I became aware of John Lewis Cochran as Edgewater's founder. I thought: I wonder if he left any descendants who still lived in Chicago. And so, naive and optimistic that I was then, I opened the telephone directory and looked for Cochran, and to my pleasant surprise, there was a J.L. Cochran living in the Gold Coast. So I picked up the phone and called. The man who answered had the most cultured voice I have ever heard, but it was a warm and inviting voice too. He was Cochran's son. We talked for a time and I said I would call him again and hoped we could meet. He was receptive. I couldn't believe my good fortune.

Later I mentioned this to John Furby, a colleague and neighborhood activist. To our mutual amazement he had just done the very same thing! We resolved to go together and meet him.

But our initial excitement came to sudden and sad end. When John called to arrange a meeting, he learned that Cochran's son had recently died, and suddenly, of either a heart attack or a stroke. He was 82.

But John didn't give up; he went to the man's house and, charming guy that he is, befriended the housekeeper. The result is that he wound up with a number of Senior Cochran's artifacts, including many contemporary photos, his scrapbooks and his "diary." All these items are now in the possession of the Edgewater Historical Society.

Moral: Be curious, don't ignore the obvious, don't give up, and be charming.



Edgewater Historical Society
5358 N. Ashland Ave.
Chicago, IL 60640-2023

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Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Public Notice

This newsletter is published by the **Edgewater Historical Society**, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1988 and affiliated with the Edgewater Community Council.

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**We Welcome Guest
Columnists At Any Time**



For the Family Tree

Thanks for your support and encouragement.



Volunteer picnic. John Holden, David Gemperle, Carl Smith and Rose Beal step up to the buffet outside the museum on July 21.

Visit our Website at:
www.EdgewaterHistory.org

Previous Issue: Vol. XXX No. 2
The deadline for the next issue
is November 1, 2019

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