



EDGEWATER SCRAPBOOK

"Notes From The Past, News From The Present"

Vol. III No. II

FALL/WINTER 1990

Telling It Like It Was

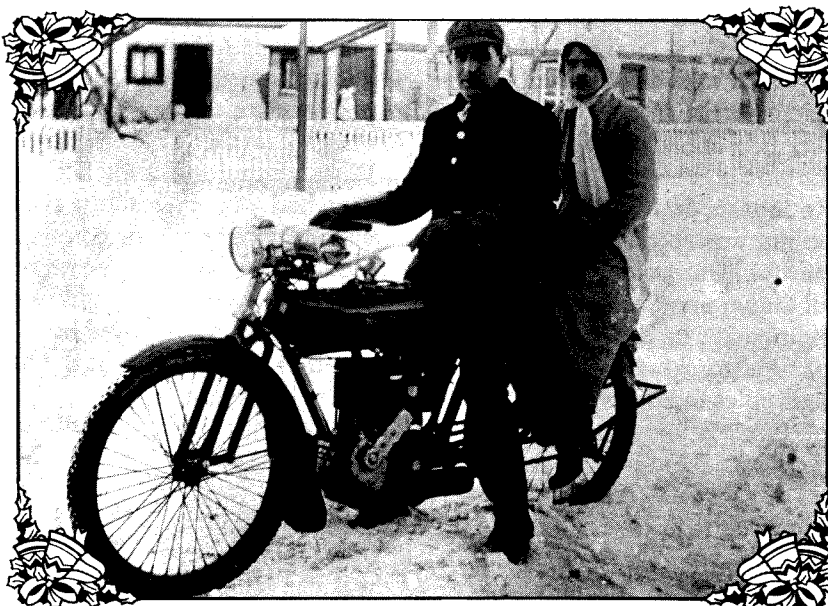
The October 20 General Meeting of EHS provided a unique opportunity to hear the history of Edgewater from a 96-year-old resident, Mary Thiry. She and her daughter Joan shared with us many delightful memories of Edgewater, their home at 1668 W. Olive, family life in general, and gave informative instruction on how others can capture their own memories to pass on to succeeding generations.

They are experts on the subject, having published a book and tape, *How To Capture Your Family Story*, spoken many times before groups such as ours, and practice what they preach—they brought numerous examples of how history and traditions have been handed down through their own family.

We learned how Mary's father, Peter Mertens, came to this country from Luxembourg at the age of eighteen as an orphan immigrant. He worked very hard . . . and eventually built eight greenhouses and a small house on the corner of Winchester and Norwood, one block north of Peterson Avenue.

Mary has fond memories of when the "Waffle Man" came: "All the children would run out to his wagon and buy a waffle. Were they good! They were light as a feather and a golden brown and he would sprinkle powdered sugar on them. I think we only paid 2¢ for one."

Mary remembered her youngster years, living one block north of Rose-



*Mary Mertens Thiry enjoys one of her favorite 1920's activities with her brother John—riding a Harley Davidson!
Photo courtesy of Mary Thiry*

hill Cemetery: "One strip along the heavy wire fence (the concrete wall was erected much later) was reserved for Chinese people. At the cemetery's side entrance, a small altar was built and about four times a year the Chinamen would come from their church in Chinatown to honor their dead."

As Mary recalled: "When we smelled the incense burning we would rush over there to watch their ceremonies. They believed in supplying food for the departed, who were buried standing up. They said prayers over small bowls of rice, then offered them up. They cooked chickens and put them in the graves. They also brought fruit; sometimes they would hand us an orange or apple through the fence.

"They were always dressed in their Chinese costumes and had that long

braid down their backs. On one occasion we saw them bring a whole roasted pig on a large frame that they offered up too. They also brought many beautiful flowers. The custom no longer takes place. We heard they took all the remains that were left and shipped them back to China."

Mary's husband had his own business, an electric appliance shop on Devon Avenue. She used to go to the store and help him. He had four booths on one side of the store with a record player inside. People would come in, play records, then buy them. Mary took care of the record sales and especially enjoyed the walks home in spring, when you could smell the honeysuckle blossoms. Those were beautiful years, until the Depression hit and they lost everything.

Continued on page 2

From The President



Congratulations and thanks to all who worked on the 1990 Home Tour. It was a great success!

While researching the Kransz-Weber holdings in Edgewater Glen, Ginny Parenteau found Gigi Ewald's document on the title search for the Kransz farm quite helpful. It dated from 1839, just three years after Chicago became a city, and mentioned a subdivision of the land north of Granville (Grand, back then) called "Edgewater Heights."

Fall celebrations abounded. Thanks to Marion and Camillo Volini and Marge Britton, St. Ita's 90th anniversary event was spectacular, including a beautiful historical display, a wonderful dinner and some "unusual entertainment." The banners produced by Joan Podgorski now grace many of the lightpoles in Edgewater.

The Peirce School celebrated 75 years with an open house at the school as well as a grand evening at the McCormick Hotel Center. The school displayed blueprints of the various stages of playground design from 1914 through 1938 and into the 1950's. EHS had a display at the event and picked up some new members. Roger McCabe, an EHS member from Texas, attended and many others came from far and wide.

Epworth United Methodist Church marked its 100th year with a special centennial service on October 14. Members of the congregation arranged a display of photographs from the church's past century.

The Board sadly accepted the resignation of 3rd Vice President Gregg Mann, who has contributed much to EHS in the form of ideas, research, and photographic documentation. We are grateful for his years of service.

Welcome to new Board member Paul Glassman and to Jim Karela, our new Program Chair. The next special program will be Saturday, March 23, 1991 at our Annual Meeting.

Thanks to Pat Ruch for providing much needed assistance in setting up

a display at the East Andersonville Garden Walk last summer. She also gave a talk on the history of Kenmore and Winthrop at a subsequent EARC meeting. Pat is from New York and all this Chicago history is news to her!

Recently I presented a slide program, "The History of the Chicago Lakefront," at the Edgewater Beach Apartments. EHS also obliged a request by residents of Kenmore Plaza for a different slide program, "The History of Edgewater," at one of their meetings.

In November I showed the video "Edgewater: Through the Eyes of Experience" to the split 3rd/4th grade of Ms. Ann Cico at St. Ita School. What a wonderful audience! The children had lots of questions and observations about how the community looked long ago. They sent the most charming, home-made "thank-you" letters after my visit. We hope to get together again to look at the history of the lakeshore.

The North Lakeside Cultural Center (NLCC) hosted their first historical exhibit in November, "Granada, A Theater Remembered." Our *Edgewater Scrapbook* piece on the Granada was handed out and two videos were shown as part of the event. EHS and the Rogers Park Historical Society co-hosted the November 10 N.E.I.L. Meeting at NLCC so that representatives from other historical societies could enjoy the exhibit. Everyone was quite impressed!

If you are interested, Marty Schmidt has photos of the Granada for sale. You can contact him through the Rogers Park Historical Society (764-0156). NLCC has T-shirts for sale—one with the Granada's facade prior to demolition, and another with a drawing of the NLCC building; call 743-4477 for information.

Looking ahead we envision a historical fashion show, an Edgewater cookbook and more walking tours of historic sites. Every committee could use two more volunteers. Please consider what you might be able to do.

Kathy Gemperle

Like It Was

Continued from page 1

Joan recalled the lean years: "Once we didn't pay our bill on time and the gas was shut off. I still remember mom cooking one egg at a time for her four children, in the center of the kitchen, on a little electric toy stove from dad's shop." Paradoxically, Joan remembers, they were considered one of the richest families around because they had a player piano with 100 rolls of music—garnered only as a matter of barter trade. (People who couldn't afford to pay merchants money during the Depression paid with belongings they could afford to relinquish for what they truly needed.)

Mary was coaxed into showing off the exquisite feather hat she wore to our meeting. Seems that in 1947 one of her sons-in-law, who loved to hunt, shot a particularly beautiful pheasant which she took to her milliner. (Stylish hats were still made, not ready-bought in those days.) Fourteen dollars later she was the proud owner of a chapeau which she has worn for three months of every year, September through November, since that time. She recently declined an offer to sell the hat for \$100!



Mary's regimen today includes getting up each morning, having breakfast, and starting in on making her homemade cards (approximately 300 per year to satisfy her ever-growing family). This last October alone she completed 80 Halloween cards with braids and real autumn leaves. She makes pillows out of washcloths and last Christmas stuffed nearly 100 homesewn net stockings for her cherished brood with her traditional "pink popcorn," candy and nuts. She got very upset with helper Joan when the walnut-in-shell was not *always* in its specified place, in the toe of the boot.

By the way, Mary is blind in one eye and has a cataract in the other.

She is one energetic 96-year-old lady, and Joan is a very devoted daughter.

For the benefit of those who missed this wonderful presentation by Mary and Joan, I'd like to quote from a chapter in their book on heritage:

"For Christmas . . . Mother and I worked on a gift for Bill, my brother . . . In a beautiful, old, turn-of-the-century book that my Mother had, we put together a family album . . . We started with pictures of our grandparents, parents, ourselves as children, weddings and the new family units thus created, bringing it up to date and leaving empty pages so that Bill can continue to fill it and pass it on to his son. Bill said it was the best present he ever received from Mom and me.

"(One day) my Mother declared . . . 'Guess what I'm doing? I'm writing my life!' Mom wanted to be sure that her *Life Story*, her most precious legacy, was left to us—just as she wanted it to be told!

"It was then that we decided to have Mom's story typed and bound in a simple spiral-bound booklet for which Mom designed her own cover and title page. The booklet was duplicated so she could give her life story to her grandchildren, her children and her friends for Christmas of that year . . .

"By sharing her story, Mom realized that the gift of her *Life Story* was more valuable than any gift bought with money.

"Mom's fourteen grandchildren . . . became aware of Granny-the-story-teller, and Granny-the-wise-woman,

with lots to share besides embroidered shirts and doughnuts.

"As for us . . . Mom's four children, we had a long-to-be-cherished session as we shared memories. We subsequently found our children more interested in "the olden days" of both their parents and their grandparents. Since two families have been in California for most of their children's lives, we have become aware of what vital links parents are in the story and traditions of their family.

"Our 'sound-album' of family memories accompanies this book. It was recorded in the home where we grew up. The sound album recounts some of our memory-gathering sessions, while this, our 'how-to' book, recounts many of the projects that mushroomed out of my Mother's first effort. *Our memory sessions and our projects have tied our family's loose ends together in a new and warm way.*

"In our way we have put together a living history that is a slice of our national history—a story of one family's beginnings in Europe, their emigration to America, and the growth and change that has occurred during four generations."

Mary and Joan, thank you for the presentation, the memories, the recipes for "pink popcorn" and other delectable delights which you distributed to meeting attendees. Most of all, thank you for showing how easy it is, although not without effort, to pass on a legacy beyond price to our loved ones. Maybe some lucky children out there will receive a "special gift" this very Christmas.

Sandee Remis

COLLECTIBLES CORNER

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

Thanks to—

G. Mark Harding
Collection of 48th Ward clippings

G. Mark Harding & Martha Kraeger
St. Ita Parish 90th anniversary memorabilia

Warren Huguélet
Clippings about Mayor Dever
Photo of Mayor Dever with Pine Tree Patrol

Gloria Magrussen
Broadway Armory Roller Rink collection including photos, roller skates, tickets and flyers

Rogers Park Historical Society
Postcard of Thorndale, circa 1900

C. Everett Stetson
Peirce School report cards
Photos of Edgewater streets and the Edgewater Beach Hotel and beach

Joan & Mary Thiry
How To Capture Your Family Story, book and tape by Joan & Mary Thiry
My Life's Story, book by Mary Mertens Thiry
Photo of Mary Thiry and her brother John in the 1920's

NOTE: The Thiry's book and cassette kit, *How To Capture Your Family Story*, is available for \$14.95. Contact Sandee Remis at 275-1836.

POSTCARDS

Dear Friends,

November. In my home Pilgrims, Indians and autumn leaves abound. The "First Thanksgiving" pop-up diorama once more finds its way to the front room tea cart after its year-long rest.

It is time to re-examine that souvenir booklet from Salem, Massachusetts; to enjoy the picture postcard of Plymouth Rock; to read Longfellow's *Hiawatha*, for the umpteenth year,

and conjure "the stern and rock-bound coast."

It is time for song and prayers, and warmth and sharing.

It is cranberry, corn, squash and pumpkin pie time . . . with a big turkey drumstick to eat at one's leisure.

It is America's second opportunity each year to be joyfully patriotic. July 4th and Thanksgiving—all other holidays seem to pale beside the sheer American flavor of these two. Happily I join in the celebration.

Frances Abner

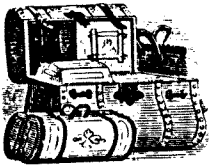


News From The Front: Committee Communiques

COLLECTIONS

Co-chairs:

LeRoy Blommaert 728-1498
Gregg Mann 271-0843
Evangeline Mistras 794-2614
Bob Remer 561-6280



The Committee met on October 27 at Kathy Gemperle's home for a sorting party to arrange the clipping file. Mark Harding

brought in a huge collection of 48th Ward clips. Warren Huguelet sorted through the photo book and put new photographs in protective sleeves.

Special thanks to Marty Schmidt of the Rogers Park Historical Society for making copy negatives of our growing collection. We also recently purchased 22 of Marty's personal photographs of the Granada Theater during its demise.

Anyone interested in donating old photos to EHS? We are a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, so all donations are tax deductible.

HISTORIC SITES

Co-chairs:

Thom Greene 743-1910
Antigoni Sofious



Edgewater's magnificent 1911 classical revival Senn Metropolitan Academy has unfortunately been "remuddled." The

community and the historical society were totally unaware of the Chicago Public School Board's plans for redoing the architecturally integral, large span windows, to increase energy efficiency. The Board replaced them with much smaller, basic double-hung windows—thus reducing the glass openings by 50% and destroying the architecturally historic character of the

building. Nicholas Senn must have turned over in his grave!

The Committee still needs help with the creation of a master inventory list of Edgewater buildings and houses. If you have information on any structure, please contact us.

EHS Board members who attended the board meeting on November 17 were treated to a special tour of the Uptown Theater conducted by Curt Mangel, head of the restoration effort. Curt is looking for volunteers to help with the loving restoration of this magnificent structure. Anyone interested can call (312) 561-4110 for further information.

MEMBERSHIP

Vacancy, chair



PLEASE HELP! We desperately need a chairman for this important Committee!

Since the last newsletter, 15

new members have joined EHS.

The Committee will meet sometime in December to prepare a letter concerning 1991 renewal that will be mailed to our membership in January. EHS membership is based on a calendar year, so dues come due each January. We hope each of you will again renew your commitment to EHS and join in our activities throughout 1991.

ORAL HISTORY

Co-chairs:

Sr. Mary Cramer 262-9274
Gloria Evenson 275-4028



Ninety-six-year-old Mary Thiry, along with her daughter Joan, related memories of growing up in Edgewater to a delighted audi-

ence at the October 20 General

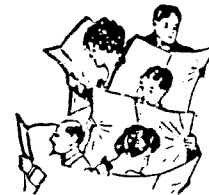
Meeting. Many who were there added their own facts and anecdotes to those of the speakers.

Gloria Evenson plans to interview Kurt Mathiasson early in 1991 regarding his research on the Swedish settlers of Edgewater.

This Committee convenes for a half hour before each General Meeting. We will next meet on March 23.

COMMUNICATIONS

Sandee Remis, chair
275-1836

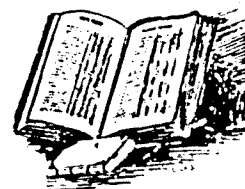


The Committee mourns the loss of Virginia Marciniak, associate editor and proofreader of the *Edgewater Scrapbook*, who

succumbed to cancer in October. We humbly dedicate this issue to her.

FINANCE

JoAnn Holmes, chair
792-7110



The 1990 Home Tour on September 16 was a success by all standards. EHS cleared about \$1400 after ex-

penses. These funds will be used to pay for the printing and mailing of our newsletter and the reproduction of photographs. About 135 attended the tour and gave rave reviews to the tour guides, booklet and the lovely Edgewater homes. Special thanks to Immanuel Evangelical Lutheran Church and the generous families who opened their homes to us: the Wangerins, Ryders, Parenteaus, Brennans, Spiedels, Thom Greene and Rick Proppe.

For the coming year we are looking at a growing list of possible fundraisers. If you want to get involved, just call and leave a message.

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

PROGRAM

Jim Karela, chair
728-2653



This newly reorganized Committee is investigating various speakers, resources and formats for our 1991 programs, including EHS' Annual Meeting on Saturday, March 23.

Paul Glassman, our newest board member, has agreed to serve on this Committee and his many skills and good spirit are welcome additions.

We eagerly encourage suggestions from all EHS members. Please contact me at home (728-2653) or at work (630-2701) with your questions, recommendations and inspirations.

Sentimental Journey

Years ago I found them stashed in the attic in a flat gift box—valentines from my Swift School classmates, from cousins and neighbor children.

Many stand up alone. Most are quite beautiful. Some are definitely 1920: white paper lace, doves, hearts, movable rolling eyes, sweet and jolly verses. In the 1990's we do "sentiment" differently.

All are precious. I made a scrapbook of them and bring it out each year to enjoy. Perhaps you'd like to see some . . . I'll just pick out a few.

Here is one sent to me 75 years ago when I was only two years old. It's a postcard with a one-cent stamp posted from the Jackson Park Postal Station. A colonial couple is pictured—he in a blue jacket, frilled shirt and yellow silk breeches; she, hands clasped at her heart, in a flowing red skirt and lacy petticoat, tiny feet barely showing. It says: "Bought a ring for fourty shillin, Which thou mayest wear if thou art willin . . . With Love and Devotion."

Someone from Swift Room 307 sent me this one signed "From ?" It's a stand-up of two girls in a garden. The message reads:

"Valentine Greetings

Guess who sends this gift to you?

Guess whose heart is ever true?

Guess who wants forever to—

Be your valentine!"

Half the fun was trying to guess who!

That one surrounded by red and white hearts was also given to me three quarters of a century ago, by a dear friend who is now long dead. Ruth Grossman was much older than me, but she was as beautiful to look at and play with as her valentine. The valentine was printed in Germany and is actually a little book entitled "A Valentine Message."

The cover depicts a baby-bonnetted little girl blowing a golden trumpet and holding in her hand a long red ribbon tied to one of the red hearts growing on the vine along the cover's border. The first page has "Valentine Thoughts" printed in gold letters. On the next page are two gold-engraved hearts hanging by ribbons from an apple blossom branch. Opposite appears this verse in gold:

"Duty's a slave that keeps the keys,
But Love, the master, goes in and out
Of his goodly chambers,
with song and shout,

Just as he please—just as he please."

Turn the page and you'll find a singing, wing-flapping, happy bird perched on a flowering branch. On the last page a boy and girl sit on a swing against a big red heart. The boy is trying to kiss the girl.

This large "granny" valentine was given to me by my big sister, Helen. Granny, in mop cap and apron, her Dutch wooden shoes resting on a warmed footstool, is knitting a green woolen stocking. She says: "For My Little Valentine." Her bright blue eyes move, twinkling, back and forth.

I think Joan gave me that white paper lace valentine. (For girls, this type was really special.) Stamps of a singing bird in a golden cage and a decorated heart imprinted with "To My Valentine" surround a red-haired little girl. The girl is an early box-radio operator, with earphones over her curls and two cords attached to the box (a crystal set?). Open the valentine—go ahead—and there sit a boy and girl, with an earphone each, on a moon against a white cloud heart. The phrase reads:

"I breathed a message into the air.
It fell to the earth, I know not where.
If you 'listened in' then you'd know

That you are my valentine. I love
you so."

The valentine was made by Whitney in Worcester, Massachusetts.

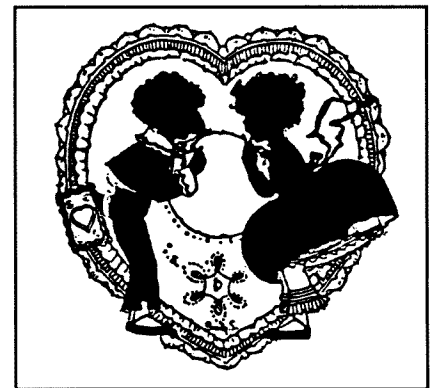
Frances Fornell (signed under the stand-up tag) from Swift School sent this different kind of free-stander, printed in Germany. The little girl, her bobbed hair caught back from her forehead by a large red bow, is manicuring her nails at a small table decorated with a red heart and "Valentine Greetings" in red. Her right arm and head swing up and down as she buffs and polishes the nails on her left hand. No nail paint in those days.

The verse reads:

"When you polish your nails,
Please think of me,
For like them I like to shine;
I'll be 'on hand' most joyfully,
If you'll be MY VALENTINE."

Well, I'll stop there for now—I said only a few. They are charming, aren't they?! You're welcome to stop over sometime, if you like, to see the rest . . . and have a happy Valentine's Day!

Frances A. Posner



MEMBERSHIP

The lifeblood of any viable organization is a continuing and growing membership. Your annual dues greatly assist in copying photos, creating this newsletter and supporting our special programs. If you are not yet a member, please consider joining the Society.

Would you like to help us? Even an hour or two a month would help. Please contact the chair of a committee that catches your interest, or call: Kathy Gemperle, 561-0893, Sandee Remis, 275-1836, or the ECC/EHS office, 334-5609.

A Lady Takes Her Leave



Last October, cancer claimed the life of one of EHS' charter members—Virginia Marciniak. For the first and last eight issues of the *Edgewater Scrapbook*, Virginia acted as associate editor and proofreader of this publication. This issue is dedicated to her.

I first got to know Virginia in 1985 as the founder and chairman of ArtsNorth, a cultural organization that presented an annual season of events including music, song, dance and theater in Uptown, Edgewater and Rogers Park. She was an inspiration. Over the years, concert seasons, and newsletter deadlines, we grew to respect each other. I shall miss her most as a friend.

A Lady

A lady left

Our midst today;
God called her home
to our dismay.

A lady left,

The people cried;
But in their hearts
She'll 'er abide.

Wife and mother,

Worker and friend;
The song she sang
Will have no end.

Gracious and kind,

Honest and true;
An artist, a poet,
Music her venue.

An artisan of English, she had a way of weaving words. Simple, not convoluted. She never made an ill remark. The softer she spoke, the harder one listened. She had something to say. She was a master of measuring type sizes and visual aspects. And if we didn't know the answer, we asked Ed. Never failed.

A singer of songs, her soprano voice could, and did, command respect, and love, and joy. In church choir lofts and at family home pianos. She filled her life with love. And flowers. And music.

Un-be-knownst to me, she lived a long time contending with cancer. If I had any inkling of knowledge, it was not through her consent. I, as many others, were left to guess. Her vivaciousness and extraordinary spirit lulled one into thinking . . . into wanting more than feeling she would outlive me. She gave and seldom took. She was brave and caring and compassionate.

A leader.

A founder.

A teacher.

A coach.

An equal without equal. A lady.

A shoulder to cry on.

An ear to bend.

A mender of fences.

A lover of rubrum lilies.

She was born April 29, 1930.

She was married April 25, 1953.

She died October 21, 1990.

Virginia Volini Marciniak.

Mother of Catherine, Christina,

Francesca and Claudia.

Grandmother of Meagan,

Catherine, Stephen and John.

Wife and companion of Edward—

Two spirits, two minds, one love.

"Through song," said the Rebbe,

"A person climbs to the highest palace.

From that palace he can influence

The universe and its prisons . . .

Song is Jacob's ladder

Forgotten on earth by the angels.

Sing and you shall defeat death:

Sing and you shall disarm the foe."

— Elie Weisel

Virginia, Salve Regina,

You saw, you sang, you conquered.

Long live the lady.

Be with us always . . .

Sandee Remis



Why?

There used to be a frame station on the Chicago Northwestern line located at Granville and Ravenswood, but the stop was named Kenmore. Does anyone know why?

C. Everett Stetson



Memories

The following memories of the Edgewater Beach Hotel appeared as part of a lengthy article by Adam Langer in the November 10, 1989 issue of the *Reader*. The author has graciously consented to let the *Edgewater Scrapbook* reprint the entire article in serialized form.

Part I

My parents spent their honeymoon there. My Aunt Faye and Uncle Harry had their high school prom there. They wanted to dance on the Beach Walk, but the 17-year cicadas were swarming, so they had to stay indoors in the Marine Dining Room. I don't remember the place, but I do remember my dad driving us by in 1970 to watch it being demolished. We sat in the back of his black Thunderbird while he took home movies of the wrecking ball crashing into the pink stucco structure.

In its time, everyone stayed there and everyone danced on the glorious Beach Walk of the Edgewater Beach Hotel. They were all there, from Jeanette MacDonald to Johnny Weissmuller to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. All of the big bands played there. Paul Whiteman, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey, Xavier Cugat—and what a night that was when his wife broke down the door to confront the band-leader in his quarters with lead singer Abbe Lane.

Legend and fiction also visited. That day in '32 when Babe Ruth hit a home run to a spot he may or may not have pointed to in Wrigley Field, he'd been ticked off, they say, by someone spitting at his wife at the Edgewater Beach Hotel. You might say Roy Hobbs of the New York Knights in Bernard Malamud's *The Natural* was shot there. You might say Eloise of the Plaza in New York stayed at the Edgewater, too. When Samantha and Darrin Stevens, of TV's



Bewitched, attended a convention in Chicago, their room was at the Edgewater.

The hotel had a thousand rooms and was designed by Benjamin Marshall, who also designed the Drake and the South Shore Country Club. When Marshall and his partner Charles Fox set out to persuade the tiny Edgewater neighborhood to accept a hotel, they described it in the most wonderful terms, as a Blackstone on the sea. And so it was . . .

There were two buildings. The first, shaped like an X, had eight floors and 400 rooms and opened in 1916. The 18-story tower had 600 rooms and opened in 1924. They were connected by a *passagio* that was lined with fancy shops. In the old days, the bands used to play under the sun and moon on the marble-floored Beach Walk, which went practically to the lake. When the Outer Drive was extended north past Foster in the early '50s the Beach Walk disappeared, but the hotel installed an Olympic-size swimming pool with cabanas.

In 1929, the Edgewater Beach Apartments, also designed by Marshall, opened a long block north, on the far side of the hotel's tennis courts and garden.

The hotel and apartments were owned by Marshall and Fox, by managing director William Dewey, and by John Connery, president of the Edgewater Beach Hotel Corporation. The hotel was sold in 1947 to Chicago businessmen, who passed it on a year

later to the Hotel Corporation of America. Among this Boston-based firm's other properties was New York's Plaza. Dewey stayed on as manager.

In time, the Edgewater started to go downhill. As hotels everywhere added air-conditioning, those breezes off the lake lost much of their allure. Then the beach was lost. The neighborhood went to seed. The carriage trade drifted downtown and the hotel began courting conventions. In 1962, the hotel was unloaded to a Buffalo outfit called the H.R. Weissberg Corporation.

Now Jimmy Hoffa and his Teamster associates could be seen around the premises. Now maintenance problems went unattended and sections were closed off. The new owners made claims that they were working to refurbish the place, but they filed for bankruptcy on December 19 of 1967 and locked the Edgewater's doors two days later. The 65 permanent residents were given two hours to move out. The Edgewater reopened for a short while as a dorm for Loyola University, but it was torn down in 1970.

The Edgewater Beach Apartments, which became a co-op in 1949, remains. Today the hotel site is occupied by a senior citizens high rise called the Breakers. The people there like to sit in the lobby and reminisce about the old hotel. A glass case displays old menus, silverware, and decorations from the Edgewater Beach Hotel.

"I had my wedding there," said one woman in the lobby. "I had it there in 1927. Oh, was it a beautiful place! It was so palatial. Glenn Miller played at our wedding, I think."

Agnes Redemski lived in the Edgewater Beach Hotel from 1927 to 1930, and she remembers listening to the Paul Whiteman and Wayne King orchestras on Friday nights. "Back then," she said "you could get a large lemonade for \$1.25 and it lasted the whole evening."

"When I first saw the Edgewater Beach Hotel," said another woman in the lobby, "it was a beautiful enchanted island in the middle of the city. You could go there and feel you were in another world. Sometimes when you look out the window and you watch the waves coming up on the beach, you can almost see the old girl there. And if it's a quiet night and you listen really closely, you can almost hear the big bands playing there."

* * *

George Stanton was there from the very beginning. He became chief executive steward in 1924 and held the post to the day the Edgewater closed in 1967. He had come to Chicago in 1923 and taken a job running a DeMets luncheonette on State Street. The DeMets brothers had several luncheonettes, and according to Stanton they were the ones who created chocolate turtles. Stanton now lives in Andersonville and runs the Swedish Bakery on Clark Street.

George Stanton, chief executive steward: When I first came to the city, I was in my high school days and I wanted to have a few bucks in my pocket. In those years, 50 cents bought you a good meal. My brother and I, we decided to come to Chicago to see what it was like. We had a little flivver, a little roadster convertible with a rumble seat, a tin lizzy. My father said, "Well, I can tell you all about it. Chicago is a nice city. A hardworking city. But if you want to go see, I'm not going to stop you. You're old enough to know what you want to do." So we took off.

When I was in Chicago, I was living only a few blocks from the Edgewater Beach Hotel on Gunnison Street,

Continued on page 8

Edgewater Beach

Continued from page 7

which back then was Lafayette Parkway. They changed the name to Gunnison because there was a Lafayette Parkway somewhere else. I remember watching this construction going up. I said, "Boy, a lot of steel is going into that building." We used to go skin diving in our shorts right there before the building went up. Back then, the squad cars were big Cadillacs and the police would say, "Hey you guys! Stop making all that noise!" I said, "We're not making any noise. We're just cooling off."

I remember when they were building it and I remember the sad days when they had to tear it down floor by floor. The idea was that the building would never collapse. An atom bomb wouldn't have brought it down—they criss-crossed the steel beams so well. An earthquake might have cracked the walls or the plaster, but we thought it would never fall down.

Romeo Meltz, bartender, bandleader: When I got out of high school during the depression years, I worked at the Edgewater Beach. I mopped the floors there from 12 at night to 8 in the morning for \$40 a month and a meal. The fellas that were elevator operators, they got \$75 and they were college kids. There was an opening in the bar as a bar porter. And they had opened the Yacht Club downstairs. That was in 1934, when booze became legal.

So you'd have to bring in kegs of beer whenever the beer ran out. You'd squeeze the lemons for lemon juice, and then when the Yacht Club closed at night I swept out the club with a push broom. That job paid me \$75 a month.

George Stanton, chief executive steward: In the Yacht Club, it was made up to look like the inside of a ship. We had snacks in there and you'd walk in on a gangplank. And when you hit a certain spot, it blew a whistle like a yacht. It was so unique and the walls were huge canvas walls and after a couple of drinks the head

bartender put the switch on and the walls would go up and down.

"Hey," you'd say, "we're sailing! How the hell can you be sailing in a restaurant?" It was so unique.

Romeo Meltz, bartender, bandleader: When the Beach Walk opened in the summer, I was promoted to bartender. That's when the big bands were playing on the Beach Walk and people would be dancing. And then, when the set was over, all the waiters would come over because everyone wanted to be served at the same time. So we had to set up the drinks before. Like we had trays and trays and trays of scotch and bourbon poured, fixings for mint juleps and crap like that.

I worked at the Beach Walk for a summer. I met my wife there. She was a hostess in the Grill Room and we bartenders used to eat in the kitchen of the Grill Room where the chefs ate. And I met my wife there, dated her, and eventually married her. I'm building this up for you because the story of the Edgewater Beach Hotel is really the story of my life.

Frank Masters, bandleader: We used to play the Beach Walk before they filled in the lake. It came almost all the way up to the hotel. In summertime, they had the outdoor place. It was pretty enough, but you found out that half the time the floor would be covered in sand flies. And you'd have to pack up and go back in the dining room.

* * *

In the summer, dancing was on the

Beach Walk. When it rained or when it got cold, dancing was inside in the Marine Dining Room. There, big band performances would be broadcast nationwide over NBC and locally over the AM station WEBH (for Edgewater Beach Hotel), according to Chicago radio personality Chuck Schaden. That's the station where Charles Correll and Freeman Gosden, who later created *Amos 'n' Andy*, got their start.

Every month would bring a new floor show featuring top national acts from across the country and a line of dancers. Through the '40s and '50s, the Dorothy Hild Dancers performed there.

Alice Ann Knepp, Dorothy Hild dancer: Dorothy Hild was terrible to work for. She was very unpopular, but she got results. She would always have some kind of big production number. We did a Polynesian theme with Freddy Martin's band. Our job included room and board and our salary was \$30 a week. If you lived at home, the girls got \$40 a week. We were free to choose what we wanted from the menu. At the time, we left a ten-cent tip for the waitress.

They would have circus parades with camels and the girls rode the camels in a parade around the dance floor. One time we did a number with bustles and some of the showgirls would walk around in Gay '90s outfits and some of the smaller dance girls would pop out of the bustles.

When you're young, you can do it. I think we were ahead of our time with aerobics. It was fun, and Dorothy



was very strict. During the summer she would prohibit us from getting suntans, and we weren't allowed to mix or mingle with the people in the hotel. She was strict with us. I'm sure it was for our own good, but we did find ways of escaping her.

Ruth Homeuth, line captain, Dorothy Hild Dancers: It was like a reformatory. We used to wear uniforms and we were supposed to go to our rooms right after the show. We did get by with things, though. We had a little door on the side of the hotel that went through the garage where we would sneak out. Once in a while we used to catch Dorothy coming in the same time we did.

She had her good days and her bad days. Probably more bad than good. We all were able to sneak out when we weren't supposed to. We managed somehow. It was a challenge. For not being able to go out with any of the employees, there were more marriages that came out of that place than you'd believe.

Betty Gray, organist: I remember one Christmas show that Dorothy Hild put on. They'd have all different Christmas tunes with members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at dinner for the house guests. Dorothy Hild had the dancers put bells on their ankles and they would kick their feet and make a tune out of it like "Winter Wonderland" or "Jingle Bells." Feet would be going up in the air to the tune of "Winter Wonderland."

Ruth Homeuth, line captain, Dorothy Hild Dancers: It wasn't as glamorous as it looked. Some of our costumes were pretty out of sight. We always used to say that Dorothy had a nightmare and that's what she would dream up for a costume. Huge headpieces and stuff you could hardly walk in, very cumbersome. You'd get hot, but being on the lake there was a very nice breeze.

We had to cope with bugs. They were horrible. Plus we always had animals when we worked out there, elephants and all of those good kinds of things, and you had to cope with what they did on the floor. You'd have to step over it gracefully. But we got along very well. For a bunch of women, we did real fine.

To be continued.



Tri-State Building Services couldn't ask for a safer office. The company conducts its business out of the old Edgewater Trust and Savings Bank building at 5545 N. Broadway.

Photo courtesy of LeRoy Blommaert

Banking In Edgewater

Once upon a time, a least four independent banks called Edgewater home. The premier bank was the Capital State Savings Bank which opened in 1913 at 5400 N. Clark, and was one of the first state banks in the nation to join the newly formed Federal Reserve System. Nine years later it moved up the street to new quarters at 5435 N. Clark.

Both Capital State Bank buildings still stand, though given over to other uses. The building at the northwest corner of Clark and Balmoral is clad in white terra cotta and has some impressive trim, of which the eagle is the most noteworthy. The imposing structure at 5435 N. Clark has housed the Philadelphia Church for years.

At the southeast corner of Devon and Clark stood another impressive building that was the home of the appropriately named Devon Trust and Savings Bank. This structure remained standing until 1976 when it was demolished to make way for a restaurant.

Further east on Devon at Broadway was the location of still another Edgewater bank, the Broadway National Bank. The address given for it in 1925

was 6371 N. Broadway, which would place it in the Woodruff Arcade Building.

The fourth bank was called the Edgewater Trust and Savings Bank and was located, at least as early as 1921, at 5545 N. Broadway. The small, stonefront building still stands, and until a few years ago still housed the original vault. A close examination reveals its banking lineage. At one time a four-sided pedestal clock stood in front of it. That clock was removed in the 1970's and placed on Wells Street (when it was being developed as Old Town) where it resides today.

Like so many banks throughout the country, Edgewater's original four banks folded during the Great Depression or shortly thereafter. Although plans were made through the years for the opening of another bank in the neighborhood, Edgewater residents had to look beyond their community for banking services until 1974. In September of that year a new bank known as the Community Bank and Trust Company of Edgewater began operations in temporary quarters at the southeast corner of Balmoral and Clark—ironically, just across the street on the diagonal from Edgewater's first bank.

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THE SALVATION ARMY ANDERSONVILLE CORPS: Service 100 Years Strong

Officers in navy blue uniforms ringing bells at Christmas time alongside bright red kettles, lively brass instrument ensembles, the *War Cry* magazine, holiday dinners for the poor, and a red and white truck which transports second-hand treasures to resale shops and shelters are all a part of the familiar image of the Salvation Army. Currently serving 92 countries, the Army is by no means a stranger to Edgewater.

According to Lt. Colonel Birgitta Nilson, a Territorial Secretary with the Andersonville Corps for several years, the Army was founded in England in 1865 by a Methodist minister, William Booth.

Booth felt a strong calling to work with the poor of London's East End, and served through the Methodist church for a time. Eventually, he felt God was calling him to a different area than that to which the Methodist Conference (who decides its ministers' assignments each year) wanted to send him.

Booth left the Methodist Conference and formed an open air ministry, but with the intention of linking converts up with local churches rather than starting a church of his own. "Respectable" Victorian churches, however, did not eagerly embrace the poor. The concept of charity as part of religion was a radical idea at that time. Booth had little choice but to train his converts to aid in the ministry, and the Salvation Army was born in a war against poverty.

In 1880 the Salvation Army came to America, with the arrival of a team of one man and seven women in New York.

The present Andersonville Corps began in October 1890 at 4748 Austin Avenue, Moreland, Illinois. The Corps had a total of 17 different locations, including 1614 W. Winnemac and 5056 N. Ashland, before the present site at 1473 W. Berwyn was chosen in August 1920. Lt. Hylt was the first commanding officer, serving from 1890 to 1891.



*Salvation Army location
at 1473 W. Berwyn,
Nov. 1960.*

*Photo courtesy of the
Salvation Army*



Originally known as the Edgewater Corps, the group changed its name to "Andersonville" in 1966, when the Clark Street Business Men's Association became the Andersonville Chamber of Commerce in efforts to promote the neighborhood's Swedish heritage.

For many years the Andersonville Corps served a Swedish immigrant population, and a Swedish radio ministry was even taped at the 1473 W. Berwyn location, with a Captain Cai Ruein as a frequent speaker. When the ethnic makeup of the neighborhood changed, so did that of the Corps. Appalachians became familiar faces in the 1950's and 60's, and in the 1980's Assyrians, Blacks, Cambodians, and Hispanics were among those added.

Despite the austerity of uniforms and military titles, Andersonville Corps officers and their message are cheerful and uplifting, teaching of a God who forgives and cares about every aspect of a person's life. This ministry to the "whole man," says Lt. Colonel Nilson, is a basis of Salvation Army philosophy. An extensive youth ministry has also long been part of the Andersonville Corps, with emphasis on character building and future officer training.

The Salvation Army logo shows a crown (symbolizing victory) atop a seal containing a cross, the letter "S" (for salvation), two swords, and the words "blood" (of Jesus) and "fire" (of the Holy Spirit). Logo colors of blue, yellow and red symbolize purity,

fire of the Spirit, and the blood of Christ, respectively.

A notable in Andersonville Corps history is Ensign Henry Rostett, who served in 1924 and later received a rare Order of the Founder for work in Haiti during the early 1950's. Also honored are Augusta Engdahl and Mildred Olson for visitation and prayer ministry. Mildred Olson was active in Swedish services at the Bethany Methodist Retirement Home, now at 4950 N. Ashland, the Corps' annual Lucia program, and the forming of a Salvation Army outpost at Wilson and Sheridan (which was replaced by the Tom Seay Center at Wilson and Sunnyside in 1973).

Favorite annual events of the Andersonville Corps are a multi-cultural fest in the spring and a traditional Swedish Lucia program in December.

In warm weather there are good old fashioned street meetings on Sunday evenings at Clark and Berwyn, complete with singing, musical instruments and a service to follow in the church building, led by Major and Mrs. Roy A. Mills. And, of course, Christmas time just wouldn't be the same without the familiar sights and sounds of the Corps on our street corners.

So, as you toss your offering into those bright red kettles this holiday season, remember to give generously — as the Salvation Army's Andersonville Corps has been doing for the past 100 years.

Gloria L. Evenson

The Old Neighborhood



My earliest recollection of the Edgewater area is probably my earliest recollection of anything at all! I remember playing with my brother, Egon, and other neighborhood children in front of the apartment building in which we lived at 1343-45 Rosedale Avenue. We played Mumblety-Peg, Hopscotch, May I, and One-Two-Three-O'Leary.

The neighborhood was a well-kept and quiet place, and the blocks were nice and long (for bike riding on the sidewalks). We all had backyards, not so much for playing as for planting. Mrs. Rosengren (or "Busy Bee," as we children called her) lived next door to us. She was a pleasant older lady who loved all the children in the area.

In our building were the Touffs (Cyril, the son, is a well known musician today), the Sheridans, the Moores, and two other families whose names I can't quite recall.

People from the past I can picture to this day (and we are talking about 49 years ago!) are: Nellie Conklin, my 4th grade teacher at Swift School who also taught my mother, Edith Fischmann Schein, when mom was a child; Mary Jean Ekdahl, a classmate of mine at Swift and Senn High, who is now Mary Jean Smart and lives in Florida; Ellen Lee; Mary Lena Law-

rence; Karina Haritonoff; Diane Horasanian, whose grandfather owned the cobbler's shop on Thorndale and Winthrop.

Then there was the "Cheese Lady" who owned a little grocery store in the basement of a building near Broadway on Rosedale; Hans and Marta Fischer; the Carr family who lived next door (mother, father, Jim, Todd, and Catherine—who was and still is my friend, although she has lived in the East since we were very young children); teachers from Swift—Mrs. Hook, Miss McConnell, Miss Greek, Miss Kenedy, Mrs. Segal, Miss Moore, Mrs. Zimmerman and Miss Tinker.

I remember a bakery on Thorndale near Winthrop, next door to the shoemaker's shop and, although I can no longer recall the owners' names, I shall never forget the delicious goodies I bought there. Those yummys probably led to the weight problem I've had to cope with over the past 50 years! Mrs. Kramer's chocolate sodas at the drugstore on the corner of Granville and Broadway didn't help my figure any either!

Fond memories exist of my childhood years in Edgewater, and it will always be HOME to me. Your organization and fine publication bring it all back to me (I read my mother's copies, as she lives with us in Chesterfield, MO now). Keep up the great work!

NOTE: If there are any other '46 graduates of Swift or '50 graduates of Senn around who would like to correspond, please feel free to write to me. I am a professional artist, art teacher and free-lance writer, married, with two adult children.

Betsy Schein Goldman
1577 Candish Lane
Chesterfield, MO 63017

FOR THE FAMILY TREE



Congratulations to newest board member Paul Glassman who has assumed the position vacated by Gregg Mann.

EHS also wishes to extend a warm welcome to our newest fifteen members—

- Patrons: Alice Rae Casey
John Doggett
Families: Marge Britton
Kenmore Plaza JCC Club
Mr. & Mrs. Eugene Ryder
R.H. & M.H. Weber
Individuals: Edith R. Anderson
Rita Anton
Grace S. Bergbom
K. Fabiszak
Corey Venning
Mervyn Ruskow
Seniors: Margaret Hammack
Clarence Strandell
Students: Amy Reinholds

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THE EDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY BECOMING A MEMBER.

TYPE OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP (CHECK ONE)

<input type="checkbox"/> INDIVIDUAL	\$10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> STUDENT (UNDER 18)	\$ 1.00
<input type="checkbox"/> FAMILY	\$15.00	<input type="checkbox"/> SENIOR CITIZEN	\$ 5.00
<input type="checkbox"/> PATRON	\$50.00	<input type="checkbox"/> BUSINESS OR ORGANIZATION	\$50.00

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO:
EDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

COMPLETE FORM AND MAIL TO:
EDGEWATER HISTORICAL SOCIETY
c/o SANDRA REMIS
5445 N. SHERIDAN RD. #1801
CHICAGO, IL 60640

Contact 334-5609 for further information.

I AM INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEE(S):

<input type="checkbox"/> FINANCE	<input type="checkbox"/> MEMBERHSIP	<input type="checkbox"/> HISTORIC SITES
<input type="checkbox"/> COLLECTIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> NOMINATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> ORAL HISTORY
<input type="checkbox"/> PROGRAM	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PHONE NUMBER (_____) _____

DATE PAID _____

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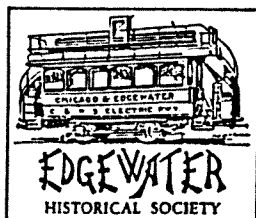
HEAR YE! HEAR YE! PUBLIC NOTICE

This newsletter is published by the Edgewater Historical Society, a not-for-profit organization, founded in 1988, and affiliated with the Edgewater Community Council. Correspondence may be directed to the editor: Sandee Remis, 5445 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, IL 60640. Phone: 312-275-1836.

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Gloria Evenson, David Gemperle,
Kathy Gemperle, Mae Scheeff.

The deadline for the April/Spring issue is March 1st.

**WE WELCOME GUEST
COLUMNISTS AT ANY TIME.**



Edgewater Community Council
Edgewater Historical Society
1112 West Bryn Mawr
Chicago, Illinois 60660

Banking

Continued from page 9

This new bank, which was organized by Edgewater resident (and current EHS board member) Austin Wyman, Jr., opened its permanent location at 5340 N. Clark on January 30, 1975. Its location was a new building designed specifically for use as a bank. In the fall of 1984 the bank expanded to the corner building to the south. On January 31, 1986, it was purchased by First Colonial Bankshares and became a subsidiary of that corporation.

On June 20, 1977, Edgewater residents obtained a second bank when the Uptown National Bank opened a new combination walk-up/drive-in facility at Norwood and Clark. Two years later (in June 1979) yet another bank came on the scene when the Broadway Bank opened its doors at 5960 N. Broadway in what is probably Edgewater's most beautiful commercial structure.

The space now occupied by the Broadway Bank was originally designed as an auto showroom for the

Riviera Motor Sales Company, a Chrysler-Plymouth-Maxwell dealership. A most elegant showroom it was too! The author's father remembers purchasing his first car there in the early 1930's. Later the space housed the Chicago Art Gallery.

On February 6, 1989, Edgewater got its fourth banking facility when the Uptown National Bank opened another Edgewater branch. This time the location was in The Breakers, a senior lifestyle residence center at 5345 N. Sheridan.

In the last 16 years Edgewater has been able to at least match its pre-depression number of facilities. Guess you could say we've been busy compounding our banks with interest.

LeRoy Blommaert

“Deck The Halls...”



The Edgewater Singers will present a free holiday concert, perfect for the whole family, at 7:00 p.m., Saturday, December 15, at Broadway Armory Park, 5917 N. Broadway.

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