



Northwest Chicago Historical Society

Your Neighborhood Historical Society

Newsletter July 2018

Number XXVIII

The History of the 4700 Block of North Karlov Ave. Stained Glass Artist Hans Muench Letters from Russ Gremmel

On April 22nd, we said good-bye to a neighborhood icon. Russ Gremel, 99, was a veteran of WW2 and the Korean conflict, Scoutmaster, and generous community member. Last year, he famously donated \$2 Million in Walgreens stock to the Illinois Audubon Society. He was active in the community for 70 years, including 60 years as head of B.S.A Troup 979 at the Congregational Church of Jefferson Park. Under his leadership, more than 150 Boy Scouts received the rank of Eagle. This edition of our newsletter features some of his personal correspondence, and it includes some interesting local stories based on his recollections. He will be greatly missed.

In this issue, we'd like to divulge a little-known piece of history about the Eden United Church of Christ (EUCC.) In the main church, the windows were designed and created by Hans M. Muench, the owner of the H. Muench Stained Glass Company of Chicago. Muench, who immigrated from Germany in 1910, lived on the Northwest Side of Chicago (5311 N. Northwest Highway.) He and his firm designed church windows throughout the Country, and they are a testament to the fine artisanship of early churches. EUCC showcased his windows in a book entitled, "Light in the Windows." Stop by the church to purchase a copy and engage in some fellowship. - *Susanna Ernst*

Mission Statement:

As the Northwest Chicago Historical Society, our mission is to educate others about the history of the Northwest neighborhoods of Chicago. We will accomplish this through discussion at meetings, public tours and events, and dissemination of historical documents and photos through publications. Additionally, we desire to collaborate with others in the community to continue to maintain and preserve the history of our collective neighborhoods. By linking the past with the present and the future, we will provide awareness and create appreciation for our place in Chicago's and Illinois' history.



Three of the volunteers working the beer tent at Jeff Fest; President Susanna Ernst, Treasurer Gail Weber, and Board Member Frank Suerth. All tips collected that night went the Northwest Chicago Historical Society.

Keep track of what is happening at the Northwest Chicago Historical Society

Join our Meet-up Group (It's FREE)

www.meetup.com/The-Northwest-Chicago-History-Meetup-Group/

NW Chicago Historical Society

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Membership:

\$15.00 per calendar year

\$10.00 for 65 years old and over

Phone: 773-736-4974

Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

Can anyone tell me what was located at 1060 W. Ainslie St. Chicago IL, 60640 in 1962? I'm wondering if it was a home for unwed mothers or some other type of social building.. or maybe just apartments. Thank you very much.

Rhea Winscom - Mesa, AZ

This address is in Uptown and far outside the northwest side of the City. Maybe the Edgewater Historical Society could help. From our investigations, the building looks like is was an apartment building. - NWCHS

Hi my grandfather owned a pharmacy on 2913 N. Central Ave. from approximately 1950 to 1965. It was called Rowe Drugs. I am trying to locate pictures of his storefront due to no one in my family taking photos of it in during its existence. Any advice in regards to finding pictures? Thanks!

Michael Rowe – Edison Park

If the family did not take any pictures, it is unlikely anyone else did. The pharmacy was very near the Polk Bros. store and the other large store across the street. Maybe the pharmacy can be seen in the background in some of their photos. - NWCHS



Last December the Cook County Board honored the Northwest Chicago Historical Society with a Proclamation. Pictured above: Commissioner John A. Fritchey, NWCHS Member Michelle Kmiec, NWCHS Board Member Frank Suerth and the Honorable Toni Preckwinkle, President, Cook County Board of Commissioners

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Letters

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I live on the 4700 block of North Karlov Ave. We have a block party every year toward the end of summer. I was wondering if you know if there is any way to find out some interesting historical facts about our block that could be shared with my neighbors. Our theme this year happens to be "Birthday Party" and I thought incorporating some history could be a fun part of the festivities. Any guidance you can provide would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Patty Koch - Mayfair

Every block has history but most of it is lost. We did find some history - NWCHS

The History of the 4700 Block of North Karlov

November 1914 – W. Nelson, of 4759 North Karlov Avenue, complain about the delay in installing lights on Lawrence from Kedvale to Crawford (Pulaski).

January 1920 – Mrs. Minnie D. Reuter, of 4746 N. Karlov Avenue, made an announcement of the engagement of her daughter, Esther Lucille, to Cecil G. Chapel of 3919 N. Kenneth Avenue.

May 1925 - D. W. Sipe, of 4765 N. Karlov Avenue, won \$5.00 in prize money in the "Presidents" contest. It pays to know those Presidents!

September 1927 – 13 year old Burton Holmgren, of 4749 N. Karlov Avenue, was walking on the sidewalk when an automobile driven by Carl Lord, of 4640 N. Keystone Avenue, jumped the curb and struck and injured Burton.

October 1927 – Salesman Arthur Peets, of 4740 N. Karlov Avenue, when asked the question: Should a girl of sixteen be punished for going to the movies against her father's command? He stated he did not think so, because a girl of that age ought to know what she is doing. A great majority of movies are educational or are first class entertainment. Arthur's wife thought otherwise.

November 1929 – Paul Berg, of 4747 N. Karlov Avenue, wanted to share some of his guinea pigs with other boys and girls of the neighborhood.

February 1934 – Frank Brower, of 4735 N. Karlov Avenue, who worked as a cashier for the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, was robbed at gunpoint of \$2,067 in cash and \$99.00 in checks. This is the second time within one year Mr. Brower has been robbed at gunpoint. Hopefully Mr. Brower kept his job.

April 1936 - Mr. and Mrs. Hanan Kaplan, of 4772 N. Karlov Avenue, announced the engagement of their daughter Minnette Kaplan, to Raymond Tanis of Chicago

December 1936 – Emil Mark, of 4731 N. Karlov Avenue, said King Edward should marry Mrs. Wallis Simpson. His wife thinks that Mrs. Simpson has been married twice before and has failed and does not think they will be happy.

June 1937 - Mr. and Mrs. Hanan Kaplan, of 4772 N. Karlov Avenue, announced the engagement of their daughter, Minnie Kaplan to Paul Smith of Chicago. It is not known what happened to Raymond!

June 1938 – Harold Balkin, of 4742 N. Karlov Avenue, was robbed of \$20.00 at Wilson Avenue and Pulaski Road by a young man who escaped in a car driven by a woman.

April 1939 – Rudolph J. Thorsen, of 4725 N. Karlov Avenue, died at John B. Murphy hospital. He was the chief clerk to the freight auditor of the Milwaukee Road and will be moving to Montrose Cemetery.

December 1939 – Helen Lowenson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Lowenson, of 4759 N. Karlov Avenue, to marry Robert Michael Levy of 4733 Deming Place. The ceremony will take place at the Edgewater Beach Hotel.

June 1940 – David Levatin, of 4772 N. Karlov Avenue, received the degree of doctor of law from the University of Chicago.

July 1940 – Mrs. Edward E. Weise, of 4749 N. Karlov Avenue, is getting her washing done from 5 radio personalities from WGN Radio. Her letter was picked out of many sent by housewives who entered the contest.

July 1941 – Henry Koop, of 4734 N. Karlov Avenue, will have his garden inspected by the Mayfair Club. We are not sure what they are looking for in the garden.

March 1942 – Second Lieutenant Milton W. Minarcin, 22 of 4762 N. Karlov Avenue, was seriously burned and suffered a fractured arm when their training plane crashed in Sumter, SC

July 1944 – John Klingstedt, of 4738 N. Karlov Avenue, will take part in the Independent Order of Vikings reunion in Gurnee, IL. The program for the Viking members will start with a Swedish style herring breakfast and the program is said to get better after this breakfast.

February 1945 – Alice W. Gels, of 4748 N. Karlov Avenue, was promoted to the rank of second lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps. She has been assigned duty at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin.

May 1945 - Pvt. Frank M. Kasmak, of 4766 N. Karlov Avenue, was liberated from a prisoner of war camp in Germany.

March 1946 – Sgt. William George Larson, of 4707 N. Karlov Avenue, welcomed his war bride, Florence Larsen 23 and daughter Josephine to his Karlov Avenue home.

January 1950 – Tilden High School student Vincent Bobrowicz, of 4734 Karlov Avenue, is Valedictorian, National Honor society, honor club, craftsman staff, Knights of Technology president and student executive council. Seems like the whole block of Karlov Avenue is filled with over achievers.

August 1952 – Sgt. William A. Mueller, of 4753 N. Karlov Avenue, took 2nd place at a rifle shoot at Marine Camp.

November 1952 – Eugene Stitz, of 4754 N. Karlov Avenue, of the Metro Movie Club of River Park will show his film, "Beyond Our Western Plains," a nature study in the clubroom at 5100 N. Francisco Avenue.

December 1952 – Don Manak, of 4749 N. Karlov Avenue, was driving in a car in Honey Creek, Wisconsin. Their friends were following them with their own vehicle. The friend's car was hit by a train and cut in two, killing 3 passengers. There was no warming gate at the train crossing.

January 1953 – Miss Stephanie Wozny, of 4768 N. Karlov Avenue, was vice president of the After Fivers club at the Y.M.C.A. Loop center.

April 1953 – 35 year old chemist, Roland Mueller of 4753 N. Karlov Avenue, was fined \$120.00 and court cost for reckless driving by Judge Butler.

March, 1954 – Howard Helt, of 4707 N. Karlov Avenue, went down to Montrose Harbor for opening day of smelt season. Smelt were caught by Helt.

Jul 1955 – Mrs. Axel F. Tolf, of 4742 N. Karlov Avenue, is celebrating her 90th birthday with a smorgasbord. A native of Sweden, she came to the United States in 1886 and raised seven children with her husband. Despite a broken hip, she plays canasta three or four times a week.

March 1958 – Miss Carol Mucha, of 4766 N, Karlov Avenue, helped celebrate the Y.M.C.A.'s 100th anniversary.

March 1963 – Chester Senese, of 4741 N. Karlov Avenue, is celebrating his 25th anniversary of graduating from McKinley High School. Chester is on the reunion committee and they are still trying to locate nearly 150 unaccounted for classmates.

May 1963 – Dr. Roma Rosen, of 4719 N. Karlov Avenue, assistant professor of English at Roosevelt University will be taking time off to compare the writings of Herman Melville and William Shakespeare.

December 1963 – Mrs. Sam Maniscalco, of 4701 N. Karlov Avenue, received a new set of china from her husband for Christmas.

October 1964 – John Solomen Garver, of 4740 N. Karlov Avenue, retired from Commonwealth Edison. His electrifying 33 years of service included work in the overhead department as a groundman.

February 1965 – R. O. T. C. Cadet, Captain Charles Heppner, of 4713 Karlov Avenue, received gold medals.

May 1965 – Parole officer Ruben Tucker, of 4738 N. Karlov Avenue, was arrested and charged with taking a \$25.00 bribe to give a parolee permission to buy an automobile.

January 1966 – Max Rubel, of 4769 N. Karlov Avenue, was elected commander of the Veterans of World War I, Wilson Park barracks.

November 1966 – Herbert E. Goerner, of 4713 N. Karlov Avenue, is retiring from 45 years with Commonwealth Edison as an accounting clerk. Hopefully his wife Elizabeth will be able to handle him being home full time.

February 1967 – Gordon Ross, of 4747 N. Karlov Avenue, works for the City's rodent control but has helped clear the city's snow-clogged street. He has put in 100 hours behind the wheel of a small snowplow. It is not known how the rodents fared with all this snow.

May 1967 – Mary Senese, of 4741 N. Karlov Avenue, is a senior at Alvernia Catholic High School. She is National Honor Society, nation-wide Latin award, drama club, student council officer, monitors' chairman, and the list goes on and on for this over achiever.

May 1968 – Robert Herbster, of 4747 N. Karlov Avenue, is a senior at De Paul Academy. He is National Honor Society, senior class vice president, student council vice president, newspaper, and on and on and on.

(Continued on page 8)

November 1968 – Roosevelt High School student, Leslie Jancovic of 4722 N. Karlov Avenue, is a member of the National Honor Society, on the school's honor roll, page editor for the school newspaper and a major-ette. She is also the student leader for the school's Human Relations Hang-Ups' 68 day. Over achiever Leslie, still managed to become a finalist for the State Street Queen Contest.

April 1950 – President of the Mayfair Rod and Gun club, W. G. Preschern of 4740 N. Karlov Avenue, will be one of the judges at the indoor casting tournament held at the Gompers Park fieldhouse. Very few fish will likely be caught inside the fieldhouse.

March 1970 – Merry Ann P. Jancovic, of 4772 N. Karlov Avenue, was named a Woodrow Wilson designate by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation.

June 1994 – 3 bedroom Chicago bungalow, at 4717 N. Karlov Avenue, is for sale for \$134,900.00. The neighbors are shocked at the high asking price.

Thank You Chicago Tribune!



Last January, the *Chicago Tribune* was kind enough to send three of their staff to one of our meetings at the Edgebrook Library to talk about their column *Chicago Flashback*. They showed us how *Chicago Flashback* is put together each week, where the ideas come from, the research, etc., showing some historic photos and talked about the Tribune's archives, and showed some historic front pages from big news days. Pictured above: collaborative editor Stephan Benzkofer, senior writer Ron Grossman and photo editor Marianne Mather.

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Fr. Michael Wyrzykowski, Pastor

For more information about Mass schedules and specific programs at our historic church, visit us at: www.olvchicago.org

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In Memoriam: Russell P. Gremel

Russ Gremel, retired lawyer, Veteran WWII and Korean Conflict, pipe smoking - outdoor enthusiast, Scoutmaster, and great friend of the NWCHS, passed away April 22, 2018 at age 99.

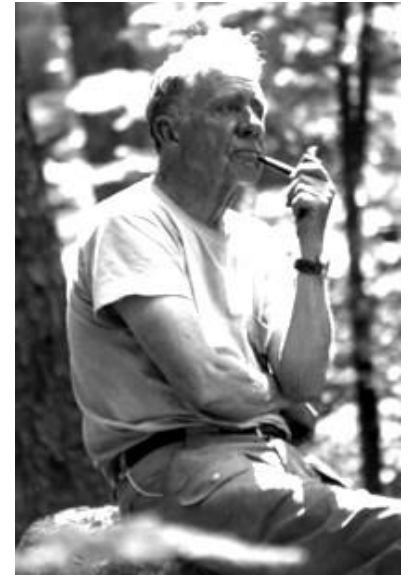
Russ made all the local TV new channels last year when he donated two million dollars of Walgreen's stock to the Illinois Audubon Society for a wildlife sanctuary in Amboy, Illinois. See <https://illinoisaudubon.org/location/gremel-wildlife-sanctuary/>

In 1953, Russ helped spearhead a neighborhood effort to stop a zoning change for a printing factory at 5237-5301 W. Lawrence Avenue.

At the City Zoning Board meeting Mr. Gremel stated, "This area in which we live is primarily residential and small businesses. The neighborhood has no objection to progress, but there's no operation such as the one in question, and we don't feel it should be allowed."

Scoutmaster for over 60 years of B.S.A. Troop 979 at the Congregational Church of Jefferson Park and under Russ Gremel's leadership, more than 150 Boy Scouts achieved the rank of Eagle.

May the great Scoutmaster of all times... be with us until we meet again.



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Letters from Russ Gremel

Russ Gremel spent his whole life in the Jefferson Park neighborhood. He shared his correspondence, with the Northwest Chicago Historical Society, with his boyhood friends about life growing up in Jefferson Park. It was the neighborhood life in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, before the Blue Line and the expressways invaded the northwest side, where the streetcar was king. An interesting look into the past.

Letter from Russ Gremel to Clarence and Harriet of Sarasota, Florida - December 27, 2002

Dear Clarence and Harriet:

It was good to receive, your letter sharing with me some of the great times and memories that you have about “growing up in Jefferson Park.” It is pleasant to note that once the memory juices begin flowing, you begin to recall things that you have not thought about for years. Some wise men said that you never really forget anything – it is still there in some corner of your mind, available for recall when the time is ripe. Your letter opened a corner in my memory bank, and glimpses of the past became alive once more.

I have just re-read your letter of September 8th, and have found enough inspiration to add a few of my own recollections to your youthful memories. Yes, Jeff was originally the Casimir (the building still stands at 4750 N Milwaukee Ave). Ten cents bought your ticket, and in addition to the regular feature, usually a cowboy saga (Hoot Gibson, Ken Maynard, Tom Mix, Buck Jones), a comedy, a newsreel, and of course, the serial. It would always conclude with the hero or heroine in some situation from which it would be impossible for them to survive..... yet next week there would be some remarkable recovery and so on and so on. The Casimir was a small, what we would today call an “intimate” theater. There was no air movement whatever, so when someone would release gas it would hang over some four or five rows of patrons like some avenging angel. You had to either move or tough it out. Five cents would buy you a bag of popcorn, and another nickel would purchase a 12-ounce bottle of Pepsi Cola. Adjacent to the theater was the Petronek Drug Store. Elmer was the soda jerk, and we would often stop in there for a great 10¢ Soda or sundae, made with real ice cream. Petronek himself was the God of Healing. The common phrase at our end of the block was that “he was better than any doctor.” When we were sick as kids the first line of our medical treatment was my mother, whose unfailing remedy was the admonition to “Shut Up!” because there was really nothing wrong with you. When that refused to reduce a 104° fever, the next-door guru, Mrs. Bethke, was called in for consultation, and when all of her nostrums failed, the verdict was The Mayo Clinic, otherwise known as Mr. Petronek. He would look you over gravely, then disappear into his workshop and finally reappear with a venomous looking bottle, the contents of which were vigorously administered until you recovered. Any left over medicine was retained for the next ailment, no matter what it was. I don’t think we ever threw away any unused medicine.

The beginning and end of all preventive medicine was known as Cod Liver Oil, perhaps the most ghastly concoction any human being was ever forced to swallow. To this day I can still taste it.

One step up the Social Ladder in the world of the theater was the Portage. It was definitely more prestigious than the humble Casimir. I think that the price of admission was also 10¢, but they didn’t have the famous pony raffle, like the Casimir. I recall sitting through two double features there one Saturday afternoon, when suddenly a handwritten note was posted on the screen: “RUSSELL GREMEL – GO HOME”. Theater operators were very obliging in those days. It was where I saw “What Price Glory” and the “Big Parade.” Unforgettable experiences.

I recall the night that the Gateway opened (June 27, 1930). Admission was 40¢ beyond my pocket-book, but in the parking lot some dairy was giving away free chocolate milk. We kids did not see the movie, but we did get our fill of Chocolate milk that night. Our next-door neighbor, Mr. Bethke, (the husband of our medically oriented Bertha) shelled out the admission price and confided in us later that it wasn’t worth it. Only one picture.

On certain nights the Casimir (later the Jeff) gave away free dishes, and this attracted my mother and grandmother. The Gateway did not resort to dishes, but had a night for a game similar to Bingo. I’m trying to think of the named, it wasn’t Bingo, maybe it was Banko (or Royal). Those were depression days and every one had dreams of winning \$25 or whatever the cash prize was a – something similar to today’s lotteries, but on a bit smaller scale I’m afraid. The theater would be packed on that night, for sure. The Gateway was one classy place. The night sky overhead was really something. Standing room only in the lobby on the nights when a really good picture was being shown.

As long as we are in Jefferson Park area, we must mention the Ten Cent Store. The world’s merchandise was there, and everything was really 10¢!!! Later Kresge was available, but they went up to 25¢. We did all of our real shopping at the Ten Cent Store: goldfish, postage stamps for collectors (everyone collected stamps), replacement soles and heels for your shoes, hammers, screwdrivers, tools of all sorts, even some clothing! And all only 10¢!!! John’s sister Marion worked there for a while, and his cousin, Eleanor was a kind of a big shot. I remember that John worked there for about 2 hours, selling ties. He looked so pitiful standing there trying to sell ties for 10¢ - I would have bought one but I didn’t wear ties in those days, and anyways, I did not have a dime. My most vivid memory of the Dime Store was one evening when my mother, my grandmother, my two sisters, my uncle Bob and myself were in there shopping. There was a 5 or 6-foot wall at the rear of the store, behind which the clerks were busy keeping records. We were in this area when some guy came back there and was trying to climb over the wall, but was having difficulty – so my uncle Bob gave him a friendly boost. When he was making his hurried exit my obliging uncle gave him a hand down. When the police arrived about 10 minutes later to investigate the robbery there was no difficulty whatever in pointing out my uncle as his accomplice, and so that gang of us spent a charming tour in local police station, explaining, explaining, explaining. My mother was mad at my uncle, her brother.

Did you go to the Portables? They were a group of tar papered shacks, ground in mud and connected by wooden side walks (located at the northwest corner of Central & Lawrence). Heated by coal stoves. They were there for first year high school students because there was no room at Schurz. I went there my first semester, and it was while going there that John and I really became friends. He had attended Our Lady of Victory and I had gone to Portage Park Elementary School. We walked the distance together, and took the same subjects. If you did attend the portables, I need not describe them. If they were in operation today they would be on Sixty Minutes. The Do Gooders would be in an uproar. Yet we never considered being in a state of suffering. We had a good education, and I guess that it what is all about.

When John and I started going to the main building, we walked both ways. We carried a bag lunch, ate it in the cafeteria with a 5¢ carton of milk, walked home in the heat, ice, snow, arguing all the way. It was two miles each way, and I do not believe that either of us ever took the streetcar a single time. Our parents could not afford it. John never once complained about his artificial limb. Speaking of John, his handicap never in any way kept him from being part of our games in the street – Softball, touch football, what have you. And he never at any time took advantage of his handicap, and never whined about it. In fact he was good at any sport in which his condition enabled him to compete. None of us, including John, every considered him handicapped. He was a bit on the slow side mentally, true, but I did tutor him all through high school, helping him grasp the intricacies of Latin, and constantly helping him with his studies in such simple subjects as English Grammar and mathematics.



Photo of a Downtown bound Milwaukee Avenue Streetcar. This was the preferred method of travel in Russ Gremel's boyhood days. Photo taken in front of the Arlington Glass Company at 4547 N Milwaukee Ave, Chicago, IL 60630

Senator John G. Mulroe

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I am pleased to support the Northwest Chicago Historical Society in their efforts to preserve the history of the area. Their efforts to conduct research and educate the community bring us all together and help us to better understand our legacy.

Back in those days boys seem to form local “gangs.” In the Wilson/Lawler/LeClaire area were myself, John Cirzan, Art Roer, Eddie King, George Roos, and Fred Kirchhoff. When John and I entered Schurz we added Billy Otto to our group. He lived on Laverne. I guess that you had your own gang on Lavergne Avenue, since you were a year or two older than we were, and certainly larger and stronger. I know that I for one used to marvel at how far you and Fred Ferris would hit a softball.

Now to tease your memories with a few flash-backs, baseball diamonds were easily formed in the street. Sewers were stationary bases, and horse manure was always nearby to form a temporary base.... the ice wagon was always a very welcome sight on a hot summer day. Since it was usually horse-drawn you could catch up with it easily, lift the tarp, and maybe find an ice chip or two.... the streets were our playgrounds, since there were never any parked cars, and very little traffic.... Evening in summer brought on the boy/girl games, always based under the street lamp post, and parents were usually on the porch watching.... I even remember the lamplighter, but just a wisp of memory....he came with a bike and a small ladder.... Russian Town was just across the tracks, our No Man’s Land.... they had goats, chickens, and we could hear the cock crow in the morning.... the old, red lumbering streetcars were our main source of transportation after our legs... One Ding was stop, two dings were go. It was great to stand on the front platform in the summer, in the open window next to the motorman. The bus was never created that could equal the old red streetcar, invincible in wind, storm, blizzard.... The old Mammy lady came from Russian Town, bleating “mammy, mammy.” When we kids heard her coming we would rush home to alert our mothers. My mother would gather us around her, lock up the house, and retire into the Kirchhoff house next door. There Mrs. Kirchhoff would have her kids gathered, then we would all retreat into the basement and huddle in the corner, while our mothers stood guard armed with heavy frying pans. I could never understand how one old woman could cause such terror.... At the corner of Sunnyside and Milwaukee Avenues, the southeast corner to be exact, stood the little wooden shack that housed the Boswell Realty Company. Across the street was Stacek Furniture Company. Surrounding both Boswell and Stacek were large empty spaces that we used for everything under the sun, but mostly, baseball fields....

Well, as I bring these ramblings to a close I must admit that distance always lends enchantment, but I still feel that we were fortunate youngsters to have lived during those times. Depression and yes, even poverty, was our lot, and by today’s standards we were certainly “under privileged.” Yet when I think back I feel that we were fortunate in the things that counted. We had parents who were strict, and moral guidelines given not only by them, but also by the church, the school, and our friends. I do not believe that I ever cheated at school, and I know that anyone who lied or used dirty language was marked by his fellows. Today they call us the Greatest Generation, I don’t think that any of us thought of ourselves that way. We did what we had to do, and I think we had fun doing it.... and we learned to appreciate whatever we had, no matter how little. I hope that today’s youngsters can look back on their youth as we do, maybe they will. I guess these will be “their good old days.”

All for now – the memory bank is closed. Hoping that this finds you both doing well and that the new year is good to you.

As always, Russ

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Letter to Russ Gremel from Clarence and Harriet Wemple - February 12, 2003

Dear Russ:

I was most happy to receive your latest letter December 27 reminiscing about the wonderful days we experienced growing up in our old neighborhood.

First I heard of the new Woolworth store was a local newspaper story announcing an opening soon in Jefferson Park. The concept of selling all articles throughout such a large store for 5 and 10 cents each was very intriguing. For a long time my favorite counter at Woolworth's was their large display of miniature toy automobiles at 10¢ each. The novelty wore off after I collected about two dozen. I cannot match your story of an incident that happened to you and your family one evening at the 5 and 10.

Do you remember the days when much of the neighborhood was in a state of upheaval for about one year with the installation of the storm drain sewer system? First, large flat bed trucks came in with huge concrete duct piping measuring about 18' to 20' long and 5 foot diameter. I can't remember the weight of each section but it must have been between 1 to 2 tons. Cranes or winches on the flat beds lowered the pipe to the ground at strategic storage places. Storage along Wilson Ave. between Lavergne and C & NWRy handled much of the bulk of this pipe. After school each day the youngsters would play follow the leader thru designated paths formed by the pipes. One afternoon my cousin Dan Bixler who was a teenage and about 5'-6" at the time did not duck his head down enough, and put a big gash in his skull. My father just happened to get home early in the afternoon when the accident occurred and immediately took Dan to a local doctor.

You may remember prior to this sewer system – our basements would flood perhaps two or three times each summer with as much as 2 to 3 feet of water. We found out one way to forestall a flood was to jam a light tin or metal pipe down all our basement drains and any back up water from the street would rise up in our makeshift metal pipes no higher than the water in the street. A plumber finally put in a new drain with a hinged flap that would close tight if water flowed from the street towards our basement.

I took my brother (Jr.) for his first visit to the Gateway Theater. It was about 4:00 in the afternoon when we entered. After his eye became familiar with our surroundings he looked up and saw the beautiful night sky, twinkling stars and the sheer filmy clouds moving slowly overhead – he nudged me sharply and said, "look Bus it's dark out already." I don't think he ever experienced again such a complete sense of bewilderment. I was at the Casimer one afternoon watching a Rin Tin Tin thriller – the dog was in hot pursuit to the rescue when an elderly fellow next to me yelled out as loud as he could "Run Rinney Run." Thought this most amusing at the time.



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The southeast corner of Wilson & Milwaukee Avenues was Chester's Drug Store. Next to the drug store was May's Funeral Home. May's eventually took over the whole building. The building was torn down in 2005. ca 1930

Photo Courtesy of Ken Vonderohe

Our pharmacist was Chester who shared Part of the building housing John V. May Mortuary at the corner of Wilson and Milwaukee Avenue. Can't remember Chesteter's last name. As we all know Chester than moved his drug store over to Windsor and Milwaukee Avenues. Well do I remember cod liver oil called Viostron whereby a couple of drops was equivalent to a tablespoon of the dreaded stuff. We could all handle the Viostron dosage.

You probably recall that Mr. Hutter of Royal Blue Grocery (4509 N. Milwaukee Ave.) printed up 500 copies weekly of their specialty sales for the following week. For a couple years I would take 250 copies which had to be folded a certain way for delivery the next day over a given route. For this I would earn an entire dollar. If I felt energetic he would give me the entire 500 and I would handle the second route for another dollar. You may remember that another merchant next to Hutter's raffled off the most beautiful large pedal car featuring sprung chassis, headlights, bumpers and windshield, really the Cadillac of toy cars. It remained in the window for a couple of months as the proprietor handed out raffle tickets on purchases. I guess I was about five or six and paused to examine this beautiful toy every time I passed this store. Finally the winning number was posted along with two other numbers in the event the winner failed to show. I had the second number. My expectation was very brief as the winner claimed the prize late the first day.

In 1928 or 1929 a neighbor opened up a delicatessen on the corner of Sunnyside and Milwaukee. I believe his last name was Green?? My father knew this fellow quite well and would go in there frequently for certain prepared foods which delis offer. As such it didn't offer much competition to Hutter's Royal Blue. The

first month Green hired a young German immigrant named Karl?? He was in his mid-twenties and an excellent carpenter. He installed all the shelving, cabinets and counters in the new deli. One day Green told Dad he had no further work for Karl and wondered if Dad could use Karl around our home – that he would work for room and board. Karl then became the seventh member of the Wemple household – the sixth was Uncle Bill Tufty – mother's brother. We had a large finished back porch and a finished room and bath up in the attic. Karl occupied the latter. Things went along very well. He built some cabinets down in the basement, a beautiful bench around the trees in the back yard, helped with washing dishes; we boys showed him something about card games, batting a baseball down the street, spinning tops, the latter two he had never done in his life and seemed to be very awkward in catching a baseball. One Sunday morning Uncle Bill got up a little late and couldn't seem to find his wallet. Karl had skipped early that morning without making a sound. The fact that Uncle Bill wore a hearing aid in the daytime – it must have been very obvious to Karl that Bill was a very sound sleeper at night. At any rate Dad reimbursed Bill for the financial loss.

The open fields behind our homes provided a wonderful setting for large family picnics during summer months, group photos and abbreviated ball games. One summer the young fellows in our group built an underground cave with an entrance tunnel and cooking area for roasting potatoes. For the roof we used old discarded door and old planks covered over with sod. The following year we enlarged the cave – it was heavy work. But, we viewed this as our very own place. As I recall we tired of the entire project and all went into scouting. Forgot to mention that we did have proper vent over the cooking area.

A couple of times each year Dad would pile us into the car and we would visit some family relatives that still operated farms as far away as 100 to 200 miles. The thrill of these visits was to climb high up a ladder in the barn and leaping quite a distance down into the hay. Some of these places still had water pumps in the front yard or in the kitchen sink. These were hand operated pumps – no running water. On a large gathering of relatives near Galesburg, IL, one summer several of the men got together for a trip into town so they could visit a LOCOMOBILE agency owned by one of the group. Dad took me along and I was so impressed with these huge machines – I can still visualize them as if was yesterday.

Two Uncle Bills, mom's brother, Ashley Tufty was the other one, were avid golfers and bowlers. On many Sundays when I was 13 or 14 we played the Edgebrook Golf Course. Dad had already given me his fine set of Hillerich & Bradsby clubs when he discovered golf was not to his liking. Years later I played a lot of golf with Artie Rohr at the Greenview 18 holer, which is now part of O'Hare Airport. We would get home from our respective jobs, race out there in an attempt to get in nine holes before dark. As a railroad freight salesman over 30 years golf was pretty important to me. But, that Greenview course had something I never saw before – a long 625 yard hole with a par 6! Bill Tufty for many years bowled in the Chicago Classic League in the Loop. One had to have a two year established average of 190 or better. For a short time he worked with a vaudeville juggling team when this was popular at some theaters in Chicago.

As our family sat around the dinner table Dad frequently described extraordinary problem brought to his attention that day or perhaps that week. As Claim Agent for the Public Service Co. of Northern Illinois he was responsible for settling all claims for personal injury and property damage against the company. As an example – a 13-year-old boy was flying a kite with fine strand radio wire. It came into contact with electric transmission line high voltage – he could not free himself as the wire wrapped around one wrist and part of his buttocks and leg. He was burned terribly. As a result he lost one hand and wrist halfway up to the elbow. While it could be said Public Service wasn't negligible, irresponsible or unlawful, but Dad felt the company should do everything possible to help this family. Ultimately they paid all doctor bills, hospital bills, mortgage on the family's home and set up a trust fund for the boy. Considering everything that happened to this lad the case had a happy ending. He went on to be the star of a local baseball team, Playing right field he would catch the ball with his gloved right hand – shove the ball to his body using the stump of his left arm to hold it momentarily as he dropped the glove to the ground and grabbed the ball with his right hand for the throw. He accomplished this maneuver so splendidly that he received nice write up in the local newspapers.

In another case a man was driving a heavy-duty earth-moving machine that tipped over and crushed one leg severely. While the man was recuperating Dad insisted that I go along on one of his visits to this fellow. He was an accomplished musician on the Spanish guitar and Dad and I were both taking guitar lessons at that time. At any rate the fellow was so appreciative of the way the Public Service was aiding in his recovery.

I was so lucky as a kid – my father took me along on many of his business trips downstate while I was still in elementary school. I studied his every move in driving the car until I had it down pat – even the slipping of the clutch to get off to smooth starts, I never mentioned any of this to him at the time. One Sunday morning he stated he was planning to go over to “Chester’s” for some cigarettes. Of course I was only 10 at the time and I announced that I would like it so much if I could drive. Of course he said no. I started to really nag, nag, nag saying that I know exactly how to drive. When he couldn’t stand this nagging any further he finally said to me, “Okay lets see what you can do.” I drove the car perfectly (right by your house that morning). From that time on he let me drive whenever possible. For a couple of years drove around the block without fail most evenings among other drives. On downstate trips he usually turned the wheel over to me for instructions on SAFE driving tips. It must have helped – since I’ve been driving 75 years without an accident, actually in all 48 contiguous states. We were actually on our way to Alaska about 10 years ago. I ran into too much snow in high elevations – Jasper Park, Alberta, Canada. Locals said September was a little too late to avoid snow and we should have started in July.

I really enjoyed your letter December 27 – pondering over the good times of our youth. I am sending a copy of this letter to Dr. John Cirzan with best fond memories of our baseball days.

cc Dr. John L. Cirzan
4619 N. Lawler
Chicago, IL 60630

Best Regards,
Ash “Buster” Wemple

Letter from Russ Gremel to Clarence and Harriet - November 12, 2004

Dear Clarence and Harriet

Time passes, and I was visiting John the other day when he asked about you. I know that it has been some time since our last correspondence and when I looked at our last exchange, I noticed that it has been almost two years since I last heard from you. I hope that everything is alright.

I was going to write one of my long, rambling, nostalgic letters but I decided to hold off until I heard from you. I know that those nightmarish hurricanes that ravished Florida last fall did hit the area where you live and perhaps caused you to relocate. John and I discussed this possibility and we are both concerned.

So if the letter does reach you, we’d appreciate it if you would drop me a line and let me know, and if you wish, I’ll send you another one of my long, rambling, nostalgic letters.

Russ

Dear Russel

I am sorry to tell you Ashby (Clarence as in your letter) passed away April 17, 2003. I was sure I sent you a notice. Sorry, he was 85 – two days before his 86th.

The 80’s are a rough age to be in. Too many of us in this area. The doctors are kept busy.

Best Wishes
Harriet

Mr. Zee's

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GYROS PLATE

Stained Glass Artist Hans Muench

By Frank Suerth

Hans M. Muench was born somewhere in Germany in about 1887. He came to Chicago in 1910 and lived at 5311 N. Northwest Highway, in the Jefferson Park neighborhood. He wife, Frieda Lexius, was also born in Germany and they had two daughters, Frieda and Margaret.

He worked as a Stained Glass artist at Munich Art Glass Company of Chicago. Most likely he was trained at his art at the Franz Meyer Studio in Munich, Germany where the Munich Pictorial-style stained glass was prevalent.



Two of the Stained Glass Windows in the Basilica of St. Fidelis in Victoria, Kansas. Designed and installed in 1916 by the Munich Art Glass Company of Chicago, Illinois, under the direction of German artist Mr. Hans Muench,

Photos Courtesy of Mitch Weber

Hans started his own company called the H. Muench Stained Glass Company. It was his company that produced the fine Munich-style stained glass windows that still can be seen at the Eden's church. The H. Muench Stained Glass Company operated in Chicago near Kostner and Belmont until the mid 1940's.

His grandson, Michael Shannon of Iowa City, IA, told NWCHS, that Hans Muench was a strict parent who demanded good grades in school for his daughters with lots of work time at his stained glass factory. Michael stated that his grandfather, Hans Muench, has stained glass windows in churches in all of the lower 48 states. Hans and his wife Frieda moved to the state of Mississippi in retirement.

The 28-page book *Light in the Windows* is available for purchase from the Eden United Church of Christ. This book showcases Hans Muench's stained glass windows at the church.

www.edenuccchicago.org

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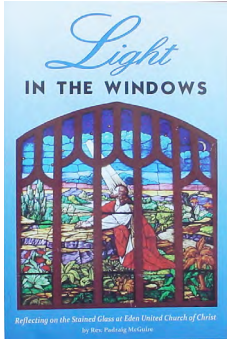


Photo of the Eden's Church at LeClaire and Gunnison in 1928



Two of the Hans M. Muench designed windows at the Eden United Church of Christ in Jefferson Park
 Photos by Lawrence D. Pavia - Courtesy Eden United Church of Christ

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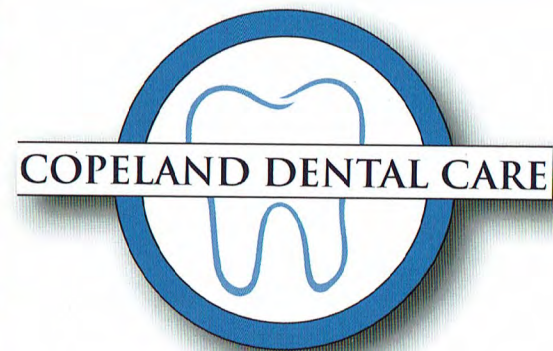
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