



Are you or someone in your family experiencing pain from stress, illness or a sports-related injury? Or, do you just feel like you need a tune-up?

Our chiropractor and massage therapists are available to help you heal and thrive.

**NOW
ACCEPTING
NEW
PATIENTS**

Sauganash Wellness Center

Chiropractic • Massage • Acupuncture

CALL 773.283.4470

for your appointment today

6160 N. Cicero Avenue, Suite 214, Chicago, IL

FREE PARKING

www.SauganashWellness.com

INTRODUCING! Chiropractic Health Treatments for Your Pets

Whether your pet is currently well, sick or nursing an injury, get help and relief for your dog or cat. These proven, non-surgical, drug-free chiropractic techniques help them heal and keep them healthy for years to come.

Chiropractic Pet Care & Wellness

Sauganash Animal Chiropractic

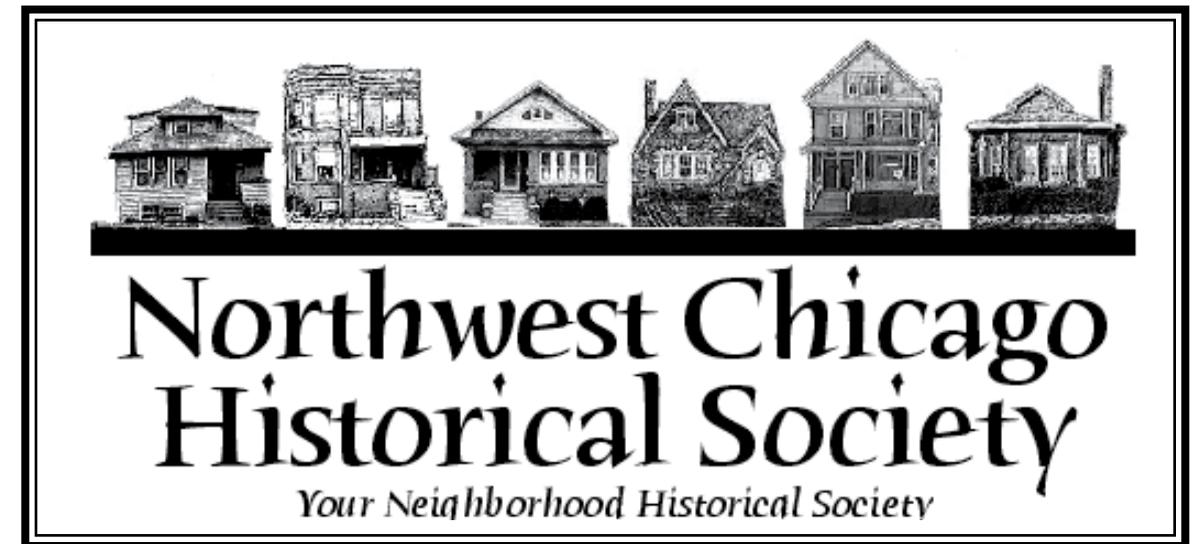
CALL 773.570.3500
for an appointment*

www.SauganashPetWellness.com

6160 N. Cicero Avenue, Suite 214
Chicago, IL 60646



**Pet sessions available early mornings, evenings and weekends. But their treatments are not actually on the tables!*



Newsletter January 2016

Number XXIII

A History of Cinema in Avondale Polk Brothers: The Early Years The Opening of the Portage Park Fieldhouse

This issue highlights two appliance store giants that got their start on the northwest side of Chicago: Abt Electronics, 2858 N. Milwaukee Avenue, 1936, and Polk Brothers, 3334 N. Central, 1935. Abt still exists today, located in Glenview, Illinois. While the Polk Brothers store is now only a memory, the Polk Brothers name lives on as a charitable foundation.

We want to thank Sandra Fernandez & Marilyn Brandenburger Short, both avid NWCHS Newsletter readers. Marilyn supplied some history and photos of the Portage Park area, while Sandra provided history and photos of Old Irving Park. Several of these photos, along with some of the NWCHS archive, are on now on permanent display at the Potbelly Sandwich Shop (located between Avondale and Kostner Streets south of Irving Park Road.) Sandra's pictures feature the building that once stood at this location.

Please continue to hunt for those old photo gems! We are certain that thousands of photos of our local area are likely stored in attics or basements across the country. Our readers would love to continue to see these elements of history uncovered. As we share with everyone, the digital image will no longer be subject to fires, floods, tornadoes or some other natural disasters that could decimate the original copy.

We would like to thank Rob Reid for sharing his story on the History of Cinema in Avondale. We could fill a dozen issues on movies theaters that are gone on the northwest side. We hope to have Rob talk at one of our Meetup meetings this year. - Frank Suerth

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.

The Northwest Chicago Historical Society

President: Susanna Ernst (773) 725-5774
Vice-president: Dan Pogorzelski (773) 350-9414
Treasurer: Gail Weber
Recording Secretary: Robert Bank

Board of Directors:

Frank Suerth Marketing Director (773) 725-5774
Marilyn Ebenstein Activities Director
Del Norwood Administrative Director
Janet Taylor Communications Director
Walt Kowalczyk Advertising Director
Chuck Brown Membership Director
Dory Ahearn Public Relations Director
Jacob Kaplan Collections Director

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 Membership:
P. O. Box 30067 \$15.00 per calendar year
Chicago, IL 60630 \$10.00 for 65 years old and over
e-mail: nwchicagohistory@sbcglobal.net Website: nwchicagohistory.org
© 2016 Northwest Chicago Historical Society - All rights reserved

Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

I work with Geoffrey Baer at WTTW/11, and I'm trying to find out when the L. Fish Furniture store closed up shop in Albany Park and sold the building. Would anyone there be able to help answer that?

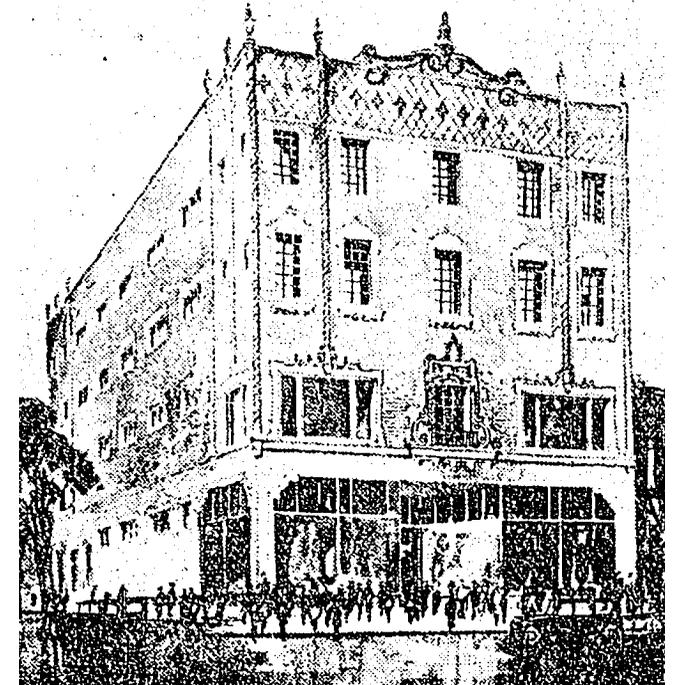
Many thanks!

Erica - North Park

The Albany Park store was their 8th store, located on the northeast corner of Lawrence and Christiana on the former site of the Hill State Bank. The building was completed in 1931 and designed by architects Schmidt, Garden & Erikson. The store operated at this location until 1942.

Most likely the building was sold soon after the store closed. A check at the county office could verify this. In the 1940's another furniture store opened in the building, The Schlesinger Furniture Co. operated at this location until it closed its doors on July 31, 1952. Quality Chrome Co. then began selling kitchen tables and chairs for a few years in the 1950's.

*The original location was the Hill State Bank and is now back to a bank of sorts; the building is home to the Interstate Blood Bank.
- NWCHS*



The L. Fish Furniture Company building on Lawrence Avenue in Albany Park in 1931.

 <p>MOODY Plumbing Inc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RESIDENTIAL • INDUSTRIAL • INSURED • COMMERCIAL • LICENSED • BONDED <p><i>Jim Moody</i></p> <p>Bus. Ph. (773) 777-1614 Fax (773) 777-6614</p>	<p>NADIG PRESS REPORTER Newspapers JOURNAL</p> <p><i>Serving Northwest Chicago & Suburbs Since 1940</i></p> <p>773-286-6100 Brian Nadig 4937 N. Milwaukee Avenue Publisher Chicago, Illinois 60630-2191 Fax 773-286-8151</p> <p>www.nadignewspapers.com</p>
--	--

Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

For the past seventeen years, I have been researching my family's Chicago history. Much to my surprise, I recently discovered (online) a photograph in your January 2013 newsletter of the 1927 NW Triangle football team provided by a Charlie Rowell of Barrington, IL. My father, Raymond Brandenburger, is in the photo (back row, third from the left) and I have his "Certificate of Recognition" as well. Ironically, I have in my family collection, a 9 x 12 photograph taken at what I believe to be the same place as the NW photo - looks like "Edward Fose"* studio (same backdrop drapery and cane chair on left). This photograph is of 23 men dressed in suits and I am able to determine that there are quite a few of the same men in both photos. Could this possibly be Lane Tech students? My Dad graduated from Lane in 1924. He also played on the "Twin Lakes" hockey team. I believe he lived on Byron Street at the time.

Regards,

**More likley Edward Fox*

Marilyn Brandenburger Short - Dunedin, FL



Northwest Triangle Four Horsemen - Thor, Dad (Ray Brandenburger), Red, and Marty. Possibly taken in Portage Park.

4.

Photo Courtesy of Marilyn Short



This 1927 photo shown above could be the Triangle football players. Many of the same boys are shown in a photo in our NWCHS January 2013 newsletter page. Ray Brandenburger is in the top row third from the left.

Photos Courtesy of Marilyn Short

The 1925 photo on the left is of Ray Brandenburger standing in front of his home on the north side of the 6100 block of Byron. All bungalows shown in the photo are still standing.

5.

ARCHITECTURAL ANTIQUES
OF INDIANAPOLIS
(COLONIAL ANTIQUES)

CELEBRATING 35 YEARS AS
INDIANA'S PREMIER SOURCE FOR
QUALITY AMERICAN
ARCHITECTURAL
ANTIQUES!

OPEN MON-SAT 10-5 OR BY APPT
CLOSED SUN

5000 W 96TH ST.
INDIANAPOLIS, IN 46268

317-873-2727 800-916-6777

WWW.ANTIQUEARCHITECTURAL.COM

Since 1980 we have delighted thousands of Customers with some of the highest quality and most Unique Architectural Salvage and other fine antiques to be found in the Midwest. We maintain an impeccable reputation by making sure that your satisfaction is our top priority.

Our inventory is vast and ever changing. Our specialties include Antique Lighting, restored and unrestored, a huge collection of antique hardware, doors, mantels, stained glass and Architectural Elements. Over an acre of items for you to see!

Let us know your specific needs and we will work with you to find the items you need. Easy access from I-65.



*We carry thousands of Lights,
Cabinets, Fire Places, Doors/
Hardware, & Unique Archi-
tectural Inventory.*



Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

I am the granddaughter of Samuel Fox who occupied the historic building at 4200 Irving Park from about 1915-1922 I believe, the Fox Drugstore. My grandmother Minnie Fox also had an ice cream and candy store across the street, and their daughter Ruth evidently worked at the "Dutch" Bakery next store. I have a few photos taken during that time, and wonder if you would like to see if they are if any value to you. Thank you for your interest,

Sincerely,

Sandra Fernandez - Simi Valley, CA

PS: I enjoyed reading your newsletters, thank you!



The Fox Drug Store was in this Chicago Landmark at 4200 W. Irving Park. The photo was taken before the drug store when Henry E. Nicholas operated a grocery store from the building. It later became a tavern – the Whistle Stop Inn.

CUSTOM LETTERED BRONZE AND ALUMINUM PLAQUES



- National Register Plaques
- Custom Wording
- Discounts to Historical Societies
- Graphics and Logos Reproduced
- Medallions to Roadside Markers



FREE BROCHURE

800-874-7848 / Fax: 717-285-9060

See our on-line catalog at www.erialandmark.com

e-mail: info@erialandmark.com

Rush service available Satisfaction Guaranteed



Erie Landmark Company
637 Hempfield Hill Road
Columbia, PA 17512



The outside and inside view of the candy/ice cream store. The Fox family lived in Irving Park from about 1914 through 1922. They lived at 3984 N. Avondale. I am thinking it was this building but the part they lived in close to Irving Park Blvd. seems to have been torn down. Minnie's Ice Cream looks like it could have been in that building also. I was told that the ice cream and candy shop was "across the street and around the corner".

Photos Courtesy of Sandra Fernandez



Sam, Minnie, Ruth, Stan, Dorothy, Mildred and Earl. My mom described Irving Park as the happiest time of their childhood. It sounded truly idyllic. The kids had the run of the neighborhood, they could walk from their home to dad's drug store, mom's ice cream shop, and drop into Kjellander's for treats also. They played on the parkways and had kittens and dogs and canaries as pets. Two loving but strict parents who raised them with respect and the desire to do good deeds in the world. All three girls became teachers and my mom Mildred a kindergarten and 1st grade teacher. When my mom went all out for dance and drama at Carl Schurz , Minnie made all of her costumes at home on an old pedal Singer machine. Gosh, I am just realizing now what it must have been like for kids to grow up in Irving Park with a father who had a drugstore, a mother with an ice cream store, and an eldest sister who worked in a bakery. *Photos Courtesy of S. Fernandez.*



Photo taken on Keeler looking north to Irving Park.



Photo Courtesy of Sandra Fernandez

Photo of a patriotic parade going south down Avondale from Irving Park. It appears definitely to be winter so am wondering if it is an Armistice Day celebration in 1918? The parade photo looks like it was taken by Sam who must have climbed up to the tracks, most likely to have taken a picture of the Belding School students which included Stan (14) and Ruth (15). Can't quite make out the signs - is it "Welcome Home" ?? Also in the top right corner you can see the drug store with the large painted sign. Right near the corner of the building on Avondale there is a sign which I cannot make out, but am wondering if it may say "Minnie's" since I think that was the location. Note the kids on their ponies. The kids went on to Carl Schurz High School.



LAKE EFFECT BREWING COMPANY

LOCALLY CRAFTED BEER ON CHICAGO'S NORTHWEST SIDE

www.lakeeffectbrewing.com

A History of Cinema in Avondale

By Rob Reid

Avondale's Forgotten Nickelodeons

During the 1890s and 1900s, as the United States rapidly transformed into a predominantly urban industrial society, motion pictures ascended to become the dominant form of mass entertainment. By the early 1910s, storefronts known as nickelodeons began showing short silent films, often accompanied by phonograph recordings or a live organ performance. Due to the low cost of admission to these films (the name nickelodeon literally comes from "nickel" as in 5 cents, and "odeon," which is Greek for theater), these screenings drew large crowds amongst immigrants and the working class. Unlike saloons, whose business suffered greatly due to this new competition, women and children were also significantly in attendance. Although these screens were typically unsanitary and cramped with fold-out chairs, the same audiences would return again and again to watch different films each week.

In many ways the Chicago neighborhood of Avondale reflected this transformative growth spurt that reshaped the country. Accommodating a wave of Polish, German, and Scandinavian immigration, several single screen storefront theaters opened in the neighborhood between 1910 and 1913. On Diversey, W.J. Weber opened the Weber, which was later renamed the Diversey (3018 W. Diversey). On Belmont, another small screen was named the Linden (3018 W. Belmont), after the predominantly German subdivision Unter den Linden (which in turn took its name from a tree-lined boulevard in Berlin). Two more small screens opened close to Avondale's massive clay pits and brick-building factories by the Chicago River - the May (3159 N. Elston) and the Elston (3167 N. Elston). Milwaukee Avenue, likely the neighborhood's most vibrant commercial strip, added the Enterprise (2829 N. Milwaukee) and the Drake (2905 N. Milwaukee).

A 1917 advert in the Chicago Tribune highlights a typical marketing strategy for drawing repeat audiences with a serial film. *The Adventures of Kathlyn* played at several nickelodeons across Chicago, including Avondale's Enterprise:

"The Biggest Thrills Are Yet to Come. Intensely thrilling though these pictures are in the first three "Kathlyn" reels, they don't compare in dramatic intensity with the reels that are yet to come. The first three reels lay the groundwork for the 24 reels that follow- two full length reels every two weeks. You'll never forgive yourself if you miss the plot of the whole wonderful story, given in the three reels now being shown in Selig's \$140,000 Play."



delightful
pastries

Delightful Pastries

French Market 131 N. Clinton Street Chicago, IL 60661 (312) 234-9644	Old Town 1710 N. Wells Street Chicago, IL 60614 (312) 255-0724	Jefferson Park 5927 W. Lawrence Avenue Chicago, IL 60630 (773) 545-7215
--	--	---

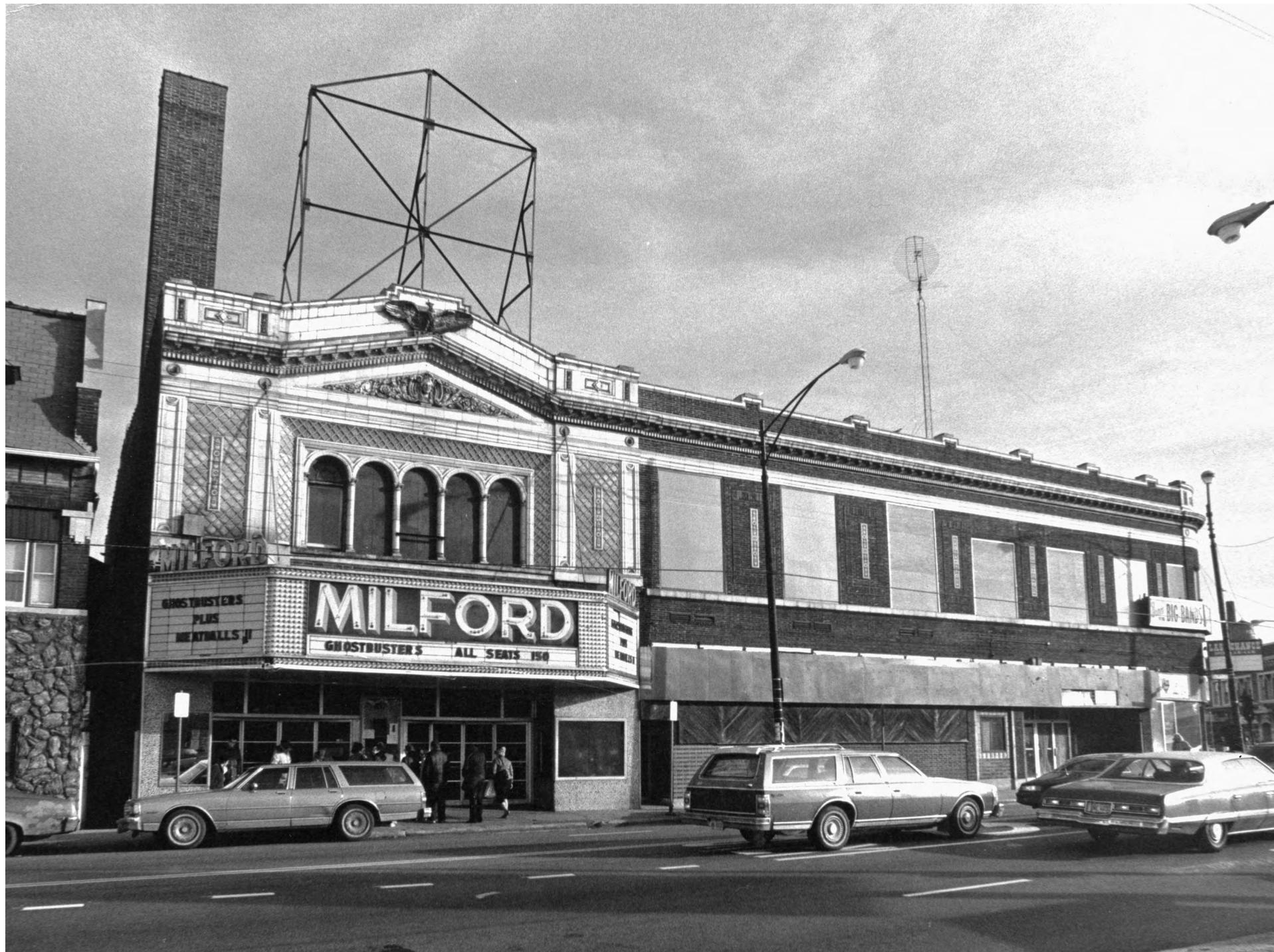
Cookies, Brownies & Bars • Morning Pastries & Breads • Cakes • Mini-pastries • Savories

www.delightfulpastries.com



The Enterprise today.

Photo Courtesy of Rob Reid



Scaling Up

It is estimated that by the 1920s, more than half of America's population attended movie screenings on at least a weekly basis. Avondale kept pace. Later in the 1910s, three new theaters were built along Milwaukee Avenue to accommodate larger audiences. The Crescent (2915 N. Milwaukee) was an 800-seat movie house featuring a stage theatre and a Wurlitzer. The Rose (2958 N. Milwaukee) had room for 700 seats. While enjoying a successful run for its first few decades, the Rose occasionally made the news during the Great Depression in relation to petty crimes typical of the time. In 1931, the theater's janitor found a 76-year-old woman beaten unconscious over a purse containing 28 cents. On Sunday, September 18, 1934, the Rose was one of four theaters robbed by a group of teenagers known as the Sunday Gang. Both theaters survived the Depression, although the Crescent was renamed the Nita in 1935, and the Rose was renamed The Dale (as in AvonDALE) in 1936.

The Milford (3311 N. Pulaski), built in 1917 with 1175 seats, was the largest and newest of the cinemas on Milwaukee Avenue in Avondale. Named after the cross streets of Milwaukee and Crawford (now Pulaski), it was initially run on the Ascher Brothers circuit and featured silent movies, a theater organ, and an adjacent ballroom. In the 1930s, the three large theaters on Milwaukee Avenue were joined by an expansion of the Elston (3167 N. Elston) from 300 seats to 800 seats. This theater was later renamed the Fox.

The Milford Theater in 1984

*(Exterior of Milford Theater;
Chicago History Museum; ICHi-25419;
John McCarthy, photographer.)*



The Dale Theater

image courtesy of Theatre Historical Society of America - historictheatres.org

While Avondale's larger theaters remained in operation for decades, the smaller nickelodeons could not compete. However, all of these storefronts were readily repurposed and still stand today. The Diversey continued to show films until at least 1915 but by 1919 was operating as an auto body shop. The location of the Linden has housed a location of Honey Baked Ham for over three decades. The Drake was known to show films until at least 1919, before the space became occupied by a variety of businesses including a variety store, the Polish American Council's service center and Chicago Salvage. The May continued showing films until at least 1917 before Ravenswood Foundry moved on site and stayed for decades. The Enterprise showed films until at least 1914, but since has had a colorful and eclectic reinvention as a hardware store, Paris Drapery, a Greek restaurant, and now a taqueria which sometimes features live mariachi.

By the 1920s, the iconic force of the movie house had become so powerful in the public mind that the brightly lit marquee, touting the latest movie playing in town, became a sure sign that a main street or neighborhood shopping area had "made it." -*Michael Putnam, in Silent Screens*



Round-Up Theater circa 1949. Shown on the left, the first home of Abt Electronics, then called Abt Television & Appliance Co, located at 2858 Milwaukee Ave. founded in 1936. Abt Electronics is still located on Milwaukee Ave. but now in Glenview, IL

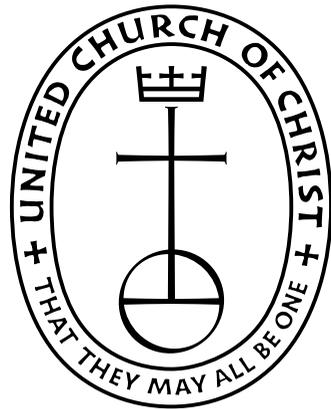
(Creative Commons, Kenny1950 from cinematreasures.org.)

“Never place a period
where God has placed a comma”

- Gracie Allen



God is still speaking,



The Congregational Church of Jefferson Park

5320 W. Giddings St., Chicago, IL 60630 773-725-0121
congregationalchurchofjeffersonpark.org

Pastor: Reverend Gayle Tucker

We are your neighbors and we would like to meet you



Rose Theater in 1917

*(Exterior of Rose Theater: Chicago History Museum, ICHi-68002;
Charles E. Barker, photographer.)*

The Last Screens Standing

During the economic boom triggered by World War II and the use of cinema as a tool for nationalist propaganda, box office revenues peaked in the early 1940s. However, by the late 1940s overall attendance began to decline due to several factors including the suburbanization of America, international competition, and the ongoing legal battles between independent cinema operators and the theater chains. This trend was further exacerbated by the rise of the household television in the 1950s.

The legal battles between major movie companies (including Paramount, Fox, Warner Brothers, and Loew's) and trade associations of independent theatre operators played out over several decades. In 1948, independent cinema scored a significant victory when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the major companies held an illegal monopoly. However, the control of production and distribution and strength of advertising (largely through television) enabled the major companies to continue dominating the market. By the 1980s, the 1948 legal settlement between independent theatres and major companies had been virtually abandoned. Mirroring these national trends, the Fox closed in 1949 and its building has since been used for manufacturing and storage. The Nita continued showing films until around 1950. Although the building caught fire in 1952, it still stands today as a grocery store. The Dale, picked up by the H & E Balaban circuit, was renamed the Round-Up in 1949 and played exclusively Westerns. One commenter on the website Cinema Treasures

remembers the Round-Up in 1950: "...as a kid we would go there in cowboy attire and check our capguns at the desk where they would all be hung on a pegboard with a claim check."

Westerns proved to be a passing fad and the Round-Up changed its name back to the Dale in 1950. It was closed shortly thereafter. The lobby was then repurposed as a storefront, while the theater was adapted for storage. Last operating as Zacatecas Mexican restaurant, the building was demolished in 2009 in true Chicago style.

The Milford, also picked up by the H & E Balaban circuit, survived for several more decades and was the last screen standing in Avondale. Accommodating migrants from the old Polish downtown in Wicker Park, as well as Polish immigrants fleeing the failing economy of their homeland, the Milford featured Polish-language films in the 1960s and early 1970s. Then, during the emergence of the two-tier cinema market in the 1970s, the Milford undersold its competitors in the second run market (the Bryn Mawr and the Des Plaines) by offering admission for only 60 cents (50 cents for kids) while surviving primarily on revenue from popcorn and candy sales. In the mid-1980s it tested the Spanish-language market before closing its doors for good in 1990. In 1994, the building caught on fire and was demolished in 1994, unimaginatively replaced by a CVS pharmacy.

Thank You - Copernicus Center

For letting the Northwest Chicago Historical Society have your historic theater for an evening. Some of our members were able to hear a little history of the theater and watch the same short film that was viewed opening night, Friday June 17, 1930 at the old Gateway Theater. And thank you for being such great caretaker of this historic theater.



**JEFFERSON PARK
Neighborhood Association**

www.jpna.net

NEIGHBORS HELPING NEIGHBORS

Since 2001

Please join us!

Our general meetings are held the last Wednesday of each month, 7 p.m., at the Congregational Church of Jefferson Park, 5320 West Giddings, in the basement. Meetings are free and open to all.

Stop by and meet your neighbors!

Polk Brothers: The Early Years

Many of us longtime Chicago area residents remember Chicago's largest home appliance and electronics retailer, Polk Brothers. Their first "Polk Bros. Store" was on Central Avenue on the northwest side of the city with 17 total stores in the Chicago area at one time.

But before Polk Brothers became the retail giant we all remember, they started out in 1935 in a small retail store called Central Appliance. This first location was located at 3334 N. Central Avenue, a few blocks north of where they would build their massive "Polk City". It was a tiny storefront, only 25 feet by 35 feet in size. As the company grew, they rented garages in the alley to store some of their inventory. Some of the family also rented apartments in this building to live nearby the store.



The Central Appliance and Furniture at 3334 N. Central Avenue in Chicago. This building is still standing. The Polk brothers operated out of this storefront from 1935 until they moved south to 2850 N. Central Avenue in 1940. They changed the name of the store in 1946 to Polk Brothers.

Photo Courtesy of Pete Kastanes

Visit Pete Kastanes' website, Chicago's Extinct Businesses at:
www.chicagosexinctbusinesses.com



Top Two Pictures: Interior of the Central Appliance and Furniture store at 3334 N. Central. Busy sales people, most likely the Brothers themselves, are shown demonstrating the latest in kitchen appliances to buyers. Consumers quickly learned that haggling over prices got them better deals. Some customers had their own favorite sales person that they would ask for by name when visiting the store. This business relationship sometimes went on for years.

Photos Courtesy of the Chicago Public Library - Sulzer Regional Library

Photo on the Left: The original Polk Brothers: Sol, Samuel, Harry, Morris, David Polk and their sister Goldie Bachmann Luftig. Their original last name was Polovitz and was legally changed to Polk in December of 1940. *Photo Courtesy of Pete Kastanes*

The Formal Opening of the Portage Park Fieldhouse

A letter was found from the Portage Park (Old Portage Park District) dated January 15th 1923 announcing the reception and formal opening of the new Fieldhouse in Portage Park on Saturday January 20th 1923.

The
PORTAGE PARK COMMISSIONERS

Announce the

Formal Opening

of the

New Field House



Saturday—January Twentieth

Nineteen Hundred Twenty-Three

From Three O'Clock P. M.
To Eleven O'Clock P. M.

Irving Park Boulevard & Central Avenue

CHICAGO

Found with this letter was the following 4 page Program. Note that at this point of time, the Old Portage Park District was one of 22 park commissions consolidated into the Chicago Park District in 1934.

BOARD of COMMISSIONERS
OLD PORTAGE PARK DISTRICT

1923

PETER T. CEDERSTROM
FRED H. ESDOHR
WILLIAM J. HILL
FRED A. KOSECKI
JOSEPH McDERMOTT

* *

ALEX M. STUART, *Secretary*

* *

Reception Committee

EX-PARK COMMISSIONERS

Edward R. Armitage

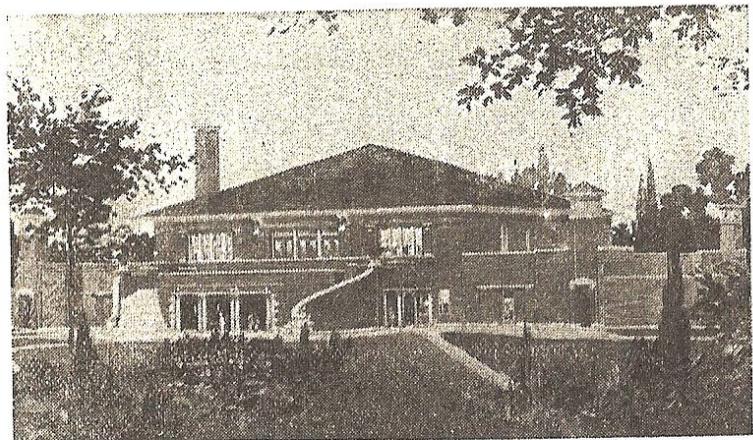
William F. Carmody

Oscar E. Brown

William A. Becker

Charles W. Howe

Peter C. Lawrence



Program

Saturday, January 20, 1923
8:00 O'Clock P. M.

INVOCATION

REV. JESSE E. THORSEN,
Pastor, Our Saviour's English Lutheran Church

DEDICATION OF FIELD HOUSE

JOSEPH McDERMOTT,
President of Park District

RECEIVING FIELD HOUSE ON PART OF PUBLIC

HENRY J. SIEWERT
MRS. L. G. BURROUGHS,
Representing Women of the District.

ADDRESSES

HON. ROBERT M. SWEITZER,
HON. WILLIAM H. MALONE,
HON. EDWARD R. ARMITAGE,
First President of Park Board
REV. FRANCIS H. CICHOSKI,
Our Lady of Victory Church

Entertainment

3:00 O'Clock P. M.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM

By pupils of
Miss Vera L. Eshelman's School of Dancing and
Expression

8:00 O'Clock P. M.

MOEBIUS ORCHESTRA—Edwin B. Moebius, *Director*

IMPERIAL QUARTETTE

Miss Mary Elizabeth Doré - - - Piano Solo

William J. Hill - - - - - Vocal Solo

