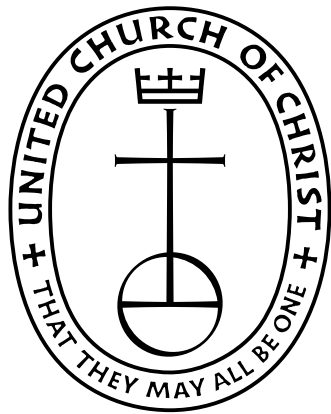


*“Never place a period
where God has placed a comma”*

- Gracie Allen



God is still speaking,



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Pastor: Reverend Gayle Tucker

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**Northwest Chicago
Historical Society**
Your Neighborhood Historical Society

Newsletter July 2016

Number XXIV

**Mothers of World War II • Orchard Place
Pioneer Cemetery Tombstones Rediscovered
Lost Movie Theaters of Albany Park**

Members raved about the movie theater pictures in our most recent issues, so we decided to share more of them! This time, we are featuring movie house photos in Albany Park. Check to see if you recognize any of these once famous venues.

Gayle Christensen of Old Irving was surprised to find an old photo of her house framed and displayed at the new Potbelly restaurant at Irving Park Road and Keeler Street. This photo, along with many others displayed at Northwest side restaurants, is courtesy of the Northwest Chicago Historical Society. Additional historic photos are proudly on display at: the Jefferson Park Grill, 5364 W. Gale St., Colletti's, 5707 N. Central Ave., and the Gale Street Inn, 4914 N. Milwaukee Ave. These old pictures are on display for all their business patrons to enjoy. We are appreciative of the investment that these restaurants have made; enabling others to understand and appreciate local history.

This season, we received some historic flags with other items on the Mothers of World War II as a gift from Bernadette Smith. In addition to the flags, she provided us a telling little history of the Jefferson Park unit. Thank you Bernie!

In 2016, we are saddened to bid farewell to Jeff Heil, whose family owned the Mirabell Restaurant for 39 years. Jeff sold the restaurant and is moving to Houston, Texas. Over the years, Jeff was kind enough to let the NWCHS use his facilities to hold some of our meetings and speaker events. We wish Jeff and his family the best of luck in the next phase of their lives. As an institution on the Northwest Side, they will be missed! - 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.

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Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

Many thanks for all you are doing. I was born & grew up in Jefferson Park; my sons had their young days there too.

Dolores Sherman Weeda - Wyoming, MN
NWCHS Member

Thanks so much for all the wonderful work you do. I can't wait to get each issue and remember and relive old memories of my growing up years in Gladstone Park, Jefferson Park, Portage Park and Irving Park, which were all my "stomping grounds". Loved this last issue (January 2016), featuring the old movie houses having spent many hours in the Milford, as well as the Gateway, Times, Jeff, Patio, and Portage theaters – along with many other north and northwest side movie houses. Many thanks again for your wonderful work.

Very Thankfully Yours,

Pat Hall – Huntley, IL
NWCHS Member

PS: Last movie I saw at the Milford was "Psycho" in 1960.

Thank You! We have had many compliments on the pictures of long gone movie houses in the last issue of this newsletter, therefore we are going to put some more photos in this issue. - NWCHS

The Times Theater was located at 4847 N. Milwaukee Avenue, one of four theaters that operated in the Jefferson Park neighborhood. It later became the Holiday Ballroom and was torn down to make way for the Veteran Square strip mall.



Photo Courtesy of the Theatre Historical Society of America



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Letters

A photo of our home circa 1910-20 is in the new Potbelly restaurant at Irving and Keeler. We would LOVE to obtain a copy of this photo to frame for our house, and was told by IPHS that the photo probably came from you.

My neighbor Gerry Pitzen told me about the gas tank and about the whooshing sounds it made. I was very interested to see that there was a driveway and garage this early on. I had always assumed that was probably added much later.

Thanks again, much appreciated.

Gayle Christensen – Old Irving Park

Yes, we put that photo in the Potbelly restaurant. - NWCHS



3912 N. Kenneth and the family that lived there.

Mothers of World War II Jefferson Park Unit 79 – Founded May 1945

By Bernadette Smith

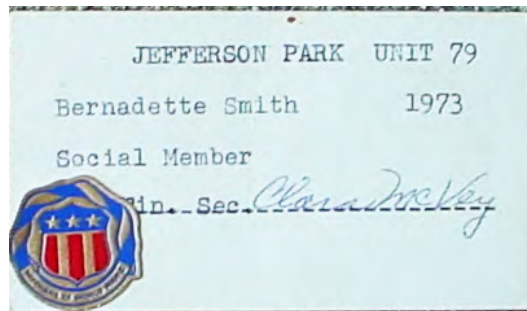
The ladies would meet at the Jefferson Park Fieldhouse, second week of the month. All members had sons in the service.

These ladies, so dedicated to their cause, which was to bring comfort to the “Boys” in the VA Hospitals; they gave to each service person fruit, homemade cookies or cake, played Bingo and cards with them to make their visits more meaningful. Members wore white uniforms and a hat with either a blue star or gold star on it. The blue star the “Boys” knew that their son had come home. The gold star signified that they had lost their son in the war.

To be able to give the “Boys” their goodies, they had Bingo and Bunco parties, held at Jefferson Park Fieldhouse or member’s homes. They always referred to the patients as the “Boys”, a loving name. Even then the Press Newspaper would print our activities. I really wish I had more information. Hopefully if someone reads this they will be able to add on.

The Veteran Square Monument, located at Milwaukee and Higgins, had our name on it until it was removed. The ladies always attended Memorial Day services as well as wakes of the members.

First started in Gary, Indiana in 1942, "The Mothers of World War II" was a national organization of women who organized to support their sons in service. These women were very active in the war effort as well as civic and defense and war related activities.



Banner for Jefferson Park Unit of Mothers of World War II. Size: 21” high by 24” wide.

Photos Courtesy of Bernadette Smith

6.

The Founding Members for the Jefferson Park Unit were:

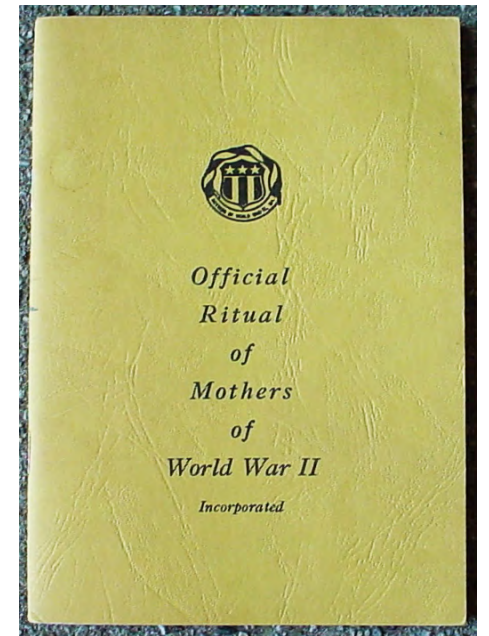
Grace Boos
Grace Below
Mary Ann Hansen
Josephine Smith
Elizabeth Lubeck
Anna Klodzinski
Anna Tamburino
Clara McVey

Honorary Members were:

Alice Plesko
Marg Klodzinski
Bernadette Smith
Dorothy ?
Marie Moll

If you were an Honorary Member, you were not a mother of a child in World War II. Honorary Members may have had a husband or brother in the war.

Anna Finn of 5741 N. Mango was also a member (and former president) of the Jefferson Park unit. She was also president of the Cook County district for two years and went on to become the national rehabilitation and hospitalization chairman in 1948. Another early member was Estella Zjawlinski.



42 page Official Ritual Book



The flag was used in parades and formal or special events. Size: 38” high by 62” wide.

7.

Photos Courtesy of Bernadette Smith

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Mothers of World War II official hat that would complement their white uniforms. These blue stars symbolize two children that are in the service. Some units had red hat with a white stripe but these white ones were more common.

Photo Courtesy of Bernadette Smith

Private Voice Lessons at Thompson Voice Studio



Jennifer Thompson

Jennifer is currently accepting new students at her studio in the Old Irving Park neighborhood, Chicago, IL. She successfully teaches students of all ages and ability level. Current and former students have been awarded Scholarships, roles in musical theatre productions, and performance opportunities that span multiple genres. Jennifer has 13 years of experience teaching private voice lessons, and is a member of the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS)

Mezzo soprano Jennifer Thompson is a frequent performer in the Chicago area. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in music from Mid America Nazarene University and a Master of Music degree in vocal performance from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

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Historic Pioneer Cemetery Tombstones Rediscovered

Through the efforts of Archaeologist Dan Melone and Verlyn "Buss" Spreeman, who is a direct descendant of Alexander Robinson, the Robinson family cemetery tombstones are now out of the Cook County Forest Preserves storage facility. Cook County Forest Preserves had hid them away for about 70 years to protect them from vandalism. The cemetery is located northwest of the intersection of Lawrence Avenue and East River Road, although the exact location has been lost over the years. This land has not always been forest preserve but part of the 1,280 acres granted to Alexander Robinson and his descendants by President John Tyler in 1843 for his service in helping conclude two treaties between the Indians and US Government.



The only known photo of Alexander Robinson



Dan Melone and Verlyn Spreeman

Photo Courtesy of Frank Suerth

10.



Mary Ragor, daughter of Alexander Robinson is also buried in this cemetery. Both had houses in what is now Cook County Forest Preserves. Alexander died on April 22, 1872 and Mary Ragor died in 1927. Photos of how the Tombstones look today.

Photos Courtesy of Dan Melone




11.




The Robinson Family Cemetery ca 1929

Photo Courtesy of UC Riverside, California Museum of Photography



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Orchard Place

By Frank Suerth



Photo of Orchard Place Train Depot. It was located northeast of the intersection of Higgins and Mannheim Roads. Due to the train stopping here a general store, a hotel, a saloon and a dance hall prospered with the support the train passengers.

Photo Courtesy of the Des Plaines Historical Society

Orchard Place, Illinois started out as Farwell, a small farming community of German immigrants in the 1840's and the name changed to Orchard Place in 1887 when the Wisconsin Central Railroad came through and built a train depot. With the train station, there was no need for the farmers to take their milk down Higgins Road into the city; they could just drop it off at the station.

Peter Stellman opened a dance hall in 1892 just east of the train station. At the dance hall, the musicians sat in the balcony and the grand piano and dancers took over the main floor. The dancing was 50¢ per couple and they could get a chicken dinner for also 50¢ per couple. The last dance was held in 1914.

The Stellman's general store opened for business about the same time. The women could shop at the general store while the men sampled products from the West Side Brewery or took in a game at the pinochle tables. Above the general store was the inn where tiny bedrooms with brass beds welcomed travelers.

The proprietor of this diversified endeavor, Peter Stellman, was born in the north of Germany on August 13, 1840 and was six years old when his parents brought him to America. Peter married Miss Margaret Gerney in 1863 and had five children, three sons and two daughters: Emma, John, William, Louisa and Charlie. His second wife was Miss Minnie Kade and they had 3 children; Fred, Fredo and Minnie. All male members of the family were carpenters.



Peter Stellman Buffet, Hotel, Saloon and Stables located within feet of the train station.

Photo Courtesy of Frank Suerth

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Photo of the Stellman buildings in 1914 *Photo Courtesy of the Des Plaines Historical Society*



Joe Baier's Elms Inn - Higgins & Manheim Roads ca 1940's



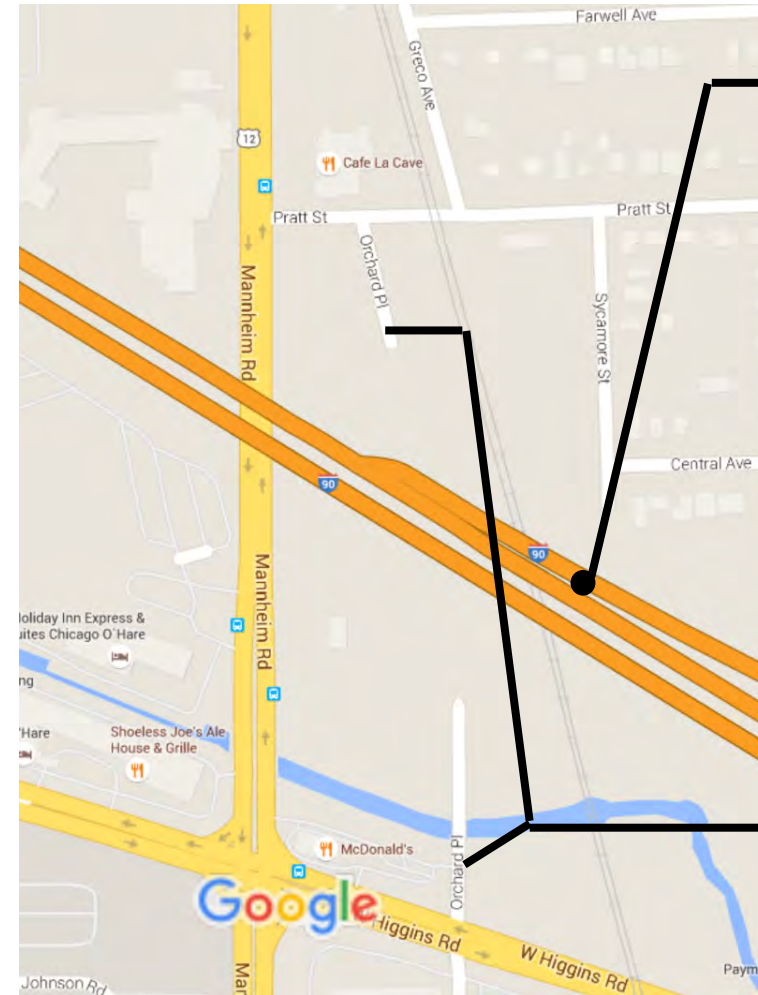
First one-room school house for Orchard Place was built in 1855 near the intersection of Lee Street and Higgins Road which is now most likely part of O'hare Airport property . It was replaced in 1923. *Photo Courtesy of the Des Plaines Historical Society*

In 1942, the farms located southwest of the intersection of Higgins and Mannheim Roads became the Douglas Aircraft plant; manufacturing airplanes for the war effort. Four runways were constructed for delivering the plants products. Douglas Field it was soon called. The Douglas plant was only opened for a little more than two years but 655 cargo planes were built at the plant. Douglas field was renamed Orchard Field and became the site for Chicago's new airport. It was again renamed to Chicago O'Hare International Airport in 1949 in honor of Lieutenant Commander Edward H. O'Hare, a Medal of Honor recipient who died in World War II. The airport code ORD for Orchard is still used today.

The coming of the Northwest Tollway in the early 1950's brought an end to the Stellman's buildings. The unincorporated community of Orchard Field was annexed by the City of Des Plaines in 1956.

While some of the old homes are still standing, all that is left of Orchard Place is a street that has been cut in half by the Tollway and a Des Plaines school that still bears the name.

A special thanks to Ronald Vallone of Des Plaines who has spent hours at the Des Plaines Historical Society looking up information on Orchard Place.



The approximate location of Peter Stellman's buildings. While the railroad tracks remain, the buildings were taken down in the early 1950's to make way for the Northwest Tollway. The property is now owned by the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority.

While Des Plaines received the bulk of the residential community of Orchard Place no doubt Rosemont and Chicago grabbed some of the unincorporated farm land.

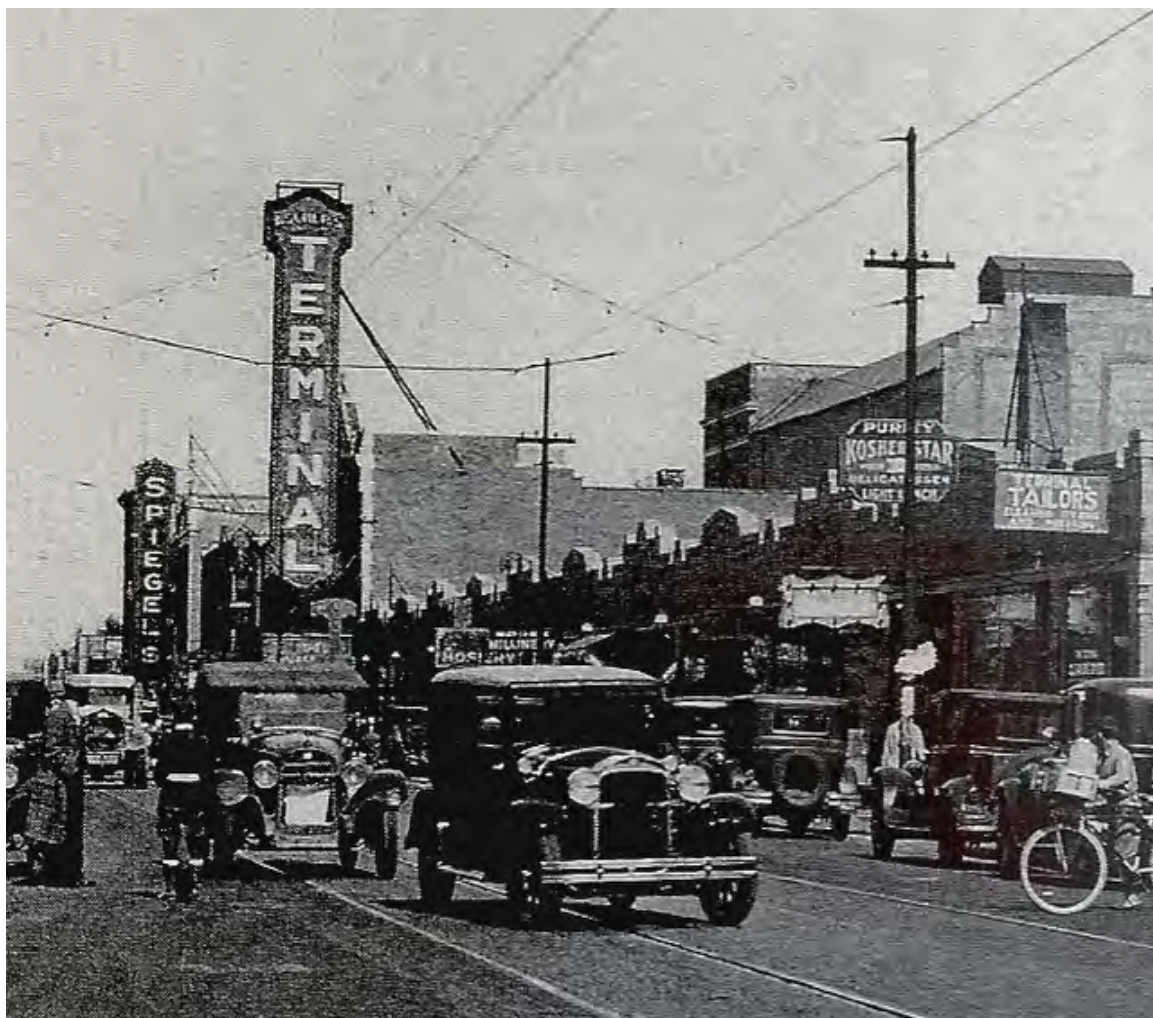
An unconnected street named Orchard Place

Image Courtesy of Google Maps

Thank you Andrew Oleksiuk

For explaining how the Postal History of Chicago's Northwest Side started at one the NWCHS meeting. Follow Andrew on his blog: andrewoleksiuk.blogspot.com or on twitter: [@Andrew_Oleksiuk](https://twitter.com/Andrew_Oleksiuk)

Lost Movie Theaters of Albany Park



The new Terminal Theater, 3315 W. Lawrence Avenue, was the show case theater on Lawrence Avenue. It was named the Terminal because the Ravenswood branch of the “L” terminated at Lawrence and Kimball, not far from these theatres. The other ones were the Metro and the Admiral.

The new Terminal opened on January 7th, 1926 with as many as 3,000 seats. The old Terminal theater across the street, at 3308 W. Lawrence, name was then changed to the Metro. This theater opened its door in 1915 and only had an 890 seating capacity and operated until 1953. The unique thing about the Metro Theater was the screen was located at the front entrance of the building, one of the so called “backwards” theaters.



Top photo was taken in November of 1955 and photo on the left taken just after it opened in 1926 with the marquee promoting the silent film “Breed of the Sea”.

One movie patron of the Terminal Theater remembers, two ticket booths (one outside on an island and one on the inside right side of the theater). Entering the theater two sets of large brass door. The carpeted ornate lobby had two staircases on either side leading to the balcony. In front of the movie screen there was a large stage for live performances.

The refreshment stand was located in the center near a grandfather clock with the rest rooms located upstairs. One could look out the windows of the rest room and view the “L” yard below.

The Terminal Theatre was demolished in the early-1970's



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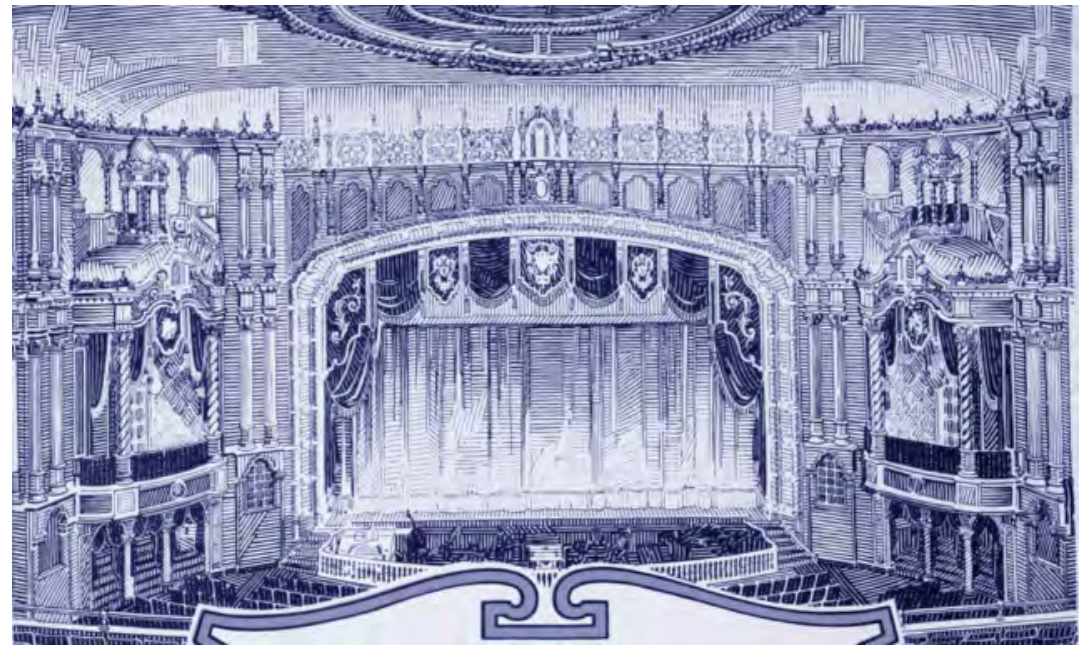
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Interior of the Terminal Theatre Photo Courtesy of Chicago Architectural Photographing Co.



Drake Theatre - 3548 W. Montrose Avenue, Chicago, IL 60648

Photo Courtesy of Cinema Treasures



Metro Theatre after it closed - 3308 W. Lawrence Ave. Photo Courtesy of Cinema Treasures



Another Albany Park/Mayfair theater was the Drake. Opened in 1925 with about 1500 seats. The Drake took the name of the nearby street to the east although it had a Montrose address. The theater was closed in 1951 and the building was razed in 1970. Photo above was after the Marquee was taken down. Photo Courtesy of Testagrose Collection



Architectural sketch of the Admiral Theatre's exterior. 1927



The Admiral Theatre at 3940 W. Lawrence Ave.

Photo Courtesy of Cinema Treasures



The Admiral Theatre opened in 1927 as a vaudeville theatre and was sparsely used as a movie theater. Used mostly as a live theater and is still used that way today. The outside of the building has been restored very nicely.

The Admiral Theatre as it looks today

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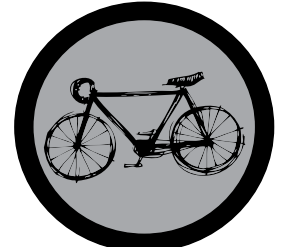
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