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Northwest Chicago Historical Society

Your Neighborhood Historical Society

Newsletter – January 2010

Number XI

In This Issue:

I Remember Portage Park • St. Cornelius Parish • Kiddytown

As the Northwest Chicago Historical Society continues to expand, we are hoping to take more of a virtual presence to make ourselves accessible to the largest number of people. We encourage you to visit our website, www.nwchicagohistory.org, which is filling up with pictures and local neighborhood histories. While the site is still a work in progress, the front page includes an engaging slideshow of old neighborhood pictures. You can also access and download any one of our first 10 newsletters. Additionally, you can view a map of a neighborhood like Irving Park, Norridge, Dunning, Avondale, or Edison Park and read about their past and view historic photos. Some neighborhoods may be waiting for content or pictures; if you notice that your neighborhood needs content and you have some to share, please contact us.

While you are visiting our website, be certain to view then “Historical Documents” page. We have *Progress Trends in Jefferson Park, Jefferson Park – The Garden Gateway – A History* compiled by Bernhardt L. Mendro and other information. The society has plans to add the 66 page book *The Township of Jefferson, ILL - Its Villages and Dinner-Pail Avenue, 1911*, by Alfred Bull. And of course, keep an eye on our events page for historical presentations or tours happening on the Northwest side.

Sharing history inspires others to share. The book *Images of America PORTAGE PARK* coauthored by our vice-president Daniel Pogorzelski, inspired the story in this newsletter, “I Remember Portage Park,” by Valentine. We welcome more readers to recount their stories of growing up on the Northwest side of Chicago. We also encourage you to share your photos, so that everyone in the area can appreciate them. Like our website and our newsletters, the Northwest Chicago Historical Society is all about sharing our neighborhood history.

If you have any interest in volunteering, please contact us. We need help with planning events, authoring the newsletter, and developing website content. We also would love to have people who are interested in managing specific facets of our organization. Have a wonderful Spring! - *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

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

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

NW Chicago Historical Society

P. O. Box 30067

Chicago, IL 60630

e-mail: nwchicagohistory@sbcglobal.net

Membership:

\$15.00 per calendar year

\$10.00 for 65 years old and over

Website: nwchicagohistory.org

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Letters

Letters have been edited for clarity and space.

Thanks for supplying all the newsletters on your website. The "Delightful Pastries" that donated goodies for your meeting was originally the "Lawrence Pastry Shop" which my parents bought in 1938 and then ran it with my brother until sometime in the 70's. Whenever I am in Chicago, I always go back to the bakery and the woman who runs it now does a great job and makes delicious everything. Such memories. The streetcar turn-around at Austin Avenue. During WW2 seeing the men board the street car on their way to their physicals. The changes to bus transportation. The hardware store next door, Johnny the butcher, Joe the green grocer, Rozanski's drug store, and the tavern on the other corner with the home made candy and ice cream specialties. You have to be a "little bit older" to remember all these but it is nice to remember.

Sophie Gottemoller

What a trip back on memory lane reading through the newsletters. And, just to show what a small world it is, my Mom worked for Sophie's parents at Lawrence Pastry in the 1960s and 70s. Their bakery goods were the BEST! The gold standard by which I judge all other bakeries even today...and none compare. I remember Johnny the butcher and Joe the green grocer. Didn't Joe run the business with his sister, Bernice? I'm assuming Ed Kluza took over Rozanski's drug store?

I especially enjoyed reading about the Grahams of Goodman Street. Probably one of the shortest streets in Chicago, but I lived at 5689 W. Goodman for the first 8 years of my life. Family members of my Koschnik/Rutkowski family lived at 5679, with Jankowski relatives lived in between.

I worked at Peerless Federal Savings from 1971 to 1993. Dick Nopar, of Edward Fox Studios just a few doors down on Milwaukee Avenue, was a regular customer, as was Glen Nadig of Nadig Newspapers/The Jefferson Park Press across the street. I worked for the President, and I later became the Corporate Secretary. One of my self-designated projects was to write Peerless' history. I placed all the old photos into an album in chronological order...mostly Milwaukee Avenue between Gale and Higgins, as well as Higgins on the block where Knobe the Stationer was located. When TCF Bank took us over in 1993, they fired all top and middle management. I pondered taking the album and history when I left, but didn't feel they belonged to me, so I left them in the vault. I am still in contact with Peerless' last president, Gene Rudnik. I'll email to ask if, by chance, he has any of that material...Gene's great uncle, Michael Rudnik, was Peerless' founder.

My great grandfather, Valentine Chwarszczynski, was referred to by the title "the Mayor of Jefferson Park" in the 1920s and until his death in 1938. And, what a coincidence...Valentine owned the building at 5365 West Lawrence (London Block) where the Jefferson Park Library now stands! Valentine's obituary in the Dziennik Chicagoski newspaper refers to his Father Knitter as his "cousin."

Valentine Chwarszczynski also owned the building at 4761 North Milwaukee Avenue (family lived in the apartment above/behind) the business. At 76 years of age, he fell to his death on the sidewalk below while washing windows on the second floor. Walter Cirzan of Cirzan Electric was my first cousin once removed. Walter's brother, Leonard Cirzan, was the butcher at the Jewel Food Store at Lawrence and Central. Leonard used to be featured in print and television ads for Jewel's meat department.

Ruth Susmarski - Des Plaines, IL

I Remember Portage Park

By Valentine

In our growing up, I don't remember much about our TERRITORY other than from Portage Park itself to Six Corners (Milwaukee, Cicero and Irving Park Road). It was rare for us to go towards Austin Boulevard and Irving or south of Irving Park Road. Of course, going to OLV was part of the Territory.

According to Aunt Dorissa, who went to the Portage Park School, the school did have its name changed during construction because our grandmother spearheaded the women of the area to give the Ole A Thorp name to the OTHER school being built at the same time. She got the support of the group that would have been a precursor to the PTA/PTO. Our grandmother lived across the street from the school being constructed and did some cleaning in it after it opened.

I remember the Sears window at 6 corners being a BIG thing at Christmas time. Everything that anyone wanted as a big ticket item was on display and sparkling in that window. It illuminated the entire intersection. It was the perfect COME-ON-IN-AND-SEE-IT-YOURSELF grab.

"Hillmans" was on the lower level. It was more of a meat market than a full grocery but you could get other grocery items. In this area there were no big food stores such as National or A&P or Jewel that were in the neighborhoods away from six corners. This small store, was not much bigger than 3000 sqft, was much like the meat floor at HARRODS in England. There were meats and deli meats and deli salad things here. You could smell that it was a great place to find exotic meats. To get to Hillmans, you would walk in off Cicero and take the down escalator and you landed right at the meat counter. If you came in off Irving, you had to find the elevator bank, walk around and then take the 'down'. When you visited here, you would see mostly women and mostly women with Babushkas (scarfs over your hair)... It was definitely an old world place. The men would be behind the counters working with the meat. All the workers looked like nurses in white uniforms and white hats, white shoes. And you could get bread too. Both meat and bread had numbers to take – like the size of a playing card. Reuseable. No paper.

I remember going to Bargain Mart with Mom. A small little store that was more like what we see today as TJMAX where they buy up lots of stuff. At Bargain Mart, it was laid out in a few long aisles, not much higher than a counter and we would get good deals. Next door to this was the record store (to the south) where we would go in and could listen to records before buying them, And of course, that included the latest in 45rpm records and we would also get our SILVER DOLLAR SURVEY of the Top FORTY from WLS. The Survey showed all the top songs of the week.



Postcard view of 6 corners. Sears' display window can be seen in the center of the photo. Photo taken in late 40's or early 50's.

4.



Our Lady of Victory

A Parish Community in the Roman Catholic Tradition

Our warmest welcome to all who celebrate with us, whether visitors, neighbors, long-time residents, or newly arrived in the Neighborhood.

Our parish family extends an invitation to all to join us as we celebrate the Centennial Year of our Serving God's People.

Our Lady of Victory offers a diverse group of ministries and organizations to fill the varied interests of our 4,000 individual members.

Our Lady of Victory School is open to all regardless of religious affiliation. Our emphasis is, of course, in the Roman Catholic Tradition. This award winning school has room for 500 students from Pre-K through 8th Grade.

Our Lady of Victory also supports a vital Religious Education Center for all ages. From three and four year-olds to Seniors, we have a Religious Education Program for all.

Leisure time organizations are the heartbeat of Our Lady of Victory, from Scouting for boys and girls of all ages, sport activities, to our Mothers' Club, Parish Men's Club, Teen Club and including our very active Music Ministry of Children and Adult HandBell Choirs, Children's Choirs, Adult, Teen and special Choirs.

We welcome you to join with us in our celebration of God's Word.

Fr. Chris

Reverend Christopher Doering, *Pastor*

5.

You are invited to:
5212 West Agatite Avenue
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773 286-2950
www.olvchicago.org

MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday Evening Mass

4:30 pm

Sunday Masses

8:00 am

9:30 am

11:15 am

Weekday Masses

7:30 am

Holy Day Masses

As Announced

Rosary

Daily in the Lower Church
after the 7:30 am Mass

Novena to

Our Lady of Perpetual Help

Tuesday 7:00 pm

Eucharistic Adoration

Every 1st Friday

8:00 am until 7:00 pm

Holy Hour

Last Sunday of month

after the 11:15 am Mass

THE GREATER INDEPENDENCE PARK NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION



The Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA) is a non-profit association representing the area bounded by Addison Street, Pulaski Road, Irving Park Road, and Central Park Avenue.

MISSION STATEMENT:
The Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA) is dedicated to maintaining and enhancing the quality of life in the Independence Park community by involving, informing, and encouraging people to participate in matters relating to the community and by protecting the historical, social, cultural, and architectural character of the neighborhood.

- GIPNA EVENTS AND SERVICES**
- The *VOICE*, bimonthly newsletter
 - Farmers Market in Independence Park
 - Fine Craft Fair
 - Gourmet Pancake Breakfast
 - Community Garage Sale
 - Spring Alley Cleanup
 - Community Talent Show
 - RidgewayFest!
 - Pet Registry
 - Liaison to 32nd, 35th, and 39th Ward offices for nuisance issues, traffic and streetscape, and zoning issues
 - School Committee to focus on improving our neighborhood school
 - E-mail Alerts for crime issues, lost pets, and other community notices
 - E-mail Event Listings of all neighborhood events

2010 Farmers Markets in Independence Park
Sundays 9AM-1PM
June 13 • June 27
July 11 • July 25
August 8 • August 22
September 12 • September 26
October 10



Irving Park Road (4000 N)
at Hamlin Avenue (3800 W)
Chicago, IL

East of Pulaski Road,
the Kennedy Expressway and CTA Blue Line



www.independence-park.com

GIPNA also supports the John B. Murphy Elementary School; Adopt-a-Family; Independence Park events, including Therapeutic Kids Pizza Parties, Summer Camp Scholarships, and Senior Bus Trips; 17th District Chicago Police DAC (District Advisory Committee); Irving Park Community Food Pantry; UDDIA Home; Irving Park Historical Society; and numerous community gardens.

GIPNA works with the Independence Park Advisory Council and the Athletic Field Advisory Council to co-sponsor Movies in the Park. We also have helped in coordinating efforts to put on Art in My Back Yard, assisted the Independence Park Bangalow Renovation Project in its efforts to restore the Women's Building at the corner of Hamlin and Byron, and worked with CAPS (Chicago Alternative Policing Strategy) in fostering relations between the police and the community.



Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA)
PO Box 18184
Chicago, Illinois 60618

GIPNA Website:
www.independence-park.com

Become a Member.
Join today!
GIPNA is always looking for new volunteers and new ideas. Send an e-mail to us at: gipna@ibglobal.net

Across the street near to the Portage Theatre was the Illinois Bell Telephone office, a super small, enough-room-for-a-few-customers-kind of place – almost like a current currency exchange where we would pass our money and the bill. And we would have to make sure we got the right amount back to pay the next bill at the next place...

The People Gas Light and Coke store is where we would be sent to pay the light and gas bill with cash. This was always our second stop. The counters were at the back of the store, behind a grill as if in a bank and to get to the counters, one had to walk thru all the latest gas appliances and electric appliances. To the right side were some desks for the sales people. It was big, high ceilings. Big, cold and sterile. And, intimidating. We knew that this company was related to the company which owned the big tank south and a little east of the Sears Building – “the Gas Tank”. We could see it go up and down based on consumption.

West of Portage Park was the PATIO on Irving west of Austin. We always called it the PAT E O. But many called it “PAY SHO” which is what our Aunt Dorissa called it. I only remember going to this theatre ONE time. I only went to the Portage a few times. Our theatre of choice was the Gateway. A much prettier place all around with a grand staircase, fancy ornamentation and beautiful statuary...”Jim” worked at Gateway as usher, head usher and youngest assistant manager in their history. Ushers carried flashlights and they could get you kicked out. Ushers wore a uniform and a hat.

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This photo of the Gateway Theater was taken in July of 1964. Parked in the parking lot, Ford's newest car, a 1964-1/2 Mustang.

*Original image, used with permission, Theatre Historical Society of America, Elmhurst, Illinois.
Image enhanced by Frank Suerth*

A few of us went to Schurz High School. There were beautiful trees in the courtyard and all different types. We often had English literature outside almost like a beach party under the shade of the tall trees. The trees were beautiful. There was grass. There often was an art class happening at the same time.

The Congregational church in 1967-1968-1969 hosted dances in their basement. These dances were groups that played songs like WIPEOUT! Or G L O R I A or slow songs like Blue Moon. One of the reasons that we passed this church was because it was in route to the post office on Lawrence Avenue. This PO was where we purchased our stamps and where our carriers came from. The delivery men from this location loaded up the green mail boxes at the neighborhood corners and then the route carriers would stop, get our mail and deliver it to the house. At Christmas time we often received mail two times in one day.

Our Lady of Victory is where the second half of our family was baptized and where most of us made First Communion and confirmation. Some even married here. Aunt Dorissa also studied here and our father went to this church. Dorissa was supposed to enter the convent with one or two of the sisters from the convent here. Instead, she went to Milwaukee by herself and asked for entry.

The Nativity for the church was at the small doorway to the East of the church at the Rectory. I don't know if they even have an outside nativity at the present time. Both the upstairs church, Marion Chapel and the outside nativities were detailed and elaborate. At Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve, we always stopped here when we were waiting for dad to get the car and to give toys for the kids. At the time, the toys did not have to be new but we gave the toys that we knew all worked and I know that Mom would clean them up and I would have been happy to get one of ours. One time we saw that someone had left a doll with a broken face. Mom was not happy and took it from the pile of toys. "Why make another kid sad?" were her words...

Our Savior's ENGLISH (We called it a LUTHERAN CHURCH) Church. I attended services there a few times with a friend – Linda Smith from Hutchinson. Mostly we all went to their big rummage sales. This church was part of our everyday life. We heard the angelus twice a day – at Noon and at 6pm. Every day. With only a few exceptions – those being when something broke and the bells did a skip and the time that it took to fix the problem. Their absence was noticeable. I remember when the bells were really THE BELLS and that they were electrically controlled and I remember when the BELLS changed to a speaker and recording. When the BELLS actually worked, there was a variety of songs. Christmas had a few different songs, and then after Christmas, the routine and regular song was played.

The John V May Funeral home was the funeral home for our mother. I only remember the funeral home at this corner. I don't remember any other stores in the makeup of the building. This part of Milwaukee was bypassed by us for the most part. That was because if we were going to Lawrence and Milwaukee, we would walk up Lockwood through Wilson Park and then to Milwaukee. We would the cut past the small HAND SETTING bowling alley to the Gateway. Very seldom, we would swing to LONG to go to the Post Office and then walk along Lawrence to the bakery on the way home or the Gateway or to the 108 Fire House.

<p>THE HISTORIC Portage THEATER 4050 N. MILWAUKEE (773) 736-4050 www.portagetheater.org</p>	<p> CITY NEWSSTAND 4018 NORTH CICERO AVENUE CHICAGO, IL 60641 OPEN 7 AM TILL 11 PM 7 DAYS A WEEK 773-545-7377 WWW.CITYNEWSSTAND.COM</p>
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From the businesses and property owners of Six Corners

Thank you, Northwest Chicago Historical Society, for your helping starting the Chicago Office of Tourism's Neighborhood Tour of Jefferson Park, Portage Park and Six Corners. We appreciate everyone working together to make the Northwest Side a great place to live.



The hand setting bowling alley was the Jefferson Park Bowl located on Giddings just east of Milwaukee. A heavy snow collapse the roof and it is now a parking lot.

Photo Courtesy of Wayne Mounsey

The starting blocks were in place at the Olympic pool all the time I went to that pool in Portage Park. They were off limits to the common person. The lifeguards enforced it with a passion. This is the pool that “Robbie” was a guard at after her time at the Park District beaches on Lake Michigan – herself and friend Marianne. Neither could anyone go up to the deck above the blocks, which, during the games, was used by officials – timers and judges. The bleachers on the east side of the pool made it impossible for the common person to see any of the happenings at the games. The locals were shut out. Mom was livid! Later, we were given a chance to go in on Sunday mornings to watch what was happening. Most of that activity included the early eliminations for diving in the 16ft pool. And yes, the platform 5 meter, 10 meter, 3 meter and 1 meter boards all were used. I remember Robbie would perform in the special water show – not just as one of the “minnows,” “sharks” and “dolphins” from THE LEARN TO SWIM program at the Park!

Please visit our friends at Forgotten Chicago: forgottenchicago.com

I have fond memories of trampoline and gymnastics and tap and baton and ballet at the park for one or more of us. In winter, the big tennis court on Berneau Avenue west of the parking lot was used for ice hockey and the football field on Central west of the inside pool for casual ice skating. The hot house for both was at the Central Avenue rink on the north end of the ice. It was about 60 x 20 wide with a pot belly stove in the center and wooden benches all around the outside walls and a few towards the center. If you sat on those in the center, you would get so warm that going out would be treacherous... In my memory, there was never a hot house by the hockey rink.

The Memorial Tree was a big oak tree at the north end of Portage Park Olympic pool. An adult would not be able to wrap their arms around the girth of the big tree. This was a very important event in our school day – to go to the Memorial Tree. The event was planned and executed over more than just that one single morning. Most often, it was Miss Jacobson who organized it - and Mrs. Rudnick. Everyone else, each of the other teachers, just did as they were told. And, there was a large audience. It was the time when only one person in a family worked outside of the home and at least one person of a family could find the time to walk to the school to participate.



The Memorial Tree in Portage Park. CA 1950

12. *Photo Courtesy of Portage Park Elementary School.*

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The natatorium in Portage Park is shown at the left. Chicago architect Clarence Hatzfeld who designed many buildings on the northwest side designed this building. Among the Park Fieldhouses he designed are Jefferson Park, California Park, Gladstone Park, Kilbourn Park, Brands Park, and Avondale Park to name a few. And not just fieldhouses but homes in the “Villa” area of Irving Park (Addison & Pulaski). Not only did Clarence Hatzfeld design many homes in the “Villa”, he also lived there for a long while. He and his wife Laura lived at 3904 Eddy Street.

And it may surprise a few people but Hatzfeld designed the Hoyne Bank building on the corner of Milwaukee & Lawrence.

*Photo Courtesy of
the Chicago Park District
Special Collections.*

Only Miss Jacobson did the student memorial books. She took the images and spent the money on the photographs of us for us. She never took a cent from our families or the families of her students. She gave us a gift of incalculable value. She collected the nylon boxes from the other teachers each year so that our books would fit inside neatly. She cut the papers and had each of us write perfectly for each of the pages which covered all the activities of the year. She designed what we would need to write and how to place it on the page. She was the organizer of the trips, the editor of our books, the beggar for the supplies for the books. Such as, trips to the memorial tree, the fire houses on Grace or the 108 by the Gateway, the zoo, the conservatory at Lincoln Park or at Garfield Park, the trip to the Bowman Dairy or special programs at the school were all documented. She was the one who collected each of these pages over the fall and helped us to put them together for our own books just before Christmas time. She helped us decorate the box covers and made us proud of the finished product for our moms and dads. We would not have had a memorial book without Miss Jacobson. I think that all of us in our family had one of these booklets. I think she did this for every year she taught at the school. I can hear her ask all the teachers to save their nylon boxes! I can imagine that she had trouble with the nylon boxes in the later years since nylons then gave way to panty hose and to plastic bags for individually wrapped nylons.

The field house had pillars at the bottom. One could, and we did, ride our bikes in thru these and then you could turn to the right or left and come out the side entries. These side entries had the same pillars as decorations. There was no such thing as decorating just the face of a building. All the sides were decorated. Under the flat part that the circular staircase took one to, were several pillars that a bike rider needed to be wary of. On the white portions of the curved railing of the two staircases were iron saw tooth plates to keep people from walking or sitting on them. This was where Halloween prizes were handed out and from here were all the treasure hunts started. The area under this landing was where we would work our way to the woodworking shop.

In all of my memory, west of the Portage Park field house, was a ice cream and hot dog stand. It was there all the time. From this place one would go to one of the baseball diamonds. The gymnasium was also where the pool was – the indoor pool. The indoor pool was under the gym that was at the top of these stairs. The wing that you can see was the women’s locker room and the corresponding opposite side was for the men. The public staircase to the lower pool level was next to the women’s locker room. The stair case from the men’s brought one to the closest access to the audience area of the pool (tho small) and later it was the place for the men to get to their locker room while the women used the locker room adjacent to the pool. This change came late and when events at the pool included men and women at the same time. Often enough, we were kicked out of the locker room at the lower level because we were kids.

Wilson Park had a nice ice rink in the middle of the field. The field house was the place where more often than not, we got our shots as part of the welfare program. It was not so much WELFARE like you might think of today but WELLfare, so that parents did not have to go to the doctor’s office to get polio shots or measles shots or whatever. These were sponsored by some government body and anyone could go. I remember shots and the GUN and the tablets and sugar cubes. Mom would take us out of school to do this. She would come to the door of our classroom and we would walk to the door and leave. We always went home after the shot.

I used the trolley bus to get to work between Berteau and Lake Streets in Oak Park on Central or between Berteau and Logan Square on Milwaukee. It was wonderful if the driver knew how to get the trollies back on the wires. It was not wonderful if the person had a hard time of it because it meant that everyone was backed up behind us and we were going to be late. I do remember when all the wires were removed and the bigger busses (we still called them ‘caterpillars’) were used by the CTA. They still were yellow on top; olive green on the bottom. Using the Central bus to work was very nice. Usually it would empty at Berteau with the kids going to Luther North and the workers who rode the bus then would get the choice seats for the long ride to Lake Street.

St. Cornelius Parish

On September 23, 1925 George Cardinal Mundelein in the Jefferson Park area on the Northwest side of Chicago established St. Cornelius Parish. Father Luke H. Lyons was appointed the first pastor of St. Cornelius and celebrated the first Mass for his new parishioners in the assemble hall of Beaubien School on Sunday, October 4, 1925. Services were held there until the first parish building, a combination church, school and auditorium, was opened for Mass on August 29, 1926 for the 100 families of the parish.



Sacraments of Holy Eucharist – The very first class of First Communicant: May 2, 1926 in Beaubien School Auditorium

Photos Courtesy of St. Cornelius Parish



1928 Alter Boys

The school opened for the parish children on Monday, December 6, 1926 with an enrollment of 100 pupils taught by three Sisters of Charity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. After the first month 40 more student were enrolled with three more nuns. By the beginning of the second year of operation the enrollment jump to 250 and the school was placed on the accredited list of city schools with a very high rating. By 1944 the enrollment reached a full capacity of 450 students and it was that year that CCD classes of Religious Education were started for 175 students of the public school on a released-time program.

By now it was evident that more classroom space was needed and plans were being formulated to build a convent for the Sisters who had been occupying the second floor of the school building for their living quarters. In September of 1950, the Sisters had moving into the newly constructed convent and their former quarter became 5 classrooms. With these additional classrooms enrollment had grew to 562.

During the next decade the growth was phenomenal and much more classroom space was desperately needed. So it was decided that a new church be built and the old church be converted into classrooms. The old church became 6 new classrooms, when the new church was erected on Foster Avenue in 1965. At the time of completion of the new church, the parish had grown to 2500 families and the school enrollment had reached the 850 mark.



Class Photo from 1957



St. Cornelius School Class Photo 1934

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Louis Chermak in his shop, Quality Meat Market, in 1925 at 5329 Milwaukee Avenue, now the OK True Value Hardware Store owned by St. Cornelius parishioner John Kovacik and former parishioner Stanley Osiol *Photo Courtesy of St. Cornelius Parish*

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Kiddytown

By Frank Suerth

When Kiddieland, at 8400 W North Avenue (and 1st Avenue) in Melrose Park, Illinois, closed this past year, it joined the ranks of other shuttered Chicagoland amusement parks: White City (1905-1945) and Riverview (1903-1967) in Chicago, The Forest Park Amusement Park, Forest Park (1907-1922), and a small amusement park, Kiddytown (1953-1964), in Norridge.

If you grew up on the far Northwest side in the 1950's or early 60's, you may remember Kiddytown. Kiddytown was located at the north side of the Harlem Irving Shopping Center, 4250 N. Harlem (at Cullom Avenue) in Norridge, IL and opened in the summer of 1953. Some of the rides were the Tilt-a-Whirl, Herschell Merry-Go-Round, Philadelphia Toboggan Little Dipper (opened in 1956), Mangels Whip and, Boats and Ski Fighter, Allen Herschell Kiddie Tanks, Eyerly Midge-O-Racer, Handcar, Ferris Wheel, Miniature Train twin Diesel kiddie train. Pony rides were also available at the 5-acre park.



An aerial view of kiddytown looking north. Harlem Avenue is on the right with part of the Harlem & Irving Shopping Center shown at the bottom. Long gone Howard Johnson's is shown at the bottom right. At the top right is the 35 foot electric Kiddytown sign located at the intersection of Cullom and Harlem Avenues. The sign has a clown pointing towards the 450 parking space area with his other arm waving patrons in by way of flashing neon lights. This photo was taken in the off-season sometime in the late 1950's.

*Image Courtesy of Steve Nosko
Norridge Historic Collection*

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This photo was taken after Kiddytown's final season from the roof of the Wieboldt's Department Store in the Harlem Irving Shopping Center. The last ride to be moved was the Little Dipper roller coaster. The Little Dipper was a mirror image of the Little Dipper at Kiddieland in Melrose Park, Illinois. Across Harlem Avenue at the top of the picture you can see Stark's Warehouse (open 7 days a week). Stark's had a warehouse of army surplus stuff to sell. You could spend hours looking at everything.

Photo Courtesy of Duane Marden



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The kiddie train had a 150-foot curved tunnel, bridge and elaborate depot for the 2,000-foot miniature railroad. The Ferris Wheel was "kiddie sized" with the riders locked into cages for the duration of the ride. The Handcars were self-propelled cars on little train tracks; a rider would sit on the car with their leg stretched forwards and their hands paddling a bicycle peddle-like device.

On the weekends, sometimes a small red fire engine with "Kiddytown" written on its side would sound its loud siren telling all the children in the neighborhood that some lucky kid is having a birthday party and they're all going to Kiddytown. Their first ride, of course, would be in the fire truck.

Each year in September the organization of the Bakers Club of Chicago would rent the whole park and treat as many as 500 orphaned children to a day at the park. Besides the rides and hotdogs, the children would receive specially baked cakes and cookies.

Sometime in the early 1960's, Kiddytown closed down and sold all the rides. It was replaced by Unity Saving Bank and a parking lot. It has been a bank and parking lot ever since.



The last ride to be taking down and moved was the Little Dipper roller coaster in 1966. Hillcrest Park in Lemont, Illinois purchased it for \$6,000.00 but it cost them \$66,000.00 to move it. It reopened in 1967 in Hillcrest Park where it thrilled youngsters until that park closed in 2003. It was again moved and found new life as the Meteor in Little Amerricka in Marshall, Wisconsin.

Photo Courtesy of Duane Marden

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Mystery Photo



This is a tree lined Montrose Avenue in 1910. Where on Montrose? Looking west or east? We don't know. We can guess it is Montrose Avenue east of Cicero Avenue because there is a single trolley track running down the right side of the street. There are some people walking on a sidewalk on the left but no sidewalk can be seen on the right.

Please contact the NWCHS if you have any thoughts at all on the location of this photo. Email us at: nwchicagohistory@sbcglobal.net

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Don't Hide Your Old Photos



Bring them to the Northwest Chicago Historical Society. Veronica Kanarowski show us this photo on the left and we gave her back her original photo and the photo at the bottom.

Photo of the construction of the bungalows on the 4600 block of Leclaire Avenue. The sign on the house reads "YOU CAN OWN \$15.00 per Month and interest – For Sale By Owner Office in the Building".



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