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# Northwest Chicago Historical Society

*Your Neighborhood Historical Society*

Newsletter – January 2011

Number XIII

**In This Issue:**

**Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium • James B. Farnsworth - Educator  
Mayfair Pumping Station**

The Henry Esdohr House is a historical 1880s farmhouse located at 4832 North Long Avenue in Thomas Jefferson Memorial Park. This structure has served many roles as the city grew up around it: a family home, a Park District field house, a community library and a Park District craft shop. (You can learn more about the Esdohr House from our January 2005 and July 2006 newsletters, which can be downloaded from our website.)

This storied building is not currently in use, but it has not been forgotten. It sits quietly and patiently, awaiting its next act in the story of Chicago. The NWCHS is beginning to examine what might be required to initiate restoration of the Esdohr House and return it to community use. We are hoping to work with the Chicago Park District, community organizations, other historical organizations, local contractors, donors and volunteers.

As we are in the research phase, we are looking for individuals who want to put their love of Chicago history into action. Whether you have specific skills or you just want to lend a hand in bringing this building back to life as a place of history and community, contact us at [museum@nwchicagohistory.org](mailto:museum@nwchicagohistory.org) and let us know how you would like to help. - *Chuck Brown*

**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 We will accomplish this through discussion at meetings, public tours and events, and dissemination of historical documents and photos through publications.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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# Letters

*Letters have been edited for clarity and space.*

I have a question to settle a bet with a friend.

There used to be a tavern on the 5000 block of North Austin Ave. back in the 1950's. A friend (who thinks he's always right) says the name was the Wagon Wheel. That name just doesn't sound right to me so I made a bet with him. I was wondering whether you might know the name of the tavern. I think it might have been called The Speak Easy.

I talked this over with my older sister and she brought up about three other taverns in the neighborhood. On Higgins, West of Meade, was The Spot, East of Meade— Wilkes Tavern and Charlotte's on Gunnison used to be the Sail Inn. Years ago, my Aunts & Uncles used to come over on a Sunday afternoon and my parents would send one of us siblings to this tavern on Austin to pick up beer for my relatives. Times sure have changed.

*D. Mirocko*

*The 5000 block of North Austin Ave. is all residential now and I don't know of any bars that were located on this block. In the 40's & 50's there was a Wagon Wheel Tavern on Narragansett and Montrose across from Dunning. The police were always raiding them for gambling activities.*

*Charlotte's on Gunnison was at one time Larson's Restaurant. Brigadoon 5748 W Lawrence Ave has been a tavern at least since the 1940's when the Olekays own the place. The Friendly Tavern at 6124 W Gunnison St at Moody was Drazek Pharmacy back in the 1940's but has been a tavern since the 1950's.*

*Maybe some of our readers would know about the tavern on the 5000 block of North Austin Ave. - NWCHS*

My grandmother Mary (Mamie) O'Leary graduated from Jefferson Park School of Nursing in 1921. I can't find any listing for that school. I do have a copy of her graduating class and her graduation picture. Do you have any information? I would appreciate any help with name of Hospital, location, etc.

Mary "Meg" Heatley

*The Jefferson Park Hospital was at 1400 Monroe in Chicago. My guess is that the school was there or nearby. - NWCHS*

**Photo on the right is the Jefferson Park Hospital. CA 1900**







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

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

Reverend Robert Fedek, *Pastor*

# Letters

The information I had from my uncle's WWII photo album indicated Joker Joe's Tavern was on Higgins located near Wasko Funeral Home but someone said it was located on Milwaukee Avenue (at Newark) right where St. Adalbert Cemetery ends.

It's a great picture of my uncle, his boyhood buddy, who through rare coincidence went through the entire war with him in the Army, and three other boyhood chums who also served, one of whom later became my Godfather. The date was January 1946, and they sure looked glad to be home and to all be together.

Ruth Susmarski – Des Plaines, IL

*Yes there was a Joker Joe's Typhoon Club on the southwest corner of Milwaukee and Newark just south of Touhy Ave in Niles. But there easily could have been a Joker Joe's on Higgins also. - NWCHS*



**From Left to right: Frank Bald, John Romanowski (Romans), Ed Borski, Unidentified, and Ted Sipiora. Frank Bald and Ed Borski were neighbors and boyhood friends on the 5900 block of West Leland Avenue. Ted Sipiora along with Ed Borski, John Romanowski and my dad, Frank Susmarski, graduated from St. Constance Grammar School - Class of 1931.**



As stated in the July 2010 newsletter, NWCHS board member Chuck Brown was planning on donating some historic awards from early Saint Patrick High School years to the school for their 150 year celebration. Shown accepting these framed awards from Chuck Brown on behalf of Saint Pat's are Brother Konrad Diebold, President of Saint Patrick High School and Francis Cardinal George O.M.I., head of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Detail photos of these awards can be found in the July 2010 issue of the Northwest Chicago Historical Society newsletter, pages 22 & 23. These awards are on display near the front entrance of Saint Patrick high School at 5900 W. Belmont Ave. in Chicago.

*Photo Courtesy of Frank Suerth*

6.

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Newly discovered Cartwright Bros. Ice sign, shown above was similar to the sign the Jefferson Ice Company gave its customers to request ice. (See the Jefferson Ice Company story in the NWCHS newsletter – July 2010). This sign was 11 inches long by 7 inches high. People would request an ice delivery by placing the sign in their front window. To inform the iceman on how much ice was requested, this sign was turned to 25, 50, 75, or 100 lbs.

*Image Courtesy of Frank Suerth*

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7.

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## Remembering the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium

By Frances O'Cherony Archer



**Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium Gate**

*Image courtesy of Jennifer Stix*

I was six in 1963, the year my family moved into a house on the 5900 block of North Central Park Avenue. Our front door faced the fenced-in grounds of the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium, but all I could see were the towering trees and overgrown shrubs and a patrol car that passed by twice a day. Along with the other neighborhood kids, I imagined the worst. Haunted, scary, forbidden. It didn't help that our parents threatened to send us across the street if we didn't behave.



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The scene across the street from our house was much different on a warm sunny morning in 1977 when Mayor Michael Bilandic presided over the opening ceremony for a new public park. It was named for Pehr S. Peterson, who had owned the land, and a landscape nursery business, on the site before it had been sold to the city in 1911 for the Sanitarium.

My family sat with a small group of our Central Park neighbors on folding chairs, listening to the Mayor describe the successful efforts of the community to save the land for a park. We weren't really listening, though. We were all stunned by the vast open space and the beauty of the land. How could something this big, this beautiful, have been right across the street all those years and we knew nothing about it?

It has taken several decades, but I'm finally learning about the TB Sanitarium, as we called it. I did some research on the Internet and published a few blog posts about what I learned. Several people left comments, sharing their experiences at the Sanitarium. I heard from a medical resident, a patient, an administrative assistant and a lab worker. You can read their comments on my blog at <http://francesarcher.com/serial-stories/municipal-tuberculosis-sanitarium/>, but I'd like to share some details of the founding of the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium that I didn't include in the blogposts.

This story is about a great medical achievement in Chicago history, but like all Chicago stories, politics plays a major role. The actual political battles are quite lengthy and detailed, so I will give you a few highlights. While the names and years are different, the events will sound all too familiar.

By early 1909, the years-long public debate about the need for a hospital for tuberculosis patients was finally getting somewhere. The Illinois state legislature passed the Glackin Bill, named for Senator E. J. Glackin, and put an end to the ongoing battle between Cook County and the City of Chicago over who should pay for the care of thousands of poor people stricken with the "white plague," as tuberculosis was then called. All that remained was for the voters of Chicago to approve the bill and a tax of "one mil on the dollar on all taxable property" in the April 1909 elections.

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**North Park Village Nature Center is housed in the last remaining Sanitarium cottage.**

*Photo by Frances Archer*

A citywide campaign, supported by doctors, religious leaders and civic reformers like Jane Addams, successfully convinced the public of the need for the institution. At that time in Illinois, 10,000 people a year were dying from TB. A Dr. William E. Quine wrote a letter to the editors of the Chicago Tribune praising the state's plan as "the most benevolent and intelligent movement of this generation in the interest of the sick, poor and, incidentally, the community at large."

I don't want to give the impression it was smooth sailing all the way to the polls, but the proposition passed and within a week Mayor Busse named a three-man commission of physicians to plan and secure a location for the sanitarium. In December 1910, they announced their intent to purchase an 85-acre parcel near the intersection of Lincoln and Foster for the site of the sanitarium.

It was an oddly shaped piece of land, described as bordering on Foster, California, Olive, Rockwell, Bryn Mawr and Western. A Mrs. Julia Foster-Porter owned the land and was willing to sell it for \$100,000. There's no record in the Tribune of why the deal fell through, but a month later, in January 1911, another site, at Bryn Mawr, Peterson and Fortieth Street (Pulaski) was a done deal. Four transfers of land were involved, including property owned by William A. Peterson, the son of Pehr S. Peterson, totaling 80 acres at a cost of \$104,000. Another 100 acres was purchased, but the newspapers didn't provide ownership details.

The local alderman, Frank J. Wilson, strongly protested the city's decision to locate the hospital in his ward. Representing 460 residents of the nearby community, he complained that the TB patients would infect the neighbors. The medical professionals assured the city that the patients wouldn't be walking around the neighborhood, but would be confined to the hospital, so there was no danger of contagion.



**This interior detail shows the craftsmanship and decoration visible throughout the remaining Sanitarium buildings.**

*Photo by Frances Archer*

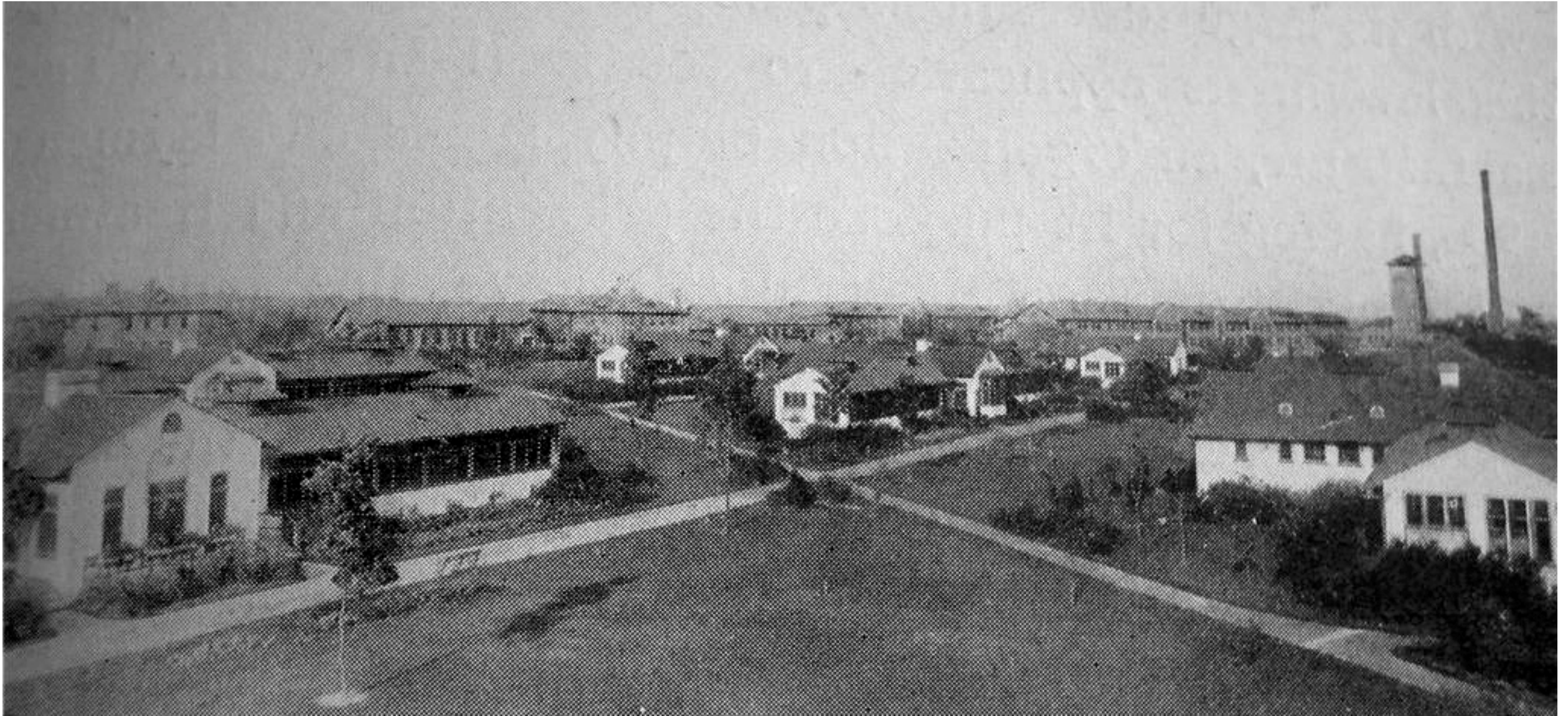
Let's fast forward to 1915, the year the hospital finally opened. Mayor Busse named one of the original commissioners, Dr. Theodore Sachs, as director of the Sanitarium. He was a Russian Jewish immigrant and had been one of the first to call for a public hospital. By all accounts a selfless man, he devoted years of his life treating TB patients and had their interests at heart. It was his misfortune that William Hale Thompson, known as "Big Bill" won the mayoral election that year.

One of Mayor Thompson's first mayoral acts was to fill the Sanitarium's skilled positions with unskilled city workers who had helped in the election. Sachs resigned from his position, saying that he had become a "political football" for the Mayor, and soon after committed suicide. Dr. Sach's colleagues remembered him in the medical journal, Chest, as a victim of machine politics.

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**A view of the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium buildings from the southwest corner at Pulaski and Bryn Mawr Avenues**

*Image Courtesy of Frank Suerth*

The Sanitarium opened with thirty-three buildings. Men, women and children occupied separate cottages, ate in separate dining halls and enjoyed separate recreation areas. There was a maternity ward, a school, an auditorium and residential quarters for the staff. The entire facility was connected by underground tunnels used to transport food, equipment, and laundry. There was also a farm, a bird sanctuary and a rock garden with water falls.

As a child I imagined the place to prison-like, but I've learned that wasn't necessarily true for all patients. Kathleen Felters, a woman who was a patient at the Sanitarium during her teen years in the 1960s, wrote me an email about her experiences. She was from the Lawndale area, ten members of her family had tuberculosis, and she had had it for six months prior to being hospitalized at Cook County. She was transferred to the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium weighing 97 pounds and fighting for her life. She underwent surgery and a long recovery period.



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**The pavement covers the ceiling of an underground tunnel, part of system that connected all the buildings of the Sanitarium.**

*Photo by Frances Archer*

Patients were not discharged from the Sanitarium until they were completely cleared of tuberculosis, so many residents were well enough to attend school and enjoy recreational activities. Kathleen recalls that “it was one of the most profound and wonderful experiences” of her life.

Kathleen’s case wasn’t unique. Recently I heard from another former patient from the 1950s, who after fully recuperating from TB, was enrolled in the Sanitarium’s laboratory training program. “It turned out to be a very important point in my life, maybe the turning point,” he wrote.

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WPA poster

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By the early 1970s, TB cases were diminishing thanks to newly discovered drugs. The hospital was empty, costly and falling into repair. After it was closed, the first Mayor Daley wanted to "give" the property to real estate developer Harry Chaddick, who had plans for a shopping mall and multiple high rise units, similar to the Winston Towers development in West Rogers Park.

Several community groups, including Hollywood North Park Community Association and North River Commission, fought City Hall and won. The results of their efforts on our, and future generations', behalf are the open grounds and public recreation facilities on the land bounded by Bryn Mawr, Pulaski, Peterson and Central Park Avenue.

**Where the Bodies Are...**

According to the late Helen Sclair, the Cemetery Lady, there were people who died at the TB Sanitarium who had no family or money for burials. Unlike the Dunning facility, where the bodies were buried on the property, the Municipal Tuberculosis Sanitarium bodies were buried in Montrose Cemetery along the Bryn Mawr Avenue fence. In later years, this section of the cemetery was sold to a builder who built some large houses. The buried bodies along the Bryn Mawr Avenue fence line are now part of their backyards.



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## James B. Farnsworth - Educator

James Birney Farnsworth was born at Westford, Vermont of Puritan ancestry, the youngest of a family of five sons. At age twelve his family migrated, with a team a team covered wagons, to a farm at Ivanhoe, Lake County, Illinois.

In 1861 he enlisted in the 134<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Illinois Volunteers, Infantry Company 'F' of the Union Army. On account of his youth and moreover that two of his brothers were in the Army, his father held him back. He did serve as a drummer and fife player. He later became a member of the Benjamin F. Butler Post, Grand Army of the Republic.

After the Civil War he married Alma Jeanette Putnam; lived in Higgins Road northwest of the town of Jefferson and was employed as the Headmaster of the Lake Zurich Academy in Lake Zurich. Two years later, in 1868, the family moved to Jefferson and lived in part of an old brick house on Milwaukee Avenue north of Irving Park Road, a former Inn called Dickinson Tavern. He was teaching in St. Charles, Illinois.

In January 1870 he organized the first Jefferson Township High School. The school was situated at the southeast corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Irving Park Road, over the old Town Hall and Police Headquarters. The site of the Northwest National Bank (now Bank of America).

Jefferson High School was the forerunner of Carl Schurz High School. A bronze tablet was placed over the entrance to Schurz' original Assembly Hall in 1910 naming James B. Farnsworth as founder of the first high school in Jefferson Township (See page 22 for picture).

Mr. Farnsworth served the Maplewood School in 1878; principal of the Irving Park School in 1884 and previous to annexation in 1889 he was superintendent of four schools of District 11.



**James Birney Farnsworth**

**July 23, 1843 – August 20, 1915**

**The Farnsworth school, which is situated half way between Milwaukee and Elston Avenues, on the northwest side of Chicago, was named after him.**



**The Jefferson High School, located on Wilson Avenue in Mayfair, on what is now the Irish Heritage Center property, south of their building. This three-story brick building was erected in the summer of 1883, after the township high school at Irving and Milwaukee closed down. Professor C. A. Cook was the first principal of this high school. At first, the school had only a few students but grew to over 700 students when it closed in 1910 when the Carl Schurz High School opened at Addison and Milwaukee.**

*Image courtesy of Frank Suerth*

From 1889 until his death in 1915, Mr. Farnsworth was the principal of the John A. Logan School on Oakley Avenue near Fullerton Avenue. Upon completion of his 50<sup>th</sup> service year (1911) he was honored with a reception, which attracted attendee's from across the United States. A memorial bronze bust was unveiled at Holstein Park on March 22, 1918 and presented to the Board of Education and accepted with the understanding it would be placed in a school named after him. The dedication of the Farnsworth School on June 9, 1927 was highlighted by the presentation of the bust to the new principal.

Professor Farnsworth was affiliated with the public schools for 54 years; an officer of the Jefferson Park Congregational Church for over 40 years while living in the house he built at 4812 West Montrose Avenue. In 1914, the year before his death, he moved to 3902 North Kenneth Avenue. He is interred at the Ivanhoe Cemetery adjacent to the church of his childhood.

*This article was published in the Jefferson Digest – May/June 1989 issue. Used under permission.*



**The bronze tablet that was placed over the entrance to Schurz' original Assembly Hall is still on the wall after 100 years. The Assembly Hall is now the library. The bronze tablet reads: THE JEFFERSON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL, JAMES B. FARNSWORTH, PRINCIPAL WAS THE FIRST HIGH SCHOOL ORGANIZED UNDER THE GENERAL LAW PROVIDING FOR TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE STATE OF ILLINOIS. IT OPENED IN 1872 IN A BUILDING USED AS A SCHOOL AND TOWN HALL, LATER AS A POLICE STATION, AT THE CORNER OF IRVING PARK BOULEVARD AND MILWAUKEE AVENUE. IN 1883 A NEW BUILDING WAS COMPLETED AT MAYFAIR, CHARLES A. COOK, PRINCIPAL EVEN AFTER ANNEXATION TO THE CITY OF CHICAGO IN 1890 THE TOWNSHIP REMAINED AS A SCHOOL DISTRICT WITH FEW CHANGES. IN 1910 THE PRESENT BUILDING WAS COMPLETED, WALTER F. SLOCUM, PRINCIPAL. – Presented by the Jefferson-Schurz Alumni Association, June 1916**

*Photo Courtesy of Frank Suerth*

James B. Farnsworth was also an early member of the Jefferson Park Congregational Church and sung in the choir for fifty years. On a January evening 133 years ago, he met with other members of the Congregation Church to discuss paying off the church debt. Fellow Civil War veteran, William C. Hazelton contributed \$100, as did H. M. Towne, Andrew Dunning, and the Rev. Williams. Robert Hastings and J. B. Farnsworth each contributed \$50.00 to completely pay off the church debt. At the same meeting, Clark Roberts, James Dymond and James B. Farnsworth were elected Trustees, with Andrew Dunning as Secretary and Treasurer.

## Mayfair Pumping Station

*By Frank Suerth*

In Chicago's early years, obtaining water on the northwest side was not a simple task. If you did not have a well on your property (like the one Henry Esdohr had on his property at Higgins and Long), then you would have hook up your horse and buggy and make the long trek to the north branch of the Chicago river. By the late 1800s, it became clear that an organized clean water distribution system was needed.

The city picked the site of Elsie Budlong's farm (of Budlong Pickle fame) to construct a new pumping station. City Architect Charles W. Kallal drew up the plans, and the Department of Public Works started construction on the new Mayfair Pumping Station in 1915. Located 5 miles west of the lake at 4850 W. Wilson, it was completed in 1918. A 12-foot diameter



**The Mayfair Pumping Station at 4850 W. Wilson**

*Photo Courtesy of Frank Suerth*

tunnel under Wilson Avenue channeled water to the pumping station from the lake.

After the water arrived at the pumping station, it needed to be pumped under pressure to the local homes and businesses. At first, only one steam-driven pump was used. A team of horses were utilized when the pump system malfunctioned, which was frequently. During this period of time, many residents complained of the lack of water. In the early 1930's, additional pumps were added to address this problem. Power for these pumps was supplied by coal that had been delivered by trains on the east side of the property. Smoke would billow out of the top of the smoke stack, which stands 184 feet from the boiler room floor and has a diameter of 8 feet 5 inches at the base. This smoke stack, out of commission since 1946, reminds us of long gone Mayfair Railroad Switching Yard and the nearby factories that it served. Fortunately, plans to raze the stack in 1958 never came to fruition.

The Kennedy (90) and Edens (94) Expressways had to be constructed around the Mayfair Pumping Station (located immediately north of where they diverge.) For the highway engineers, this must have been a challenge, as they had to reroute the water supply and discharge tunnels and sewer lines during the construction. At present, the pumping station supplies water to most of the northwest side and surrounding suburbs: Schiller Park, Park Ridge, Morton Grove, Niles, River Grove, Norridge, Harwood Heights, Rosemont, and Elmwood Park.

This red brick building, with its neoclassical ornament and its intricate tile flooring, has served us well for over 90 years. The smoke stack stands as an industrial beacon on the northwest side, reminding us of its past and present, providing us with some of the cleanest tap water in the world. With appropriate maintenance, this local landmark should last well into the next century.





This photo was taken on December 7, 1915 of the construction of the Mayfair Pumping Station looking west showing the north Boiler Room wall. Shown on the right are wooden slides that will be used to bring cement down to the foundation and walls. Notice the team of horses used to move materials up the ramp.

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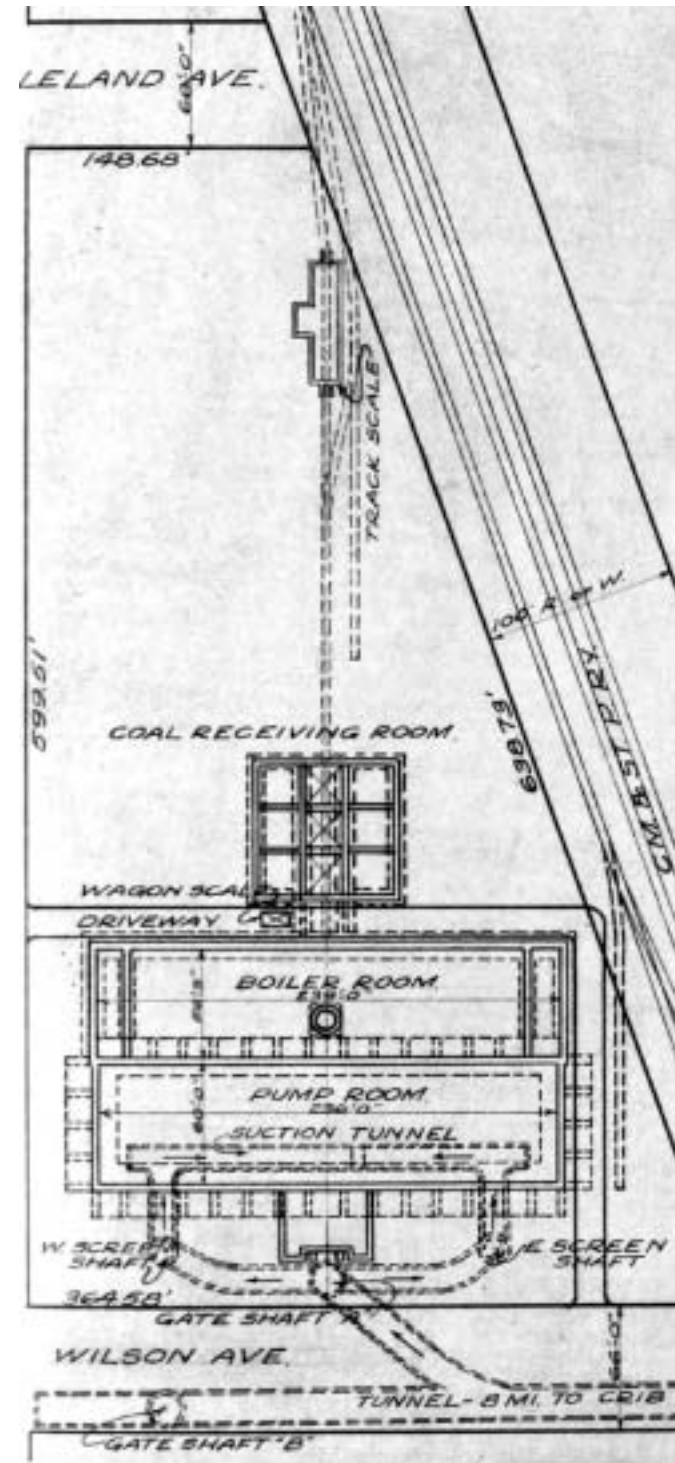


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Shown on the left is the original site plans for the Mayfair Pumping Station with a 364-foot frontage on Wilson Ave. Which runs from Lamont Avenue on the west to the railroad tracks on the east and Wilson Avenue on the south, 600 feet north to where Leland Avenue once came though. This occupied a much large site then it does today.

The track scale is shown on the north end of the property on the tracks that would supply coal to the Coal Receiving Room. These tracks would come off the old Chicago Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway tracks at the east end of the property. From the receiving room, the coal would be use as fuel in the Boiler Room. The Pump Room is located just south of the Boiler Room. The Boiler Room is 54 feet by 239 feet and the Pump Room is 60 feet by 236 feet.

The main water supply tunnel is shown under Wilson Avenue. The water comes in from the water crib in Lake Michigan 8 miles away. The main tunnel is divided into two feeder tunnels, one going to the left screen shaft and one going to the right screen shaft, which supplies water to the Suction Tunnel in the Pump Room.

# |||GIPNA|||

## INDEPENDENCE PARK Farmers Market



2011

**Farmers Markets  
in Independence Park  
Sundays 9AM-1PM**

**June 12 • June 26**

**July 10 • July 24**

**August 14 • August 28**

**September 11 • September 25**

**October 9**

**Irving Park Rd. (4000 N.)  
at Hamlin Ave. (3800 W.) Chicago, IL**

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



[www.gipna.org](http://www.gipna.org)

Civic-minded individuals who believe that a unified community that faces modern challenges can affect real, lasting change formed the Greater Independence Park Neighborhood Association (GIPNA).

### 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.

The Independence Park Farmers Market received a favorable mention in the first-ever Chicago edition of the world-famous Michelin Guide:

*"The nearby Independence Park Farmers Market is also worth a trip. This fast-growing market will satisfy with its array of produce, plants, and baked goods."*

### BECOME A MEMBER

GIPNA is always looking for new volunteers and ideas. Join today! E-mail to us at: [gipna@sbcglobal.net](mailto:gipna@sbcglobal.net)



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