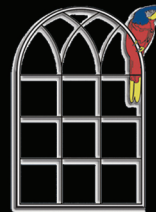


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Northwest Chicago Historical Society

Your Neighborhood Historical Society

Newsletter July 2013

Number XVIII

Sears: 75 Years at 6 Corners Antonio Pasin and His Little Red Wagon

In the last two issues of our newsletter we have shared with you, our readers, much information on the history of the Freemasons, their impact on the development of the area, their charitable works and short biographies of some prominent members from the turn of the (last) century. One of the members featured was my grandfather, John Groenier. But the story I have to tell isn't about the Mason's impact on the neighborhood, but on one little girl.

It was 1960, maybe '61, I would have been 5 or 6 years old. The Masonic Lodge was having a Christmas party for their members' children and grandchildren and I was to attend with my grandfather. How exciting! I remember being impressed (overwhelmed) by the sight of their temple sanctuary, but was much more excited to see what was to come. We took our seats, am sure there was an introductory program that I don't recall, we were all waiting for the "headliner", a magician!

He, of course, started out with minor amazements, cards tricks, slight-of-hand, all the typical magician stuff which was totally amazing to a 5 or 6 year old. It wasn't until his "finale" that I was impacted with a memory that has never left me.

He pronounced that we would make a cake, okay, no big deal. He produced a large cookie tin, this is where we would make the cake. He called up individual children to add the ingredients to the cake, one child would add the flour, another the sugar, another the butter and another the walnuts. Last of all, a child added the toothpaste, as we all knew we had to brush our teeth after eating sweets. He put the lid on the tin, said his magic words, took the lid off and there was a CAKE!! To put it mildly, I was totally amazed! I couldn't wait to get home and tell my mom and dad and grandmother about the AMAZING thing I had just seen.

To this day, whenever I see a magic act (and I have seen some of the best, Doug Henning, David Copperfield), I still think back to that first magician and the impact he had on my childhood memories. THANK YOU, Masons, for a priceless memory of my grandfather and my childhood. - Gail Weber

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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Vice-president:	Dan Pogorzelski	(773) 350-9414
Treasurer:	Gail Weber	
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NW Chicago Historical Society

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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 may have been edited for clarity and space

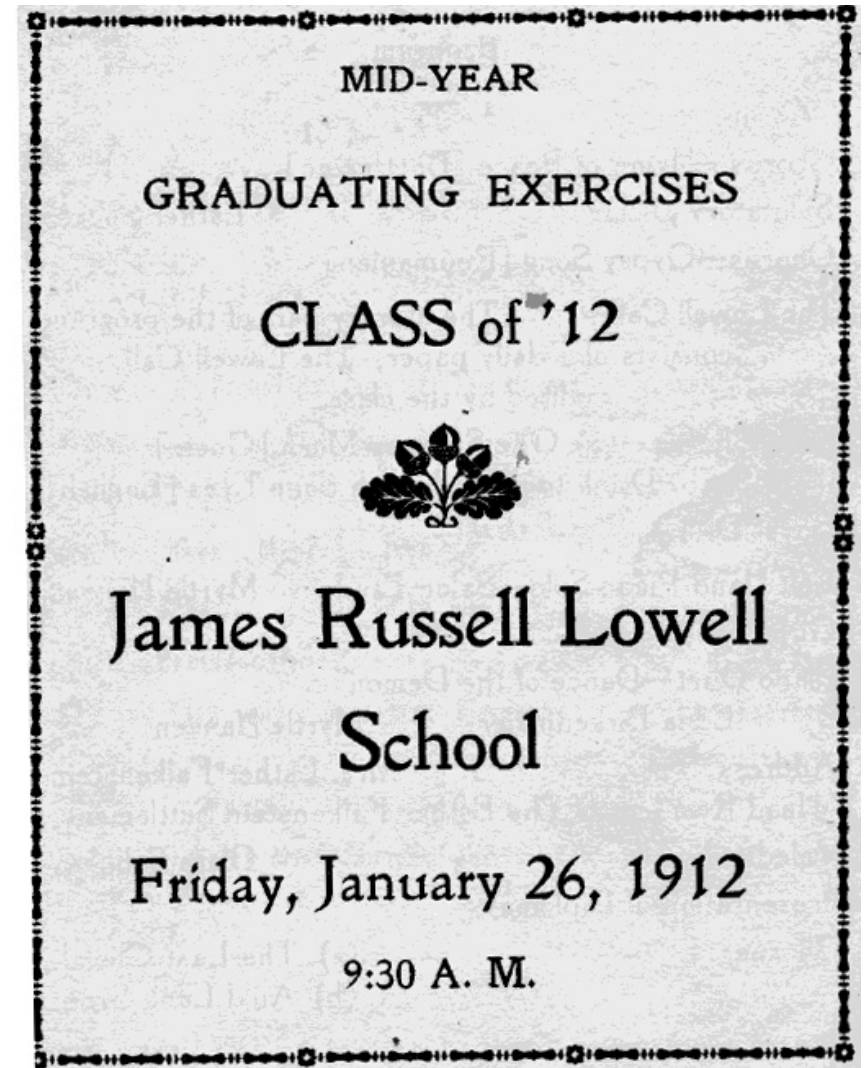
I have an autograph book that contains most of the graduating class of 1912 from James Russell Lowell School. I also have the program from the graduation. Is this something your society would be interested in?

Trudy Smith

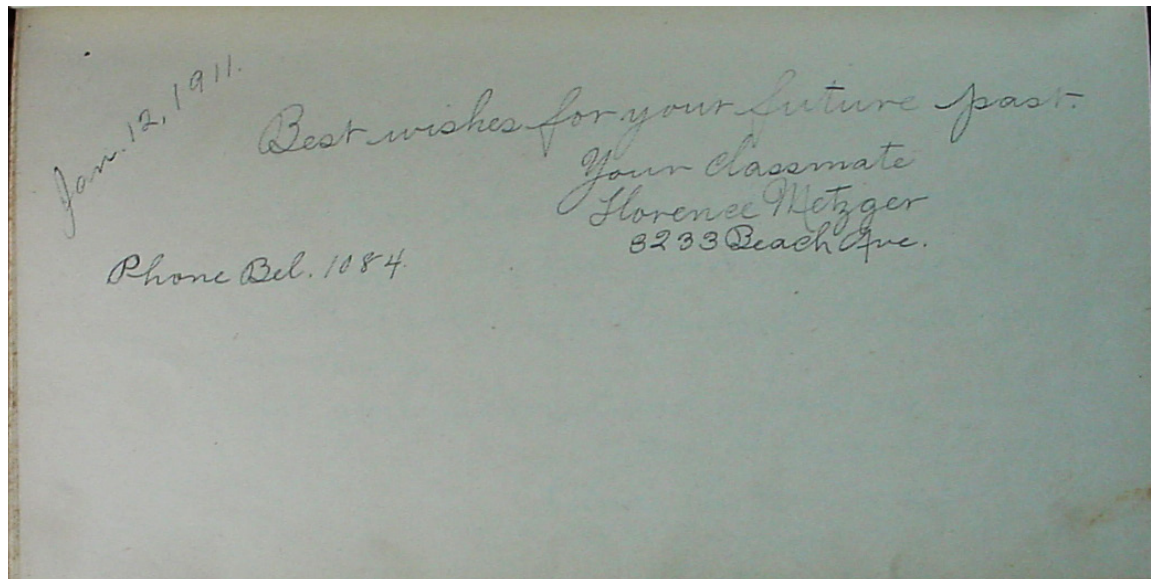
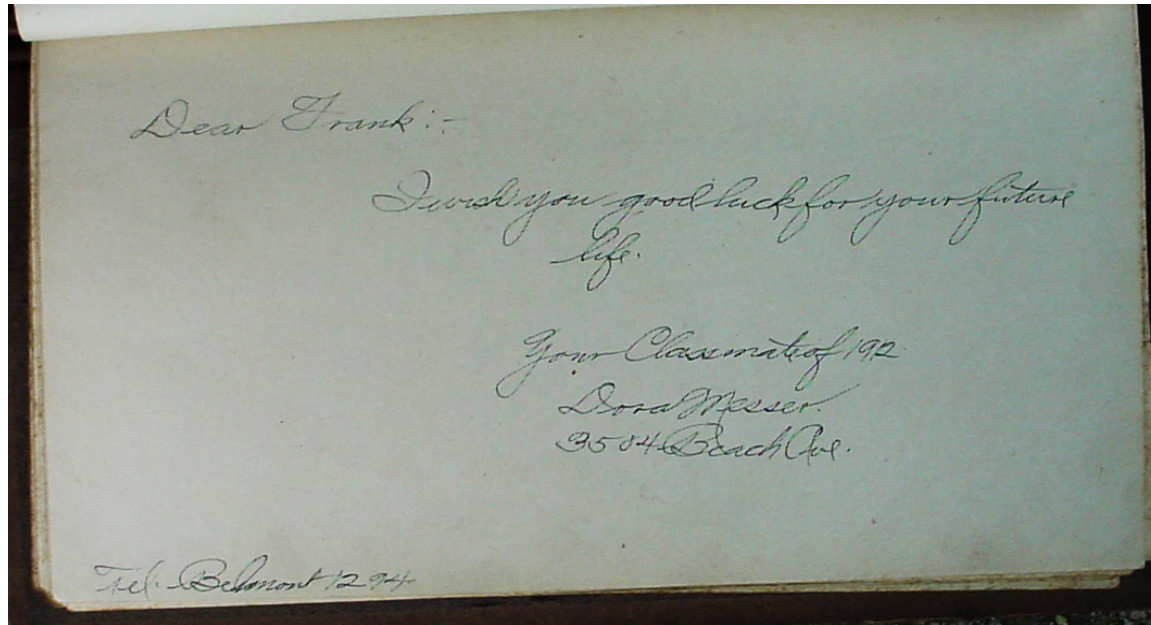
Yes and thank you Trudy! - NWCHS

Mid-Year Graduating Exercises – Class of 1912 – James Russell Lowell School
Friday January 26, 1912 – 9:00 AM

Frieda C. W. Balau
 Verna E. Bartels
 Edward J Beckmann
 Elinor M. P. Bernhardt
 Edna A. Birkenmaier
 Henry J. Boergerhoff
 Ernest L. Buchheister
 Russell J. Cuppage
 Thelma Christensen
 Mabel Erickson
 Lillian Erickson
 Walter A. Fredrick
 Lester K. Hirsch
 Myrtle H. Hansen
 Leonard J. Hanson
 Eva L. Journey
 Laura E. Jeschke
 Bertha M. Johnson
 Olaf Jensen
 Frank A. Kopaska
 Edwin W. Lindley
 Emma A. Laiss
 Frank F. Mischke
 Florence M. Metzger
 Anna E. Olson
 George W. Ott
 Chester Ole
 Irene L. Petersen
 Esther Seitzer
 Clara A. Schukay
 Mildred M. Schwaan
 Margaret W. Thompson
 Harvey W. Zur



1912 Autograph Book for Lowell School



Shown are a few pages from the autograph book. Most everyone wrote down their address while some had a phone at the time and stated their phone numbers. Belmont was the phone exchange in this area of Chicago. The Lowell School is located at 3320 W Hirsch Street in Chicago, just west of Humboldt Park.



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Monday-Saturday Morning Mass
7:30am

Wednesday, School Mass
8:15am During the School Year
Holy Day Masses
As Announced

Rosary M-F after the 7:30am Mass

Novena To Our Lady of Perpetual Help
Tuesday 7:00pm
in the Upper Church

1st Friday Adoration
Upper Church 8:00am-5:00pm
1st Saturday Devotion
Lower Church 10:00am-3:30pm

Holy Hour Devotion
First Sunday of month after the 11:15am Mass

Letters



Interior view of Old St. Stephen's Church

Image Courtesy of Frank Suerth

I am working on my family's genealogy and am hoping you can help me. My parents were married in 1935 in St Stephens Church (I was told by the PGSA that it is also known as Old St.Stephens.) I have a framed marriage certificate from the church but I cannot locate an address for it. My brother and I were raised in the Humbolt Park area and I know both my parents lived east of there while they were growing up. My mom lived at 1625 Hermitage in the late 30's before she was married. Her family and my dad's always seemed to live near each other. I would appreciate any help you can provide. Your website has been a big help.

Thank you

Dorothy Jarosz-Dykema – Memphis, TN

St Stephen's Church was one of those bulldozed to make way for the Kennedy Expressway back in the 1950's. It was located at 923 W. Ohio St. which would mean it was in the way of the Ohio exit/entrance ramp of the Kennedy Expressway. - NWCHS

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Old St. Stephen's Church with Grotto in the side yard.

Photo Courtesy of Dorothy Jarosz-Dykema

7.

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Antonio Pasin and His Little Red Wagon

by Frank Suerth

Antonio Pasin was born in a small town outside of Venice, Italy on July 4, 1897 into a family of cabinetmakers. After learning cabinet making from his father and grandfather, his family sold a mule to buy Antonio passage to America. At 16 years old, Antonio arrived in New York and began a new life in America. With no money in his pockets, he worked odd jobs and traveled to Chicago with nothing but his name and his dreams.

In Chicago, he worked as a cabinetmaker, making cabinets for phonograph players and finishing pianos for a piano company. He also worked other odd jobs, including water boy for a sewer digging crew. But his dream was to own a business for himself. He invested his money in some used woodworking equipment and rented a one-room workshop. In 1917, Antonio crafted his first wagon, a wooden toy wagon. He named his wagon after the Statue of Liberty and called it the 'Liberty Coaster'. His company eventually was known as the Liberty Coaster Company.



Antonio Pasin in his one room wood working shop.

Photo Courtesy of Radio Flyer Inc.



Early Company Truck

Photo Courtesy of Radio Flyer Inc.

A few years later, he outgrew the one room workshop. With more nerve than capital, he opened a factory a little farther west in Chicago. The move paid off, as he soon had an order of over 7,000 wagons. Suddenly, business was booming.

On December 16, 1926, Antonio Pasin became a Naturalized Citizen of the United States. At the time, he was living at 6041 W. Grand Avenue, just 5 blocks east of his factory. To this day, the corporate headquarters are still located at 6515 W. Grand Avenue.

Never having a wagon as a child, Antonio dreamed of making a wagon that was affordable to every boy and girl. In 1927, he replaced the wooden body on his wagon with a stamped steel body, a technology used in the auto industry. He named his new wagon the 'Radio Flyer'.

In 1930, he renamed his business the Radio Steel & Manufacturing Company. Antonio's business is now the world's largest producer of coaster wagons. Even during The Great Depression, his factory produced no less than 1500 wagons a day.



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The World's Fair of 1933, The Century of Progress, was held in Chicago. Antonio wanted to be a part of it, so he could showcase his wagons. Against the advice of others, Antonio acquired a major debt to finance the construction of an exhibit – a 45-foot statue of a boy riding a giant red wagon. Underneath the statue was a shop that manufactured miniature souvenir wagons for 25¢. This was a simple but brilliant idea. The Coaster Boy exhibit captured the attention of visitors from all over the world and an American icon was born.



Antonio's Radio Flyer exhibit at the Century of Progress in 1933

Photo Courtesy of Radio Flyer Inc.

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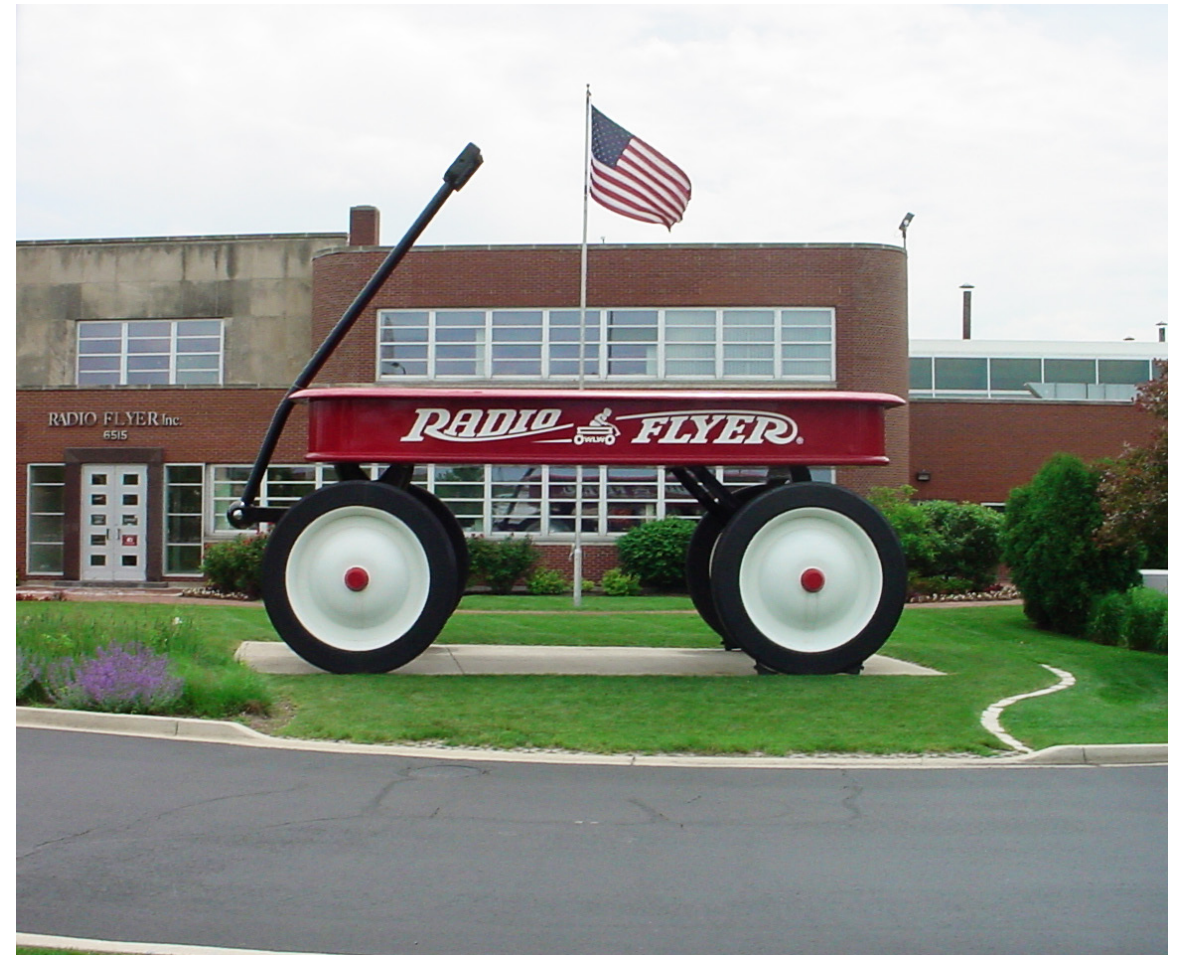
Coaster Wagon Ad

Ad Courtesy of Radio Flyer Inc.



Wagon Boy Metal Art at Corporate Gate

Photo Courtesy of Frank Suerth



Large Radio Flyer Wagon at the intersection of Grand and Fullerton Avenues (6515 W. Grand Avenue). Still the headquarters for Radio Flyer Inc.

Photo Courtesy of Frank Suerth

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1934 Photo of the proud company employees who built these little red wagons.

Photo Courtesy of Radio Flyer Inc.

During World War II, Antonio's company shifted production to portable five-gallon Blitz cans for the US Army. In 1957, Radio Flyer introduced a line of garden carts to help out with lawn care in the nation's fast-growing suburbs. This revolutionary design made it easier to carry a larger load in a smaller area — its heavy steel construction and baked enamel finish also added to its durability.

In the 1960's Radio Flyer also introduced the Baby Walker, designed to help small children take their first steps. The Baby Walker could also be used for storage, all types of imaginative play, and exercise. It was a triumph for toddlers everywhere.

In the 1970's the unique and interesting design of the Ski Sled allowed for edged turns similar to those made in real skiing, and came with a hand brake for increased safety. This was one of the only products designed for adult riders, offering fun and excitement for the entire family. Another sleek, and radical, design shift for Radio Flyer, the Motocross bike combined a unique body structure with safety features such as spokeless wheels, hand grips, and a wider wheel base for added stability.

In 1987, Radio Steel became Radio Flyer, named after the popular little red wagon. Today, the company produces a wide range of children's products, including scooters, bicycles, tricycles, ride-ons, horses, and wagons. Antonio's grandson, Robert Pasin, has been CEO since 1997.

On July 5, 1990, at age 93, Antonio Pasin died in his home at 1338 William Street in River Forest, Illinois. Antonio was inducted into the Toy Industry Hall of Fame in 2003.

Since 2002, the company has produced plastic as well as metal-bodied wagons. The Radio Flyer Wagon was inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame at The Strong in Rochester, New York, in 1999. Radio Flyer is one of the oldest remaining national toy companies still owned and operated by the founding family.



Antonio Pasin and his iconic Radio Flier

Photo Courtesy of Radio Flyer Inc.



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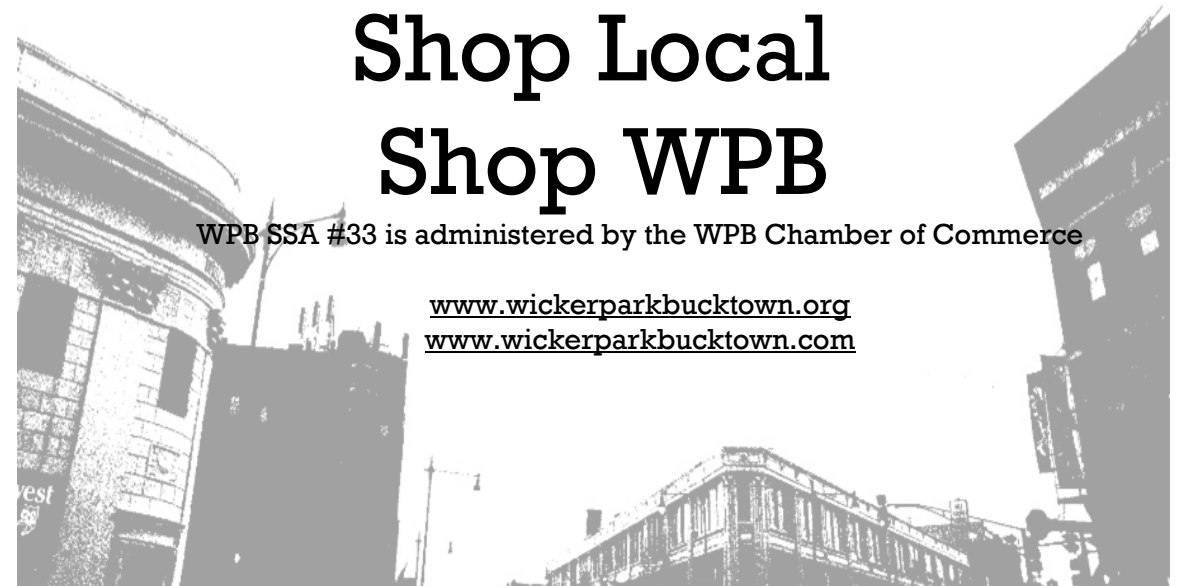
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Sears: 75 Years at 6 Corners

by Frank Suerth



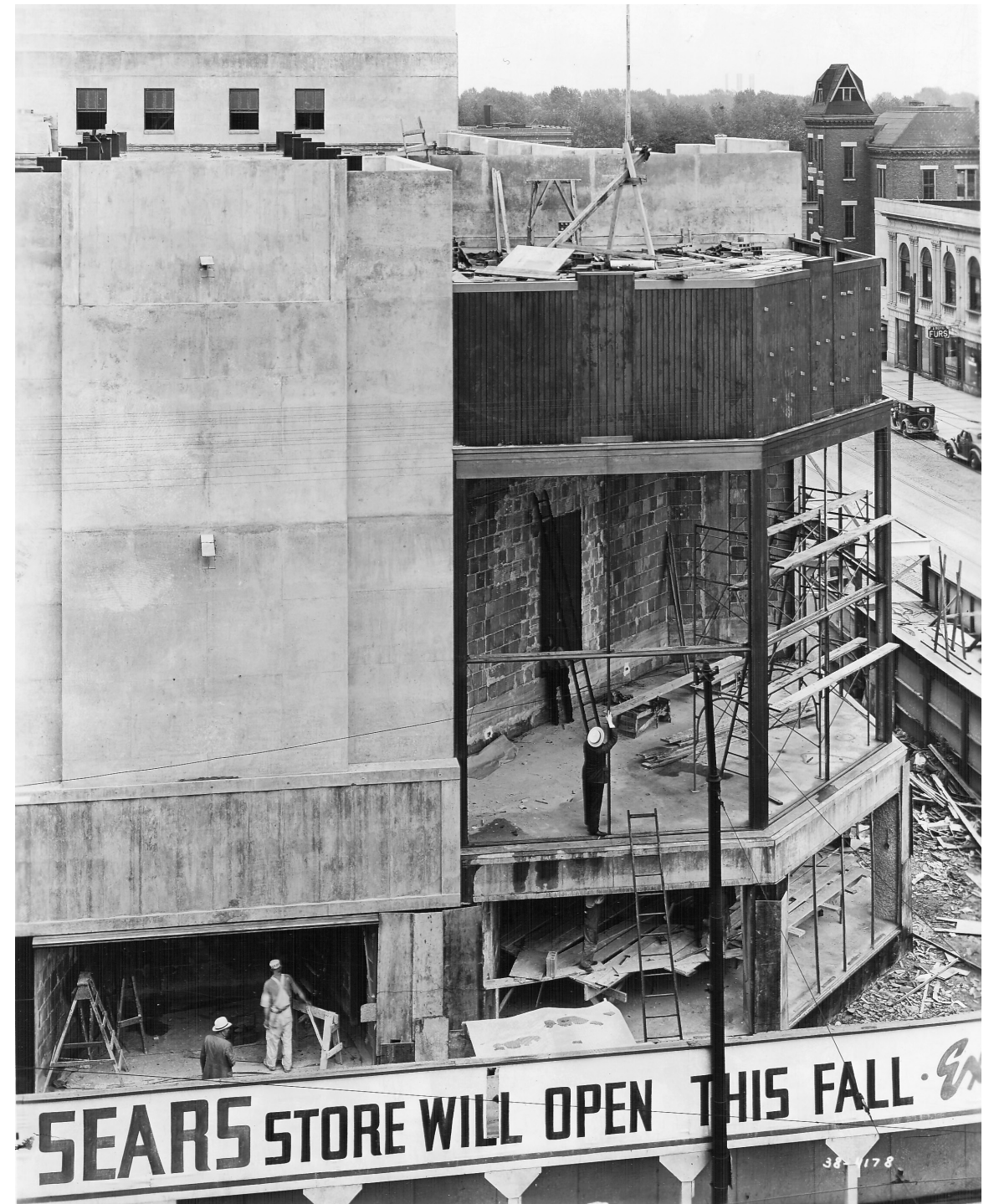
Photo Courtesy of the Six Corners Association

Very few of us can remember 6 Corners without their largest tenant Sears. The opening of Sears in 1938 was the driving force in transforming 6 Corners, at one time, into the busiest shopping district outside of the Loop. Surely many of us have fond memories of long ago visits to this 6 Corners institution. Maybe the purchase of a first major appliance, a visit to the candy counter, a first ride on an escalator or a visit with Santa in the basement toy section.

Of course like everything else, Sears has changed over the years. Hopefully the following images will do more than bring back some early memories but inspire a return visit to Sears, Roebuck and Co. and its 6 Corners business community.

Opening Day - October 20, 1938

Almost 100,000 people elbowed their way in on opening day to see the new Sears store at 6 Corners. This new Sears building was design by Chicago architects Nimmons, Carr & Wright and featured some of Sears' new design concepts like artificial light and air conditioning instead of relying on windows for these things. The store was set up as self-service to cut down sales staff in an effort to keep down the cost of the merchandise.



Construction of Sears at 6 Corners

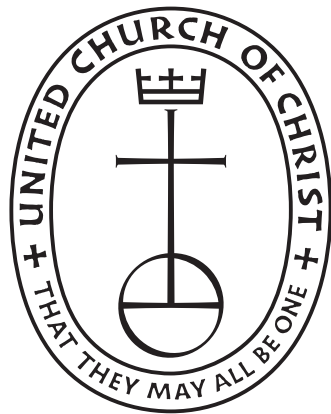
Photo Courtesy of Sears Holding Historical Archives

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where God has placed a comma”

- Gracie Allen



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Night view of the Sears store at 6 Corners with display windows and Hillman's sign lit up.

Photo Courtesy of Sears Holding Historical Archives



Early morning shoppers waiting for Sears to open in the 1940's.

Photo Courtesy of Chuckman
<http://chuckmancollectionvolume15.blogspot.com/>

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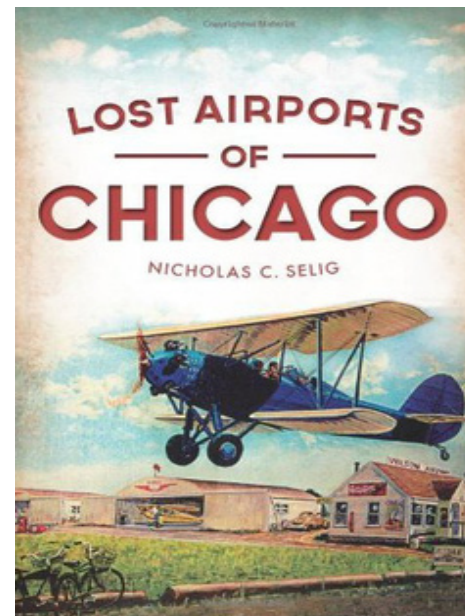
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Two photos of Sears looking from the Irving Park side. Upper photo with the street-car was taken in the 1940's. Lower photo with the trolley bus was taken in the 1960's. Public transportation on Milwaukee and Cicero and Irving Park would bring customers throughout the day to Sears.



Sears motorbike. Photo Courtesy of Chuckman - <http://chuckmancollectionvolume15.blogspot.com/>



Thank you Nick Selig!

Historian and air pilot Nick Selig gave a presentation at one of the Northwest Chicago Historical Society meetings. Nick recounted Chicago's rich and colorful aviation history. He has been researching airplanes and runways in the local area for over 50 years. Nick Selig is author of Lost Airports of Chicago.

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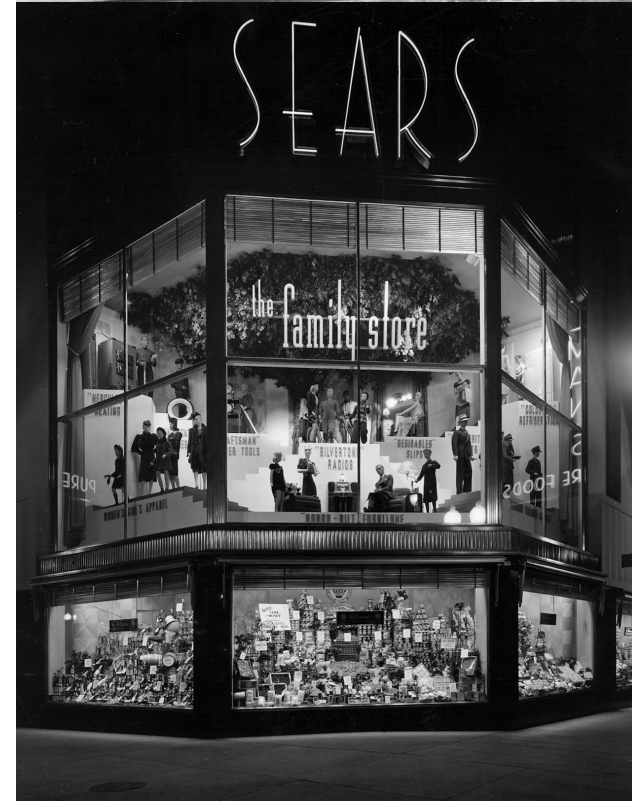
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An early, much photographed view of the corner of the Sears store. ca 1940's



1938 photo on the left shows the elaborate display window which was the largest in Chicago at that time.

Photos Courtesy of Sears Holding Historical Archives

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Photo Courtesy of Dale Harris

Photo of the popular four-sided Sears candy counter, where the clerks were stationed inside. An impressive selection of bulk nuts and candies were available for purchase by the pound. The clerk would fill white paper bags with the amount and type by the customer's request.

A man picking out a shovel at Sears Garden Center at 6 corners. ca 1959



Photo Courtesy of Dale Harris



*Photo Courtesy of Chuckman
<http://chuckmancollectionvolume15.blogspot.com/>*

Photo of the Hillman's Pure Foods at the Sears store at 43rd and Pulaski. This Hillman's was very similar to the Hillman's in the basement at the Sears at 6 Corners. ca 1950's



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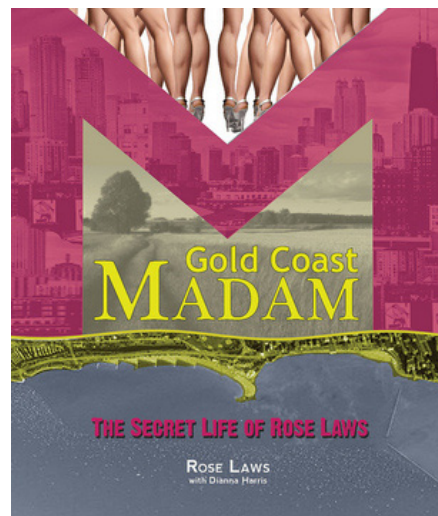


A view of 6 Corners at Cicero Avenue from Milwaukee Avenue taken in 1978. This photo is from Street Photographer Fred Leavitt's award-winning book, Fred Leavitt's Chicago. Consisting of 128 pages with 87 images, this landmark publication is printed in a proprietary continuous-tone process. You can purchase this book, as well as prints by visiting his website at www.fredleavitt.com.



Gold Coast Madam: The Secret Life of Rose Laws

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