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Northwest Chicago Historical Society

Your Neighborhood Historical Society

Newsletter January 2023

Number XXXVII

Big Oaks Golf Club • The Buffalo 5408 N. Central Avenue

When one sees a new building we sometimes ask ourselves what was there before. And most often we cannot remember what was originally at that location. Out of sight – out of mind as they say. In this issue we highlight three places that are no longer with us.

Big Oaks Golf Club was one of those places. Once located in unincorporated Cook County, it is now part of Harwood Heights and Chicago. Apartments and single family homes have replaced the sand traps, fairways with divots, and putting greens. Not one photo could be found by us.

No doubt, the Buffalo Ice Cream Parlor will bring back fond memories to many of us. Cold ice cream on a warm summer night with your family or maybe the location of a first date. We even added a menu to help bring on those euphoric feelings.

The house at 5408 N. Central Avenue. This beautiful Victorian home is now long gone, sentenced to an early demise because of the large lot size on which it stood. On these pages, we have a look at some of the people who called this house their home. A big thank you goes out to Dave Royko who grew up in this house and shared some pictures of his parents and the house itself.

Thank you for reading the NWCHS newsletter. - *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 We will accomplish this through discussion at meetings, public tours and events, and dissemination of historical documents and photos through publications.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.



4545 N. Central Avenue. Ca 1970

Visit our website: <http://nwchicagohistory.org>

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

Join our Meet-up Group (It's FREE)

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NW Chicago Historical Society

P. O. Box 30067
Chicago, IL 60630

e-mail: nwchicagohistory@sbcglobal.net

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Membership:

\$15.00 per calendar year

\$10.00 for 65 years old and over

Phone: 773-725-5774

Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

Dear Editor, The view of Milwaukee Avenue and the story of Borman's Shoe Store brought back wonderful memories of our shopping area (NWCHS Newsletter July 2022).

My parents, my sister, Joan and I lived with my grandparents in the house they bought in 1924 at 5216 N. Lieb Avenue. Each new school year meant a visit to Borman's shoes where they had an x-ray machine so you could see how the shoes fit your bones.

Other stores I remember are Annes, the Army-Navy surplus, and Knobe's Stationers, with A & P across the street. Thanks to whomever kept this picture!

Dolores Sherman Weeda – NWCHS Member
Wyoming, MN

Here is another photo - Looking north down Milwaukee Avenue at Lawrence Avenue. - NWCHS

This photo has both Annes and Wolke & Kotler Department stores and longtime fixture Fannie May's Candies shown. None of these businesses in the photo are still in business. (Image courtesy of John I Tucker)

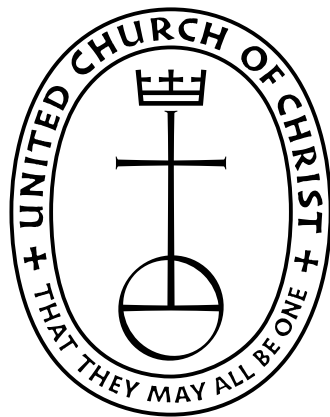


“Never place a period
where God has placed a comma”

- Gracie Allen



God is still speaking,



The Congregational Church of Jefferson Park

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

www.ccjpucc.org

We are your neighbors and we would like to meet you

Letters

Letters may have been edited for clarity and space

Hello, I recently came across your site and was very pleasantly surprised at all the memories.

I grew up at Agatite and Central, went to Portage Park and OLV schools, and spent my nights haunting the Jeff Park area. My best friend and his family grew up in the Esdohr House on Giddings, so I am very familiar with its curved glass, sink alcoves, and other hidden features. It seemed like we were always finding some secret or another. We always thought it must have been owned by a Dr. or similar.

Anyway, the reason I am writing is to see if you might have any photos of two locations -

First, a front / interior photo of Anne's department store - I frequented this store until its closure, and when they demolished it, was lucky enough to purchase two pieces of neon signs from their front doors - a green "Sewing center" sign which was supposed to be for my wife's craft area in our basement, and a pink "men's annex" sign for my shop in the garage. Sadly, the green sign got broken before it was installed, but the pink one is still in use.



The pink "men's annex" neon sign from Anne's department store was purchased by Bob Williams and now hangs in his garage.

Photo Courtesy of Bob Williams

The only thing I find is the same photo on multiple sites of Milwaukee facing NW which shows Hoyne Savings and the Anne's sign in the distance on the left. When I noticed a photo of Wolke and Kotler in one of your newsletters, I thought perhaps you might have something. Hard to believe an area that was that busy for decades has almost no photos.

You might be interested to know that most of those building rows were very convenient for bored teenagers to explore - you could start at the end building and make your way all the way to the corner. Stanton Hobby shop, for example had a pipe that was also a great ladder.

I also heard that a group of teens were up on the roof next to Hoyne waiting for the Pope to come by until they were shooed away by police. Don't ask me how I know this, just a rumor. :-)

The other thing is any photos of the interior of the lower level of the Mayfair train station on Cicero Avenue. Back in the 80's this was an attractive nuisance for bored teenagers, and my friends and I frequently tried to explore it.

At some point someone had broken through the bricks in one of the archways, and the opening was just big enough for our smallest friend to squeeze in. He said it still had restrooms, ticket booths, etc. But as this was well before digital cameras, all the rest of us could do was peer through the hole. The top access on the tracks was sealed off.

This was before the large opening under the tracks facing the Kennedy was closed up. And at some point we braved the embankment and walked down there. One of use threw something into the void, and it came back at us pretty quick with someone yelling, so clearly someone was living in there.

We ran like schools girls, and shortly after the hole in the arch was covered, and we never returned. What it looked like inside has bugged me for 30+ years!

Thank for the memories! - Bob Williams

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A professional real estate advertisement for Nicole Hajdu. It features a black and white portrait of her on the right side, wearing a leather jacket. The left side contains her contact information and a brief description of her expertise in Northwest Side real estate. The background is dark with white text.

Thank you Bob for the picture of the neon sign from Anne's Department store!

We do not have a good photo of the front of Anne's but we have a newspaper image of the interior as seen below. As for the Esdohr House on Giddings Street. It was built for Herman Esdohr, not a doctor, (brother of Henry Esdohr, whose house is in Jefferson Memorial Park). Herman owned a few businesses on Milwaukee Avenue in Jefferson Park and with his money, financed the Jefferson National Bank (Their bank building is now occupied by the Hoyne Bank).

We welcome everyone to discover the history we have on our website:- NWCHS

<https://nwchicagohistory.org/>

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A rectangular advertisement for NADIG Newspapers. It features the company name in large, bold letters at the top. Below that, it lists the contact information for Brian Nadig, the publisher, including a phone number, address, and fax number. The website URL is also provided. The background is white with black text.



Photos by Ellen Domke
Solid area merchants include (top) Irving Warso (left) of Anne's Department Store with brother Sherman and son Howard, as well as



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*Quiche Bites - Caprese Canapés - Mushroom Turnovers - Mini Latkes
Deviled Eggs - Baked Brie - Mini BLTs - Mini Roasted Veggie
Mini Tuna - Mini Ham Swiss Chard Tart
Mini Thanksgiving Poached Salmon Side
Salad Platters - Frittata Catering Cookie Tray - Quiche
Petite Pastry Tray Salmon En Croute
Sandwiches - Petite Pastry Tray - Cookie Tray - Spinach Lamb Pie
Crudités and Dip - Yogurt Parfait - Cookie Tray - Pierogi Tray*



Letters

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I lived in Jeff Park from 1949 to 1979, when I married and moved to Morton Grove. I can remember houses “moving” down the street on Avondale to make room for the Kennedy Expressway. I’d be SO interested in the newsletters! Thanks!

Arlene Schuetz

The best way to get a copy of our newsletter mailed to your house is to become a NWCHS member. Membership is:

\$15.00 per calendar year

\$10.00 for 65 years old and over

Mail your check to:

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Hello, I am interested in finding if you have any general and/or specific information about the Big Oaks Golf Club (owners, etc.) and in general about the area; including Norwood Park. I would be interested in finding out if you have any periodicals, photo's etc., to look at or for you to pass on to me :).

Best Regards,

Myles Williams

Big Oaks

On the right is a matchbook from Big Oaks Golf Club and a newspaper ad from 1923. Both list the address as 6600 Lawrence Avenue, which would put it inside Ridgemoor Country Club.

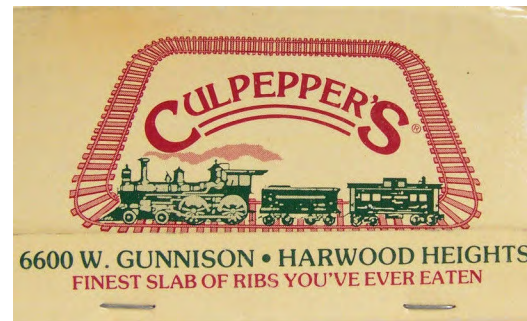
But not really...

(Continued on page 10.)



Long ago, Gunnison was called Smith Road, but by 1920, the stretch between Austin and Harlem was named Lawrence Avenue. It was a continuation of Lawrence as it jogged up on Austin, where the Indian Boundary line once was – that’s why the jog is there. Sometime, in the 1920’s, (likely around the time of annexation), the road name changed from Lawrence to Gunnison. While I can’t say this for certain, my educated guess is that they changed the name so that it was aligned with Gunnison in Chicago. The stretch of Lawrence that exists today between Austin and Harlem was not opened up as a regular street until the 1930’s. Therefore Big Oaks Golf Club’s address would be 6600 W. Gunnison Street and not part of Ridgemoor. Big Oaks Golf Club was a public course whereas Ridgemoor was, and still is, a private club. In 1904, Israel G. Smith’s homestead was put up for lease plus 70 acres, at \$848.00 a year, becoming the Irving Park golf club’s new home – Ridgemoor Country Club at 6601 W. Gunnison Street. Big Oaks Golf Club, at 6600 W. Gunnison Street, operated from the early 1920s to the mid 1950s.

In 1955, the City of Chicago annexed most of the unincorporated area of Big Oaks Golf Club and in 1956, it was rezoned and subdivided for single family homes. Neighboring Chicago residents, raised concerns about crowded schools and sewer issues. Land was set aside for a new school (Daniel C. Beard Elementary School).



After Big Oaks Golf Club closed its doors, restaurants have taken the 6600 W. Gunnison Street address. In the 1960s, the Height Restaurant operated at the address. The most successful, was Culpepper’s, (ca 1979 to 1990) with its famous toy train running along the ceiling, throughout the dining room. After Culpepper’s, the Da Vido’s Italian Steak House had a short run. Presently, condos occupy this address.

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The Buffalo Ice Cream Parlor (1902 to 1978)

The mere mention of the Buffalo Ice Cream Parlor at Pulaski Avenue and Irving Park Road, to anyone from the northwest side, will bring smiles to their faces followed by personal stories from the past. Surely, the following pictures will do the same.



A south bound Pulaski electric trolley bus, passing the Buffalo at Irving Park Road.



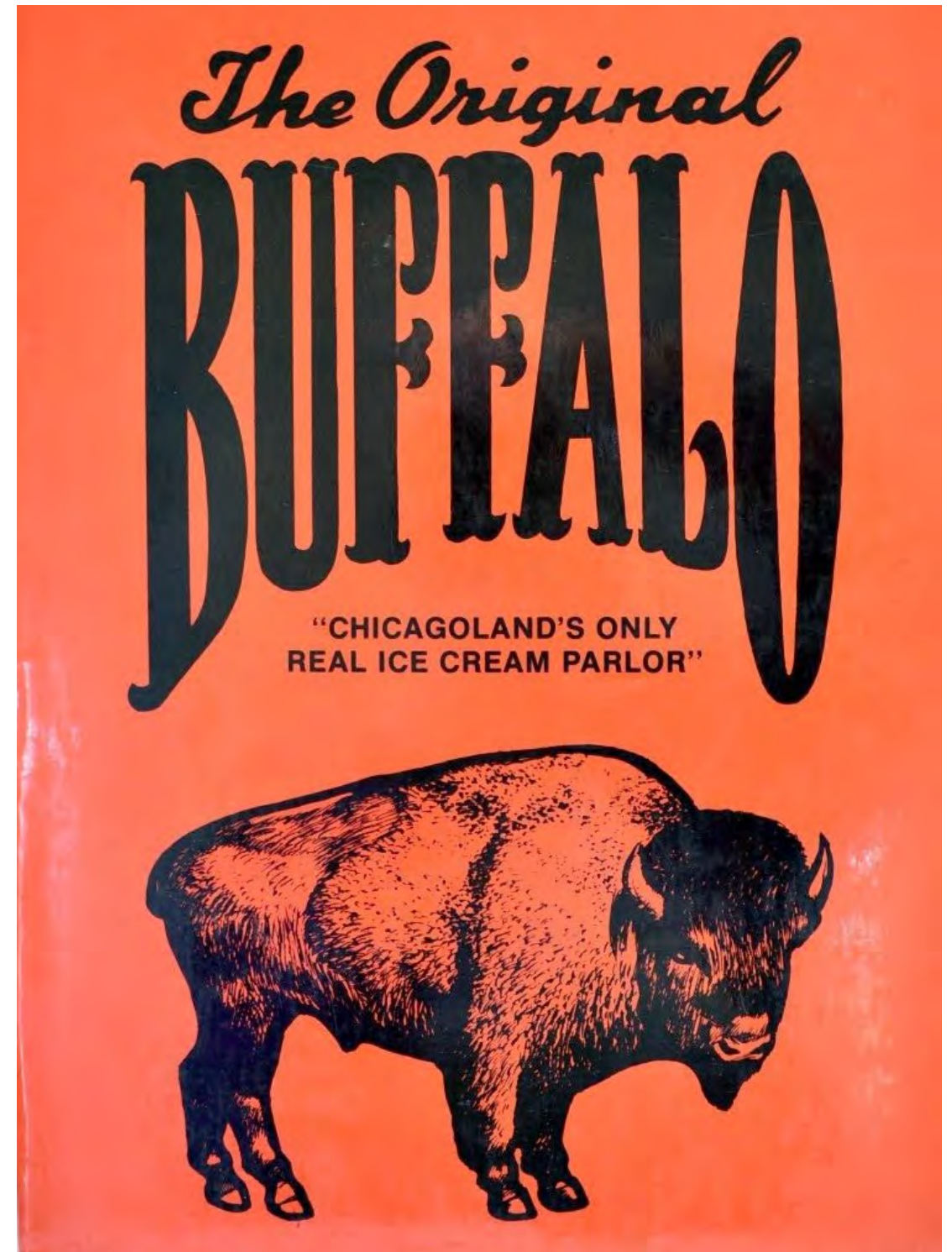
Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah and whose trust Jehovah is. Jer. 17:7
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Above: An ad for the original Buffalo... “Chicagoland’s Only Real Ice Cream Parlor.”

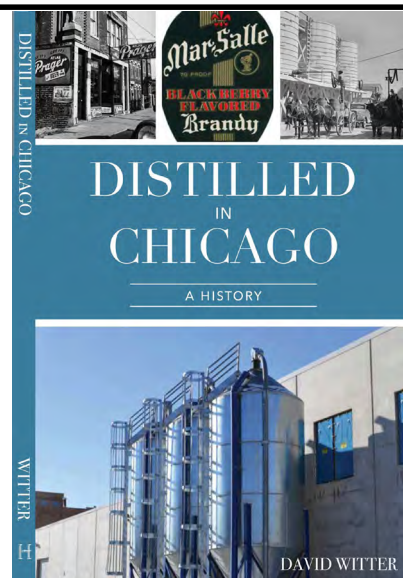
Right: Front cover of one of their menus.



A Big Thank You to David Witter

for his presentation, *Distilled in Chicago*, at our November meeting. David detailed how alcohol influenced nearly two centuries of Chicago’s history.

If you missed this event, you can still purchase his book, *Distilled in Chicago* on Amazon or at your favorite book seller.



ICE CREAM

Our Ice Cream Creations are Designed first, then put into Production by our Famous Fountain Engineers

WORLD FAMOUS BANANA SPLITS

- Old Fashioned1.55
- Fruit Salad1.25
- Fresh Strawberry1.25
- Hot Fudge Split1.25
- Caramel Split1.25
- Butterscotch Split1.25
- Swiss Chocolate Split1.25
- Chocolate Marshmallow1.25
- Fresh Raspberry Split1.25

HOT FUDGE SUNDAES

- Featuring our homemade toppings.
- Fudge With The Works1.25
 - Sliced bananas and pecans.
 - Fudge Pecan Sundae1.25
 - Fudge Nut1.20
 - Featuring ground walnuts.
 - Plain Fudge Sundae1.10
 - Fudge Banana Slice Sundae1.20
 - Fudge Marshmallow Sundae1.20

BUFFALO MASTERPIECES

HUBBA HUBBA2.05

Our parasol masterpiece! 5 scoops of ice cream, fruit salad, bananas, butterscotch topping, whipped cream, nuts, a cherry and Nabiscos.

BUFFALO SPECIAL1.35

Vanilla ice cream, fruit salad, bananas, caramel, whipped cream, nuts, a cherry and Nabiscos.

CHOP SUEY1.35

Not Chinese or with celery. Vanilla ice cream, fruit salad, bananas, Swiss chocolate syrup, whipped cream, nuts, a cherry and Nabiscos.

THREE QUEEN'S

SPLIT1.35

For Queens only. Vanilla ice cream, fruit salad, bananas, marshmallow topping, whipped cream, nuts, a cherry, Nabiscos and 3 Queens.

CHOPPED WALNUT SUNDAES

- Vanilla ice cream, nuts, whipped cream, a cherry and Nabiscos.
- Caramel Butterscotch Raspberry
- Cherry Lemon Orange Chocolate
- Maple Banana Fresh Strawberry
- Lime Pineapple
- 1.25

SPECIAL PECAN SUNDAES

- Swiss Chocolate Marshmallow
- Butterscotch Raspberry
- Pineapple Cherry Caramel
- Maple Fresh Strawberry
- 1.30

"TRY OUR FAMOUS SKYSCRAPER"

- Boston Sodas85
- Whipped cream, nuts, Nabiscos, cherry.
- Plain Sodas75

There may be one or two ice creams as good as ours, but nobody has our Super High Quality Whipped Cream with 36 percent butterfat (No Guns), Hand Whipped

* Ice Cream Carry-Outs 10¢ extra.



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CHAR-BROILED

BUFFALO BURGER2.15

Magnificent in size and flavor. A large portion of freshly ground beef on a toasted bun, with French fries, lettuce, tomato and pickle.

With Melted Cheese2.25

Served with lettuce, tomato, French fried potatoes.

BEEFBURGER1.55

Here we use 100 percent pure ground beef.

CHEESEBURGER1.65

Covered with melted cheese.

OLIVEBURGER1.65

Topped with chopped, stuffed olives.

OLIVE CHEESEBURGER1.75

Topped with cheese and olives.

MUSHROOM BURGER1.85

Topped with mushrooms.

FRANCHEEZIE1.85

A King-size red hot stuffed with melted American cheese, wrapped in bacon.

BAR-B-Q SIRLOIN OF BEEF2.05

Covered with our special sauce.

JUMBO RED HOT1.55

GRILLED CUBE STEAK SANDWICH2.05

CORNED BEEF ON RYE2.05

- Sanka25
- Coffee20
- Tea20
- Milk35

- Fountain Drinks25
- Fruit Pies55
- Pie Ala Mode95
- Strawberry Shortcake1.10

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ENTREES

CHOICE BUTT STEAK5.95

Char-broiled over a sharp, hot flame for tantalizing taste. Served with onion rings, French fries, garden fresh salad, rolls, butter.

JUMBO GULF SHRIMP3.25

Deep-fried to a golden brown and served over buttered toast. French fried potatoes, lettuce, tomato, pickle and cole slaw, rolls, butter.

GOLDEN BROWN PERCH3.05

Deep-fried to a golden brown and served with French fries, lettuce, tomato, pickle, cole slaw, tartar sauce, rolls and butter.

ONE HALF FRIED CHICKEN3.50

Disjointed. Served with French fries, cole slaw, lettuce, tomato, rolls and butter.

FISH AND CHIPS2.50

Served with lettuce, tomato, cole slaw, French fries, rolls and butter.

Sandwiches

CLUB HOUSE

Served with lettuce, tomato, pickle and French fried potatoes.

CORNED BEEF AND SWISS CHEESE2.55

On Rye.

CHICKEN CLUB HOUSE2.65

Sliced breast of chicken and bacon.

BACON, LETTUCE AND TOMATO2.35

TRIPLE DECKERS

Served with lettuce, tomato, mayonnaise

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|
| Ham and American Cheese | 1.55 | Sliced Egg and Stuffed Olives | 1.55 |
| Liver Sausage and Tomatoes | 1.55 | Egg Salad and Ham | 1.55 |
| Ham and Peanut Butter | 1.55 | Sliced Chicken and Ham | 2.25 |
| Ham Salad and American Cheese | 1.55 | Sliced Egg and Ham | 1.55 |
| Swiss Cheese and Ham | 1.55 | | |

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|------|--------------------|------|
| Sliced Chicken | 1.55 | Hamburger | .95 |
| Roast Beef | 1.65 | Cheeseburger | 1.05 |
| Red Hot | 1.25 | Oliveburger | 1.05 |
| Lettuce and Tomato | 1.05 | Mushroom burger | 1.25 |
| Bacon, Lettuce and Tomato | 1.25 | Swiss Cheese | .85 |
| Fried Egg | .85 | Liver Sausage | .85 |
| Bacon and Egg | 1.25 | American Cheese | .85 |
| Cream Cheese 'n Jelly | .95 | Grilled Cheese | .95 |
| Peanut Butter and Jelly | .95 | Summer Sausage | 1.05 |
| Grilled Cheese 'n Tomato | 1.20 | Peanut Butter | .75 |
| Corned Beef | 1.65 | Ham Salad | 1.05 |
| Boiled Ham | 1.35 | Egg Salad | 1.05 |
| Plain Francheezie | 1.45 | Tunafish Salad | 1.25 |
| Fish and Chips | 1.45 | Olive and Nut | 1.05 |
| | | Plain Bar-B-Q Beef | 1.65 |
| | | Cube Steak | 1.65 |

This and That

- French fried potatoes50
- French fried onion rings 1.25
- Plain Salad95
- Greek Salad sm. 1.50 lg 2.75
- Bowl of Chili75
- Soup Of The Day65

Minimum charge at tables or booths 50¢ per person

We regret that we cannot be responsible for the loss or exchange of personal property.

Full menu from the Buffalo Ice Cream Parlor. Some readers may have forgotten that the Buffalo was not just ice cream creations but food was offered at this establishment.

The Buffalo opened in 1902 at Division and Sedgwick Streets, moving to the Irving Park location in 1918. One wonders how the ice cream was kept cold in the early days of refrigeration. The shop was named after Buffalo, New York after the original owner's hometown. According to the Chicago Tribune, the buffalo had patented recipes for its ice cream and toppings. Its whipped cream was hand whipped and 36 percent butterfat.

The Buffalo, a landmark on the northwest side, had wooden booths, with black glass table tops. Vintage looking cherub murals decorated much of the interior of the parlor. The Korompilas family sold the business to Tom Amarantos in 1951. In 1974, Amarantos opened another Buffalo restaurant in Morton Grove.

The final scoop of ice cream was sold at 4000 W. Irving Park Road on Friday, September 29, 1978. The 2-story building was torn down to make way for a gas station.



Another view of the Buffalo Ice Cream Parlor on the northwest corner of Irving Park and Pulaski Roads.

Thank you Windsor Tavern
for hosting us for one of our meeting!

The Windsor Tavern and Grill - 4530 N. Milwaukee Avenue

5408 N. Central Avenue

By Frank Suerth

A house has a history and if these walls could talk, as people say, one would be amazed at the stories it would tell. So is true for any house, even houses no longer around like the one that was located at 5408 N. Central Avenue. History is all around us and it is conveyed by people, buildings, and artifacts.

This victorian house was built in the 1880s and the earliest residents that we could find, were Marshall and Grace Fletcher, who were members of the Ridgemoor Country Club. Marshall worked in the banking industry and Grace was a member of Jefferson Park's Altrui Club from 1904 to 1938. Marshall and Grace lived in the house with her parents; William and Elma Price. (Continued on page 20.)



The house as it looked in the 1940s, when Robert G. Suerth owned the property. The house was described as a nine room frame house located on an 113 foot x 125 foot lot.

Photo Courtesy of M. J. Suerth



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Another view of the property as it looked in the 1940s.

Photo Courtesy of M. J. Suerth

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In the early 1940s, Robert Suerth purchased the property with the idea of running a business out of his new home. Seeing how successful his brother, M. J. Suerth, was doing with his mortuary business on Northwest Highway in Edison Park, Robert started the R. G. Suerth Funeral Home with ambulance service. Most undertakers at this time lived and worked out of the same building.

Robert and his wife Leila welcomed their first child, Philip in this house. By the late 1940s, the family sold the business and house and moved to Wisconsin and eventually settling in North Dakota.



Installing the Fred R. Duckman Funeral sign. Fred is show on the left. Note how rural looking the neighborhood is in the early 1950s.

Photo Courtesy of David Royko - <https://www.davidroyko.com/>

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The R. G. Suerth Funeral home became the Fred R. Duckman Funeral Home in around 1950. Fred's son, Robert Duckman, was a mortician and in 1950, Fred listed his occupation as an electrician. The funeral home only operated until the mid 1950s. Besides Robert, Fred and Mildred had a daughter, Carol Duckman. Arthur Spellman and his wife Claine lived on the 2nd floor in 1950.



Carol Duckman is dressed for her job in the doctor's office. This was taken alongside the house at 5408 N. Central, on Mike Royko's leave when he proposed.

Photo Courtesy of David Royko - <https://www.davidroyko.com/>

Carol Duckman married Mike Royko in Seattle Washington on November 6, 1954. Mike Royko was in the Air Force at the time and stationed in Blaine, Washington. In January of 1955, Mike was transferred to the Air Force base at O'Hare Airport and moved into the top floor of the house on Central Avenue. Mike and Carol had two children while living at the Central Avenue address, M. David (1959) and Robert (1963).

In 1955, Royko started his newspaper career as a columnist while living on Central Avenue. First with the O'Hare News, (an Air Force base newspaper), then the City News Bureau of Chicago, the Lerner Newspapers' and Lincoln-Belmont Booster. In 1959, he joined the Chicago Daily News and also covered the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, all while living at the Central Avenue address.

By 1969, a fresh coat of paint was added to the exterior of the house and the property was put up for sale. But the paint was for not because a developer purchased the property and demolished the house. The large lot doomed the lovely home and the developer cashed in on placing three 3-flats on the property. The Duckmans moved to Franklin Park and the Roykos moved to 6657 N. Sioux Avenue in the Edgebrook Neighborhood of Chicago.



This pin-up girl is Carol Duckman-Royko. Carol did some modeling when living at the Central Avenue address. *Photo Courtesy of David Royko*

Please support our advertisers



Mike Royko walking down the sidewalk on Central Avenue taking a cigarette break, after the big snow of 1967. *Photo Courtesy of David Royko - <https://www.davidroyko.com/>*

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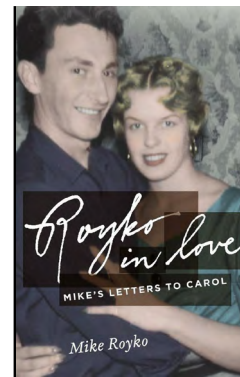
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I grew up in Norwood Park and am a Taft High School alumni, so I know the northwest side and it's history.



Protesters upset at one of Mike Royko's newspaper columns in front of the house at 5408 N. Central Avenue. The picture was taken from inside the house by Carol Royko.

Photo Courtesy of David Royko - <https://www.davidroyko.com/>



Mike Royko's love letters to Carol sent to 5408 N. Central Avenue.

Royko in Love offers that story's moving and utterly beguiling beginning in letters that "Mick" Royko, then a young airman, wrote to his childhood sweetheart, Carol Duckman.

<https://davidroyko.com/royko-in-love-the-book>



Mike Royko and son David, outside the Central Avenue house (1966).

Photo Courtesy of David Royko



Two views of the house when the Duckmans and Roykos lived there.

Photo Courtesy of David Royko

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