



RE-ECHO

Newsletter of the St. Louis Park Historical Society

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NORDIC WARE

Nordic Ware is one of St. Louis Park's oldest and most successful businesses. Of special interest to the City is the company's proximity to the last viable roadside park on Highway 100. Nordic Ware voluntarily maintains the site in the summer, and is on the committee to preserve the park. The importance of Nordic Ware to our community cannot be understated.

The company now known as Nordic Ware was founded by brothers Dave and Mark Dahlquist and friend Donald Nygren in 1946. Their first business was called "Plastics for Industry," and was headquartered in Mark's basement in Minneapolis. They quickly outgrew this and then another space, and bought a 40 ft. lot in St. Louis Park. Apparently a man had inherited several lots along Highway 7 but failed to pay the taxes, so a former mayor of St. Louis Park (which one?) bought the lots, and the company bought its first lot from him. When they erected a small concrete building, there was no water along Highway 7 and they had to melt snow to make mortar. They moved into the building in the spring of 1947.

The company's building and land holdings grew steadily, and now covers the entire frontage on the northeast corner of Highways 100 and 7. One of the properties they acquired was a lumber yard, and on that land stood the old Peavy grain elevator, built in 1899. Nordic Ware replaced the words "Lumber Stores" on the tower with its own Viking symbol. Another parcel was once part of the Robin Hood Flour grain elevator, acquired when it was torn down in 1968.

By 1948, the focus was changing to cast aluminum bakeware and specialty kitchenware. Some of the first products included the krumkake iron and the rosette, ebleskiver, and platte pans. Maid of Scandinavia was set up to market these products by mail order, and became a separate entity in 1963. In 1949, the company bought out Northland Aluminum Products and the term "Nordic Ware," and has been known as Nordic Ware ever since.

In 1966, the company's signature Bundt pan was used in a winning entry (the "tunnel of fudge" cake) in the Pillsbury Bake-Off, and its popularity soared. Founder David Dahlquist had created the pan in 1950 based on the specifications of two Jewish women from the Minneapolis chapter of Hadassah, who wanted to make an old-world (German) bund cake. Bund meant "a gathering of people," but other connotations led to changing the name to Bundt. Starting in 1971, Pillsbury made cake mixes specifically formulated for the Bundt pan. Nordic Ware could hardly keep up with the demand for pans.

Story continued on Page 2.....

NORDIC WARE, CONTINUED

Two exciting things have happened lately over at Nordic Ware. The first is the publication of a history of the company, replete with many interviews of people who were instrumental in making the company such a success. The book is called *The Nordic Ware Saga, An Entrepreneur's Legacy*, written by Linda Dahlquist Jeffrey. It's a fascinating look into the workings of a family business.

The second exciting development is that the famous bundt pan has been acquired by the

American History Museum of the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, DC. On February 23, 2007, curators from the Smithsonian arrived at Nordic Ware to collect bundt pans and other artifacts relating to its development.

Founder H. David Dahlquist died on January 2, 2005. His wife Dorothy serves as the company's chief ambassador. Son H. David Dahlquist III has run the business for many years.

YOUR 15 MINUTES OF FAME

In the days ahead, the Historical Society will be conducting a series of interviews of people who have roots in St. Louis Park. This is an important project, in that we hope to record the experiences of people who have lived and/or worked in the Park for a long time.

This project is headed up by Bob Jorvig, Trustee on the Historical Society board. Bob has deep roots in St. Louis Park himself – among other things, Jorvig Park is named after his father. Giving us invaluable assistance is John McHugh, the Community TV Coordinator for the City of St. Louis Park. The goal is to conduct an interview and produce a video,

complete with pictures, that can be kept by the Society and shown on SLP cable stations. We can't say enough about John's commitment to this effort.

If you are interested in participating, you are encouraged to call Bob at 952-938-6553. Many people don't think that they have anything interesting to contribute, but we find that everybody has something to share. With so many changes in the Park, it is important that we learn from you the way the City used to be. And if you know someone who would be interested in being interviewed, please call Bob Jorvig.

THE HISTORY OF YOUR HOUSE

Although you may not consider your St. Louis Park house to be historic, years from now future owners would love to know about its origins. From an 1892 "Walker" house to a 1950's rambler, every house has a story to tell. The Historical Society would like to encourage you to bring us copies of documents and pictures pertaining to the history of your house, and we will keep the information on file at our space in Lenox.

A good example: Judy Reynolds Best brought in copies of financial and construction documents for the house that her father built in 1937. Included were copies of priceless pictures of the house under construction. The house is on Georgia Avenue, across the street from Lenox, and a picture of Lenox from that period was included. This is wonderful history, and something we would very much like to encourage.

MAILBAG

You may recall the inquiry that was made from Historical Society member Mrs. Marlen Rice Warren, looking for someone who had known her cousin. The following is her account of what transpired. We have a very large mailing list, so you are encouraged to take advantage of our resources.

"When I put an inquiry about my cousins John and Marjorie Woodhead and their son John III in the last Re-Echo, I wasn't too hopeful for a reply, since, the Minneapolis Suburban Directory indicated that they had probably left St. Louis Park about 1960.

So I was excited when Jeanne Andersen called to say that the Society had received this email: "I am

the son John III to whom you refer. How can I help?"

Since then, John ("Jack"), who lives in Georgia, and I have been in touch by phone and email, comparing notes about our Scottish ancestors who came to America to work in the Pennsylvania coals mines. Their two youngest children, the only ones born in this country, were his grandmother and mine.

An added bonus is that Jack contacted another family member in New Jersey who has done considerable genealogical research on Scotland and I am the grateful recipient of that information plus a copy of the published family cookbook!"

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME IS HERE

Thank you to everyone who has renewed or become a new member! We count on your membership dues to operate, so if you haven't become a member yet, please fill out the form below and send it in. The St. Louis Park Historical Society thanks you!

_____ I am a current member

_____ I am a new member

Annual Individual/Family Membership: _____ \$25

Business and Individual Benefactor Member Donation:

_____ \$50 _____ \$75 _____ \$100 \$ _____ Other

Name(s): _____

Address _____

Email address: _____

During winter months from _____ to _____:

Address _____

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Mail membership dues to: St. Louis Park Historical Society

3700 Monterey Drive

St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Donations are 100% tax deductible

BEEHIVE UPDATE

Rick Birno at the City Parks and Recreation Department has been developing an analysis of issues such as planning, financing, and timing with regard to moving the beehive from the Minnetonka Blvd. to the Highway 7 Roadside Park. A meeting is expected shortly, and the next Re-Echo will include a full report. Stay Tuned!

HARRY REASONER FOUND

We had two great responses to our request for information about Harry Reasoner. It turns out that he and his young family lived at 4085 Alabama Ave. from 1953 to 1956. He and his wife Kathleen Carroll "Kay" Reasoner came with four of their eventual seven kids from a three-year posting in Manila with the U.S. Information Agency. He apparently wasn't employed when he first got here, but he took his first TV news job here in Minneapolis in late 1954. He served as the first News Director at the new KEYD-TV, which was a member of the DuMont Television Network and precursor to KMSP-TV. During the family's stay in St. Louis Park, former neighbor Betty Beach Barrus reports that the Reasoners were quite social, and kept some of their St. Louis Park friends for decades.

In 1956, the DuMont network shut down, KEYD was sold, and the news department was no more. That was the year Reasoner got the job at CBS in New York. Brookside teacher Pearl Heitke remembers that son Stuart Reasoner was in her 4th grade class, and that he left for New York in the middle of the school year. Harry Reasoner wrote his autobiography, *Before the Colors Fade*, in 1983, but while he did describe his days at KEYD, he didn't talk about St. Louis Park.

DONATIONS RECEIVED

The growth of the Historical Society's collection is dependent on donations, and we thank everyone who has made gifts of Park artifacts. Our most recent donors are:

George F. Clough donated documents and ten pictures of the Joel B. Clough family, a very important early family in the Park.

Nancy Roetman Menzel shared with us a biography she wrote about Luther Melancthon "Deacon" Thomson, a charter member and elder of Union Congregational Church.

We filled a huge gap in our yearbook collection recently. **Jim Reiss** donated copies of the Echowan ranging from 1946 to 1954. And then Sylvia and **Jerry Timian** donated theirs from 1955, 1956, and 1959. We only have about 10 to go before 1967 – and we need just about everything after 1968. See if you can get your kids to give them up!

Tim Layeaux donated materials from Musicland, Treasure's Island, and a hardbound children's book published by Picture Window Books, located on Excelsior Blvd.

Scott Coltrane, Baston descendant, donated two pictures of his ancestors that he had restored, and shared much of his research of this important early St. Louis Park family.

Manny Camilon donated a 1971 plastic SLP phone book, covered with ads. (Not sure why the cover is not the same size as the 1971 SLP phone book!)

Phil Davis donated a picture of his old house at 4105 Vernon Ave., now the slow lane of Highway 100.

We apologize if we left anyone out. Thank you for your generous donations!

PLACES OF WORSHIP IN THE PARK

The SLP Historical Society has been researching the histories of churches, synagogues, and other places of worship in St. Louis Park. Information can be found at www.slphistory.org/history/worship.asp. If the church or synagogue has a website with a history page, we link directly to that site. Otherwise we have used material on file or provided by the organization, either verbatim or in a condensed form.

The oldest church in the City is Union Congregational Church, at 37th and Alabama Ave. It started life as Clarke Chapel, at the intersection of Wooddale (then Pleasant) and Excelsior Blvd. Its roots go back to 1870, when services were held at Pratt School, also at that location. In those days it was not unusual for a public school to be used for worship services while a church was under construction. Clarke Chapel was built in 1878, and in 1891 it was moved to its present location. The present building was dedicated in 1941.

There were also two early "community churches" that met the needs of the populace in north and south St. Louis Park. North Side Community Church has roots going back to 1920. In the mid 1940s, the heretofore nondenominational church became Lutheran. 1947 saw the name change to Westwood Lutheran Church. Westwood built a new building in a different location in 1948. The original North Side building reopened as Ascension Lutheran Church in 1956.

Brookside Community Church, on the south side, started with members meeting in a cottage in 1913. In 1915 they moved into their new church on Brookside Ave. It is unknown whether the church was originally Methodist, but it was certainly Methodist when it merged with the Methodist Meeting House on Salem Ave. to become Aldersgate Methodist Church

in 1946. Aldersgate built at its present site in 1951. The little white church on Brookside Ave. was subsequently used by Christian Scientists and is now St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church.

In addition to these older churches, there was a building boom of churches in the late 1940s and early '50s that coincided with the home building boom and, of course, the baby boom. Many of the congregations have stories of meeting in a tavern, a bowling alley, or a public school before their buildings were ready. There was real excitement surrounding the establishment of a new congregation, finding room for the burgeoning population (holding Sunday School in the ladies room was not unheard of), and building an ample, lasting building.

It is not unusual for a building to be used by more than one church over the years, and several churches have changed their names. At least two churches seem to have come and gone - we are in need of information about Cross of Christ and Suburban Baptist.

Synagogues, of course, have a very rich and important history in St. Louis Park. The migration of Jewish families from North Minneapolis to St. Louis Park started after the War and continued in force throughout the 1950s and '60s. Two of the first synagogues to move to the Park were Beth El (1961) and B'nai Emet (1959). For more about the Jewish migration to St. Louis Park, see www.slphistory.org/history/jewishmigration.asp.

If you have information about a church, synagogue, or other place of worship that you would like to share with the Historical Society, we would appreciate anything you might contribute. See the back page of this Re-Echo for contact information

WHO WE ARE

The St. Louis Park Historical Society was founded in 1971 to record and preserve the history of St. Louis Park. The archives of the Society are located in the Historic Depot in Jorvig Park (37th and Brunswick) and at the Lenox Community Center (6715 Minnetonka Blvd.). Office hours at the Lenox site are Mondays and Thursdays from 10 to noon, and by appointment. Our mailing address is:

3700 Monterey Drive
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

To contact us by phone, you can call 952-924-2550. Leave a message, and someone will return the call. Our email address is history@slphistory.org. You may also contact a member of our board of directors:

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Join us on our web site at
www.slphistory.org.

ABOUT THE RE-ECHO

The Re-Echo is published quarterly by the St. Louis Park Historical Society. Its purpose is to share information about the City's history and the Society's activities. The Re-Echo was started by Robert C. Reiss. The name was inspired by the *Echo* newspaper, which has been published by and for the students of SLP High School since 1917.

ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue marks our first use of our bulk mail permit. This will save us a tremendous amount in comparison to First Class. The only problem is that the post office doesn't return undeliverable mail, so we won't know if we have a bad address. With a mailing list of 900, we've gotten a lot of returns, so if you don't get this, let us know! :D

JOIN US!

The St. Louis Park Historical Society is a nonprofit organization and is wholly dependent on membership dues and donations for its operating costs, including the cost of mailing the Re-Echo. You don't have to be a member to receive the Re-Echo, but we really need new members, and are looking for people to become active in the Society. Meetings are on the first Tuesday of every month, and are open to everyone. They are held at Lenox Community Center October-May and at the Historic Depot June-September.

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