



RE-ECHO

Newsletter of the St. Louis Park Historical Society

Volume 6 No. 3

Issue No. 26

SILVER FOX FARM

The Fox Farm is an intriguing part of St. Louis Park History, but there are many unanswered questions, so we hope you will contact us if you have any clarifications, corrections, or additions.

St. Louis Park was the site of the **United States Silver Fox Farm**, "breeders of the Roosevelt Strain of Mormon Fox." The farm was established sometime in the early 1920s, and was removed at the end of the 1930s. We are not sure exactly where the fox farm was. There are two different but adjoining parcels, both facing Wayzata Blvd., on either side of Texas Ave.

WESTWOOD LAKE

A 1926 map shows that the Silver Fox Producer Assn. owned 80 acres, directly north of the Westwood Hills Golf Course, south of Wayzata Blvd, west of Texas. However, most of this site is now Westwood Lake and the northern end of Westwood Hills Environmental Education Center, so we scratch our heads. We do know that at one point the lake was drained by ditch to Bassett Creek. The map may not be 100 percent accurate; while Minnetonka Blvd. is labeled as such, Cedar Lake Road is labeled Cedar Lake Road OR Minnetonka Blvd.

A May 1931 Village planning map reiterated that the Fox Farm was located between Flag and Texas, and Wayzata Blvd. and 15th Street, which would be in the same general area. (There is no 15th Street today.)

WAYZATA AND LOUISIANA

We have eyewitnesses who will testify that there was definitely a Fox Farm at the southwest corner of the intersection of what is now Louisiana and Highway 394.

In August 1927, Dr. George Young moved his radio antenna for station WDGY to the Silver Fox Farm, described as Superior Boulevard and Falvey Crossroad (7401 Wayzata Blvd. at Louisiana.) So far we have no pictures of the tower or building, which was abandoned in 1949.

The 1926 map shows 19 acres at that area belonging to George L. Maddan, a name we don't know.

The 1933 directory lists United Fur Ranches located at Louisiana and Wayzata Blvd. The farm could be seen from Louisiana, at the top of a hill that sloped up to the south. Later directories list it as 14th Street and Louisiana.

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FOOD AND DRINK ON MINNETONKA BLVD.

In our last issue, we examined the various liquor establishments that made Excelsior Blvd. famous. Not to be outdone, we now look at what Minnetonka Blvd. and Lake Street had to offer in the way of refreshments.

It is interesting to note that several ads for gas stations, right after repeal in the mid '30s, advertised beer – on tap! Someone must have figured out rather quickly that this kind of “fill ‘er up!” was not a good idea.

Actually, Minnetonka and Lake didn't have much in the way of bars and restaurants. There was Cliff's Drive-in at Minnetonka and Highway 100. At first it was next to a gas station, but the highway swallowed it up – the rebuilt gas station is still there. There was the Jiffy Lunch across from the new Texa-Tonka Shopping Center, and there is a spectacular picture, taken in 1959, of a drive-in at 8105 Minnetonka, but alas by 1961 it was a Laundromat. The Bee Line Diner sounds inviting: now Beek's Pizza since 1957 at 6325 Minnetonka. Probably your best bet to wet your whistle was Art and Esther's Tavern, at Louisiana. This building became a grocery store and then the original Park Tavern.

What Minnetonka Blvd. had in spades was grocery stores. Here are some of them:

Esser/Stewart/McGilligan/Lee/Western:
5555 Lake Street (now Linsk Floral)

Stillman's: 4000 Minnetonka

Giller Drugs and Liquor: 4008 Minnetonka

August Witt's Super Valu: 4100 Minnetonka

Borchert's Milk House: 4201 Minnetonka

Moldestad's/Prall's: 4805 Minnetonka

Klein's, Piggly Wiggly, Don's, Tony's:
6312 Minnetonka

Moscrip's/Jackson's/Park Manor/Kent's Big
Ten Food Store: also the site of Beek's Pizza.

Please let us know if we've missed any major
sources of food and drink on the (other)
Boulevard!

SILVER FOX FARM, CONTINUED

An undated photo captioned "A Birdseye View of U.S. Silver Fox Farm of Minneapolis" shows a large circle of pens (with foxes drawn into them) surrounding a three-story, tower-like building. Village Council minutes show that neighbors on the North Side complained about the fox farm, particularly about the noise from gunshots - not gunshots to kill the foxes, but to kill horses used to feed the foxes. [A reliable source says that this is unlikely - there were very few people living up there, and those who were there did a lot of hunting, so gunshots would have been prevalent.] The Village Council found that the company was committing a nuisance by their slaughtering of animals, and the recorder wrote a letter saying as much. The subsequent ordinance, passed in 1931, provides other hints at the goings-on, by requiring that the animals be properly fed and otherwise cared for. More complaints ensued in 1933, and a Mr. Harvey of the farm was brought before the Council and promised to move the farm as soon as he could afford to, it being the Depression and all. Based on the directories, it was apparently gone by 1939. See more at www.slphistory.org/history/foxfarm.asp

DONATIONS RECEIVED

Donations are coming in at a record rate – thank you to everyone who has shared their pictures and other artifacts with us. Here are some of our most recent donors:

West Side Volkswagon provided us with a VW convertible for the Parktacular parade on June 16. This is the second year they have given us a ride down the parade route.

Emory Anderson donated 21 pictures of 4345 Vernon Ave. (which was moved for highway expansion in 1967), Excelsior Blvd., and 1996 photos of the Honeywell building before, during and after it was torn down.

Phyllis McQuaid donated Party in the Park materials, Park High Mandala magazines, and a precious 1971 Echowan.

Carole Bennis gave us two pictures of buildings

in the Brookside neighborhood, one being her parents' house in 1937.

We appreciate photographs donated by Don Olson.

Harrison Allen donated several mementos of his junior high and high school days in the 1930s and '40s.

Jim Lewis donated a 1927 price list for lots in his Norwaldo neighborhood.

Frank Motzko allowed us to copy his very valuable 1944 St. Louis Park directory.

Mrs. Beverly Brown Gaddy gave us important documents on the Ainsworth family, and SEVEN Echowans!

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

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Thank you to everyone who has supported us by becoming members. This helps us not only financially, but also when we submit reports to the Minnesota Historical Society and apply for grants. We are down quite a bit from last year, and we are hoping that, if you haven't joined, you will seriously consider it. We are glad to share our information free to everyone, and we are all volunteers, but it takes operating funds. Thanks for your support.

2007 MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION/RENEWAL FORM

☐ 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 _____

During winter months from _____ to _____ :
Address _____

Email address: _____

Mail membership dues to: St. Louis Park Historical Society, 3700 Monterey Drive
St. Louis Park, MN 55416

Donations are 100% tax deductible

RECENT INTERVIEWS

We at the Park Historical Society are constantly searching for information to add to our files and our web site. We seek to interview people who actually made or witnessed history. Dr. Ellen Fifer Green contacted us through our web email, and described her years as the City's Public Health Officer from 1959 to 1966. She also entrusted pages of her scrapbook to us. On another subject, local activist Marv Davidov shared his experiences with the Honeywell Project, protesting the manufacture of cluster bombs and land mines. He also provided us with materials that gave the history of the

organization. We've heard from many people who were important to the development of the City, including former City Manager Cam Andre; former Councilman Keith Meland; former Mayor Phyllis McQuaid; attorney John Yngve, developer Adolph Fine's son Jeffrey; and members of various families, including Friegang, (Lydia) Rogers, Seirup, Carney, Waddell, and deBoom. We have plenty yet to learn, including histories of churches, organizations, and neighborhoods. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this search thus far.

BEEHIVE UPDATE

Rick Birno reports that the City has finished its proposal to move the Beehive and tables, and that it is being typed up. Once ready, it will be presented to the Beehive Committee for review and suggestions. Then the proposal will be submitted to the City Council for approval and funding.

A setback is that a grant the City wrote to the DNR to get a connection to the bike trail was turned down, but there may be other ways of accomplishing that. The project is going to have a big price tag, and your contributions will help to make it happen.

THIS AND THAT

We thank **Westside VW** for the use of a car for the Parktacular Parade, for the second summer in a row. Without this donation, we wouldn't have been able to participate. But for next year, we would like to better portray SLP history in our presentation. One way is to ride in vintage convertibles. We are also thinking about period costumes (what about a Creosote factory tiebucker?). The date of next year's parade is June 14. If you are interested in working on this project, or if you have a car that you might consider loaning us, please let us know.

We have received two **aerial photographs** from Jeffrey Fine, but we need help identifying them. You can view them (sideways) at www.slphistory.org.

We are receiving more and more inquiries about people who lived in the Park long ago, but to research them, we need old **City directories**.

Especially helpful would be 1943, 1946, and 1948. If you have one that we could copy, we would really appreciate a loan. We would also like to have copies (too large to photocopy) of 1950-61 (we have 1956 and 1958).

Jorvig Park used to be known as Central Park and **Bandstand Park**. There was an actual bandstand, built in 1914 and demolished in 1954. Does anyone have any pictures of it?

Incentive: The SLPHS is now giving out pens to all new memberships. These are the **best pens you ever had**, so be sure to sign up now!

Thanks to Don Gallaway and Gerald Hines, two retired **SLP firemen**, for speaking to us about their experiences, and identifying pictures we found in our archives. Your stories are great!

PAVEK MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING

The Pavek Museum of Broadcasting is a must-see attraction in St. Louis Park. The museum is located at 3515-17 Raleigh Ave., close by the Rec Center and the Post Office.

The nucleus of the collection is the many antique radios donated by Joe Pavek, who had picked them up as he worked as a traveling nuts-and-bolts salesman. In 1988, the museum was formed to display these radios. Since then, many other donations have augmented Pavek's initial collection. Today, the museum is filled with hundreds of antique radios and televisions, but also TV cameras and other artifacts from the broadcasting industry in and around Minnesota.

One of the biggest contributions the museum makes to the community is its Broadcast Workshop program. This is one of the most popular field trips for elementary schools in the area. Kids are given scripts and perform a radio show, complete with songs, commercials, and news flashes that they write themselves, coming over a real teletype machine. This all takes place in a mockup radio studio with authentic equipment.

Students come to the museum to learn about electricity and communication. A highlight is a demonstration of a spark gap transmitter like the one that was used to signal SOS on the Titanic. Later, at the quiz show set, students are tested to see how much they remember.

You may have seen the museum featured in the *SLP Sun* newspaper last July when it won a prestigious national award for preserving the history of electronic communications and for its educational work.

The Pavek has been a strong partner with the SLPHS, and the Society even held meetings in their board room in the early years. Assoc. Director Tom Mittelstaedt has also provided much-needed technical assistance to the Re-Echo staff.

The museum is open Tuesday-Friday from 10-6, and Saturdays from 9 to 5. It is always best to call ahead, especially if you have a group. (Most weekday mornings are occupied with the Broadcast Workshop.) A trip to the Pavek is a surprising and educational experience.

OUR FRIENDS, DOUG AND AGNES

The Historical Society is mourning the loss of two of its staunchest supporters, Doug Gullifer and Agnes Hodgdon.

Doug Gullifer had been a member of the St. Louis Park Historical Society since its inception in 1971. He was a part of and helped on the camera for several Oral History Videos covering the early days of St. Louis Park. Among his many contributions to the Society are the shelves that he made for the Depot, allowing us to keep our papers and artifacts off the floor and in good condition. Doug served as treasurer of the Society for a number of years as well. And Doug was one of our most valuable "old timers" who could tell stories of the Park in the 1930s. Doug would not so much pour lemonade at the

Ice Cream Social as hold court, greeting about half of the visitors by name. Even when the state of his health would have kept others away, Doug made a huge effort to come to meetings and man our information booths. Doug passed away on June 21, 2007, and we will miss him dearly.

Agnes Hodgdon was not an officer, didn't drive, and toward the end could hardly see, but for years she made it to our meetings and participated in the work of the Society. Always the voice of common sense, Agnes contributed in small ways, such as providing all the women with pioneer sunbonnets for the Parktacular parade. Agnes was always smiling, and we were pleased that she worked so hard to spend time with us. Agnes passed away on June 4, 2007

WHO WE ARE

The St. Louis Park Historical Society was founded in 1971 to collect, preserve, and disseminate 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

Some folks have noticed that the Re-Echo is now more often asking for more information about topics from our readership. History requires many memories and artifacts to piece the story together. More and more people are contacting us by email (history@slphistory.org). We are glad to provide whatever information we can, and always appreciate more information about a topic on the website or in the Re-Echo.

JOIN US!

Thank you to all of you who have become 2007 members. 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.

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 32087
Minneapolis, MN

The Re-Echo
St. Louis Park Historical Society
3700 Monterey Drive
St. Louis Park, MN 55416