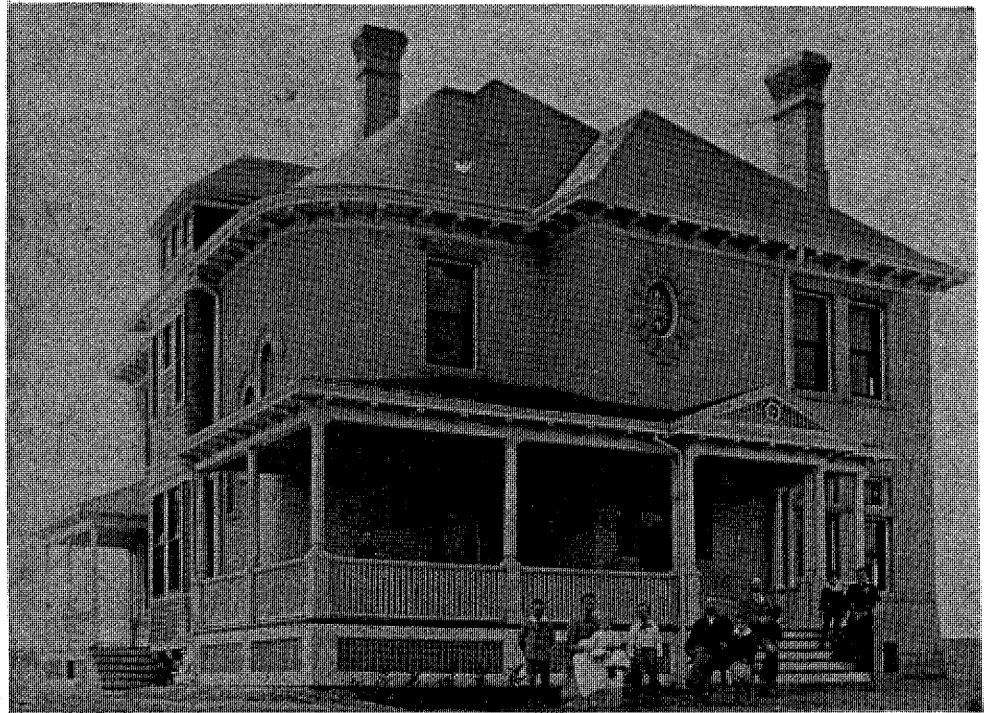


# WINDOM: *HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES*





Cover photos, clockwise from left: William Windom at age of 40, circa 1867, courtesy Windom School archives; Henry Bachman and family in front of their original home (now site of Bachman's Store), circa 1890, courtesy Doris Bachman; aerial shot of Windom, with 57th Street in foreground, 56th Street in background, Harriet Avenue on left side and Grand Avenue on right side, circa 1940, courtesy Clarence Mortenson.

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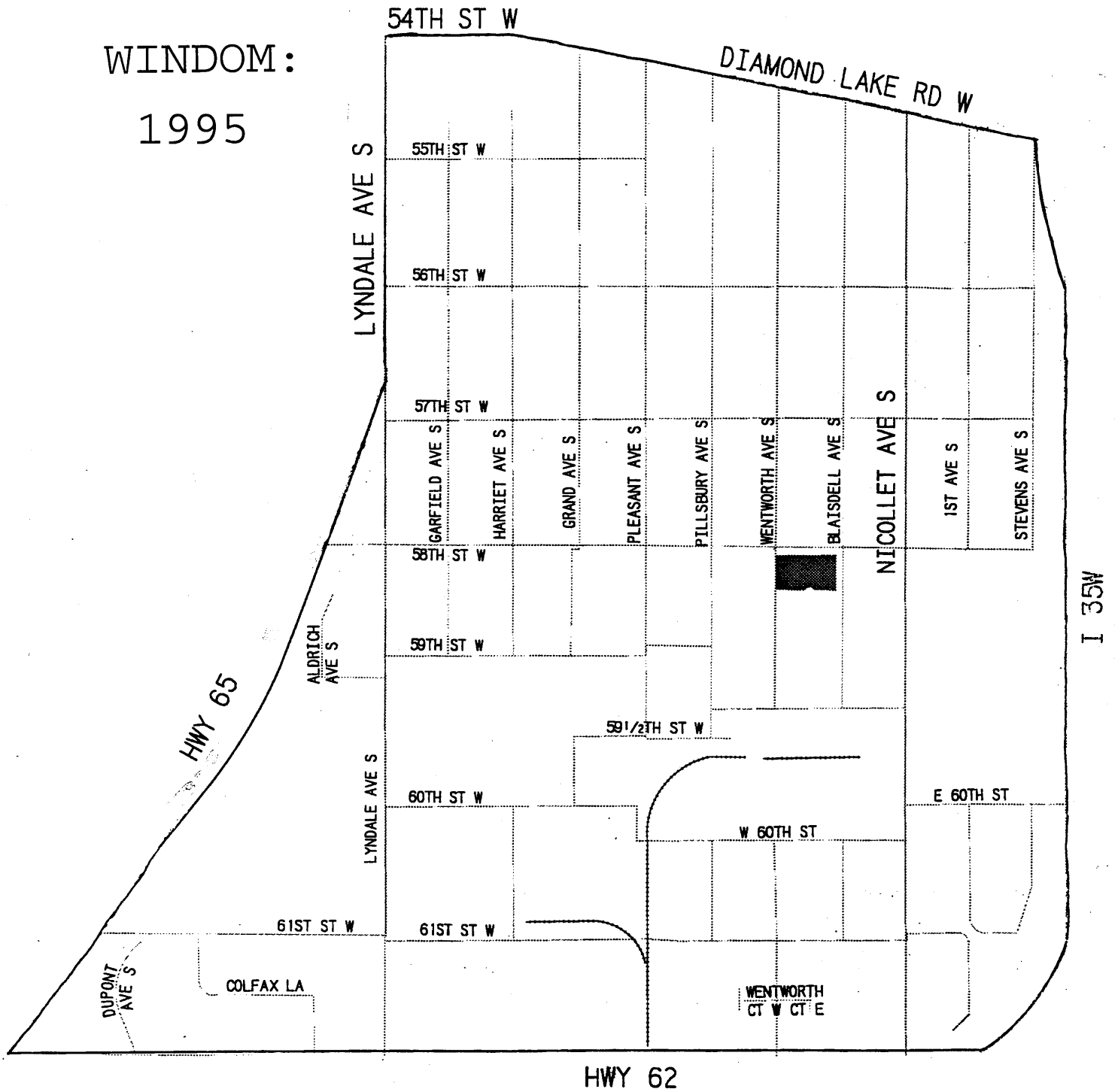
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*Windom neighbors active in the Windom Community Council gather at the Windom School Tot Lot, summer 1995. From left to right: **sitting down:** Genevieve Joubert, Dolly Haugen, Jim Carroll with his dog, Nicky; **standing:** George Gozola, Paul Kibbe, Kristi Perry, Helen Holseth; **on the slide:** Genny and Kevin Houston above; the Perry children, Douglas and Heather, below. Photo donated by Tom Corcoran, Corcoran Photography.*

WINDOM:  
1995



Current map of Windom, showing its streets and boundaries, 1995. Courtesy City of Minneapolis Map Department.

# **WINDOM:**

## ***HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES***

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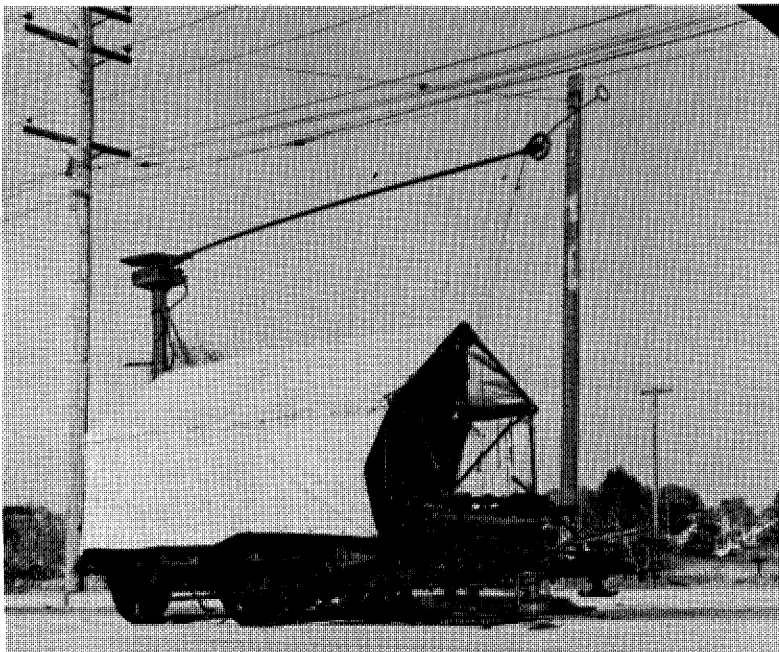
# INTRODUCTION

*In 1991, the South Minneapolis neighborhood of Windom was one of the first neighborhoods in the city to receive funding through the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP), a program created by the state government to support greater cohesiveness and pride in inner city neighborhoods. (Incidentally, NRP is making history as well--this is one of the first programs of its kind in the country.) With the funds provided by NRP, one of Windom's first decisions was to create a written history of its neighborhood. Traditionally Windom has been known as a strong family neighborhood. In recent years there have been annual Windom Block Parties and Old Neighborhood Picnics, but the Windom of the past had an even stronger social and neighborhood structure. As a home for both families and businesses, the area has a history which goes back to the mid-1800's. I felt very privileged to have the opportunity to create a booklet about the history of Windom, and I have benefited in many ways. Not only do I have a much richer appreciation of one neighborhood in the area of South Minneapolis (which is also my home), I have had the grace to meet some wonderful, involved people who care about their neighborhood and its current status as well as its historical roots. As I was reading the newspaper clips and stories and looking at photographs and scrapbooks, I experienced a range of emotion--from sadness, for eras gone by that seemed simpler as well as more close knit and caring; to amusement, as I chuckled over archaic sayings and outmoded ways of life (e.g. one barbershop specialized in "shingling and bobbing," and the madcap Windom Dads' Orchestra was known for dressing up in drag for vaudeville shows).*

*But why take the time to create a history booklet of Windom in the first place? As an article in the Windom Community News indicated at the beginning of the Windom History Project, "There are several ways in which historic preservation can play a much broader role in neighborhood conservation and revitalization. Five points come to mind: 1) Preserving a neighborhood's past contributes to its sense of place, neighborhood identity and neighborhood character. Each neighborhood's past is unique, and tells a very important story of not only why people came in the first place, but why they stayed and why new residents continue to come. Preservation provides an historic fabric that creates a sense of neighborhood identity and character; 2) Historic preservation can foster a sense of neighborhood pride, and through this can come an enriched sense of neighborhood identity; 3) Historic preservation enhances the aesthetic quality of a neighborhood. Minneapolis' neighborhoods are full of well-maintained reminders of our past--from the mansions of Kenwood to the workers' homes of Milwaukee Avenue. Traditional commercial nodes, many of which recall the days of the streetcar, provide a human-scale alternative to large, impersonal indoor malls; 4) Historic preservation reminds us of our roots; 5) Most importantly, historic preservation has a role to play in managing neighborhood change. Neighborhoods are organic--they are always changing, and what new forms they take are based in the old. Preservation is not an end in itself, rather, it is a means to an end. Preservation is a valuable tool with which to move from the past to the future, and to accomplish neighborhood identity, pride, beauty and vitality."*

*Creating a neighborhood history is not an easy task. Great kudos goes to Gen Joubert, to whom I deservedly give the title of Windom Neighborhood Historian. Gen, who has been a Windom resident since 1923, volunteered to spearhead the project, collecting enormous amounts of historical information, typing up countless facts on her computer, serving as project supervisor, conducting interviews, and contributing a personal memoir as well as numerous anecdotes, facts and figures. Gen, former Project Supervisor Mary Petersen and another Windom History Committee member, Helen Holseth, were instrumental in bringing this project to fruition.*

*I wish to apologize for any incorrect information or important stories which were left out. Great pains were taken, starting in 1992, to let the neighborhood know about this project, through the Windom Community News and other sources. Also, the book was created through a limited grant, which required that it be written within a very short period of time. It is not intended to be a comprehensive documentation of all the facts and figures of the neighborhood over the past century and a half. Rather, we ask readers to see it as a picture painted of Windom of old, with some scenes highlighted. We hope the book gives a flavor of what the community was like, throughout the succeeding eras.*



*Portable Rail Grinder Wagon #39 or #40 [used by the rail grinder, an employee of the railroad hired to periodically grind down the railroad tracks to keep them smooth]. This wagon was located on Nicollet Avenue between 58th and 62nd Streets, in Windom. Circa 1947. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.*

*Thank you to NRP and in particular, Peg Mountin, Windom's Neighborhood Specialist. NRP enabled me to write the booklet and conduct business at their offices (in the beautifully refurbished Crown Roller Mill overlooking St. Anthony Falls). Peg Mountin served as my unofficial advisor and neighborhood expert. Huge thanks as well to Shari Albers, my community mentor, who taught me about the relevant computer program (Quark) and 'held my hand' throughout the entire process, both for this booklet as well as an accompanying brochure I also wrote for the neighborhood, entitled Windom: A Neighborhood To Call Home. (Shari was also one of the principal writers/editors of Powderhorn neighborhood's historical booklet, Powderhorn: Nature, People & Community (1990), which was one of my principal sources of information on historic Minnesota.) Thank you to the people of the Windom Community Council, who provided comments on the project as it was being created. And thank you--on behalf of Windom's History Committee and the Windom Community Council--to the individuals, businesses and organizations that contributed information, pictures, newspaper articles and stories. This is Windom: Historical Perspectives. ♪*

**--Jennifer Holt, Editor  
Summer, 1995**



# EARLY HISTORY OF MINNESOTA AND MINNEAPOLIS



Pioneers riding in an old stage coach, Minneapolis-St. Anthony Semi-Centennial Anniversary, July 1, 1905. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.

The European history of the area now known as Minnesota began when Father Hennepin, one of the first European missionaries, came upon the largest falls he had seen on his travels along the Mississippi River. He named them after his patron saint, Saint Anthony. In 1681 Father Hennepin was captured by Indians at Mendota, “the meeting of the waters,” and carried inland so that he would not find out about the natives’ sacred river, the Menesotor. It was not until 1689 that LeSueur claimed the lands along what he called the “Riviere Ste. Pierre.” Ste. Pierre, or St. Peter’s River, was its name until the territory was admitted to the Union, at which time it reverted to a form of its original name, being called the Minnesota River.

Native Americans who lived in this land included the Mdewakanton Dakota, as well as the Ojibway. The white names for these two native tribes of Minnesota are the Chippewa and the Sioux, which are corruptions of names Native Americans called themselves. “Chippewa” was the French voyageurs’ slurring of the name

“Ojibway.” “Sioux” came from an epithet applied to the Dakota by the Ojibway—“nadouesse,” meaning “snake in the grass.” The French added their plural ending, creating the name “nadouesioux.” Later they began using only the last syllable when referring to the Dakota, whose real name ironically means “ally” or “friend.” As more pioneers, particularly the early explorers, came to the area, the Ojibway served as the middleperson in trading deals, trading with the Dakota for furs, then selling the furs to the French. The Ojibway, much greater in number than the Dakota, eventually moved down from the north and east, pushing the Dakota out onto the grass prairie, away from their beloved forests and river.

St. Anthony Falls was the first major white settlement to be established. Upon hearing of the area’s spectacular falls, Thomas Jefferson instructed Zebulon Pike to create the Treaty of 1805 with the Dakota; Pike subsequently purchased the land from the Native Americans that same year. (The sum that was supposed to have been paid is still in dispute, with the Native Americans insisting they were never remunerated.) The falls of St. Anthony were greatly coveted by the white settlers, as the falls sat at the southern tip of a vast forest of 200-foot trees covering 70% of Minnesota. Before the steam engine became technically sophisticated enough to be used for milling (around the mid-1870’s), it was essential that a milling industry be situated at a waterfall. The trees were felled and floated down the river to the falls, and lumber was then created at the mills for a multitude of uses.

With the settlement of the town of St. Anthony, Minnesota’s natural state of beauty began to dissipate. Soldiers were installed in a fort to enforce the white settlers’ self-proclaimed ownership to the land. The fort was called ‘Fort St. Anthony’ originally, being named after the falls. The name was later changed to ‘Fort Snelling,’ in honor of its first commander, Josiah Snelling. By the 1830’s, Snelling was replaced by Joseph Plympton. Plympton wanted to detach the east side of St. Anthony Falls from the military, which would extinguish Indian title to the land, thus opening the land to settlers wishing to stake claims.

As a consequence, in 1837, the Dakota (Sioux) Nation was coerced into signing another of the many treaties which were gradually taking away their land rights, in exchange for paying off supposed debts incurred from trading with the white men. As a consequence, the area now known as Richfield (which included Windom) became part of Fort Snelling. Then, in 1851, the Treaty of Traverse des Sioux, negotiated by Alexander Ramsey, Governor of the territory, and Luke Lea, Commissioner of Indian Affairs, forced the Sisseton and Wahpeton Dakota (Sioux) to “cede, sell and relinquish to the United

## HISTORIC DATES

- 1837 Dakota people sign treaty giving part of land of Minnesota away.
- 1849 Minnesota becomes a territory.
- 1851 Treaties of Mendota and Traverse des Sioux take remainder of land away from Native Americans.
- 1852 Land surrounding Fort Snelling Reservation is released for settlement.
- 1858 Minnesota becomes a state; ‘Minnehapolis’ is incorporated; Township 28 incorporated as Richfield.
- 1872 Minneapolis and St. Anthony are reincorporated as one city.


States...all their lands in the State of Minnesota.” The imperialist attitude is obvious in this 1854 address by Territorial Governor Willis A. Gorman: “[W]e are standing at the Falls of St. Anthony 2,200 miles from the mouth of this great river...when but yesterday...we were crossing its turbid waters in a log canoe and pushing as with the palm of our hands the red man of the forest and prairie farther and farther back from the habitations of civilized men.”



*A typical midwestern farm, circa 1885. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.*

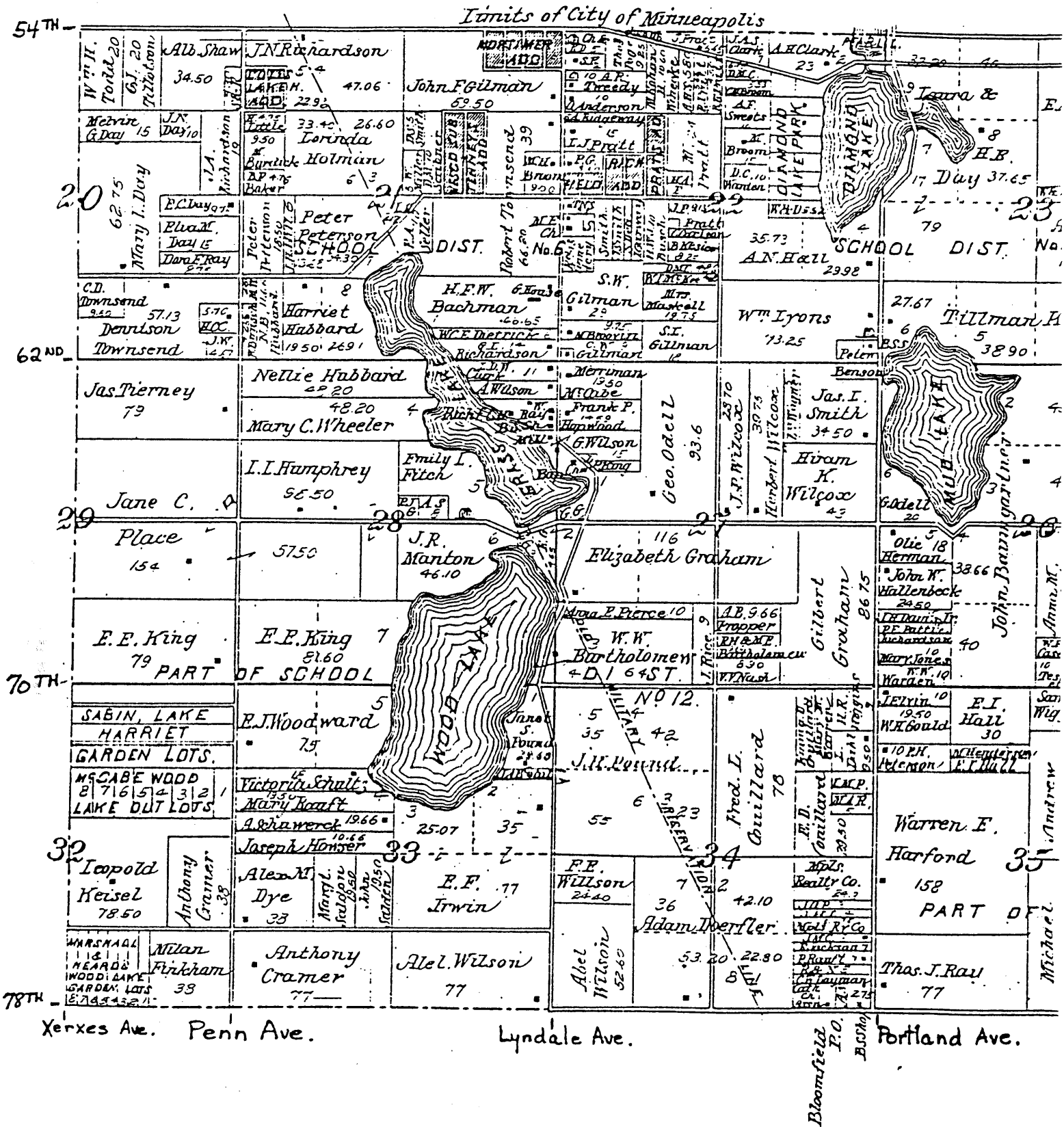
The fact that Native Americans might have precedence to the land, and consider the pioneers invasive was not something the white settlers cared about, except to the extent that their own safety was affected. According to a document from the Richfield Bartholomew House Museum, an “indian outbreak took place in the harvest time of 1862. Immediately after hearing of this event, volunteers were called to aid the soldiers at Fort Ridgely. Many in Richfield were quick to respond and, along with others from Minneapolis, were hurriedly gotten together, on horseback, and placed under the charge of Captain Northrup of St. Anthony [Fort].”

In the mid-1800’s, then, Minnesota was only a “territory,” and St. Paul—often called “Pig’s Eye” by its detractors—was its capitol. St. Anthony, the frontier town on Nicollet Island, and Minneapolis, west of the river, were many miles away from Richfield, and the area that would soon be named ‘Windom.’ The origin of the name “Minneapolis” is interesting, and includes a combination of a Native American name and an ancient Greek word. The Native Americans had another name for the falls at St. Anthony: “Minnehaha,” which means “laughing water.” When white people named the second major settlement on the river, they combined the Indian word for the falls with the Greek word for “city” and called it “Minnehapolis.” Minnehapolis was first incorporated in 1856, but the ‘h’ in the name of the settlement was quickly dropped, becoming, as it is known to this day, “Minneapolis.”

The city originally had a southern boundary at Grape Street, which was later renamed Franklin Avenue. The following year (1857), the area extending to 24th Street South was also annexed. The reason for extending the boundaries of Minneapolis concerned the political ambitions of a man named Dorilus Morrison. Morrison, who lived at 23rd Street and Stevens Avenue near present-day Fair Oaks Park, wanted to run in the first mayoral election held in the city. In order to run, candidates had to reside within the city limits. As a result of the change in annexation, Morrison ran for mayor, and was subsequently elected the first mayor of Minneapolis. Fifteen years later, on April 9, 1872, Minneapolis and St. Anthony reincorporated as one city, taking the name of the former. This collaboration enabled businesses on St. Anthony’s Falls to operate more smoothly, and the capital and resources to be more easily controlled. With the success of the lumber and flour milling industries, this new, larger, and more powerful Minneapolis quickly became the most prominent city on the upper Mississippi. [*Principal source: Articles by John Akre and Wizard Marks in Powderhorn Park: Nature, People & Community (1990).*] 



# Partial Map of Richfield, circa 1898



Part of a map of Richfield, circa 1898, from a plat book of Hennepin County, compiled and drawn by Peter M. Dahl from official records and actual surveys. Originally published by Northwestern Map Publishing Company, Mpls. Area of Windom is in upper central portion of map. Courtesy Richfield Historical Society.


## SETTLEMENT AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF WINDOM AND RICHFIELD

Township 28, later known as Richfield, extended in 1853 from what is now Lake Street to the present 78th Street line, and from the Mississippi River west to cover all of present day Edina and part of St. Louis Park. It was considered by settlers to be prime land, although the son of Franklin Steele reputedly said it looked like "one vast swamp" to him. Indeed, the eastern part of the township had many lakes, including Amelia, Pearl, Mud and Diamond, which were connected by swamps and streams. There were bogs along the present sites of Nicollet and Portland Avenues (the Nicollet Avenue swamp, located in Windom, was used as a dump for everything from discarded objects to sewer run-off). But there was much good land, which was quickly claimed by settlers, who swarmed in as soon as it was open for settlement in the 1850's, and who liked the idea of being close to the fort, and the amenities of marketing in St. Anthony. From Lake Calhoun to the Mississippi, there was a wide plateau of open prairie. Minnehaha Creek was heavily wooded with deciduous forest. A long spur of these woods ran out from the creek at about where Lyndale Avenue is now and extended almost to Eden Prairie. [See map on page 3.]

<i>EARLY HARD TIMES</i>	
1873-76	<i>Grasshopper scourge</i>
1877-1880	<i>Wheat crop failure</i>
1892	<i>Drought of 1892 resulting in Financial Panic of 1893</i>
1903	<i>Scarlet Fever epidemic</i>
1930's	<i>The Depression</i>

Small game was plentiful, there were deer in the area and even bear in the early 1850's. Low-flying passenger pigeons darkened the skies; a boy could perch in a grove of trees, fire a shotgun up in the air and get a dozen at one shot. The streams were teeming with fish. There were ducks, prairie chickens, partridge, squirrels, and rabbits to be had at almost any season. West of Lake Minnetonka, buffalo still grazed on the prairies. Obviously the early pioneers did not want for wild game.

The first steamboat via the Mississippi River to reach Fort Snelling arrived in 1823 and, according to a Richfield Methodist Church history booklet, "created utter pandemonium among the Indians, who thought some voracious monster was coming after them." Many more followed and for the next several decades, cruising up the river on steamboats became the fashionable thing to do. As the Minnesota River was considered too shallow for steamboats, keelboats were the river's main means of transporting goods. Steamboats eventually attempted the Minnesota River in 1850, finding it, in fact, deep enough. By 1853 regular steamboat service was running up and down the Minnesota River. The arrival of the steamboat, at any port, was a signal for everyone in a river town to go to the wharf to get the latest news. Pioneers who homesteaded close to the river towns were less isolated. They, along with the town folk, were able to import many of the 'niceties' from back home. Inland settlers, on the other hand, had to depend upon land freight, which was slower.

A new era was beginning for the large city known as Richfield in the early 1900's. There was to be an unending population growth for the next 50 years. World War I changed lives for many people—not only because of those involved in the fighting but because of the technological changes that advanced rapidly during the period. Communication and transportation were making a new Richfield; what had been a farming community was quickly becoming suburbia. [Principal source: *We Have This Covenant, The History of Richfield United Methodist Church (1979).*] 



Two aerial views of Windom: On the left is a view of the area around Windom School with the white Kesler farmhouse showing to the right of the school, photo circa 1930. On the right, a view of 57th Street (foreground) to 56th Street, and Harriet Avenue (left side) to Grand Avenue, photo circa 1940. Courtesy Clarence Mortenson.

# WINDOM BECOMES A NEIGHBORHOOD OF MINNEAPOLIS

In 1858, Minnesota became a state and Minneapolis was incorporated as a city. On the same day, Township 28 held its first town meeting and adopted the name 'Richfield.' Just 20 years later, in 1875, Windom was incorporated, then reincorporated in 1884, as a village. For the next five decades, Windom was considered a village in the city of Richfield, and the names of its churches and businesses reflected this status. However, this all changed when an annexation vote was taken to expand the southern limits of Minneapolis from 54th Street to 62nd Street. Minneapolis citizens voted to put annexation of the area on the city ballot November 3, 1926, and it passed for both city and state. The final vote of the City of Minneapolis came on June 24, 1927. There were 1658 votes for and 575 against. According to historic records, some Windom residents were none too happy about the outcome. For instance, Henry Bachman, the grandfather of Bachman's, a nationally known floral business still going strong in Windom [see *Bachman's story*, p. 25, *Business Section*], noted, "We're in Minneapolis, whether we wanted to be or not." Apparently the annexation of the area of Windom was supported chiefly by residents of the east village, who at that time outnumbered voters on the west side. According to Richfield Methodist Church records, once Windom officially became a part of Minneapolis, "residents in the area were discouraged by resulting higher taxes and assessments."

On top of exorbitant taxes, the Depression followed shortly thereafter, increasing financial hardship. But Windom neighbors banded together to help out those in need. The Bowie's, one local family (whose heritage was African American and Native American), were very generous during the hard years of the Depression, sharing their garden and orchard harvests with neighbors who were less fortunate.

The present boundaries of Windom are Diamond Lake Road and 54th Street on the north, Lyndale Avenue South and Highway 121 on the west, Crosstown Freeway 62 on the south and 35W Interstate Freeway on the east. The 1927 annexation of Windom which removed it from Richfield included other areas as well--the Armatage and Kenny neighborhoods, and the Richfield Yards area (the industrial area south of 59th Street). The benefits of paying city taxes followed in time: the main gas line was put in on 61st Street in the late 1930's; roads were paved and curbs put in by the Works Project Administration (WPA) in 1937-38; and city water and sewer was completed in all of Windom by 1951. In the 1950's, when major highways were built to enable greater ease of automobile traffic, Minneapolis neighborhoods went through huge changes. The 35W Interstate Freeway was built through Windom from 1957 to 1961, and daily life in Windom was severely affected, with the noise and distraction of the construction taking precedence. To make room for the freeway, several houses along its path were either demolished or picked up and moved to other locations. A few of the houses remained in Windom, being

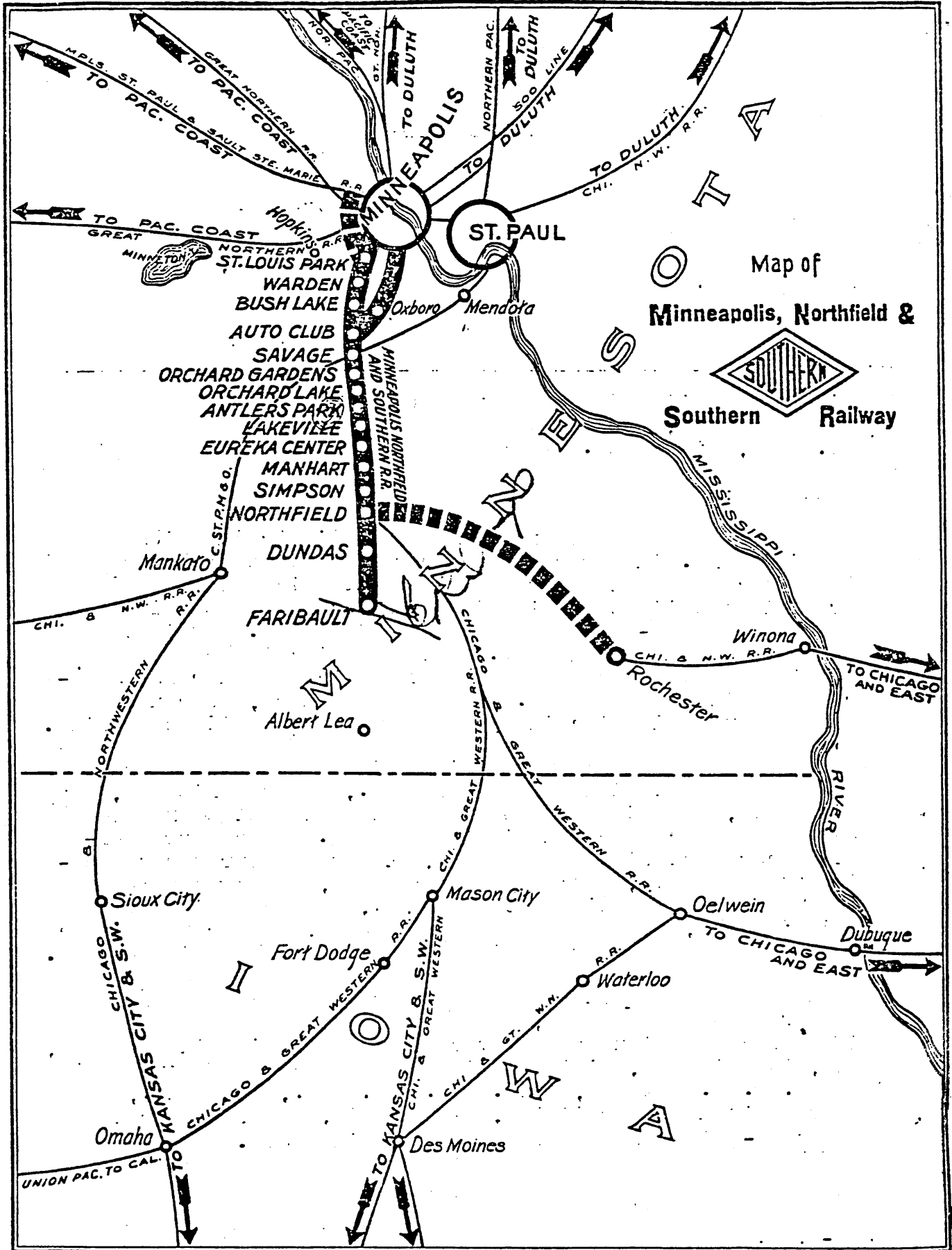


William Windom (1827-1891).  
Courtesy Windom School archives.

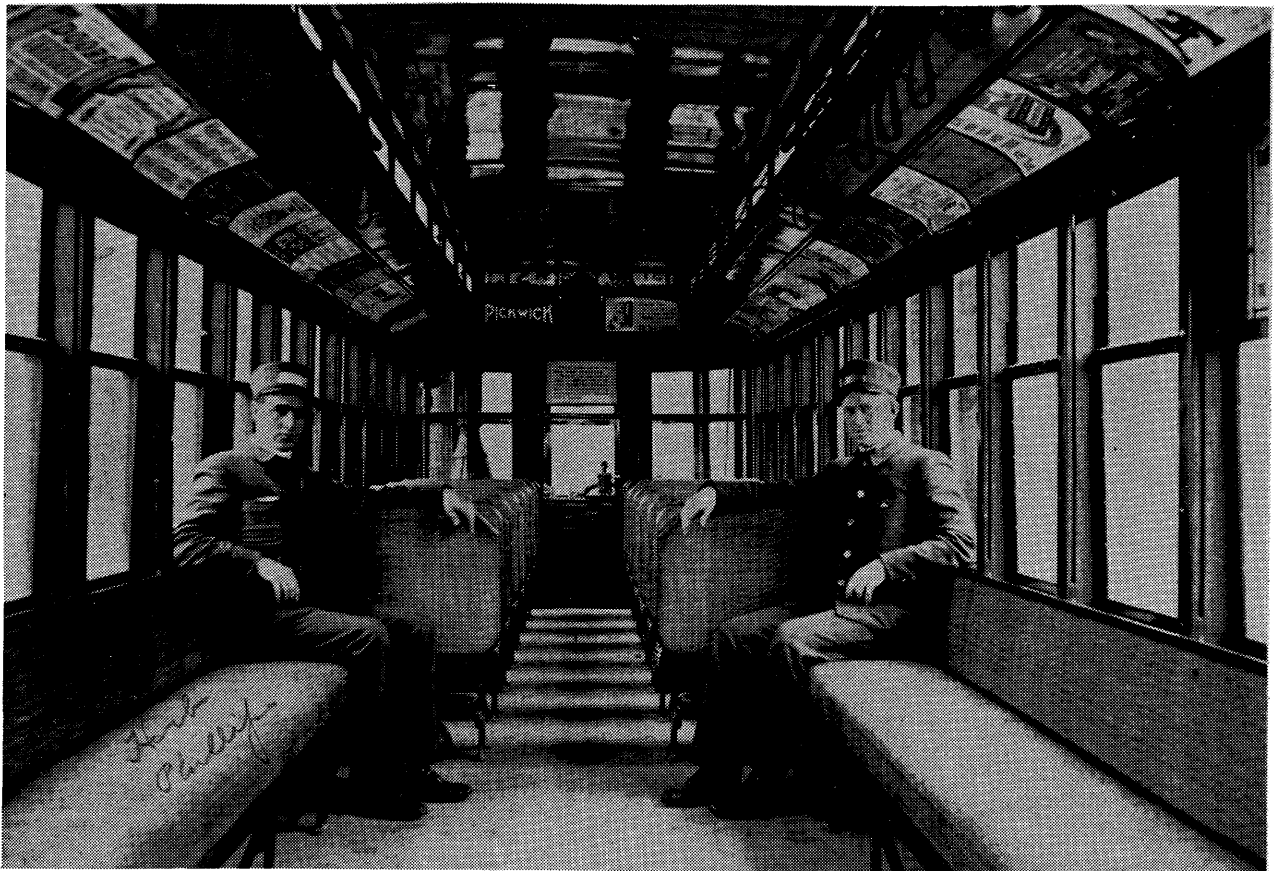
## THE HISTORY OF WINDOM'S NAME

*The village of Windom was named after William Windom, an esteemed citizen of Minnesota. Windom was born May 10, 1827 in Ohio. As a boy, he was apprenticed to a tailor but found that the vocation did not suit him. Shortly thereafter, he attended law school and upon its completion, was admitted to the bar in 1850. He practiced law in Ohio until 1857, when he moved to Winona, Minnesota. In 1859, he was elected to Congress and served as a Congressman for ten years. In 1870, Windom was appointed to the United States Senate, and served until 1881, when he resigned to become Secretary of the Treasury under President Garfield. Upon the death of Garfield he resigned and thereupon was reelected United States Senator to fill out his unexpired term—ending in 1883. He then moved to the city of New York, where he became a leading financier. Eventually, President Harrison appointed him Secretary of the Treasury under his administration, a position he held until his death, which occurred very suddenly and unexpectedly following his delivery of a speech before the New York Chamber of Commerce. [Source: Windom School archives.]*

moved to streets with available vacant lots. But most of them were transported to the suburbs. This meant that neighborhood friendships were broken, especially among the school children, and the sense of close community taken for granted in the Windom neighborhood was irrevocably altered. The construction was noisy, and dust and dirt choked the air, due to the amount of fill-in required to eradicate the swamp area along Nicollet Avenue and 59th to 60th Streets. However, once the land had been filled in and levelled, it became a favorite cook-out site for Windom neighbors, particularly girl and boy scout troops, until the freeway was laid, in 1961. ☺



Map showing route of Dan Patch Railroad, circa 1910. Courtesy Richfield Historical Society.



*Interior of Minneapolis streetcar, circa 1910. Photo: F.P.D. Bruce, courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.*

## DESCRIPTIONS OF WINDOM IN THE EARLY 1900'S

### THE DAN PATCH RAILROAD AND THE NICOLLET AVENUE STREETCAR

The old Windom before the turn of the century and up to the time of World War I had been scattered farms and truck gardens, dependent upon horse and buggy for transportation. The new Windom had automobiles and telephones; old-fashioned homesteads and farms were beginning to make way for suburban living. Automobiles, however, were still considered quite rare and expensive, the main modes of transportation for longer distances being the streetcar lines within the city, and the railroads for longer distances. Windom was fortunate to have both services within its neighborhood. The **Dan Patch Railroad** [see map, p. 6], as it was known, had lines extending from south of Minneapolis into the Windom area, servicing passengers travelling to and from out of town, as well as supplying many local businesses with coal and merchandise shipment and other types of delivery service. Gasoline-electric motor cars, which were used by the railroad company, were divided into an engine compartment in the front, a baggage and mail compartment in the middle, and a third compartment for passengers at the back. The official name of the Dan Patch Railroad was the **Minneapolis, St. Paul, Rochester, Dubuque Electric Traction Company** (the longest name for a railroad company in Minnesota history). The railway got its nickname from world champion race horse Dan Patch, who was owned by Marion W. Savage. Savage was also the man who built the railway line. In addition to its regular passenger and freight lines, the Dan Patch Railroad ran popular weekend excursions from Minneapolis to Savage, where the corral and training grounds for Dan Patch were located. The railroad opened up its first line in 1907 through Kansas. Three years later, on December 10, 1910, the Dan Patch Line began its operation to Northfield, Minnesota, then later extended its main line from the Auto Club Station, located at Auto Club Road in Bloomington, northward to the Minneapolis downtown station, which was at 7th Street and Second Avenue North. The train ran right through Windom, coming up from 94th Street, through Richfield, to 54th Street, along what is now Nicollet Avenue. The northerly terminal was called the 54th Street Station or the "Truax" Station, because the Truax family, of Windom, owned the station. The Truax station was also the southern terminal for the **Nicollet Avenue Streetcar** line. Because the Dan Patch line only travelled into downtown Minneapolis once a day, many local residents used the Nicollet Streetcar service for inner city travel, coming aboard at the Truax Station. The station consisted of a depot and platform. For a time, there was also a lunch counter in the depot. The streetcar line had a "Y" at the Truax Station, for turning around and the Dan Patch Line had a "Y" near their shop at 60th



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From left to right: Marion W. Savage, owner of Dan Patch and Dan Patch Railroad, driving Dan (left) and Dazzle Patch, circa 1905; Dan Patch Moving Pictures ad, from Mpls. Journal, March 31, 1910; Dan Patch with Marion W. Savage, circa 1905. Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.

Street. Neighborhood folks from a huge radius, including as far away as Chicago Avenue, would make the trip by foot to 54th Street and Nicollet Avenue to use the streetcars and rail lines. The streetcar service also had a line running as far as Bryant Avenue and 48th Street. From 1910 to 1920, railway lines and streetcars were the main modes of transportation in Minnesota.

Another popular Dan Patch line took Twin Citians to Antlers Park, a small amusement park on the north shore of Lake Marion. Located near Farmington, Antlers Park was one of the first developed recreational sites in the state. The tourist excursion ride helped stimulate the passenger part of the railroad business. But the commercial division of the railroad business was quite successful as well. For instance, Bachman's shipped so much produce (Bachman's was initially a produce, rather than floral business), that the Dan Patch railroad had a line going right to their property, called the "Lyndale Avenue Spur." The Spur at Bachman's was near Dan Patch's 60th stop at 58th Street and Nicollet Avenue. The spur came to Bachman's via a westward path off the Dan Patch line that ran south from Minneapolis to Northfield.

While riding on trains and streetcars was certainly safer than driving automobiles (as any motor fatality records in recent history will indicate), there were still problems, and accidents were not unheard of. A complaint was filed with the Minnesota Railroad and Warehouse Commission on August 13, 1913, about overcrowding on the coaches of the Dan Patch lines. People were said to be standing in aisles, as well as riding on the platforms of the coaches, and the depot facilities were considered inadequate. The principal reason for the overcrowding was apparently due to the tourist service to Antlers Park. Two years later, on December 13, 1915, an accident occurred on the Dan Patch Railway. It had tragic results, with a brakeman killed. This was caused by brake failure on Milk Car #51. The accident happened at the "frog" intersection leading into Bachman's Lyndale Avenue Spur.

The Dan Patch Railroad went into receivership after Mr. Savage died in 1920. It was then reorganized as the **Minneapolis, Northfield and Southern Railroad (MN&S)**, and as automobiles became more popular, the railway was mainly used for freight shipment.

### NICOLLET DUMP GROUNDS

As previously noted, much of the land along Nicollet Avenue was swamp prior to the construction of the 35W Freeway, and residents used the area indiscriminately as a dump. Although efforts were made to close the dump down, these had apparently not been entirely successful. The *Windom PTA Messenger* of December 8, 1939, exhorted neighbors to clean up the mess: "Inasmuch as the dump between 59th and 60th on Nicollet Avenue has been closed officially, we feel it would be in order to ask all interested members to refrain from dumping in the ground and to ask the cooperation of all the loyal neighbors in this matter. The dump is a constant health menace. The fire department has had to spend hours extinguishing resultant fires. The rats have overrun our yards in numerous instances. Let's cooperate and get this situation cleared up." However, not everyone found the swamp a nuisance. During the prohibition, moonshiners, who were residents on 60th Street and Second Avenue in the late 1930's, ran water out into the swamp off of their stills!





*View of Oak Hill Cemetery, circa 1870. Photo courtesy Oak Hill Cemetery.*

## OAK HILL CEMETERY

A non-sectarian cemetery was created in Windom, in 1862, for the use of all residents of Windom and the entire community of Richfield. Several farmers donated their land to create the original small cemetery, but today it is much larger, with several more partitions of additional land. Its entrance is located at 60th Street and Lyndale Avenue. The Oak Hill Cemetery played an important role in the community. For instance, the Windom School students participated in a march on Memorial Day to honor veterans. Once arriving at the cemetery, flags and flowers were placed on the graves. ❧

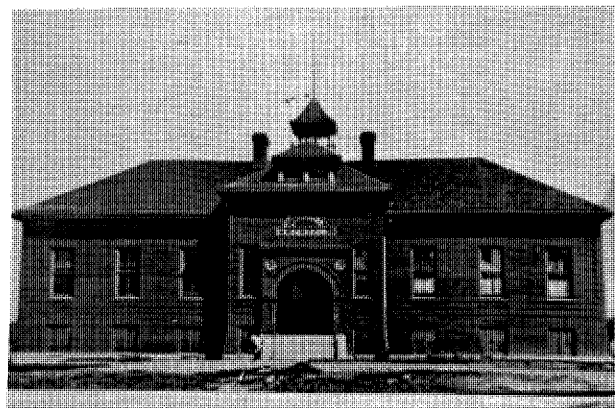
### Oak Hill Cemetery Records

The following pertinent dates from the Oak Hill Cemetery Record Book (obtained from the Richfield Historical Society), give an indication of the growth of the cemetery:

- 1862 Five percent of lot sales funds set aside for perpetual care.
- 1863 Graham [one of original board members] made street [running through the cemetery].
- 1868 Blade grass be sown [sic].
- 1869 Hired first sexton and paid \$2 per grave between 1/11 and 4/1, then \$4 per grave.
- 1870 Purchased land north to Methodist Church, 2 1/2 acres.
- 1872 Lot must be paid for before funeral: \$130. Six men and 33 ladies in.
- 1873 Festival burial.
- 1874 Constitution and by-laws received. Started to build receiving vault.
- 1876 First Deeds issued.
- 1881 Discussions of grass cutting.
- 1882 First rules and regulations. Change Potter's Field to Free Ground. \$25 per lot; 16 grave sites.
- 1885 Rule on sale of lots to other than original purchaser.
- 1890 Discussion on neglected grounds, mix-up of deeds and lots.
- 1893 Participation in GAR [Grand Army of the Republic] Memorial Services.
- 1898 Built tool house.
- 1905 Land now 48' wide, [cost] \$200.
- 1908 Purchased land from Methodist Church.
- 1912 \$750.00 per acre for 3 acres.
- 1915 Single grave, \$10.
- 1922 Soft stone monuments outlawed.
- 1929 100 trees planted, office building constructed.
- 1932 Women's Club of Richfield erected a flag pole.
- 1933 Certificate of deed guaranteed.

# WINDOM SCHOOL HISTORY

Historically, school life in Windom has been extremely important. Windom was a neighborhood with many young families, thus a large number of elementary school age children attended the two schools within the boundaries of the neighborhood: **Windom School** and **Annunciation Catholic School**. In eras gone by, before schools were decentralized and the children of the neighborhood were bussed to schools in other areas, the neighborhood school was one of the most vital aspects of the community. For the younger generations, it may be difficult to understand just how important the school was to neighborhood residents in the early to mid-1900's. With no telephones, no video games and no television, families had other interests, and for parents, participating in their children's school was a big part of their social life, as well as for that of the community in general. Windom School has a very lively and interesting background of social activities, which were held at the school's location throughout the year. In the following pages, the history of such entertaining groups as the "**Dads' Orchestra**," the "**Mother Singers**," and civic groups such as the "**Mothers' Club**" will be covered. Thanks to an extensive collection of scrapbooks and photographs throughout Windom School's history, some detailed information was able to be included. [For information on Annunciation Catholic School, see p. 18, *Spiritual Community Section*.]

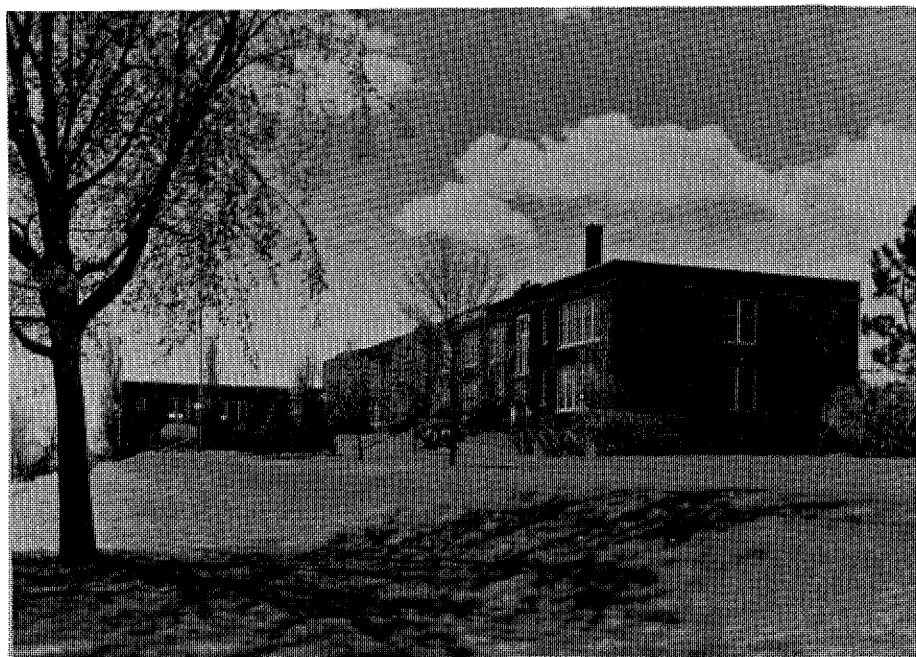


The original Roosevelt School building at 58th Street and Bryant Avenue. Photo circa 1915. Courtesy Henry Kesler.

The first school in the area was called **School District 6**, which was established in 1879, in a small structure on 54th Street and Lyndale Avenue. It had 80 pupils and two instructors, and was a two room frame building. A larger institution, named **Roosevelt School**, located at 58th Street and Bryant Avenue, was built in 1906 and served as the neighborhood's school until 1920. Lulu L. Ganschow, PTA President from 1938-39, describes the school and the history of its "school bell," in a letter from the 1930's: "[It was a] red brick school with two rooms, each with four grades and one teacher. An essay written by one of the pupils tells of the old bell pulled by a rope to call the children. When the school was being built, Mr. W. F. Webster, a great admirer of President Theodore Roosevelt, informed the school board that if they would name the new building the Roosevelt School, he would purchase a bell for it that could be heard over the entire community. [It cost \$100.] Many people still remember its clear and ringing tone. A picture of the school was taken and sent with a letter of condolence to Mrs. Theodore Roosevelt, on the occasion of the death of her husband, ex-President Theodore Roosevelt, January 6, 1919, and an answer was received, written by Archibald B. Roosevelt." To continue the bell's story, it was misplaced when the old building was torn down in 1920 to make way for a new building. However, it

was recovered in 1942. Apparently, a former student had salvaged it from the old building, and his son, Mr. Merrill K. Franklin, responded to a note in a 1942 edition of the *Windom PTA Messenger* asking for information about the missing bell. As of more recent years, however, the bell has once again disappeared.

Due to a large increase in pupils, the school quickly became too small. The **Richfield Roosevelt School** was thus built at 58th Street and Blaisdell Avenue at a cost of \$300,000, with an 800 student capacity. On November 12, 1920, the students walked several blocks from the location of the original Roosevelt School to the new building for the opening of the new school. It was the only school building in the Twin Cities area used exclusively as a grade school in 1927, serving kindergarten through eighth grade students. It was also considered the most up-



William Windom School, circa 1960. Courtesy Windom School archives.

Parents,

Parents, Teachers and Friends, as spokesman for the children of the Roosevelt School I come here tonight to honor one of our best friends. Not long ago we were plodding along as best we could over at the old school at Lyndale and 58th St. We children began to here rumors of a new school building with fine playground and modern equipment. And then again of a battle raging and a victorious drive for school bonds. At last the ground was broken and the huge piles of lumber, stone and bricks were carefully molded into our present school building which is one of the finest in Hennepin County. Finally our principal and teachers told us to gather together our books and prepare to move to our new school building. As our little line of marchers came along 58th St. one fancied that they could see marching at the head of our column a tall, gray haired man carrying a banner with letters of gold which read of better education for our children. That man was Mr. Fred Clarke.

Mr. Clarke, on behalf of the children of the Roosevelt School I present you this loving cup as a token of our appreciation for the much you have done for us, and with it best wishes, good health, and the best of everything. As I take your hand I want to convey to you as best I can this spirit, that in later years we may look to back and remember you as a mighty good friend; one who helped make us better men and women.

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Copy of the original speech made by unidentified student to Fred Clarke, for his contribution to Windom School. Courtesy Martha Kidd, granddaughter of Mr. Clarke.

**November 1926 School Bulletin:** "Tomorrow is THANKSGIVING, and of course there will be no school tomorrow or Friday. We do not know why Friday is so universally used as a holiday unless the fact that so many go visiting on Thanksgiving and do not get back for school on Friday. Some have said that children eat so much on Thanksgiving they are not in physical condition for school work on Friday. Of course this is not true, at least in most homes. We are of the opinion that there are too many holidays in November as it is and school should be held on Friday the same as any other week day. We think if our forefathers had known how much better it would have been for future generations they would have made Thanksgiving on Friday instead of Thursday."

**Notice going home with children in spring of 1926:** "The water during the past few days has of course been very excessive. It seems almost remarkable that the children have kept as dry as they have, but most of them seem to be 'well shod' and if they get wet feet, it is usually their own fault. However, we have asked children to be very careful and no doubt but what the parents too have emphasized this matter. Much sickness is apt to occur as a result of wet feet and wet clothing. Sickness means loss of time and frequently loss of a grade. It pays to be careful." [As a result of the 'hazard of mud,' which made it difficult for the students to walk to school during rainy times without getting soiled, curbs and sidewalks were provided in the area surrounding the school shortly thereafter.]

In 1916, the school was wired for electricity and the Mothers' Club, a very instrumental group in improving conditions at the school, bought the school a phonograph and records. It took 14 more years for the necessity of modern contraptions to become significant.

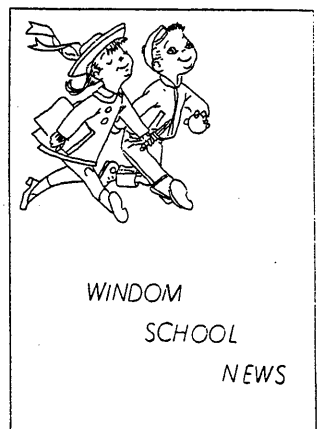
**School memo, February 7, 1930:** "The teachers have unanimously decided that the time has come when the school must have a radio. The men of the school have been appointed to act as a committee to make the purchase. Educational programs are becoming more and more common and the radio will soon be needed almost as much as the teacher."

to-date school in the Minneapolis school system when the Windom area was annexed in 1927. Historic notes from the Works Project Administration in 1934 indicate that the first kindergarten class was started in 1925, and that the school had 10 toilet rooms, two shower rooms, and a basement garage for two busses.

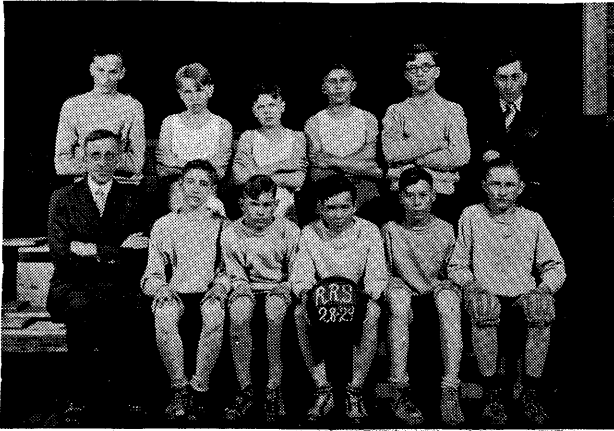
When the Windom area was annexed by the City of Minneapolis in 1927, the school's name became an issue. Apparently there was another school in Minneapolis with the name "Roosevelt"; two schools with the same name was considered confusing. Although an attempt was made to get the other school, located near Lake Nokomis, to change its name to Nokomis High, the effort failed. The Richfield Roosevelt School thus became **William Windom School** in 1927 (today it is known as **Windom School**). Fredrich H. Clarke was responsible for re-naming the school, as he donated some of the money for the building's construction. Mr. Clarke, a grandson of Charles Hoag, who named Minneapolis and was also the first Superintendent of Schools in Minneapolis, chose the name for esteemed Minnesota resident William Windom. Clarke's granddaughter, Mrs. Martha B. Kidd, still has in her possession the Loving Cup given to Mr. Clarke for his generosity, as well as the original copy of a speech made for him at the time of the presentation [see graphic at left]. The cup's dedication reads, "To Fred Clarke--A mighty good friend, from the children of Roosevelt School." Martha Kidd's mother was also well-known at the school, serving as a substitute teacher for the upper grades for many years.

**SCHOOL NEWS--HOW TIMES CHANGE!**

**Mid-Summer School Bulletin, 1924:** This bulletin noted the opening of the private Catholic school at Annunciation Parish with this announcement: "Last year the total enrollment was 350. This year it has increased to 419 in spite of the fact that a large number of our former pupils entered the new Parochial School."



Cover for 1958 booklet provided for parents. Courtesy Windom School archives.



Richfield Roosevelt School boys' basketball team (before the name change), 1928-29. The school's first principal, Francis Maxson, is seated on the left. Courtesy Windom School archives.

*Yearbook, 1960-61*, states, "At the closing of the skating season, the leisure time activities will begin. We had so many boys sign up for basketball, and so many girls come out for volleyball last year, that we will repeat this program again." Dancing classes for girls, consisting of "tap and acrobatic instruction," were also sponsored by the PTA.

### IN THE BEGINNING...THE MOTHERS' CLUB AND THE SCHOOL PICNIC

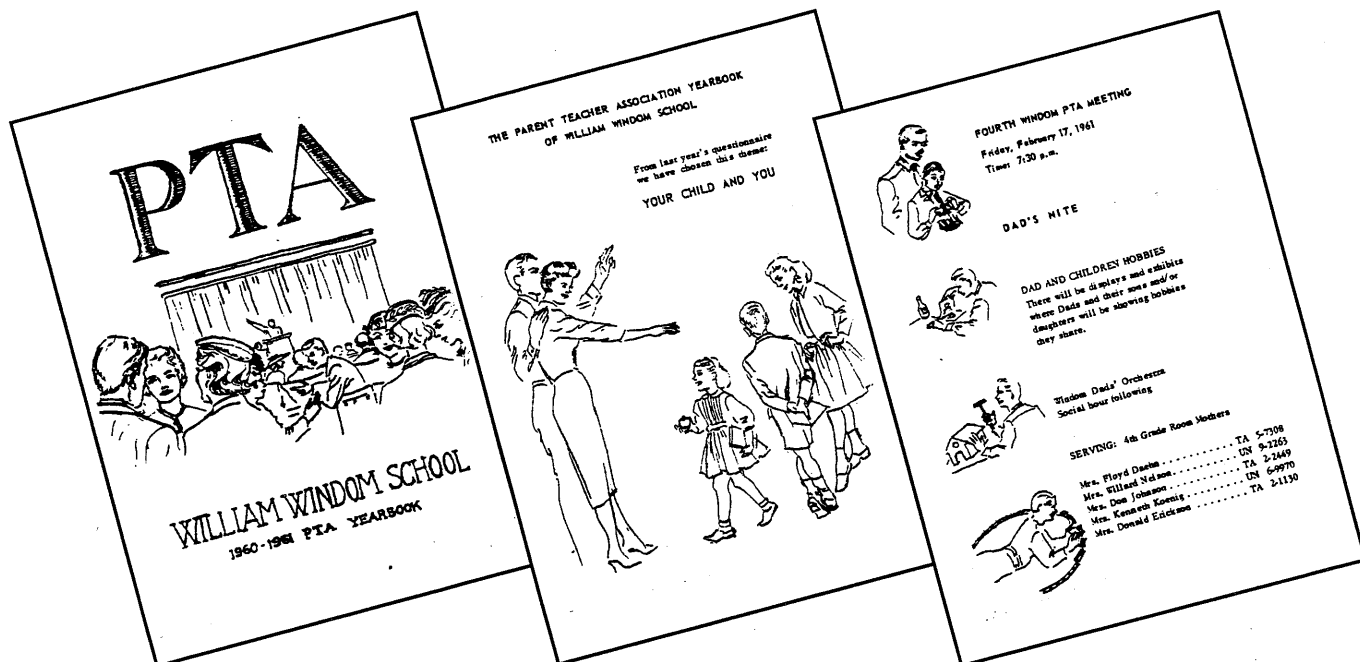
Before the **Parent Teachers Association (PTA)** became nationally organized, Windom started an organization for parents wishing to be more involved in their children's school activities. The first Windom "**Mothers' Club**," organized in 1914 by Mrs. E.J. Ohr (also the first president), boasted 25 members. The following letters from past members of the Mothers' Club provide vivid descriptions of its origins, and of the favorite school outing of the entire year: the **School Picnic**, held each spring at Minnehaha Falls.

**1931 letter written by Mrs. George Towler:** "We were a young 'peppy' group of moms who organized the Mothers' Club. Most of us were still in our thirties, busy with our growing children and concerned...in anything that was for their welfare. The query, 'What year was the club organized?' was asked of me some years ago and led to [a] long search. ...Last spring while housecleaning I took the time to read through a journal I started to keep during the World War and, under the date of November 1914, I wrote that I had read a chapter in the book on Child Training at the Mothers' Club at the school house. I also was frank enough to say that I 'did not make a very good job of it but that I had gotten through it anyway.' This definitely sets the date as September 1914..."

"The school our children attended...was the red brick school house on 58th Street and Bryant Avenue. The Methodist Church was the only church in our school district, the Lutheran Church not being organized until the spring of the following year. Outside of the church there were no organized groups such as we have now except a large and active men's organization, which has been out of existence for some time, called the Richfield Improvement Association, which was started about a year and a half before the Mothers' Club. The Richfield Woman's Club was organized about six months later, in March 1915. Most of our activities were centered around the church and school. In the school, there were two events in the year, the Christmas entertainment and the School Picnic at Minnehaha Falls. There isn't a child who attended the old school but has happy memories of these Red Letter Days. The school house had two rooms of about the same size, called the Big Room and the Little Room, each of which had four grades and one teacher. At the Christmas entertainment, which was held in the afternoon of the Friday before Christmas vacation, the children from both rooms and the parents crowded into the Big Room for the 'exercises and the Christmas tree.' The tree was lighted with candles and hung with cards. The children for years gave each other cards at Christmas and Valentine's Day. ...Every child spoke a piece or sang a song for which they were primed and practiced weeks ahead. Candy and oranges were distributed to the pupils and children visitors, each pupil having brought 10 cents beforehand to defray the cost. Always we were afraid the Christmas tree would catch on fire, but it never did."

"And there was the School Picnic! What thrills go up and down as we remember. [It was not just] any picnic where we arrived a little before noon. I can remember getting up to the school house with my five children and lunch for a regiment...at 8 a.m. You will remember I said we were a peppy group! There were no autos or trucks or chartered cars. We rode in farm wagons and hayracks. The picnic was always held the last Friday in May before school closed, in the spring of the year, and we drove along the old narrow winding boulevard to Minnehaha Falls. We did not hurry; the ride was the best part of it. We could see the fresh green leaves of the trees, the yellow and red of the willows and the eddies and sparkling of the water which too was making its way, now leisurely, now rushing, in the same direction in which we were going. After the day was over, at 4:00, for we all had cows to milk or chickens to feed, we loaded the empty baskets and the absolutely full and foot-weary children into the wagons, and returned, singing and laughing and cheering along the same route, beside the shining water. Yes—the good old days!"





Three graphics from The PTA Yearbook , 1960-61, for Windom School. Courtesy Windom School archives.

*"In all the years I never missed a school picnic but one and that is how I remember how we happened to form the Mothers' Club. On the morning of the picnic in 1914, two calamities had happened in our family, at least as far as the children were concerned. It looked as if it were going to be a rainy day and [my] mother was sick and couldn't go. But Mrs. Plummer, my sister-in-law, told me she would take care of the children for me and Mrs. Kesler took them in their wagon. I remember their driving away down the road, huddled under umbrellas, for it already had begun to rain. It wasn't a very satisfactory picnic, according to all reports. It rained off and on all day; the tables had just been set under the trees when it began to rain again and they had to hurry everything up into the pavilion to finish their meal. The teachers hadn't known they were to make the lemonade, according to tradition, and no one had been delegated to make the coffee. Mrs. Bryant, whose daughter had taught in the school and who had always taken charge of all such things, had moved away, and there was no lead. The teachers were new and everything was at sixes and sevens. After the lunch was over the women sat talking things over and decided to do something about it [for the coming] year. Mr. Wilcox, Assistant Superintendent of Schools at that time, suggested they start a Mothers' Club to handle all such matters and the women decided to do so. So in September 1914, we gathered in the school house and elected Mrs. E. J. Ohr our first president. Our program was to be a chapter from a book in Child Training followed by a discussion. ...[T]he dues were five cents for each meeting. Two or three of us remember Mrs. Plummer sitting in a front seat entering up our nickels in the paper-covered composition book. Our women didn't just read a book and talk at our meetings. At one of our very first meetings, we began to act. The children had come home and complained about flies and how they surrounded their lunches. It didn't make much of an impression on us, but the afternoon we [met at the school and] had our first refreshments, the flies, surprised and delighted at a second feast being served up to them that day, settled down on our food and we ate with one hand and shooed with the other. We immediately got busy with the school board and we weren't to be brushed aside or shooed away, so in a little over a week the school was screened. ...[T]his is the story of how the Mother's Club was started...back in the good old days." [Windom still has neighborhood picnics to this day, that bring together Windom School ex-students and neighbors of past and present eras. The "Old Neighborhood Picnic" occurs every August.]*

**Mrs. F. W. Van Sant, Mothers' Club President 1915-1916:** *"...The club took up the subject of sex education. We read a chapter in a book on the subject each month—so we would enlighten our children in the proper way. Also, we sponsored an ice cream 'sociable,' which was held on the lawn of the Richfield Methodist Church. The whole countryside turned out for the occasion. We sold gallons of ice cream. The large cakes were the real homemade ones. We used the proceeds toward improving the school. ...School closed the last week in May because the boys had to help their fathers put in the crops. Many a lad quit school the day he was 16--the law required them in school until that age."*

In 1920, the Mothers' Club officially reorganized to join the National Parent Teachers Association (PTA), and also took on the responsibility of providing hot lunches in three area schools. The yearly dues were 50 cents for the first 13 years. Then in 1933, to boost membership during the Depression, the dues were dropped from 50 cents to 15 cents, and consequently, membership increased from 150 to 519 members. The popularity of the group continued to increase, due in large part to the active social role the PTA played in the community, as will be described in the following paragraphs. Incredibly, in 1951-52, for instance, the total PTA membership was 880, while the number of students was only 865!

Gen Joubert recollects the final School Picnic held at Minnehaha Falls: "The actual annexation of Richfield Roosevelt School was April of 1927. May of 1927, two street cars were chartered to take the whole school--students, teachers and some parents--to Minnehaha Park for the Annual School Picnic. Everyone walked down 54th Street, which was the end of the streetcar line. The cost round-trip was 14 cents. This was the last school picnic held away from the school. Before 1927, parents like Mr. Kesler and Mr. Bachman, who had flat bed trucks (being farmers), would load the kids all on the back of the truck and drive them over to Minnehaha Park from 58th and Bryant."

After 1927, the Minnehaha Falls Annual School Picnic was replaced with the Annual Indoor Picnic, and as the *Windom PTA Messenger, February 7, 1942*, noted, "The Indoor Picnic has become a tradition of fun and frolic at Windom. Come dressed to play active games."

### DADS' ORCHESTRA AND MOTHERSINGERS WOW WINDOM

In the first several decades of Windom School's existence, school budgets were very limited. Providing financial support to the school was a perfect opportunity for Windom adults to socialize and gather around an important cause. Musical revues provided fun and merriment for community members willing to get involved or simply attend the performances. "Vaudeville" shows were a popular event in the 1930's, featuring elaborate skits, costumes and "all-original jokes." In 1936, for instance, one vaudeville show raised a total of \$147.17 for the school. Then in 1943, the **MotherSingers** formed, a group of mothers who sang popular numbers of the era. They performed frequently to raise money for the school. The fathers were also instrumental in organizing fund-raising events. For instance, in 1945, a group called "Dads' Night" sponsored the Sunset Valley Barn Dance to raise money for a school movie projector. And by 1949, a swing band, consisting entirely of men from the area of Windom, was formed. Called the "**Dads' Orchestra**," it was the only group of its kind in the Twin Cities area. For the next 15 years, the band played for numerous events throughout the community. The *1960-61 PTA Booklet* boasts, "We at Windom are very lucky to be the only PTA with an orchestra made up of PTA Dads. (In fact, many of these Dads no longer have children at Windom, but they're still loyal to their children's alma-mater, for which we're very grateful.) They add much enjoyment to our Windom PTA meetings and to various civic functions throughout the year." Besides playing swing music, the dads created skits for the frequently held vaudeville shows, often with hilarious schemes. The theme of dressing up as women was apparently quite popular, as one of the pictures on this page indicates. For the Windom Follies of 1952, *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* reported: "These versatile dads will...do a "Sophie Tucker" routine, Bob Adams will be featured in a Hawaiian number, doing a solo dance in native costume ...[and] all skits will feature the fathers in wigs and costumes. Scenery and set backgrounds were designed and built by the members of the cast, and all numbers will be accompanied by the dads' band." Other selections: the "Gibson Girl Chorus," featuring Wally



At left, Pat Hicks stars as the infamous 'Sophie Tucker' in the 1952 Windom Follies, flanked by other "gals"; above, two dads in more traditional costume perform a softshoe number. Courtesy Windom School archives.

Dorr and Harold Hoas, five men as the "Royal Palms Dancers," a Hawaiian number featuring the guys in hula skirts, five men kicking up their heels as the "Ziegfeld Girls," and the "Palace Theatre Girls Chorus."





The Windom Dads orchestra is composed of men from many walks of life. Their common interest: music.

DADS HAVE AN ORCHESTRA AT WINDOM SCHOOL

## They Can Make a PTA Meeting Jump



Clair Ryan (standing) is leader of the Windom Dads orchestra. An engineer at Minneapolis-Honeywell Regulator Co. by day, Ryan has played in orchestras or had his own band since high school days. Here he is rehearsing the sax section at an evening practice.

PTA MEETINGS aren't always the dull affairs some persons (those who have never attended one) imagine.

At Windom school in Minneapolis, for instance, attendance at PTA meetings spurted when a group of fathers formed an orchestra.

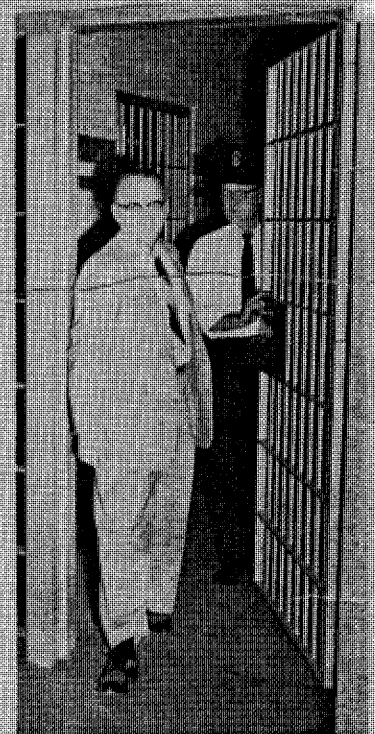
Appearance of the Windom Dads orchestra at meetings several times a year is music to the ears of PTA members. It has been since 1949.

The 17-member orchestra, composed of men representing a variety of occupations, practices twice a month—usually in the home of one of the members.

What kind of music do the Windom Dads play? "Swing," says Clair Ryan, who became leader of the group last year. "We play tunes like Stardust, All the Things You Are and Tuxedo Junction."

Members of the orchestra look upon their musical activity as a form of relaxation. They look forward to practice sessions and appearances—so much so they even postpone business trips and skip other commitments.

Photos by Donna Elliot



Two members of the sax section are Rolf Stageberg, superintendent of the Minneapolis workhouse, and Roy Rubert, a guard. The Windom Dads orchestra has played for workhouse prisoners on regular recreation nights.

continued

Minneapolis Sunday Tribune • Picture • October 12, 1948

Part of an article in The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune, October 12, 1958, featuring the Windom Dads' Orchestra. Courtesy Windom School archives.

The MotherSingers were not to be outdone by their hammy husbands. A news clipping from the late 1950's noted, "All housecleaning activity has been set aside as the Windom MotherSingers center their efforts on their annual spring entertainment, 'Mississippi Moods.'" And the *1960-61 PTA Yearbook* exhorted mothers to join in the fun: "If you enjoy singing and good fellowship, MotherSingers is the group for you. We invite any of you who might be interested to join our happy group." A *1953-54 Windom MotherSingers Memo* notes, "We began the year by taking part in a chorus comprised of MotherSingers from throughout the state of Minnesota. This large chorus...sang several selections for the State PTA Convention at the Nicollet Hotel, Minneapolis." That year alone, they also sang at PTA meetings in October and January, sang Christmas carols in the halls at Windom School, sang twice at Richfield Lutheran Church, and in April entertained at a luncheon for Edgewater Methodist Church. In February the group sponsored a variety show called "Magic, Music and Monkeyshine." One favorite event for the group: singing at the St. Marks Church Mother Daughter Banquet, held in May. As a finale for the year, the MotherSingers participated in the Family Night Program at Windom School in April.

The two groups also frequently performed together. A *1954 PTA Memo* concerning music provided at PTA meetings noted, "Dads' Orchestra and MotherSingers performed at October get-acquainted meeting. November: Dads' Orchestra performed music for the Fall Festival. In April the Dads' Orchestra, Teachers' Novelty Band and the MotherSingers provided music for the Family Night Program."

### OTHER SCHOOL REMEMBRANCES

The parents were also very active as leaders of **Boy and Girl Scout Troops** and other children's civic groups. Boy Scout Troop 75, started April 16, 1924, with a membership of 16, was still going strong into the 1980's. Henry Kesler, a well-known Windom resident to this day [see *interview, p. 19, Personal Stories Section*], was the first troop scribe. He is still active in the community 70 years later. The first troop in the area was started at the Richfield Methodist Church. When

the larger school structure was built, the troop changed headquarters to the school. Due to its popularity, more troops branched off, with meetings held in various locations, including the Richfield Lutheran Church and, once again, Richfield Methodist. Two Boy Scout Troops are still in existence in the Windom area, with meetings places at Mayflower Church and Annunciation School. The **Four Square Club**, a YMCA affiliate, was formed for boys in the 6th to 8th grades in the same era. And **Campfire Girls**, originally led by Miss Powell and the Girl Reserve Organization, was started by the YWCA. The involvement of children in the various troops has declined as the number of sports and activities held through the school system has increased. School decentralization has also contributed to the decline of such groups.



Three unidentified boyscouts from Windom's Boy Scout Troop 75, August 1960. Courtesy Windom School archives.

While in the current era, the people who clean up and take care of the school are often taken for granted, the **school janitor** at the original Roosevelt School played a significant role. A notation in one of the school scrapbooks states, "All who attended the Roosevelt School on 58th Street and Bryant Avenue will remember **Mr. Landis**. Mr. Landis raised sweet peas on his place at 58th Street and Grand Avenue in the summer, but in the winter he served as janitor of the school. The children all loved him and his cheery greetings. His horse "Bob" was very gentle, and the children all had many rides with Mr. Landis in his cutter. He always kept the school building warm and in order."

Due to a significant drop in enrollment, the Windom School closed for 11 years. October 17, 1977, *The Minneapolis Star* carried the following announcement, "Legal Notice--Public Hearing on the Proposed Closing of Windom Elementary School. The Board of Education of Special School District No. 1 proposed to close the Windom Elementary School as a school for elementary age pupils." For the next decade, the building was used instead for community education center and Senior Congregate Dining. In 1989, however, the building was reopened as a school. As mentioned previously, decentralization occurred at Windom School, along with all school systems in the country, in the mid-1970's. The reasons for decentralization are clear and appropriate, but there have been significant drawbacks. While greater integration has resulted, there has been a negative backlash on the families. Children within Windom are bussed to other areas each day, resulting in loss of close friendships within the neighborhood. Some students must ride the bus up to an hour each direction. In addition, in families with several school children, each child will sometimes attend a different school, with unique bus schedules. The various arrival and departure times is difficult for the parents, as well as the children. As a result of problems such as these, the current mayor of Minneapolis, Sharon Sayles Belton, has expressed interest in returning the schools to a centralized approach, with children in each neighborhood attending the schools closest to their homes. ♪

## WINDOM'S SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY--FOUR PROFILES

In the early 1900's, there were five churches in the Windom/Richfield area: the Mayflower Church, the Annunciation Catholic Church, Richfield Lutheran Church, the Baptist Church, and Richfield United Methodist Church. A brief history of four of these principal "oldsters" is included, thanks to historical booklets provided by the churches themselves. [All quotes used within each story can be attributed to that church's respective booklet.]

### **RICHFIELD UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, est. 1856**

The General Conference of the Methodist Church in 1820 agreed to seek the "conversion of the Indians west of the Mississippi." Finally, 15 years later, Rev. Alfred Brunson received approval to travel to the area of Fort Snelling in October, 1835. Brunson was accompanied to Minnesota by Rev. David King and an African American man named James Thompson, who was married to a Native American woman and who had a basic knowledge of the Dakota language. In order to bring the couple on his journey, Rev. Brunson raised money in the Illinois Conference to purchase James Thompson's freedom for \$1,200. Rev. Brunson was thus the first Methodist Missionary to come to Minnesota.

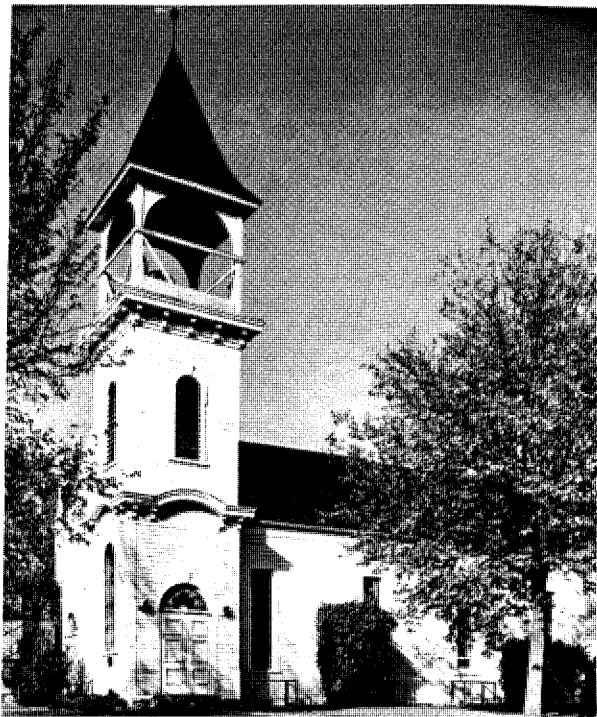
In 1852, James Dunsmoor bought a claim of 260 acres in the Windom area. His wife, Almira, found the life on the frontier very lonely, so she wrote the Methodist Society and asked that a circuit rider come to a meeting at her house. Thus began the first "Methodist Class." As the church's historical booklet notes, "In a short time, there were more people than could meet in a farmer's parlor. Henry Townsend then invited them to meet in his granary, which they did when the weather permitted." By 1856, the Methodists were meeting in a log school-house near 66th Street and Lyndale Avenue, called the Wood Lake School. The Baptists also met there, the two groups often consolidating into one Sunday service.

With the official name of The Richfield Methodist Episcopal Church, the church dedicated its new building in the fall of 1869, located on a hill north of Oak Hill Cemetery on 59th Street and Lyndale Avenue. Originally, in the winter of 1869, the Baptists and Methodists discussed the possibility of building one church for both faiths, but argument arose about location and other political affiliations, and individual plans were made instead. "It seems that the building of the two churches that summer developed into a vigorous race to see who would finish first. The Baptists dedicated their church three weeks ahead of the Methodists, but the Methodists bragged that theirs was complete and fully decorated when it was first occupied. Mr. Woodward [the contractor for the Richfield Methodist Church], claimed that one reason the Baptist Church was finished first was that his crew consisted of farmers who did not keep 'hours,' but that [the Baptist Church] crew were city men who started Monday noon and quit Friday noon." The rivalry continued for several years; when the Baptists replaced their oil lamps with a chandelier, the Methodists followed suit, purchasing an extravagant chandelier as well.

Interestingly, the original color of the church was not white, but brown, due to the addition of sand in the paint. Apparently, "as the painter had worked along, another man followed him and sprinkled shiny sand in the wet paint. This was done for two reasons: First every man and boy carried a jack knife in those days, and the temptation to carve one's initials was hard to resist. But sand was hard on knife blades! Second, the sand was believed to be fire retardant."

In 1877, after four years of grasshopper plague, area residents were in bad shape. "Old timers told how the insects would arrive in a great black cloud, remain for a short time eating everything in sight (even fence posts) and depart, leaving nothing but desolation behind." When the plague finally ended, the Annual Methodist Conference of 1877 made an official proclamation of thanksgiving for deliverance from the grasshopper scourge.

Richfield Methodist Church remained in remarkably good shape for the duration of its use. The plaster job was considered to be exceptionally good and did not need repair until, "one day in the 1920's, when a large chunk of ceiling fell down with a crash during the final prayer being given by Rev. Herbert Sawyer. It is said he opened one eye to see if anyone was hurt, and then continued praying with scarcely a pause for breath!" The church building was not replaced until the 1950's. The new building was dedicated in 1956, with the first worship service held in the new Richfield Episcopal Methodist Church on December 16, 1956. [Source: We Have This Covenant, The Story of Richfield United Methodist Church, 1854-1979 (1979).]



*Richfield Methodist Episcopal Church, built 1869.  
Courtesy Richfield Methodist Church.*

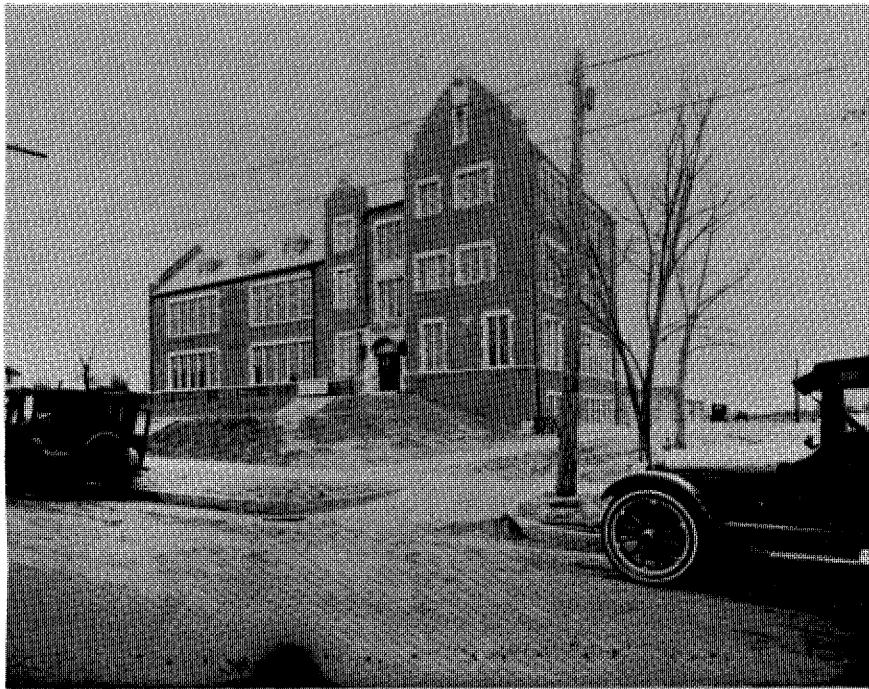


## **RICHFIELD EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH, est. 1915**

Lutherans as a group first began meeting in Windom at Mr. and Mrs. Bookwalter's home, located at 58th Street and Clinton Avenue. Officially, the Richfield Lutheran Church was organized on January 10, 1915, and a church site purchased the following month at Blaisdell Avenue and 58th Street, which was a "temporary basement" facility. In 1925, the "basement church" was sold to the Richfield School Board and the Windom School was built in that location. New church property was purchased at 58th Street and Wentworth Avenue, with the church dedicated in November of 1925. As a result of an expanding congregation, another new site was purchased at the corner of 60th Street and Nicollet Avenue in 1959. Before its completion, however, problems arose. "A severe crisis occurred during the construction of the new church when it was learned that the property a few feet north of the building was about to be sold for a car wash operation! Fortunately, the owner was persuaded to sell the property to Richfield Lutheran Church for \$66,000. Where to get the money! Members came to the rescue by loaning funds to the congregation." The new church was dedicated April 3, 1960, with 1,556 people crowding into the various rooms of the building. An education addition was then built in 1968. [Source: Richfield Lutheran Church: 75 Years, 'Great is thy Faithfulness' (1990).]

## **THE CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION, est. 1922**

The Catholic community of Windom has historically been very strong, contributing in great measure to the local neighborhood, in addition to being home of the private elementary school for over 70 years. The Church of the Annunciation,



*Church of the Annunciation Catholic School, 525 West 54th Street, circa 1925.  
Courtesy Minnesota Historical Society.*

located at 54th Street just off of Lyndale Avenue South, was first established as a response to pleas of Catholics in the area who found street car service too unreliable and the distance to the two nearest Catholic churches too great. As a result, the first church building was erected in 1922. Just a year later, the Annunciation School opened in September of 1923, with 80 children in five grades. The school has continually expanded in the following decades, and currently teaches students of kindergarten to 8th grade.

In 1949, the Annunciation Church built the Convent of the Holy Rosary, for the Dominican nuns who staffed the school. "With the school enlarged and the convent built, the parish turned to the problem of overcrowding in the auditorium church. The 1,100 seats could not accommodate the needs of the parish. Besides five Sunday Masses in the church, two overflow services often had to be held in the gymnasium." So in 1960, a building fund was created, called the "All in One Program," to raise money for the new church. On December 16, 1962, the priests, nuns and parishioners of Annunciation offered the first Sunday Mass in the new church, a structure which cost \$890,000 to build. [Sources: Church of the Annunciation (1963) and Annunciation Parish: 60 Years on the Way (1982).]

## **MAYFLOWER CHURCH, est. 1925**

The Mayflower Church, a Community Congregational United Church of Christ, erected its first structure, a white frame building costing approximately \$3,500, in 1925 at Diamond Lake Road and Stevens Avenue. As its congregation quickly burgeoned, the building was expanded three years later. But within a decade, in 1936, an entirely new, bigger building was built and dedicated. The Spanish style church contained a new sanctuary, a dining hall and a kitchen. In 1940, to make room for additions, the original church structure was sold and moved to Falcon Heights. This enabled the construction of a religious education building adjacent to the sanctuary. With additional congregational needs, another structure was built in 1960, and became the new home for religious education. In May of 1961, by a vote of 179 to 11, the congregation approved joining the United Church of Christ. Then in 1974, a new sanctuary building was completed--across the street from the original building [ now home of Enga Funeral Chapel]. The new church's dedication signified the completion of a building program conducted over a period of 21 years in master planning/construction. [Source: Mayflower Church Community Congregational United Church of Christ, 50th Year (1975).] ❧

# PERSONAL STORIES

## AN INTERVIEW WITH HENRY KESLER

Windom is fortunate to have the remembrances of Henry Kesler, who was born in 1906 at 59th Street and Nicollet Avenue in Windom. He lived there until 1935, at which point he married and moved to 5748 Pillsbury Avenue South. He is still living in this same home with his wife Irene. The couple celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary this year. Neighborhood historian Gen Joubert talked with Henry, and his interview reveals interesting insights about Windom's history, including Henry's school days, farming at the turn of the century, social activities and the effect of the Depression on his family.

*[Gen:] When did your parents move into the Richfield area [now known as Windom]?*

*[Henry:] I think my dad moved from Victoria, Minnesota about 1865.*

*Why did he decide to move into this area?*

He was looking for a property for a truck farm.

*Where did your parents come from?*

My father was born in Victoria, Minnesota and my mother was born in Germany. She came here when she was 13 years old.

*Did you have any brothers or sisters?*

I had one brother and four sisters: Emma, Marie, Dora, Clara and Fred.

*What school did you go to?*

I went to the Richfield Roosevelt School on 58th and Bryant.

*How did you get there?*

We all walked, the five Keslers. What other way was there?

*How many students were in your school?*

There were only two rooms, 50 students in the school, four grades in each classroom. The first teacher I remember was a Miss Wicklund. She was a student teacher from Central High School in Minneapolis. May Dills was a teacher also, and she turned out to be the Superintendent of Schools for Hennepin County.

*Can you tell us about working on the truck farm?*

I know I worked! I started working when I was about six years old. I worked around the hot bed yards moving stuff and I always bunched the vegetables when I was six years and over. That's what I did all of my life. Sometimes we'd work 20 hours a day and in the winter time we didn't have anything to do.

*Can you tell us how large the farm was?*

My father's land was from 58th and Nicollet to the railroad tracks, way back to Pillsbury. I think we had about 17 acres altogether.

*Didn't your parents sell land to the Richfield School Board for the new Richfield Roosevelt School on 58th and Wentworth, which was later called William Windom School?*

Yes, we sold five acres to the school board, at 58th and Wentworth to Blaisdell Avenue, in 1920.

*Can you remember what they were paid for the land?*

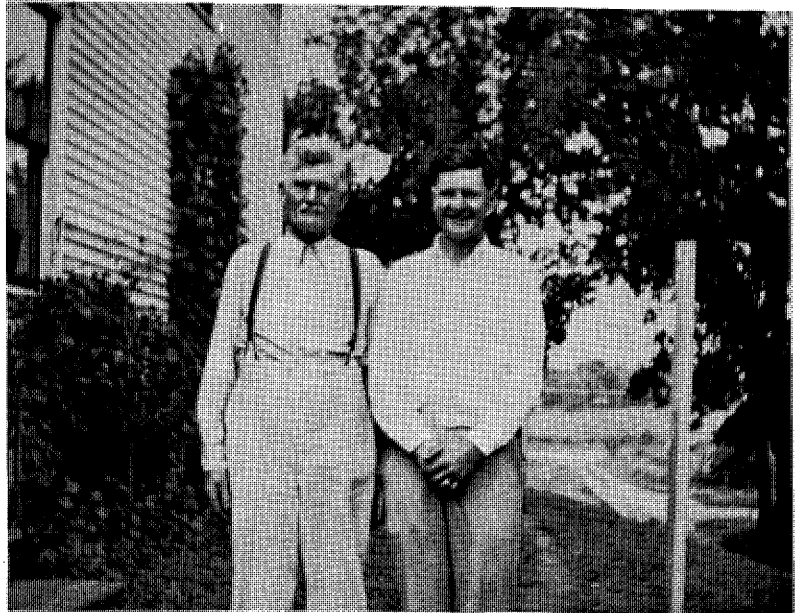
I think it was \$5,000.00.

*What changes do you feel affected you in your lifetime? What are the best and the worst?*

I think when we sold the farm was the worst, as I had to get a job. I then worked for the Le Jeune Company for 25 years.

*Can you tell me what happened to your old house, and where it is now?*

The old house is on the northwest corner of 59th and Nicollet, right on the corner, a two story house with two apartments in it now.



*Henry Kesler and his father, outside of their farmhouse in Windom, circa 1920's. Courtesy Henry Kesler.*

They took off the front porch and the kitchen off the back end.

*What do you think is the best [event] that has happened in your lifetime? Inventions or whatever?*

The communications and then transportation are the best. The worst? Now, in 1994, there are so many poor people out there and there's no one controlling the economics.

*Tell us about when you were a Boy Scout.*

I was a Boy Scout...in Troop 75, which was sponsored by the [Windom] school. I was their first scribe when Richfield Roosevelt's troop started. I know I didn't take many trips, 'cause I was a truck farmer. Eventually I got to be a Boy Scout Leader, but it got to take too much time from the farm.

*One time when we were talking you told me about your camping [trips] with the Boy Scouts. Where was [this]?*

We went out to Bush Lake, a "game refuge." Another time we went up to Anoka, where the Boy Scouts had a log cabin. I drove my truck up there. The building [log cabin] they had at the Builders Show at the Minneapolis Auditorium. It was dismantled, then it had to be rebuilt up there for a camp.

*Can you tell about going to the last day of school, when you [went to] the picnic at Minnehaha Falls?*

Several truck gardeners took their trucks and hauled everyone to Minnehaha Park. I know my father always bought a stalk of bananas [at the wholesale house] and everybody got one.

*Were your mother and father active in school activities?*

I don't think my father was very active, but he always went on the picnics...to drive the truck.

*Tell me about meeting your wife Irene, and marrying.*

Well, I was a great one to go dancing. Every Saturday night I would go to dances around the neighborhood, and I met Irene at Cass Lake in North Minneapolis. I used to see her every Saturday and Sunday.

*When did you get married?*

March 2, 1935. When we celebrated our 50th anniversary, we had 11 inches of wet snow that day. We had 100 people, had expected 300, everybody got stuck on the way home. A couple of cars were totalled.

*What effect did the Depression have on you?*

I had none. I was lucky 'cause my father always had a tank full of gas and good tires on the truck, and I didn't lose any money, 'cause I didn't have any in 1929.

*What do you remember about wages and prices?*

Wages were very low. Any money the boys had--I had boys 12 to 15 years old working for me--and any money they would make would be very good for them. We had men working in the wintertime; they would get room and board. In the summertime, they got \$100.00 per month and room and board.

*How did you feel about America's Depression? While reading the newspapers and such?*

It didn't bother me at all, 'cause we were working, we had food and there was good entertainment at that time.

*What did you do for entertainment?*

Well, I was always interested in church, and the Young Luther League. So I was busy with that, and I enjoyed dancing very much. I'd go to dances; we had a group we used to go around with all the time.

*Did you go riding around in your cars?*

I don't think you'd call it riding around. We used to go to places. We never just drove around "whooping it up" like the kids do today.

*Did you hear of any strikes at this time, in the '30's?*

Yes, there was a big truck strike at the farmers market. They held up all the fruits and vegetables from the grocery stores. It was a shame the way the vegetables and fruit spoiled, and I remember very young boys, 15 to 18, the reserves, going down to the market and trying to break the strike. A lot of heads were knocked. They had guns and billy clubs. They fought the truck drivers and helpers and workers. They were rather big and the truck drivers were a pretty tough bunch of boys. I never got down and interfered with them. The grocerymen came out to our farm and picked up their produce at that time, so I was not directly involved.



*Mr. and Mrs. Henry Kesler on their wedding day, 1935. Courtesy Henry Kesler.*



## GROWING UP IN THE WINDOM NEIGHBORHOOD

BY GEN JOUBERT

Growing up in Windom, there were no parks or recreational facilities, and the neighborhood people were great about tolerating the kids. We made entertainment for a wide age group of kids. We used to have wiener roasts, cooking in fields or in front yards, frying potatoes, onions and apples for a supper or a night out. We were allowed to go into a farmer's field as long as we ate what we dug up—they did not complain if we did no damage. Watermelons, apples and corn were some of the things we procured to eat from the fields, eating on the street corners and playing under the arc lights in the harvest season. At Halloween, we did not treat—that was not started yet. But we did trick—we soaped windows and tipped garbage cans!

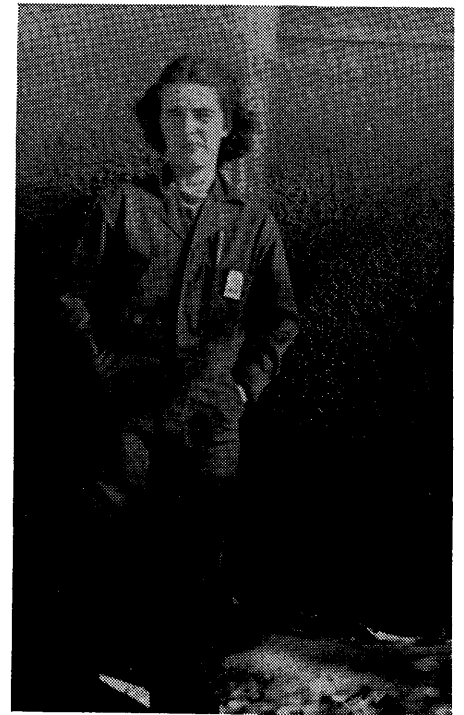
In 1923, when I was about 16 months old, my parents moved to Richfield--way out in the country, no telephone for about two blocks away, a house or two on several blocks nearby, farmland at the end of the block on the corner, and a sweet pea farm across a dirt road--if you could call it a road. Weeds were growing in the center, and there were ruts or just worn paths for First, Second, Stevens, Third, Clinton, Fourth and Fifth Avenues, between 60th and 62nd Streets. First and Fifth Avenues were only one block long. There was no 60th Street between Nicollet Avenue and Second Avenue. It was a swamp there, and later became a dump. In the 1950's, the 35W Interstate was built and the Diamond Lake Super Valu was put on the [site of] the former dump. [At that time], our neighborhood changed.

We had a "real neighborhood." People from Portland to Nicollet Avenue and many from as far west as Lyndale were friends. Everyone knew everyone else's children as well as their parents. The teenagers played baseball, gathered at the "Arc Light" [street light] on the corner of either 61st and Clinton or 61st and Second at dusk to play many games in the middle of the street: Pump Pump Pull-away, Sixty, Hide 'n' Seek, and Pussy Wants a Corner. Once in a while we would have to stop for a car to pass, but not very often. It was rare that we had trouble with one another. Every now and then a new family would move in as the neighborhood expanded, and they were most welcome to join our fun.

In the early days, no transportation came out past 48th and Nicollet. [At that time] my mother would walk from 61st and Fourth to 48th, with two babies under three years of age [in] a wagon, and two more children that could walk. There was no bridge crossing the Minnehaha Creek, so there was a steep hill to climb. It was a day's journey to go downtown or to Grandma's house. In the late 1920's, the streetcar came out to 54th. In the 1930's it came to 58th and in the 1950's to the city limits, at 62nd.

I started at Richfield Roosevelt School in February of 1926. It was the second year of the new school. I attended it through the name change to William Windom School, finishing in eighth grade. We had children from Fort Snelling, Richfield and Bloomington who were bussed to school. There were about 550 students in at least 16 classrooms, with large classes of 35 to 40 students. There was also cooking, sewing, woodworking, and mechanical drawing classrooms. We were divided into two classes per year, so we graduated twice a year. This all changed in the 1950's.

The janitors at the school also drove the school busses, so everybody knew them and they knew about half of the kids. No misbehaving or no hitching a ride to a friend's house. We had one and a half hours for lunch. If you were lucky and you rode the bus, you could take your lunch. Or if you happened to be privileged. Otherwise you had to brave the weather and get home [on foot], hoping to be dry and get back to school on time. We lived a mile from school, [yet] had to go home at lunch. The principal would not let us bring our lunch because we were "too many in the family"--five total--and he thought we'd fill the lunchroom. Also, we could not catch the bus on the corner that picked up the kindergarten kids for afternoon classes. We were always running to get back to school on time. In the 1930's, we could take a short cut through the Kesler farm, across Nicollet and through the dump. We poled across the swamp in tubs, trunks, wooden boxes, whatever it took to cut off about 15 minutes walk time. Many times we would get wet feet, because the tub or whatever we were using would leak. Of course, it was during the Depression, and we only had one pair of shoes. Sometimes we had to put cardboard in the soles because of holes. Some years, when it was dry, it was easy to cross



*Gen Joubert, circa 1943, in her work clothes for Northwestern Airlines.  
Courtesy Gen Joubert.*

the swamp area. There was a path worn through the weeds.

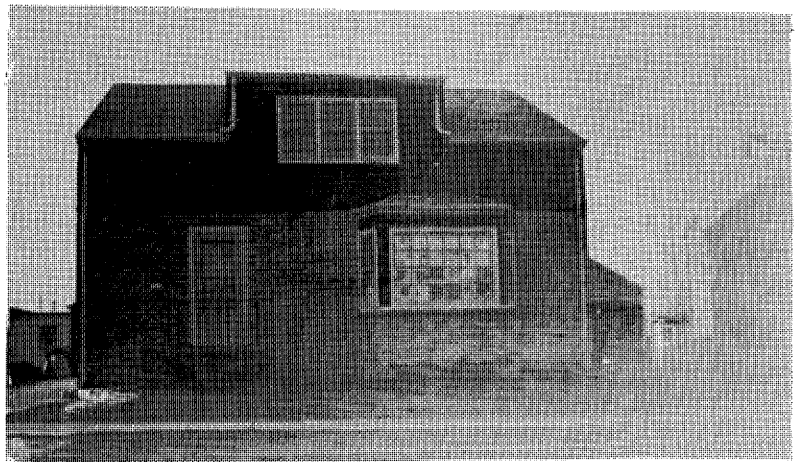
In the summer we played baseball, boys and girls together, in the fields. Sometimes we had to move a neighbor's cow, for a place to play. We used the dried cow pies for bases. In the winter we would walk to Pearl Park, [which had] no warming house at first. We would walk along Clinton, dark at night as there were few street lights, [and only] a few houses. But always we were a group of kids together. We had a curfew and most everyone followed it: 9:00 p.m. if you were under 16. In the 1930's, a man on 56th Street and Clinton built a toboggan slide and a ski jump. We brought our sleds, toboggan and skis, and he allowed us the use of his slide, as long as no one damaged it. We really had quite a slide down into Diamond Lake, which was a dried up swamp in those years. Then houses started surrounding the lot and we lost our sliding area.

In 1937, a man named Harold Robinson was interested in hockey. On some land he owned on Roslyn Place, he built a hockey rink and invited any neighbor boy that was interested in learning hockey [to play], at no expense to the family. He got a team together, paid for all electricity and water and supplies used to build the rink, and then proceeded to get other teams to play Windom. He set up games with Nicollet Park, Chicago Park, and then went to Richfield and Bloomington to get other teams. He also set up a game between our little team and Nicollet Park's team down at the Minneapolis Arena between quarters of the Minneapolis Hockey Team's regularly played game with the Chicago Blackhawks. They played two 20 minute periods. In 1938, he set up a girls' hockey team and recruited some girls from Richfield to play at a "winter carnival" that initiated the start of a hockey rink at Richfield and a park at 68th and Portland, which is now where Richfield City Hall stands.

In the 1930's, during the Depression, we had a lot of fun as young kids. We were allowed, by the farmers who were close by, to go into their fields and dig potatoes or pick their field corn, for cookouts that we had in our yards. They never complained as long as we didn't waste or destroy things. We took apples and potatoes, and fried them along with onions, or boiled field corn, for a meal, or picnic fun. We also had a watermelon field nearby that was raided every year. It was on Portland between 59th and 60th Streets. We also had access to cantaloupe, which we called muskmelon. Sometimes we really feasted!

We had bonfires in the woods at 58th and Portland, cutting down dead trees for the fires. We had a real sense of community, no trouble with the law. No one that grew up around our area got into trouble. The teenagers who worked picked potatoes, peppers, cucumbers, sweet peas, peonies, radishes, weeds, etc. They probably made 50 cents for an eight to 10 hour day. Babysitters were lucky to get 10 cents an hour. As a member of a large family, we did handbills for a grocery store to help pay for family groceries. We also changed storm windows for 10 cents a window, shoveled snow, and mowed lawns, boys and girls alike. My father had no job, and eight children. Then Roosevelt started the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Father worked at that for a time. Times were bad for many families then.

During my high school days, I worked during my study hour correcting papers for \$6.00 per month, or about 30 cents per day, to help pay for school books and supplies. At that time, books were not supplied to students; you could rent or buy them. Also, I babysat after school each day until 9 p.m., then went home to do homework. When I graduated in 1940, jobs were still hard to come by. So I worked for the National Youth Administration (NYA), another program started by F.D.R. I worked in North Minneapolis, tearing up World War I army blankets into two inch strips. I then sewed them together, rolled them in balls, then wove them into rugs. These were sold or given to families. My brother learned to cut and lay stone on the same program. He helped build the stone bridges across the Minnehaha Creek along the Minnehaha Parkway, to Lake Nokomis. We earned \$20.00, working three weeks per month, then looked for another job the other week. Ten dollars of the money we earned went to our parents; the rest was for transportation and clothes. Streetcar tokens at that time were 12 for \$1.00.

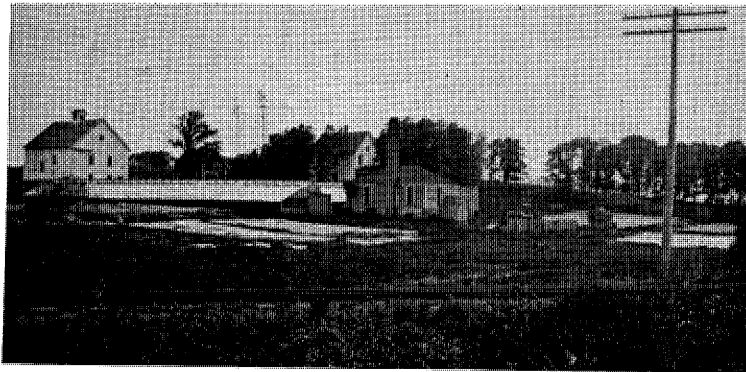


*Ben and Gen Joubert's home, at 6044 Wentworth, after the front was finished in 1956. Ben built the house completely by himself. Courtesy Gen Joubert.*

In the mid-1930's, the WPA built roads all around the southern Minneapolis area. They also put in the curbs. In the late 1940's, the main gas line was extended to the city limits, also water was put into the streets. But at the edge of the city, curbs were not put in until the 1950's, and some areas did not get the city water and sewer until the 1950's as well. In 1953, the Nicollet Village Complex was built, which is now known as Windom Gables Apartments. There was also Diamond Lake Super Value, Diamond Lake Bowling Alley, and Park Lane Florist Shop. The Post Office was on 60th and Nicollet, where the Bridge Center is today. [As businesses went up], houses were moved from 61st and Nicollet to 60th and Wentworth. A house on 59th and Second was also moved to this same block.

Many changes happened in the 1960's and 1970's. The 1980's have gone swiftly, but we still have contact with friends from the 1920's and 1930's. About 1980, a group from Richfield Lutheran Church decided it would be nice to have a reunion of the "old neighborhood"--kids that played on the corner, went to school together, etc. We started rounding up old acquaintances and came up with about 75 names all over the United States. We contacted them and have had as many as 85 old timers plus their spouses attend the annual August Old Neighborhood Picnic, rain or shine! We also have a spring event: we gather at a restaurant for a Windom Neighbors get together. Our ages are from the 60's to the 90's.

Now that's a neighborhood remembrance!



*Kesler Farm, with Dan Patch railroad tracks in foreground (now Nicollet Avenue), circa 1920's. Courtesy Henry Kesler.*

### **EDWARD KRIGBAUM: LIFELONG WINDOM RESIDENT**

Edward J. Krigbaum, who was born October 7, 1917, has lived in the Windom area his entire life. Edward grew up at 5800 Portland Avenue South, which, prior to the 35W Freeway construction, was considered part of the Windom neighborhood. He is currently living in a home at 57th Street and Garfield Avenue. He is married, and has four children. Edward was a home builder, as well as being employed by the City of Minneapolis as a building inspector for many years until his retirement.

Edward's childhood home was initially located on Diamond Lake, and he recalls that the house was moved for the building of a church. It was this move, house and all, that brought his family to the Windom area. He was active in the community life of the neighborhood, and belonged to the Richfield Lutheran Church, the Freetimers, the Minnehaha Masonic Lodge and the Seniors of Shrine.

As a student, Edward attended the Windom School, which was called the Roosevelt School at that time, then attended nearby Ramsey Junior High and Washburn High School. He enjoyed playing baseball, football and hockey. Then in 1941, he was drafted into the military service. As a medical sergeant in the Air Force, he served in many countries, including Ireland, England, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Sicily, Corsica and Italy. Edward received 12 battle stars for his commendable military service.

Edward remembers many businesses in the Windom of the past, particularly Krigbaum's Meat Market (owned by his father), Pearson Grocery, Fritz Carlson's Hardware and the Richfield Bank. He also remembers riding the Dan Patch Railroad line and its stop in Windom at Nicollet Avenue and 54th Street.

A longtime confirmed member of Richfield Lutheran Church, Edward witnessed the move from the original church, a small basement structure on 58th and Blaisdell (which became the home of Windom School), to the new and much larger church structure, built on 58th and Wentworth. "The congregation marched up 58th Street to the new church," he recalls, "with Reverend Wicklund and Reverend Sanders Peterson." The most prominent landmarks that Edward remembers from Windom were the Kesler Tomato Farm [see picture above], the Franklin Peony Farm, the Hallenback Farms and Bachman's Nursery. ♪



Arvid Pearson in his back yard, at 5824 Pleasant Avenue South, circa 1924. House is now owned by Bill and Mary Petersen. The steeple in the background is Richfield Methodist Church. Courtesy Mary and Bill Petersen.

## PROMINENT LANDMARKS AND CITIZENS

### WELL-KNOWN CITIZENS

Windom has had its share of hometown celebrities. A few of these include: **Rev. George (Judd) Lundquist**, head of the Minnesota Synod of the United Lutheran Church of America. Judd lived on 60th Street and Stevens Avenue and as a child went to church Richfield Lutheran; **Rev. H. Kindem** is another well-known Lutheran Church minister; **Bob Provost**, A Windom School student, is one of the department heads at the Department of Natural Resources; **Bob Polk**, from Windom, was a trainer for the Minnesota Lakers Basketball Team before they were sold to Los Angeles; **Warren Ajax**, Windom School alumni, was a player with the Minnesota Lakers Basketball Team; and **Gordon Bowen**, ex-mayor of Richfield, attended Windom School in his youth. Well-known families in the neighborhood include the **Kesler's**, (Henry Kesler's parents), owners of a 17 acre truck farm in the area; the **Carlson's**, who owned Carlson Hardware; the **Krigbaum's**, owners of Krigbaum's Market; the **Sundelius'**, owners of Sundelius Sweet Pea Farm; and the **Truax's**, who owned the gas station/changing station for the Nicollet Streetcar service and Dan Patch Railroad lines.

### PROMINENT LANDMARKS

In 1992, as a part of a Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization initiative, a list of recognized historic resources in Windom was compiled by the Minneapolis Heritage Preservation Commission. Some of the buildings designated were the **Annunciation Church, Windom School, Richfield Methodist Church and Enga Funeral Chapel**. Several homes were also designated in the Windom area, including:

<i>Address</i>	<i>Date Built</i>	<i>Description</i>
414 W. Diamond Lake Rd.	1910	Early suburban house
108 W. Diamond Lake Rd.	1895	Colonial revival house
305 W. Diamond Lake Rd.	1915	Craftsman bungalow
5649 Pleasant Avenue	1925	Medieval stucco bungalow
5905 Pleasant Avenue	1925	Dutch colonial house (moved from original site during 35W Freeway construction)
5728 Stevens Avenue	1930	Bungalow

Designation is the first step in historical preservation of a site. Windom hopes to accomplish preservation status with some of the above sites in the future, following the lead of the Richfield Historical Society. ♪

## WINDOM MEANS BUSINESS

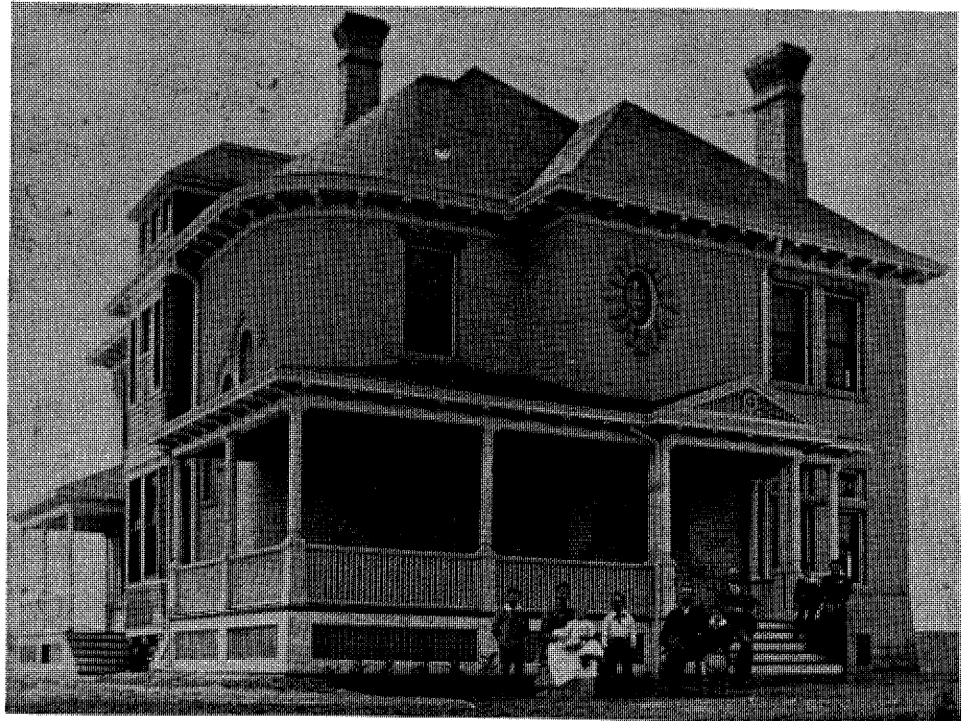
Windom has had a very strong business community throughout the past century, with business owners and local neighbors working together to maintain a high quality of living in the neighborhood. As the years have passed, the types of businesses have changed, and the faces have changed; sons and daughters have replaced their parents, the businesses have been sold to new owners, or in some cases the owners have quietly closed their doors to make way for a new era. The business districts of Windom are located along Nicollet Avenue and Lyndale Avenue. In the following short profiles, a few of the well-known businesses with long-standing reputations in the Windom community are highlighted.

### SALK DRUG

For 47 years, Salk Drug served the Windom community from its location at 54th Street and Lyndale Avenue. Edward Salk graduated from pharmacy school at the University of Minnesota and bought the drugstore in 1946. He and his wife, Roz, lived across the street, upstairs from a bakery formerly located on the corner now occupied by Walgreens. In 1949 disaster struck; the entire building burned to the ground, taking a year to rebuild. During this time, Mr. Salk kept filling prescriptions upstairs from a nearby variety store. Throughout the years, Mr. Salk was assisted at the store by his wife, Roz, and two daughters, Shelley and Carla. Illness forced him to retire in 1982, but he continued to come to the store every day until his death in 1989. At one time, there were nine corner drugstores within a five mile radius of Windom but Salk Drug continued to prosper. The Salks contributed their nearly 50 years of success to good business sense and a commitment to a loyal group of neighborhood customers. The store closed its doors permanently in 1992.

### BACHMAN'S

It was 1882 when Henry Bachman stepped off the train in Minneapolis. He was 24 years old, spoke no English (being from Germany), and was penniless. But he had family, and it would be family, along with his own determination, that would one day establish his name as one of the largest retail florist and nursery operations in the world. Henry Bachman came to Minnesota during the peak year of German immigration to this state. Nearly 260,000 Germans arrived in 1882, on a route that took them by rail from New York through Cleveland and Chicago to St. Paul. Statewide, it has been estimated that one out of every five Minnesotans is of German stock to this day. Bachman began by working for his mother's brother, Frederick Busch, who owned a vegetable and garden business in Richfield. He earned about \$15 a month, learning about the gardening business. After a year he quit to work for the Hillman Brothers, a produce commission house in Minneapolis, and expanded his knowledge about produce marketing.



*The Henry Bachman clan, in front of their original home, at 60th Street and Lyndale Avenue. Photo circa 1894. Courtesy Doris Bachman.*

Two years after arriving in the area, Bachman married Hattie Dietrich, on October 23, 1884, following a year-long courtship. With his wife at his side, Henry went into business in 1885. Henry bought four acres of good farm land in Windom, on 61st Street and Lyndale Avenue. Hattie used seamstress money she had saved to buy horses for clearing the land. Initially, Bachman's was a produce business, growing such foods as potatoes, lettuce, onions, squash and cabbage. The hard work paid off with modest success, even from the first year in business. By 1895, the company had 150 hotbeds and 11 greenhouses, with three of their total 44 acres under glass. To heat the greenhouses, coal was required, as well as lumber for building; deliveries had to be made by horse and wagon. The produce was also delivered in the same, slow manner, and spoilage was a major con-



cern. As a consequence, in 1911, the Bachman farm got its own railroad spur, with the Minneapolis, St. Paul, Rochester, Dubuque Electric Traction Company (Dan Patch). The train brought in coal to heat the greenhouses and carried out squash and potatoes to Boston and New York. In later years, the train brought peat moss in bulk and bags, and when the boiler was converted from coal to oil, the train brought in tankers of fuel oil. During the 1930's, open cars brought cattle manure from South St. Paul for the business. Spoilage was always a worry, and when Bachman, Sr. shipped squash to the east coast during the winter, he rode on the train himself so he could keep a stove burning and his produce from freezing.

Bachman's entire brood was expected to work with their parents, and chores were divided according to gender. The three girls worked with their mother in the house at 60th and Lyndale [see photo, page 24], preparing meals and doing laundry for not only their immediate family, but all the boarders hired to work the field as well. They also clerked the store and spent time learning the art of floral arranging. The five boys worked in the fields and greenhouses. A favorite part of their work was driving the farm vehicles, which all of them were readily doing by 12 years of age. Later, they drove the delivery truck, with the oldest in the driver's seat and the others handling packages and running up to the houses to make deliveries. By 1910, Henry Bachman's sons were beginning to assume some control of the business. Each of them found niches according to their interests and abilities. One of the sons, Albert, decided to diverge from the produce market. Instead of growing vegetables, he grew flowers. It was a decision that would have a significant impact on the future growth of the company. Albert began by tying bunches of carnations and selling them outside the gates of Oak Hill Cemetery in Windom, located across the street from Bachman's. His profit did not initially impress his brothers. But Albert and his wife Olga persisted, building their own carnation house in 1924, at a cost of \$10,000. Soon, Albert was offering his flowers right alongside the vegetables, and, to the others' surprise, there was a demand for them. Moreover, the flowers were showing a clear profit. In a short time, Albert was earning more from a single bench of flowers than his brothers earned from an entire greenhouse of vegetables.

Throughout the 1920's, vegetables were gradually phased out, with carnations, roses and other flowers taking over the greenhouse space, and the idea of a retail shop took hold. In 1927, the first Bachman's store was built on the Lyndale Avenue site at 60th Street (where the company still does business). One of the most demanding tasks was working in the gladiola fields. Over the course of a season, the flowers had to be planted, weeded, watered, sprayed, cut and carried. Just before the frost, the bulbs had to be dug, hauled and carried, dried, then cleaned, dipped, dried again and stored. Even today, third generation Bachmans in their 60's vividly recall the hot summer days of hand-weeding the long and seemingly endless rows of gladioli.

Even though Henry was head of a thriving business, he had always been an asthma sufferer, and by 1916, he and his wife had decided to make a move to California. He relinquished primary control of the business to his sons, continuing to come up during the summer months to lend his business acumen and expertise. After World War II, the business went through a transitional phase, with the third generation sons taking their place as the business heads. In addition to acquiring more land, and opening another store, the name was changed from Henry Bachman's Sons to Bachman's Inc. and for the first time, formal business agreements were drawn

### WHY IS RICHFIELD IN THE NAME OF SO SO MANY WINDOM INSTITUTIONS?

*The Richfield Lutheran Church was established in 1915, when Richfield still claimed the area now known as Windom. The church has moved three times, but its location continues to be in the Windom area, currently at 60th Street and Nicollet Avenue. The name, however, has not been changed. "Minneapolis' expansion to 62nd Street caught us with the wrong name," said Rev. H.T. Rasmussen, pastor of Richfield Lutheran in 1990, "but for reasons of church records, births, deaths, marriages, it would become quite confusing if we had changed our name." Apparently several other churches and businesses felt the same way, for instance: the Richfield United Methodist Church and Richfield Appliance.*

*Richfield Appliance is another fifty-years-plus business in the Windom neighborhood, originally established in the 1930's. When one of the two original owners passed away, the other retired and the business was sold to Tom Divine and Gordon Radtke, who decided to keep the original name. "It's pretty hard to change a name," said Divine. "We've been going years and years, been advertising as Richfield Appliance and what not. We've got customers who've been buying here for years and years and years, some who used to buy from the original guys. We've serviced appliances we sold 20-25 years ago."*

*Diamond Lake Hardware, originally called Richfield Hardware, has been operating a hardware business at 54th Street and Nicollet since the 1920's. Diamond Lake Hardware continues to be a family tradition, having been passed down from Fritz Carlson, to his son Virgil, in 1952. "Father was a tinsmith in the Franklin Avenue area making pots and pans. Then he started the tin shop and hardware store," Carlson noted in 1992. "He did a lot of tinning, gutter and furnace work, then less and less tinning and more retail hardware and appliance."*

*Another historic business in Windom is Nicoloff's Shoes and Repair, at 5417 Nicollet Avenue, established 1932. Nicoloff's Shoes and Repair has also been passed down as a family business. Chris Nicoloff took over the shop in 1948, after his father, a shoemaker from Bulgaria, had run it for 16 years. [Source: Minneapolis Midweek Sun newspaper article, February 14, 1974.]*



up by the cousins. In 1960, the firm became involved in a popular winter event for Twin Citians--the Dayton's Bachman's Flower Show. Still held to this day, the shows feature up to 150,000 blooms, in 100 varieties. In 1968, Bachman's introduced the marketing of cut flowers to grocery stores, via Bachman's **European Flower Markets™**. The subsidiary, which sold cut flowers and plants within other stores, quickly caught on, and within three years, there were 22 in operation. In the 1970's, Pillsbury bought the subsidiary, but sold it back to Bachman's five years later, claiming the selling of fresh flowers was more labor intensive and expensive than they had anticipated. However, in 1984, 48 European Flowers Markets™ generated \$7.5 million in sales for Bachman's Inc. Overall sales for the company in the mid-80's were \$55 million, and as of 1995 the company is continuing to be an international leader in retail florist and nursery operations. [Source: Purple Packages: Bachman's 100 Years (1985).]

### **KLIER'S NURSERY & GARDEN**

Bachman's is not the only plant nursery that boasts a long history in Windom. Back in the days of the Depression, when Windom was still a part of Richfield, the Klier brothers, Lawrence and Henry, who were long time residents of the area as well, started a small nursery on Nicollet at 59th Street. The business, Klier's Nursery & Garden, is still going strong, run by Henry's son, Howard Klier. The building it occupies has had many overhauls and additions made, due to the ever-increasing business flow. Klier's handles products to meet the outdoor needs of the community for all seasons of the year.

### **MARTIN MOTOR**

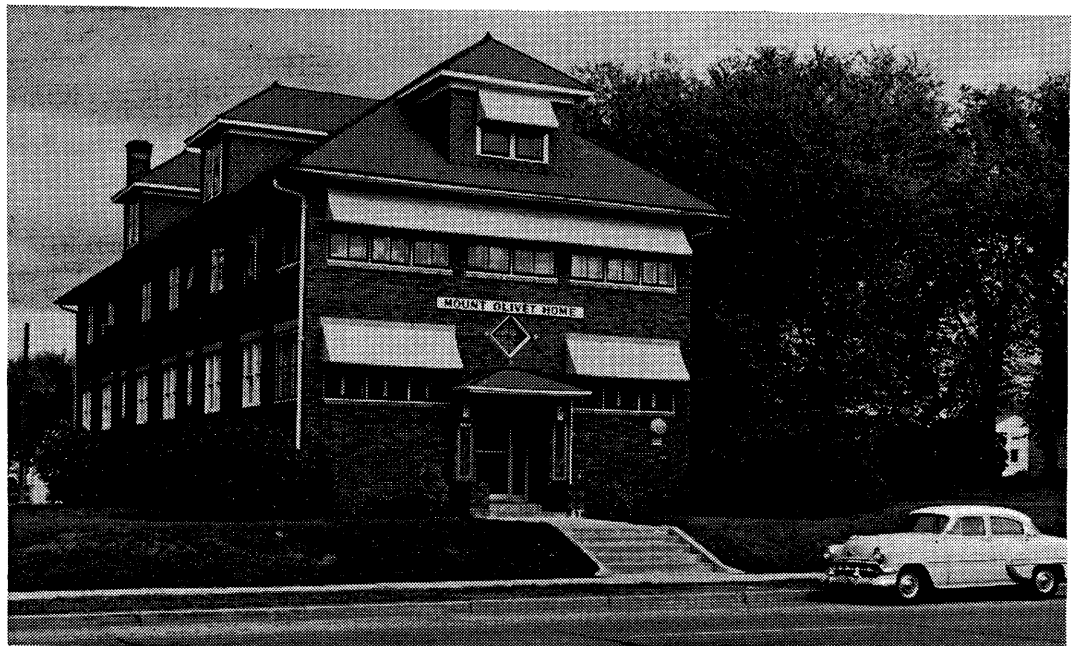
In 1921, W. T. Martin, a young farm boy from near Little Falls, Minnesota, fixed his first car—his uncle's model T Ford. Six years later he landed a job as a mechanic with Harrington Huppmobile in Minneapolis, lying about his age to get the job. After a few years, in 1931, Martin started his own business, moving the business in 1950 into the Windom area, at 6030 Nicollet Avenue. For the first three years it was known as Shenandoah Garage, then was changed to Martin Motor, which it is still called today. Martin's two sons run the shop these days, servicing foreign and domestic cars and running a towing service.

### **ENGFER AUTOMOTIVE**

John Engfer has been operating Engfer Automotive at 58th Street and Nicollet Avenue since 1963. Engfer Automotive is a family business, with John's wife, Virginia, and son, Paul, also involved in the business. The company offers a complete mechanical service for cars, and John, a past president of the independent Garage Owners Association, is also interested in antique car work.

### **LEHMAN'S GARAGE**

Lawrence and Nels Lehman opened a filling station at 5419 Lyndale Avenue in 1917. In 1919, a four-stall garage was added to the business, which was then named Lehman's Garage. In the coming years, a repair shop and other additions were added, with the business going strong. In the 1940's, the business became a partnership between the two Lehman sons, Fred and Edward. Two years after their father passed away, in 1950, the sons decided to make the business a corporation. A new building was added in 1957, followed by a paint shop in 1961. In 1968, Lehman's purchased the neighboring building, previously in business as Simmons Lumberyard, to make a parking lot. Lehman's Garage was, for many years, the largest independent garage in Minnesota. In 1969 the business was sold to Don Morgan and Dick Cossette. As of 1979, Cossette

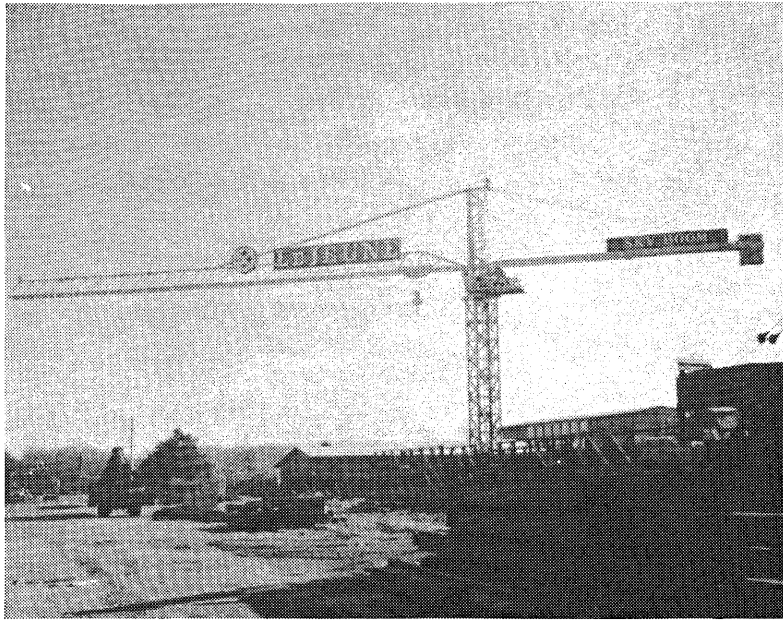


*Mt. Olivet Home: This building, originally a vocational hospital, was given to Mt. Olivet Lutheran Church in the 1950's with the stipulation that the building continue to be used for the elderly. Hardly recognizable as the same building today, the very modern Mt. Olivet Senior Care facility is home to a large retirement community. Photo circa 1958. Courtesy Mt. Olivet Senior Care.*

became the sole owner, continuing to provide full automotive services for Windom and other communities. [Source for above four profiles: Various articles in Windom Community News, 1990-1994.]

## LE JEUNE STEEL COMPANY

The Le Jeune Steel Company has been a major business in the Windom area since 1945. The company was started by a man named Louis Le Jeune, who was born in Louisiana, in the heart of "Cajun Country."



*The Le Jeune "skyboom" was a landmark in Windom until the 1970's, when it was torn down for business expansion. Photo circa 1955. Courtesy Mike Le Jeune.*

Louis was a pipe fitter in Chicago in his early adult years, but decided to make a move to Indianapolis, hearing work was more plentiful there. His transportation was a train--not as a passenger but as a 'hitcher'--and he accidentally hopped off the freight train in Minneapolis, where he remained for the next several decades. He started out with a garage in Robbinsdale, specializing in welding. Shortly after this, he moved to the Windom location, on 60th Street and Nicollet Avenue, buying a house and opening a shop behind it. As a result of expansion, the Le Jeune home was eventually moved across the street to a vacant lot. Recently the home was torn down to make way for the Cub Foods Grocery Complex. When Louis retired in 1968, his two sons, Laurence and Tom, bought the company. As a result of their efforts, the business expanded, working with Rauenhurst Co., a contractor that would later become Opus, a national leader in the contracting business.

The company boasted \$7 million in sales by 1968. Just a decade later, Laurence would buy

out his brother Tom for approximately \$17 million. Within a few years, he had put a huge addition onto the office, creating a crane runway. The sky boom, which had been a neighborhood landmark for several decades, was torn down in the process. During the business recession of the early 1980's, nearly every large steel fabricator went under in Minneapolis, but Le Jeune managed to stay afloat, in spite of the recent costly additions. Then with a building boom that lasted from the mid-1980's to 1990, the company began to be profitable again. Le Jeune Steel has been involved in the construction of such Minneapolis landmarks as the Piper Tower, the AT&T Tower, Norwest Center, Minneapolis Convention Center, Plaza 7 Hotel, Minneapolis Marriott Hotel, and most recently, the Mall of America. In 1989, Laurence Le Jeune sold the business to Lee Anderson, but grandson Mike Le Jeune carries on the family tradition in his position as company president.

## PERKINS FAMILY RESTAURANT

The Perkins Family Restaurant, at 60th Street and Nicollet Avenue, is of special historic significance. Initially, in the 1950's, the restaurant was a food drive-in owned by a local family, the Farnham's. Later, the business was bought by Perkins, becoming a full-scale restaurant. This particular Perkins is actually the birth place of the national chain. The restaurant, open 24 hours, still specializes in good old, plain American food, and is now one of a huge franchise of Perkins Restaurants across the country.

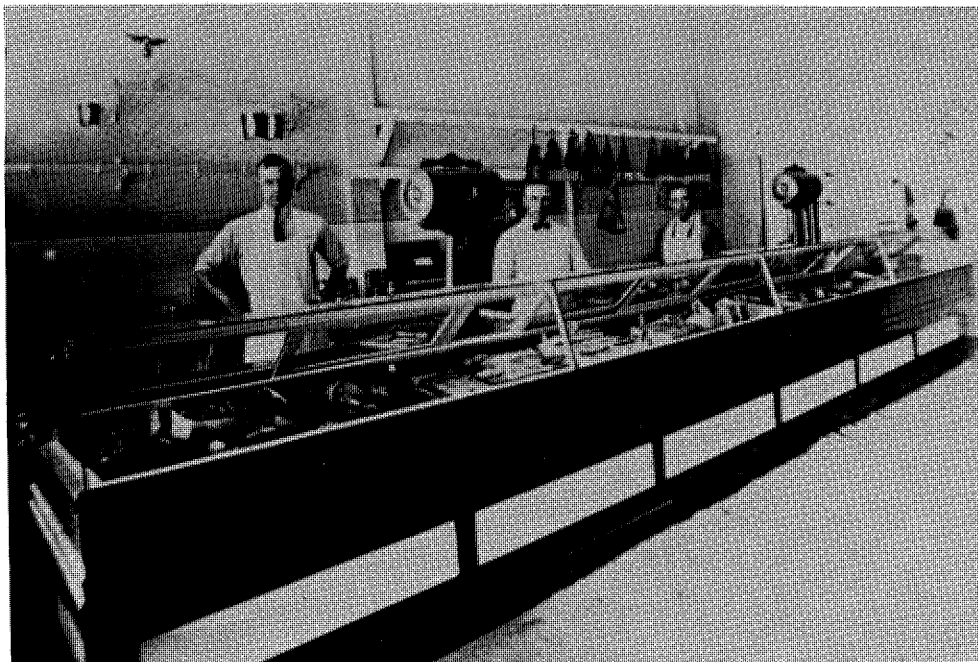
## SUNDELIUS SWEET PEA FARM

Gen Joubert remembers working on this flower farm in Windom: "We had the Sundelius Sweet Pea Farm, on 61st to 62nd Street and from Portland Avenue to 4th Avenue. They had about three acres of sweet peas on this site, plus some lots on 1st Avenue and 61st Street. In the summer of 1936, I went to work for them. I was 14 years old, and would get up at day break, pick the sweet peas, with at least three blossoms on each stem, to put in bundles of 100. If there were not three or more blossoms, I picked them off or discarded them. The going price was one cent per 100 stems. When it got too warm to be out in the sun, or if we had covered the field, you could quit for the day. Sometimes you could make a whole 25 cents for the day!" At night I would return and clean the blossoms, then put them in containers with dye in them. At that time, there were only pink, white and pale blue blossoms. We would dye them to be taken to market early the next morning for sale. We usually worked seven days a week, since it was a short growing season and we worked when we could. Mr. Sundelius also grew gladioli for the flower market. Up until the late 40's, he grew sweet peas on this site. His home is still standing on 61st Street and Portland Avenue, before the 62 Crosstown Highway, on the northwest side."

## REMEMBERING WINDOM'S BUSINESSES OF THE PAST . . .

Windom has traditionally been a mixture of family homes and businesses, relying on each other in a mutually beneficial manner. While many of the more prominent businesses were already mentioned, many more existed in Windom of old. How many of the following businesses do you remember? Here is a partial listing of Windom's businesses from eras gone by:

**Doctors and Dentists:** Dr. L.A. Shoenleben, 5349 Lyndale, 20's; Dr. John A. Lyng, 5439 Lyndale, 20's; Dr. Norval W. Haddow, 5403 Lyndale, 20's; Dr. Peter Schultz, 30's; Dr. H.J. Hanson, 6 East Diamond Lake, 20's; Dr. W.S. Lindsly, 6 East Diamond Lake, 20's. **Veterinarians:** W.N. Blue Cross Animal Hospital, 54th & Lyndale, 40's-present; Diamond Lake Animal Hospital, 58th & Nicollet, 1983-present. **Nursing Homes:** Walker South (originally Willows Nursing Home), 62nd & Lyndale, 60's-present; Mount Olivet Senior Care, 30's-present. **Restaurants:** The Coffee Cup, 5408 Lyndale, 20's; Lunches At All Hours, 5423 Lyndale, 20's; Mary Hunt Food Shop, No. 2, 904 West 54th, 20's; The Kettle Pot & Pan Food Shop, 5413 Nicollet, 20's; Lyndale Cafe, 5406 Lyndale, 30's; Bowen's Cafe, 5403 Lyndale, 1914-20's. **Jewelers:** J.A. Hustad, 5320 Lyndale, 20's; **Real Estate Sales & Insurance:** Joe H. Clark Real Estate & Insurance, 5421 Nicollet, 20's. **Greenhouses:** Lynnhurst Greenhouse, 55th & Lyndale, 20's; Franklin Nursery, 60th & Portland, 30's; Park Lane Florist, 60th & Nicollet, 30's. **Grocery Stores:** W.L. Pelling, 5456 Nicollet, 20's-40's; Richfield United Grocery, 5429 Nicollet, 20's; Schwallen's Grocery, 9 East Nicollet; 1927-40's; Hodroff's, 54th & Nicollet, 30's-50's; Marshall's Grocery, 3 East 58th; Brown's Grocery, 6037 Portland, 20's-50's; Hecht Grocery (originally R.V. Noland's), 6040 Nicollet, 40's-50's; Diamond Lake Super Valu, 59th & Nicollet, 50's-'93; E.G. Spencers, 5229 Lyndale, 40's; Barr's Grocery, 56th & Wentworth, 30's; O.H. Landin Food Store, 5400 Lyndale, 30's; Bowen's Grocery, 5403 Lyndale, 1914-20's; National Tea Co., 5338 Lyndale, 20's; S.O.S. Grocery, 5402 Lyndale, 20's; Gold's Grocery, Diamond Lake & Nicollet, 30's-40's. **Meat Markets:** Dawson & Weigand, 5404 Lyndale, 20's; Diamond Lake Meat Shop, 5454 Nicollet, 20's; Richfield Meat Market, 5427 Nicollet, 20's; Bischoff Meat Market, 5748 Nicollet, 30's-40's; Henry Bischel, 5750 Nicollet, 30's; Black Hawk Meat Market, 5404 Nicollet, 30's. **Bakeries:** Richfield Bakery, 5423 Nicollet, 20's; Town's Edge Bakery & Food Shop, 5415 Nicollet, 20's. **Ice Station:** Ed Olmstead's, 7 East 58th, 30's. **Hardware Stores:** Alleman Hardware (originally Wells Hardware), 5400 Lyndale, 20's. **Pharmacies:** Butler Drug (originally Richfield Pharmacy), 54th & Nicollet, 30's-80's; Dodd's Drug Store, 5758 Nicollet, 30's-50's; Leo Manning, Diamond Lake & Lyndale, 20's-'93; Richfield Pharmacy, 5431 Nicollet, 20's-'80s. **Tailors and Dry Cleaners:** Richfield Tailors, 5456 Nicollet, 20's; Tech Art Shoppe, 5415 Nicollet (dry cleaning, cards and gifts), 20's; Al Pearson: Tailor, 3 East Diamond Lake, 30's; Town's Edge Tailors/Dry Cleaning, 5421 Nicollet, 30's-present; **Dressmaker:** Mrs. Knutson, 5470 Nicollet, 30's. **Upholstery & Drapes:** L.B. Brown, 5714 Pillsbury, 20's; Esther Brown, 5830 Pleasant, 50's-60's. **Shoe Repair:** Alberty Shoe Repair, 6 East Diamond Lake, 20's. **Funeral Parlors:** Enga Funeral Chapel (site of original Mayflower Church), 70's-present; Gill Brothers Funeral Chapel, 50's-present. **Electric Contractor:** American Electric, 5415 Nicollet, 30's-present; Electric Contractor, 136 West 56th, 20's; **Paper Hanger:** W.G. Bergman, 6100 Lyndale, 20's; **Plumbing/Heating:** Klingelhuts Plumbing, 5320 Lyndale, 20's-40's; Twin City Plumbing & Heating, 5401 Nicollet, 20's; Aqua City, 20's; Hultgren's, 5428 Nicollet, 1916-30's. **Well Drillers:** F.W. Renner, 54th & Stevens, 20's; Hemphill, 5817 Nicollet, 1914-20's. **Builders:** Robert W. Gram, 5401 S. 1st, 20's. **Coal/Fuel Companies:** P.G. Speakes, 60th & Pleasant, 20's; Hart Coal Company, 61st & Pleasant, 1926-50's; Campbell Coal Co., 6013 Pleasant, 30's; Kuntz Oil Co., 5444 Nicollet, 30's. **Lumber Yards:** R.B. Thompson Lumber, 61st & Pillsbury (moved from 5429 Lyndale), 30's-'89; Simmons Lumber, 54th & Nicollet, 20's-30's; Richfield Yards, Nicollet, 20's. **Cement/Stone Suppliers:** Arvid Pearson Cement [see photo, p. 28], 5824 Pleasant, 40's-50's; Acme Stone Co., 60th & Grand, 30's. **Feed Stores:** PL. Coulliard & Son, 5320 Lyndale, 20's. **Dry Goods:** Marylou Hat Shoppe, 5403 Lyndale, 20's; Legenfield Dry Goods, 54th & Lyndale, 20's; Richfield Dry Goods, 5452 Nicollet, 20's. **Auto Sales:** Leck Motors, 5420 Lyndale, 20's; Rice Motors (originally Richfield Motor Co.), 54th & Nicollet, 20's-30's; Nonn Chevrolet, 5425 Nicollet, 30's.



Eddie's Market, Diamond Lake and Nicollet Avenue, circa 1925. Courtesy Eddie Krigbaum, Jr.

**Gas Stations:** Richfield Oil Co., 5407 Lyndale, 20's; W.P. Truax Gas/Grocery Station, 5801 Nicollet, 20's-60's; Townsend Oil Co., 5407 Lyndale, 20's; Holiday Station (originally Joe Henenan's), 20's-present. **Garages:** Robertson's Garage (originally Lyndale Parkway Garage), 5302 Lyndale, 20's. **Barber and Beauty Shops:** Harry's Shop: Shingling and Bobbing, 614 West Diamond Lake until 1926, then 5636 Lyndale, 1926-30's; Care of the Hair Shop, 6 East Diamond Lake, 20's; Bud Hedtke: Barber, 54th & Nicollet, 20's; L.A. Stetler Barber, 5460 Nicollet, 20's; Austin Barber Shop, 28 West 58th, 30's-50's; Redfield Barber & Beauty, 5408 Nicollet, 30's; Reed Huthe, 54th & Nicollet, 20's; Bowen's Beauty Barber Shop, 5403 Lyndale, 1914-20's. ♪

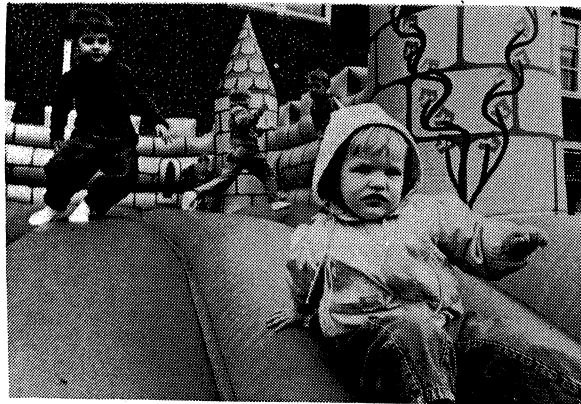


## HOUSING/HOMES

The Windom neighborhood offers a variety of housing options. While single family homes, both owned and rented, are in the majority, there are also affordable multi-unit complexes with modern and comfortable apartments available. Windom is always looking for more families ready to buy beautiful neighborhood homes! Encouraging incentives for home owners include a Minnesota State Property Tax Refund Program. And for first-time home buyers, the Minneapolis Community Development Agency offers very attractive loan options.

## ACTIVITIES/RECREATION

A widely anticipated event by members of Windom as well as many surrounding neighborhoods, the annual **Windom Block Party** was created as a means of bringing neighbors closer together. The Windom Block Party is held each May and features a children's parade, musical entertainment by children and adults, group games, and a variety of food booths. As a part of **National Night Out** in August, Windom closes down several of its neighborhood streets with block parties and picnics. For recreation and sports enthusiasts, Windom is located just two blocks south of Minnehaha Creek, famous for its



Children play at the annual Windom Block Party [courtesy Southwest Journal].

## NEIGHBORING PARKS

- **Armatage** (57th St. & Russell)
- **Kenny** (58th St. & Fremont)
- **Lynnhurst** (1345 W. Minnehaha Pkwy.)
- **Pearl** (414 E. Diamond Lake Road)

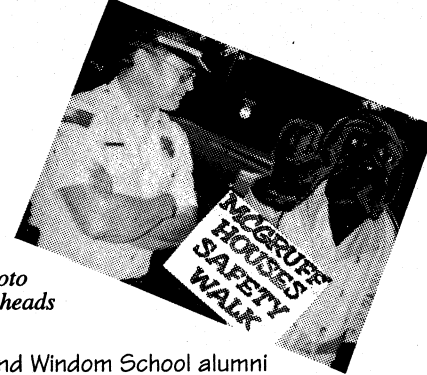


Pictured clockwise above from left: Windom Block Party Parade (courtesy Windom Community News); Ben and Gen Joubert outside their Windom home (Staff photo by Charles Bjorgen, copyright 1993, Star Tribune/Minneapolis-St. Paul); and McGruff heads up a neighborhood Safety Walk (courtesy Windom Community News).

miles of groomed bike/roller skating and walking/jogging paths. There are also several city lakes, with pedestrian paths and playgrounds, just a hop, skip and a jump away, such as **Lake Nokomis** and **Lake Harriet**. A variety of recreational activities take place at the lakes, such as swimming, sailing, windsurfing, and group sports in the summer, figure and hockey skating, cross country skiing and sledding in the winter. For indoor fun, check out the nearby **Boulevard Theatre** (55th Street & Lyndale Avenue), a movie theater built in 1930 that still shows movies--at a budget price! For the civic-minded, the **Windom Community Council** holds monthly meetings, bringing concerned residents together to plan for the future of the community and ensure its high quality of living.

## SENIOR SERVICES

Seniors in Windom are active and involved. The **Senior Dining Program** holds luncheon meetings every weekday at the Mayflower Church (on Diamond Lake Road), providing dining and entertainment for seniors at a very affordable price. At the annual **Old Neighborhood Picnic**, resi-



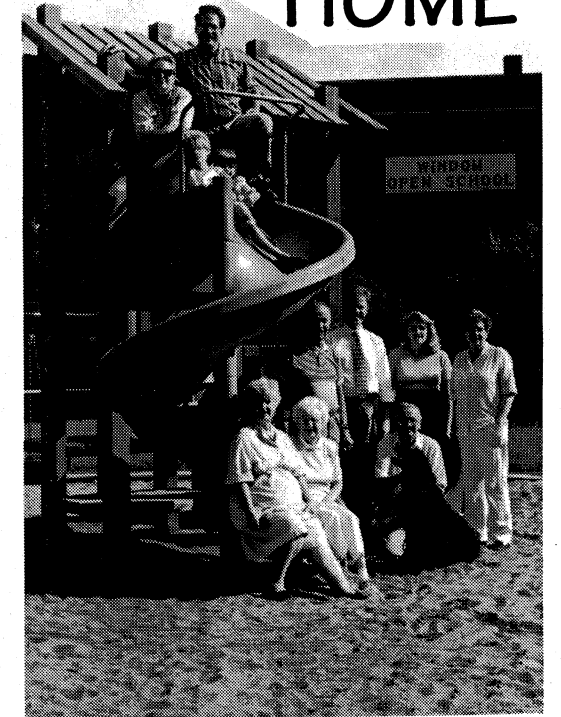
dents and Windom School alumni from throughout Windom's long history come together to share memories, food and fun. The **Intergenerational Program**, sponsored by Minneapolis Family Community Education, brings seniors together with Windom Open School elementary students, enriching the children's academic learning. Community Education also sponsors senior day trips and tours throughout the year, giving seniors a chance to enjoy plays, concerts and other activities. For all age adults, Windom also offers a **Bridge Center**, which offers instruction and card games.

## WINDOM EXTENDS THANKS

Thank you to the following organizations: *Windom Community News; Southwest Journal; Star & Tribune, Windom Business Association; Windom Community Council; Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP); Minneapolis Community Development Agency; Corcoran Photography* and the many community members who provided valuable input. **Published 1995 by Windom Community Council and the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program.**

# WINDOM

## A NEIGHBORHOOD TO CALL "HOME"



Windom neighbors at Windom School's Tot Lot (photo donated by Corcoran Photography).

Windom neighborhood: family atmosphere within a big city . . .

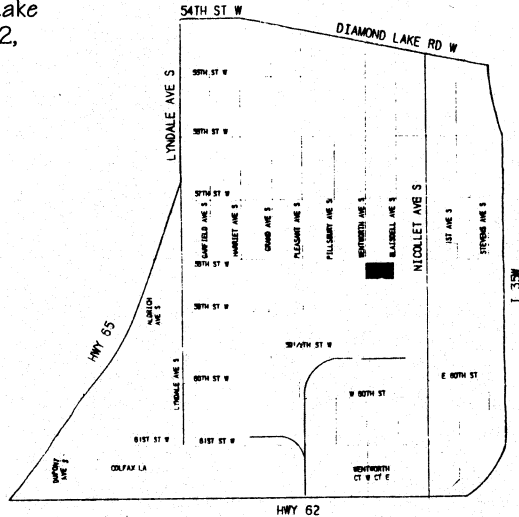


# WINDOM . . .

*Small town values, metropolitan convenience*

## LOCATION

The Windom Neighborhood is located in the Southwest Community of the City of Minneapolis, bounded on the north by Diamond Lake Road and 54th Street, on the south by Crosstown Highway 62, on the west by Lyndale Avenue South and Highway 121, and on the east by the 35W Interstate Freeway. The suburb of Richfield is its immediate neighbor to the south, and the Minneapolis neighborhoods of Kenny, Fuller/Tangletown and Diamond Lake are its neighbors to the west, north and east, respectively. Windom's location is ideal for both inner and outer city travel, due to its proximity to high speed freeways and its central location in the greater Minneapolis area. There is also excellent bus transportation along both Nicollet and Lyndale Avenues, two of the larger streets running through Windom, which are both filled with thriving businesses. Downtown Minneapolis is a 10 minute commute; St. Paul just 20 minutes away and all Twin Cities suburbs easily accessible by the 35W Interstate Freeway or Crosstown Highway 62.



## DEMOGRAPHICS

Windom is truly a "melting pot." According to the City Planning Department of Minneapolis, Windom "is an area of significant diversity as compared to other Southwest Community neighborhoods." Predominantly a family neighborhood, the number of single family homes in Windom far outnumbers apartment complexes. The per capita income is better than average, with the percentages for both families and single persons living in poverty considerably below city-wide levels. The neighborhood also has excellent crime demographics; it is statistically a low crime area compared to the city as a whole. The number of McGruff Houses (safe houses for children) is one of the highest of any neighborhood in Minneapolis. McGruff the Safety Dog, is a frequent visitor at Windom neighborhood events (see picture on back). Unsurprisingly, Windom home owners have consistently given their neighborhood a "good" rating at a percentage almost twice that of home owners in other Minneapolis neighborhoods.



"Clownin' around" at the annual Windom Block Party (courtesy Windom Community News).

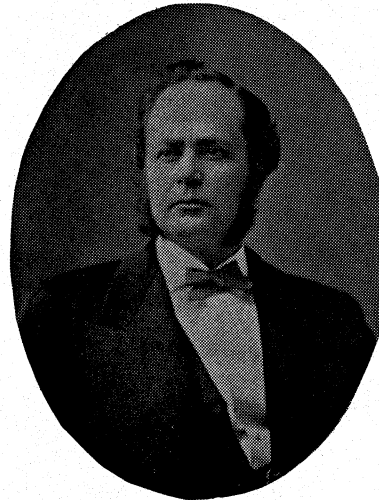
## FAMILY/COMMUNITY OFFERINGS

To accommodate working families, there are three child care facilities, a babysitting co-op formed by local mothers and a "tot lot" located on the Windom Open School playground. The **Windom Tot Lot**, which was created with funding from the Minneapolis Neighborhood Park Board, is just one indication of the neighborhood's family values. A top priority for Windom residents concerns their children's safety, and the Tot Lot enables playtime close to home. There are also two grade schools conveniently located in the immediate neighborhood: **Windom Open School** (public), and **Annunciation Catholic School** (private), both serving kindergarten through 8th grade age students. **Washburn High School** is located nearby in the Fuller/Tangletown neighborhood. Other community offerings: Windom also has a strong spiritual community, with five churches of various denominational faiths in the neighborhood, some with a history extending back to the mid-1800's. In addition, the **Washburn Library** is located at 5244 Lyndale Avenue South, and the **Diamond Lake Post Office** at Diamond Lake Road and Nicollet Avenue South.

## HISTORY

Windom, first incorporated as a village in 1875, was named after William Windom (1827-1891), a distinguished statesman from Winona, Minnesota (see photo). He served in Congress and the Senate and became Secretary of the Treasury under Presidents Garfield and Harrison.

In 1927, the City of Minneapolis offered to incorporate Windom as a part of the city, thus expanding the official southern boundary of Minneapolis from West 54th to West 62nd Streets. The vote for inclusion was hotly contested, as many residents had become accustomed to being a part of the incorporated town of Richfield. However, on June 24, 1927, Windom was officially annexed into Minneapolis. To this day, many area institutions retain Richfield as a part of their name. (For more historical information, see: *Windom: Historical Perspectives*, published 1995, by the Windom Community Council).



William Windom: 1827-1891 (courtesy Windom School)

## HISTORIC SITES

- Oak Hill Cemetery (1859c), 59th & Lyndale
- Turn-of-century farmhouse (1890c), 55th & Pillsbury
- Bachman's Garden Center (original store built in 1890c), 60th & Lyndale
- Colonial house (1895c), W. Diamond Lake Rd.
- Windom Open School (1929c), 58th & Wentworth
- (Original) Mayflower Church (1925c) (now Enga White Funeral Chapel), 55th & Lyndale

## BUSINESSES

There are about 160 businesses in the Windom area, offering a wide variety of goods and services. **The Windom Community News** (one of the first community newspapers in the City of Minneapolis), reports, "We have a unique mixture of small and large businesses that make Windom nearly a self-supporting community." The two main business districts are located along Nicollet and Lyndale Avenues and a wide variety of goods and services are offered. Windom businesses run the gamut from auto



Jim Simon, Manager, Cub Foods Store (courtesy Southwest Journal).

services, hardware stores, small appliance businesses and home improvement contractors, to floral and plant nurseries, cement and steel industries and beauty and barber shops; from restaurants, grocery stores, motels and realtors, to nursing homes, veterinarian services, dentists and a pharmacy. The diverse business community enables Windom residents to take advantage of the convenience and personal service of businesses available within blocks of their home, while supporting local merchants and small enterprise.

Through the efforts of the Windom Community Council, and with the generous support of the Minneapolis Neighborhood Revitalization Program, the **Windom Business Association (WBA)** was formed in 1993. The organization currently has a membership of over 60 businesses in the Windom, Kenny, Lynnhurst and Fuller/Tangletown neighborhoods. Through the efforts of the WBA, many business relationships and friendships have developed, as business owners work together to enhance the general climate and appearance of the area's business districts.

New businesses can find excellent opportunity for investment in Windom, whether large or small-scale. July 1995 heralded the long-awaited opening of Cub Foods, a \$7 million grocery store/business complex located on 60th Street and Nicollet Avenue South (see photo).