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The Jefferson Park story was transcribed and formatted by George Valko with his additional of the Jefferson Park map and photos and the page about Anna Kraus Smith who originally prepared the document in 1976.

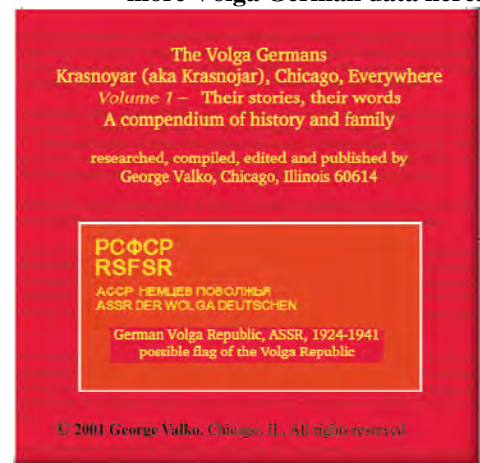
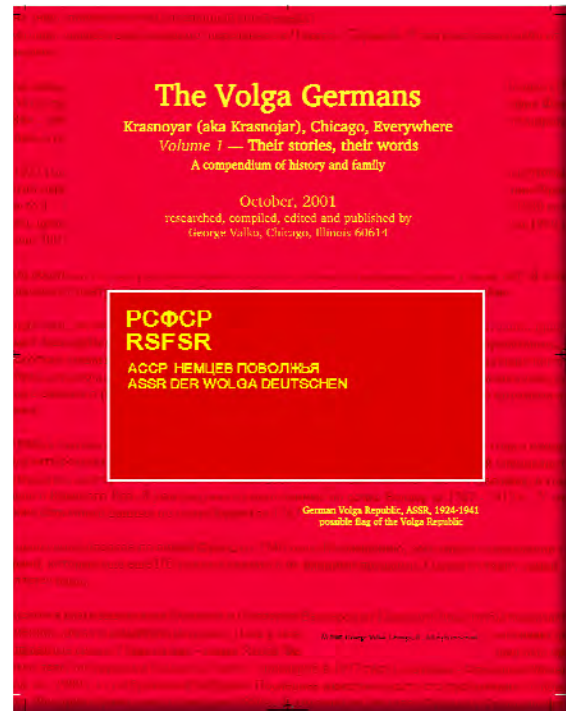
The entire book is available in both printed form and on CDR/DVD contact....

George Valko
773.988.8619

george@georgevalko.com
www.georgevalko.com

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JEFFERSON PARK and its' history as recalled by*

Bernard Molay, known locally as Bernie Molay, civic leader business man, and an all around contributor to society, and the development of the area.

JEFFERSON—JEFFERSON PARK settled as a Township in 1830. The first settler was Kinzie Clark. Settlers held land by "Right of Possession." The first sale of land in the area was in 1838.

JEFFERSON VILLAGE—was laid out and recorded by D.L. Roberts in 1855. The City of Chicago annexed Jefferson Park in 1889. Two main arteries leading to the heart of the city are near the eastern (Elston Avenue also referred to as the Lower Road) and western (Milwaukee Road called the Upper Road) edges of this community. Both were former Indian Trails to the northwest.

Family History: Father, Jacob William Molay, born in Minsk, Russia, arrived in the USA with his family at the age of seven years. The family settled in Plainfield, New Jersey. Mother, Helen (Dina) Molay was born in England, and likewise emigrated to the USA. 1916, February, Jacob and Dina Molay with their seven children—three girls and four boys, all born in Plainfield NJ, moved to the area of Mayfair in Chicago.

In Mayfair, on the corner of Keeler and Montrose Avenues, my father Jacob Molay, purchased a little grocery store and delicatessen as the means of livelihood for the family. Bernie recalls the history of the area and as told to him: Shortly after we established ourselves at this location, the U.S. came into World War I in April of 1917. With it we went through the shortages, priorities, and privations that put the whole country in turmoil, until the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918. About that time, with having an empty store window next to our grocery store, we were asked to display some used furniture for one of our customers in hopes of selling it. If it sold we were to get a commission on it for the handling of it. After selling the first library set and with a commission of \$5.00 (which was big money in those days), it gave us the idea of starting a used furniture business.

We soon had enough furniture to fill every store on the block. In those days we used to sell sugar, flour and other staples in bulk, by weighing it out in 1 lb, 2 lb and 5 lb packages. Finding that the used furniture business had more potential and future, we gave up the grocery store and delicatessen business in favor of it.

At that time our customers were mostly new immigrants, Reich Germans and the Germans coming in from the Volga regions of Russia. They settled in Mayfair, and as early as the 1900s in parts of Jefferson Park. Inasmuch as there was no language barrier between them, and us, as they were all *landsmann*, we got along beautifully with them and from our business furnished many of their homes.

As these people became more established here they would help others coming in after them. Usually they would pool together about \$ 100.00 with which they and the newcomers would come to see us. For this amount of money we would furnish them with (*haus mabel*, as they called furniture) and everything to make them comfortable in a five room flat, as apartments then were called. Everything included pots, pans, dishes and clothes to help them get settled.

The attraction to this area to many was the Sellers Iron Mfg. Plant. It was located west of Cicero Avenue between the Milwaukee Rd. and the Northwestern RR tracks and north of what now is Wilson Avenue. Night and day the booming of the trip hammers could be heard with the flare of the furnaces lighting up the night skies.

Here these people found employment, and being of an industrious nature they soon became an asset to the social and the business life of the community. At the Sellers Plant "Track Plates" were manufactured

**This document is on file at the Chicago Public Library, Jefferson Park Branch, 5363 W. Lawrence Avenue, Chicago, IL 60630. It was prepared by Anna Kraus Smith.*

and were shipped for use around the world. Already then Jefferson Park had a spot on the world map. Opportunities for employment provided inducements for emigration from other shores. Others of these immigrants found employment with the flourishing Bowman Dairy Company located in the Mayfair area. Those with a little more skill worked as laborers, cement finishers, and carpenters. After becoming more established and affluent, many moved into the Jefferson Park area where they built new homes, or purchased them. Many started into business of their own, especially the cement construction businesses, wherein they hired and employed many of their own *landsmann* [fellow countryman], and later providing employment to other ethnics. Such names as Steigerwaldt, Altergott, DeGraf were popular in the cement businesses along with the Reimers, while names such as Felde, Hardt, Kraus, Christ, Gorr, Kramer, Schweigerdt, Ulrich and others, soon became familiar names contributing to the total development of the area and business. North of Lawrence Avenue to Foster, east to Elston Avenue, and west to just past the railroad tracks, we had many Czechoslovakian immigrants settling in that area. November 1918, the signing of the Armistice, again opened the gates of immigration, and drew to the Chicago area and our immediate vicinities many people from all over the Mid-European countries.

On Transportation

Elston Avenue and Milwaukee Road for many years were plank roads financed by tolls collected at various toll gates. These two arteries provided the truck farmers to the northwest with a means of taking their produce to the heart of the city for marketing. Later other streets were graded and street cars were introduced. The Milwaukee Avenue street car used to end about two blocks south of what we now know as Irving Park Rd. It was extended later to Berteau Avenue and finally passed Lawrence Avenue to what is now Gale Street. At a later date it was extended as a one line track to Devon Avenue. The areas around Devon in those days was very rural. The way they operated the one way street car was to have two bay sites, one at about Nagel and the other closer in. When one street car was moving northwest, the one moving southeast would pull over into the bay and let the other pass; they then would proceed on. Traveling west in those days, the Lawrence Avenue street car would stop at Elston and finally was extended to Milwaukee Avenue, and still later to Austin Avenue. Montrose Avenue then went as far west as Milwaukee Avenue. The Chicago NW Railroad, and the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, were at grade level at Montrose Avenue, and also at Lawrence Avenue. Travel was held up here time and again not only by passenger trains but also by freight trains, moving through here. While gates and flagmen were maintained at these crossings, every once in awhile someone tried to beat the gates down and resulted in a fatality. As the area developed and protests became more vociferous, the railroads were prevailed upon to elevate their tracks. This in turn again afforded employment to many of our newcomers and aided them in establishing themselves here in the area of Jefferson Park.

Mobility

Many families of those early days could not afford, or had the opportunity to own a motor vehicle. Therefore the extension of the street car lines made it possible for many from the inner city areas to get to the outer rims of the city. St. Adalberts' cemetery just beyond Devon Avenue on Milwaukee Avenue in Niles, was then and is still today, the popular Polish Catholic cemetery of the northwest side of Chicago. While it still required a short walk from the end of the street car line turnabout at Devon Avenue, it made it quite convenient for the inner city people to make their visits to the cemetery as they saw fit. Also, it afforded city folks a Sunday outing with their families, and picnic baskets in tow, for a picnic in the woods at the end of the Milwaukee-Devon car line. Many ethnic picnics, dances, and social get togethers were enjoyed in these woods. Today these same woods have become and are designated as a "preserve" wherein are to be found the Jensen toboggan slide and the outdoor swimming pool, both popular through the years. Beyond the two traffic lanes ending a Devon Avenue, Milwaukee Avenue was not paved. Ditches were to be found on either side and it was not at all unusual to see cars in these ditches that had gotten out of control. Especially after a good rain or snowfall.

In the mid 1920s, Jefferson Park started coming out of the doldrums of an Old Village atmosphere, into a modern community and shopping center. The Jefferson Park National Bank put up a beautiful building on the southwest corner of Lawrence and Milwaukee Avenues. Many of the stores then still had the wooden fronts where one had to step up a step or two, to enter the establishment. Inside, the stores were dimly lit by gas-lighted fixtures. A remodeling and modernization program was started which spruced things up considerably.

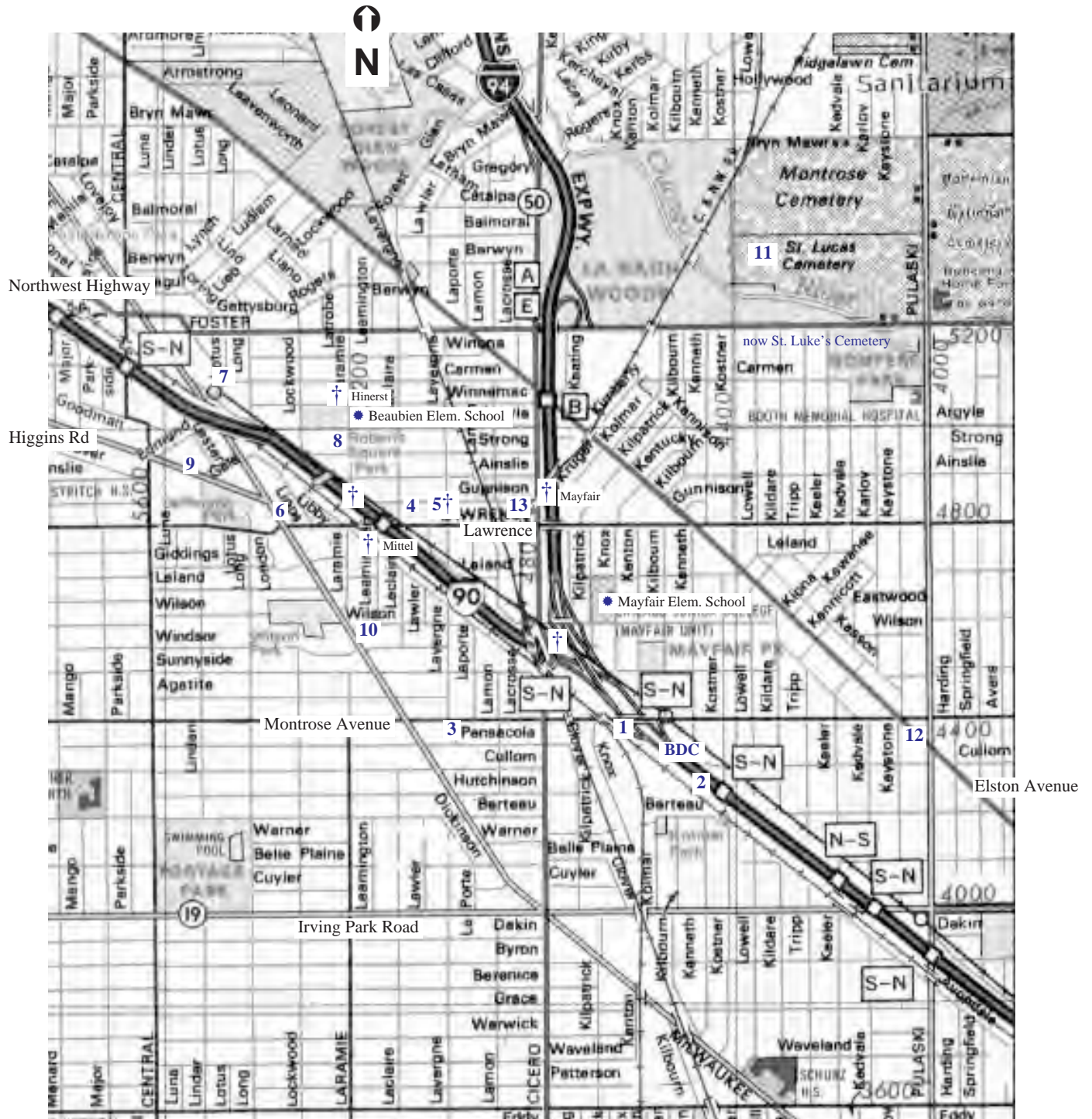
We, the Molays, came on to Milwaukee Avenue right near Ainslie and Milwaukee Avenues. (From 1928 to 1932 we were located with our New Furniture store at Laramie and Milwaukee Avenue.) On the corner of Ainslie and Milwaukee (northeast) was a drug store, owned and operated by Dr. Frank Brykowski who was also an optometrist. We had the double store right next door to his drug store, and from here had the pleasure of seeing these changes take place before our eyes. There were still old-timers out here who operated strongly in the servicing of the farmers needs. On Ainslie street, where the surface lines has a sub-station (now in a remodeling-enlarging state) behind Woolworth's (a 5 and 10¢ store then), KANKA Brothers had a Hay and Feed business. Mr. Sugar, was selling hay and feed from his store also, and was located next to the Holiday Ballroom [the Times Theater before it became a ballroom] to the northeast where the parking area now is for the CTA riders. Across the street on Milwaukee Avenue Mr. Sugar purchased a large place (formerly housing an automobile agency), and from there sold feed, flour, and groceries. Hoyne Savings and Loan today occupies the former National Bank building, where to the southwest Wolke and Kotler had their first dry goods store. They later relocated their department store to where it still stands today, and is the favorite shopping spot for dry goods and ready-mades for many localities and former residents of the area as it has been through the years. They especially endeared themselves to the community when they made available their second floor for worship services, to the Jefferson Park Lutheran church congregation, prior to the existence of the church structure at Long and Argyle north of the railroad station.

Across the street from Wolke's Dept. Store, Annes' department store started out with a little fifteen foot store front and kept enlarging to its present site and size. The Annes' family owned and operated this store throughout the years and after the death of the original owners, the store was sold and is now owned and operated by the Warso family. Cowheys' coal, material and service yards were established in the same location they are in today. In recent years their facilities were upgraded and modernized in keeping with the anti-pollution code of the city. Most of the merchants and founders of the businesses along the avenue in the early days, have since gone to their reward. Many of the establishments are still carried on by their heirs, or others, and still retain some of the original business firms names.

The store in which we are located today was occupied in the early days by the Leonard Seed Co. who provided the farmers with the seed for their fields. Seed was then sold by the bushel or the gunnysack. Many will remember "Whimpies" restaurant to the northeast, and to the southeast, the first Hoyne Savings and Loan establishment on the north side. Earl Weber, son of the founder of Hoyne S&L is now President, and has a long record of successful operation in Jefferson Park.

On the corner of Milwaukee Avenue and Higgins, where the monument to the World War II Veterans for Jefferson Park is erected for those of the area that sacrificed their lives in the war, formerly stood a watering trough for the farmers horses. There also was a smaller watering trough where stray dogs could get a drink. The farmers would come in from the now Niles area, from west on Higgins Rd and from the northwest, now Northwest Highway. In Jefferson Park they would rest themselves and their horses a bit, refresh themselves and then proceed on down to the Randolph street markets and the South Water street markets, to sell their produce. On their return trips homeward they again would stop to refresh and to do their shopping before returning to the farms. In those days buying a 5 lb bag of sugar was unheard of. They would buy a 100 lb bags of sugar, 100 lb bags of flour, 100 lb sacks of oats, a bale of hay or two and other staple goods and groceries to take back home with them. This was a common sight practically every afternoon. Saturdays, was the big shopping day for the local people. They would all come out on the street to do their shopping and to greet their neighbors. This was quite an event.

With the exception of drug stores, all businesses were closed on Sundays. This was a neighborhood where the people had a profound respect for their faith and their church. We had churches of every denomination here which were well attended and supported. To this date, there are still several churches in the area that have services in the German language, and still cater to the old-timers that settled the area, and the new Germans still coming into the area and making their homes here. Actually Jefferson Park was incorporated as a Village before Chicago got its' charter. Jefferson Park is between 15 and 20 years older than the city of Chicago.



LEGEND

- 1. former site of Veller home # 3, 4547 W Montrose
- 2. former site of Veller homes # 1 & 2, 4247 & 4277 Avondale
- 3. site of St. John's Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod
4339 W. Montrose Avenue
- 4. site of Eden Evangelical Lutheran Church
5051 W. Gunnison Street
- 5. site of Calvary United Methodist Church
5001 W. Gunnison Street
- 6. 1924 site of Jefferson Park Lutheran Church
4811 N. Milwaukee Avenue
- 7. current site of Jefferson Park Lutheran Church
5009 N Northwest Highway
- 8. former site of St. John's Church, Wartburg Synod
Argyle and Laramie, SW corner, until 1951
- 9. former site of Russian Hotel / Glasgow House
5440 W Higgins Road
- 10. site of John V. May Funeral Home
Milwaukee Avenue at Wilson, SE corner
- 11. site of St. Luke's Cemetery
5300 N Pulaski Road, formerly Crawford Ave.
- 12. former site of Rivoli theater
4384 N Elston Avenue
- 13. Former site of Weber home 1922-1973
4819 W. Gunnison

BDC-former location of Bowman Dairy Co, Avondale & Kilbourn, the Henry FRANZ and Henry BAUER families once lived adjacent to this site.

† indicates location (partial list) of Bruederschaft, Versammlung, Brotherhood, Brethren prayer meeting sites.

Note: The 5100-4600 blocks of North Milwaukee Avenue and the 5200-4800 blocks of West Lawrence Avenue would contain the "heart" of the Mayfair and Jefferson Park retail and social German-Russian community from about 1915 through the mid 1950's.

Schools

Going a little to the east of Jefferson Park to Lawrence and Tripp Avenues, stood a red brick schoolhouse which served the area for many a year, and eventually gave way to the Palmer school in North Mayfair and the Mayfair elementary school which was built at Wilson and Kilpatrick Avenues. The red brick schoolhouse was known as Jefferson school. Through the years Mayfair School, a very beautiful and large school, served as an elementary school, high school, Junior City college, and presently serves the area with extension courses on the college level. In the Milwaukee Avenue, Higgins area stood an old frame schoolhouse. This was raised and the Beubien school at Laramie and Winnemac took its' place. The schools were always well attended as the people here always wanted the very best for their children. Especially desirable was a good education, and thus most all the children went through the whole program. From grammar school the children went to the Carl Schurz public high school, at Addison and Milwaukee Avenues. In 1926 a huge addition was added to Carl Schurz to accommodate the children of the District. To the northwest of us we have Farnsworth school on the elementary level, with Taft High school built for the children of that area and out of the Schurz district. In addition to facilities for a good education, (the area is also serviced by several parochial schools both on the elementary and high school levels.) the community boasts the Jefferson Park Police station known as the Gale Street Station or the 16th district station, between Milwaukee Avenue and Higgins on Gale street. It is the largest police district, in square miles, in the city of Chicago. We have been fortunate to have had the lowest incidence in crime rate, of any district in the city.

The recession of the 30s: was set in the years of 1928, 1929 and 1930. The unrest and the misery that accompanied those years is really difficult to describe. We did not have the governmental agencies we have today to give relief. Here in Jefferson Park we tried to handle it in our own way. My father, Jacob Molay, and the Captain of the police department and a couple of other civic-minded workers got together and formed their own Relief organization. It worked out quite successfully because of the generosity of some of the merchants and the help from volunteers.

We needed money, and about the only ones that were working steadily at any weekly salary were the policemen, firemen, postal employees and the suburban bus drivers. We had the cooperation of the United Bus Lines, which was a suburban line running out of DesPlaines and terminating in Jefferson Park. Voluntarily they all gave about 50¢ out of each weeks salary to this Relief Fund. (50¢ then was equal to several dollars of today.) The bakeries contributed their day old breads and pastries. With the little cash we had to work with we were able to buy groceries at cost. Mr. Sugar would give us flour and sugar at cost or even a little less, and also some canned goods. Bushels of groceries were made up for emergency distribution in the headquarters of the Jefferson Park police station, which was in an old frame building and stood at the site of the present station. A squad car would be the means of transportation, and would take my dad and perhaps another individual to deliver these bushels of groceries to needy families on the brink of starvation. We were able to also get coal from Cowheys' yard, a bag or two at a time, and deliver these to people to help keep them warm and from freezing. Frank Brykowski, from his drug store would fill prescriptions at cost. We even had the services of several local physicians who were most generous with their time and services. One I particularly recall, was too poor himself to have his own transportation he would agree to see patients in their homes if he was taken portal to portal. Frequently this lot fell to me. In the middle of the night we would get a call to go to pick up this doctor, take him to the home where some youngster or someone was running a high fever or was ill. The doctor would treat the patient, we would take him home and return to our home and to bed.

We had various ways of raising money to help these people. Ladies would get together and have bake sales. We would have benefit dances, raffles, and most anything we could think of to raise the moneys so desperately needed to help those less fortunate in those trying times.

Contribution by Anna K Smith: Another facet of difficulty and hardship brought on by the depression years was the problems it brought upon the farmers. Most farmers outside the city limits had good sized truck, and grain farms, and raised vegetables marketed on the Randolph and South Water street markets. Produce brought no return on the market and often did not warrant the fuel needed for the truck to go to the markets. Rather than let the produce go to waste in the fields the farmers would share what they had

with those that would or could come and get it, and one farmer in particular will be remembered by the generation of that day amongst the Volga Germans of Jefferson Park, as Farmer Kraus.* He would bring a load of sweet corn and other produce, eggs and the like, to the heart of the Volga German settlement in Jefferson Park. He would park his truck and to those unable to pay a meager price for the goods he would give the produce and things away and glad that they did not go to waste in the fields. To many homes in desperate need he made personal visits with contributions for their tables. During the summer months teenagers and elderly folks from the city often found refuge as well as sustenance on the farm. It was common also during this period for the city to put youngsters that were wayward and in the care of the city, on these farms for the summer months. Some stayed on till they had fulfilled their probation period, or were able to be independent of their families. Holidays always meant large numbers of city folks visiting the farm and returning home with fresh produce, eggs, butter and milk. * *see page 234*

Another difficulty besetting the farmer of that time were the thieves that lay in wait in the ditches along the side of the roads leading out of the city. They would jump the truck as the farmer would stop for a cross road, or throw themselves into the oncoming path of the truck, causing the farmer to stop. They then would force him physically or otherwise to turn over to them the little cash he may have picked up on the market from his produce. Often the lives of the farmers were threatened and making the coming and going for the farmer very dangerous.

The end of the car line at Devon and Milwaukee Avenues was the daily "pick-up point" for farm help. People out of work, especially from the inner city, many of them Poles, would ride the street car early in the morning to the end of the line and there sit and wait for the farmers to come in to select a certain number for the days field work. Pay was little, but along with it food was provided for the day plus a little bundle of produce to take home to their families. Times were difficult for all, those that had nothing as well as those that had little and shared what they had. Of interest here is to note how "people helped people," relieving or sparing the government the additional burden.

Moving on to the early 40s. World War II broke out, and again Jefferson Park banded together stronger than ever and really did their part to help win the war from this side. We had huge Savings Bond rallies. We collected anything that could be salvaged, aluminum, iron and so forth, to be melted down. Every serviceman from the area was given a personal effects kit before he left for overseas, from the merchants. A beautiful monument was erected at the corner of Higgins and Milwaukee Avenues, in memory of those from Jefferson that gave their lives in the war.

Agitation had started about that time for an expressway from Jefferson Park to downtown Chicago. The war interrupted any construction ideas because of the priorities. However, after the war the agitation for some relief into the central area of the city was again promoted. Jefferson Park was the first to have a definite route in mind. Before they could get approval, the west side came in and said they would vote for our approval if we in turn would back them for approval for what was to be the Congress Street Expressway (AKA Eisenhower Expressway). Then the people from the south side came along and stated they needed help more than we people did, congestion there being terrible. All had to be appeased and with what started to be a modest sum, soon became an astronomical figure, for those days. The original plans for the "Avondale expressway" were for it to be elevated and run parallel to the Chicago NW RR, from Kinzie Street downtown, to Bryn Mawr, northwest. The total cost, condemnation payments and payment for the right of way and so forth could have been done for something less than \$19 million. When the "Kennedy Expressway" was finally under construction, the overpass at Milwaukee avenue and the Chicago NW RR, cost six and three quarter million alone just for that one unit.

Many local residents just east of the expressway from the 5100 block on Gunnison St., east to the railroad tracks, and between Lawrence Ave. and Ainslie will well remember Nov. 6, 1956, when a large water main was accidentally broken during the construction of the expressway in that area, flooding the whole of the area and making residents in basement apartments homeless, and leaving much unpaid damage to the others residences.

Before the right of way was cleared and construction started we noted a little article one morning in the newspaper stating, that the city was going to sell a piece of this expressway running from the Mayfair interchange (approximately) to Canfield Road which was the city limits, to the County for \$10 million. This money in turn was to be used to complete the Congress street expressway. We then would have been subjected to a Toll Gate at about Wilson Avenue on the Kennedy expressway. This met with great disapproval and we were agitated to a point of no return. They just could not do that to us. This expressway was dream materializing after waiting about twenty years, and to have a Toll Gate at our front door was just unthinkable. The merchants and the civic leaders of the community finally got an audience with the County Commissioner, Dan Ryan. After the hearing, we asked for just two more minutes, to relate a brief bit of Jefferson Park history to the board. This really happened and took place where Milwaukee and Wilson Avenues cross. In the early days a fellow once owned a tavern there whose name was Snell. He owned the plank road which he extended northwest on Milwaukee Avenue to what is now Niles. When the weather was wet or bad, these planks would become quite slick, and would shift and slide all over the place in the mud. Teams of horses with their drivers and wagons in the ditch were not an uncommon sight. Thus making traveling these plank roads a very unpleasant experience. In spite of these conditions he extracted a toll from every vehicle that used that old plank road. The farmers got fed up with the condition of the road and still having to pay a toll. So one night dressed as Indians and fortified with a couple of drinks, they approached the Toll Gate and burned it down. It was never replaced. We advised the Commissioner that some of these Indians still live in the area and there was no telling what they would do should he still decide to put up at Toll Gate in the area. The Toll Gate idea was defeated. We now have a Freeway. Getting this expressway through here was quite an accomplishment, as it meant keeping everyone happy and overcoming the many obstacles that were in the right of way.

Churches

This was established as a God-fearing community and the churches have always played an active role in the personal lives of the people living here. We have many lovely edifices of worship in the Jefferson Park area. Some date back many years but today still stand as beautifully as when they first were erected. One of the older churches, serving many of the Jefferson Park residents, St. John's Evangelical, Missouri Synod at Montrose and Lavergne avenues, this year celebrates its' 100th anniversary. It was started as a German church serving the people of this and outlying areas. It today, is still an active church with some of its' members related to those who originally settled the Mayfair and Jefferson Park areas, and still providing worship services in both the German and English languages.

The Jefferson Park Congregational Church first at Milwaukee and Giddings, and now located at Giddings and London, has seen its' 115th anniversary. Edens, Calvary, and pastor Blocks' church, St. John's, Wartburg Synod; were churches that played a great part in the lives of the Germans from the Volga of Russia in the early days of Jefferson Park. Edens and Calvary today still function effectively in serving their community.

The Jefferson Park Ev. Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod (English District), north of the train station, had its' founding on the second floor of Wolkes' Dept. store and now registers over 50 years of association with the community. St. Cornelius, rebuilt in more recent years, on Foster avenue, and Our Lady of victory at Laramie and Sunnyside, are two catholic churches that have served the catholic residents of the area throughout the years. In addition to these major denominations we have many churches of other faiths that dominate the area, who are active and maintain a steady membership.

Public Parks

Wilson Park and Jefferson Park, both well landscaped with eye appeal to the neighborhood, provide a large range of activities and public services to the community.

Avenue Merchants

Recognition should be given the Bormans' Shoe Store, one of the oldest establishments still being carried on today by members of the original family, in business here for over 80 years. Knobe's stationery and office supplies, is operated by Lou Knobe and was established in 1928 in the 5400 block of Higgins. Also on Higgins, we used to have the widely known Kensen Tea Store. Next to them was the Otto Gorski meat market. On the southeast side of Milwaukee and Lawrence we had the Gutman meat

Top row— 1 Alex Groh, 2 Hank Bauer, 3 Henry Diehl, 4 Fred Walter¹, 5 Fred Bauer, 6 Charles “Red” Werner², 7 Al Ritter,
 Middle row *top*— 8 Christ Felde³, 9 David Walter¹, 10 __?__, 11 Henry Werner², 12 Fred Steigerwaldt, 13 Mr. Eduard Dorazil, director, 14 Henry Elhert, 15 Alex Steigerwaldt, 16 Henry Altergott



Middle row *bottom*— 17 Henry Ulrich, 18 Hank DeGraf, 19 Vernon Ulrich, 20 *not identified*, Yurk, 21 Fred Schnarr, 22 Alex Dubs, 23 Karl Felde³, 24 Fred Altergott,
 25 Dave Schnarr
 1 Walter brothers, 2 Werner brothers, 3 Felde brothers
 26 Fred Groh

market. Across the street from them we had Varnelli's old time ice cream parlor. Next to this was the hardware store owned and operated by the Cripe brothers.

Where the CTA terminal is today we had several other establishments. One, a blacksmith shop, provided a common sight of horses being shod. Thor Judgood had a moving business in a big frame building. In the same general location stood the Ploen homestead. A large frame house of original farm era, stood until the senior Ploens' passed away. A parking lot jointly owned by the local merchants replaced it, and today the CTA terminal utilizes that whole area. In the early years certain ethnic groups settled and dominated the area, but through the years and changing times many other ethnic groups have come in and establish their roots here.

1940s through 1950s

The farms north of us and to the west of us were subdivided. People from the central parts of the city moved out and bought lots to live there. Truck farms used to be west of Austin Avenue off of Higgins Rd. Further west were farms of larger acreage that raised grains, corn and cattle. Higgins Rd. in those early days was just a two lane road with ditches on either side. When people first bought these subdivided lots, they did not have the funds to build homes on them. Often, the lots would first be paid off and then used as security with which to erect a home. In those days a nice brick home could be built for \$ 4,995.00. In some instances, people would buy a lot, and in the rear of it they would put up a two car garage wherein they would house themselves until such time that the lot was paid for and monies saved with which to build a home. Others would purchase the lot, dig the basement or cellar and finish it off with a roof over it. Herein they would provide the needed housing for themselves again until such time that funds were available to erect the rest of the home. These cellar homes were quite comfortable and required less heat than a temporary home above ground level. Kerosene lanterns for light, and water brought in on coaster wagons in 10 gallon milk cans from the fire hydrants along Higgins Rd, lent itself to the mode of living of that time. There were no streets or sidewalks in those subdivisions. When deliveries were made, the trucks would park on Higgins Rd. and merchandise would be carried in by hand to the customers. Many Italian families moved into this western area.

To the northwest along Milwaukee Avenue, many Poles moved in. In fact it is said that the corner news stand at Milwaukee & Lawrence at one time was selling more Polish newspapers than were sold in Warsaw, Poland. In the heart of Jefferson Park we had the Reich Germans and the Germans from the Volga areas of Russia. Going a little further north to Foster Avenue and east, the Swedes settled in goodly numbers. To the northwest as the Poles settled in, and to the west as the Italians came in, their faith was shown by the lovely churches they have built, maintain and support.

Back in Jefferson Park we should mention the Zelekowski family that owned and operated a sausage shop, well known throughout the Jefferson Park territory. They were most famous for their Kilbasa and other Polish delicacies. Next to the Zelekowski's was the well known Polish bakery owned and operated by John Kleczewski. Hoyne Savings and Loan expanded into the bakery quarters, with the Kleczewski relocating themselves on Fullerton avenue. Out of the four or five well known meat markets and sausage shops that were popular in the Jefferson Park shopping area, we now are down to one independent meat market located next door to the Hoyne Saving and Loan establishment.

Back in the 20s, 30s and into the 40s, we had two blacksmiths here. Now we have none. One of the blacksmiths later operated a truck repair business, which too now is gone. One of the old-timers, recently retired, was "Tell The Tailor" located on Gale street just east of Milwaukee Avenue. Another old-timer well remembered is T.R. Schroeder who had taken over the greenhouse on Milwaukee avenue at Leland, which had been started by the Kirchoff family. For a time it was operated by Olie Prior, known by all as an "Individualist" in both looks and dress. Olie, well known in the community, took great pride in the clothes he designed for himself. Besides being a good horticulturist and landscape artist, he is known as a good skier and world traveler.

There has always existed a good spirit of cooperation amongst the merchants of the avenue. Competitors have always been cooperative in maintaining store hours sales and so forth without undermining one

another. All have prospered well. Annes' department store today is operated by the Warso family. The eldest son, Irving, has a degree in electrical engineering, Ascher is a CPA, and Sherman an attorney. Across the street from Annes' we have the Wolke-Kotler department store. Both Mr. Wolke and Mr. Kotler have gone on to their reward. The store is now owned and operated by their heirs and nephews. A third department store, Resnicks, to the southeast of Wolke's, was in the area for many years and located their business outside the neighborhood for a period of time. They have recently reopened the store as a discount department store.

The location of the old ice cream parlor with its' ceiling fans, old wire chairs and marble topped tables, brings back refreshing memories, and is now just as popular in the form of a restaurant known as "The Westwood" and operated by Mr. Jim Zafaris. They specialize in family type meals and are patronized not only by local residents and avenue employees but others as well. Many of the merchants of the area gave up to the changing times, or moved on to other locations. New merchants have moved in making the avenue a still popular shopping area.

While I personally lived east of Jefferson Park in the Mayfair-Irving Park, and Albany Park areas, my whole adult life centers around Jefferson Park. Having had the privilege of doing quite a bit of traveling I have always taken pride in relating that I come from the "Garden Spot" of America. I say this and rightly so, as during my 19 years of being on the Mayors committee as chairman of the "Citizens for a Cleaner Chicago" committee, I have twice seen Jefferson Park designated as the # 1 winner in the most beautiful home landscaping, and once as runner up. The corner home located at on Higgins and Nagel has won the prize twice, while Joe Waltz of Mayfair took second place, for having the most well groomed grounds in the city of Chicago. We can rightfully take pride in title and credit to our well kept homes and grounds of the Jefferson Park area.

My personal experience also has been that the people of Jefferson Park "have a heart." The American Cancer Society, with whom I am affiliated, concluded their crusade with Jefferson Park not only making their quota but going over it by 126%. This was made possible by the people of the community and the merchants in their ever continued concern in finding a cure and erasing this disease. We have the Salvation Army who find the Jefferson Park residents helping them to help others, as well as the Amvets, and other organizations geared to helping the needy. The Lions Club of Jefferson Park last year took #1 honor in funds raised throughout the State of Illinois. The \$14,502.00 raised, will be distributed to charitable causes and is something the community can be proud of. Volunteers are not to be outdone in this area and we give them due recognition in the accomplishments of these goals.

Reflecting on non-existing sights of former times

On the corner of Higgins and Milwaukee avenues, where the Jefferson State Bank now has its' drive-in facility, once stood an old red brick Tavern or Inn. It is said Lincoln once slept there. The place was abandoned and eventually taken over by a plumbing supplier. The corner was dubbed "Bathtub Square." It later was an army surplus store, along with kindred goods to sell to the public. On Lawrence Avenue where the Jefferson Park State Bank now is located, we had a city car barn where the surface line cars (street cars) were serviced. It later was used as a Ford Automobile agency.

On Higgins, just west of the present drive-in facility, separated by the alley, stood an old long frame building known as "the Russian Hotel" for many years. Herein lived many German immigrants from Russia, as well as other local residents, less affluent than their brothers. Families lived in small apartments at ground, first, second and third floor levels. Many of the apartments shared sanitary facilities. Most did not have hot running water. All did have cold water taps. Water for bathing and so forth had to be heated on top of the stove. Baths were taken in "wash-tubs." Lighting was very poor and many had no more than a single electric bulb hanging from the ceiling. In later years as the city codes became more stringent, the owners of the building gave it up and the site today boasts a modern apartment building.

The Jefferson Park Post Office

In the early 40s was it housed in the building at 4900 Milwaukee Ave. (Also for some time Molays Furniture House) When additions to the building still proved inadequate, it was relocated in a new structure erected specifically for it at Long and Lawrence Avenues by the US government.

The Jefferson Park Public Library

For many years was located in stores on Milwaukee Avenue. Through community pressures we now have another well designed building on Lawrence Avenue and London serving us with excellent library facilities. Both structures did much to up-grade the community.

The Jefferson Park Police Station

District #16. Originally located in Portage Park on Milwaukee Avenue, Cicero and Irving Park Rd., in a little frame building and known as the Irving Park station. It was relocated to Jefferson Park at Lester and Gale streets with the name changed to the Jefferson Park police station, often referred to as the Gale Street Station or the 16th district station.

After 40 years at the 4900 Milwaukee Avenue address, the Molays Furniture House was sold to, and is the new quarters for the Edward Fox Studio, whose previous location was at Milwaukee and Armitage Avenues. The Edward Fox Studio was established in 1902 by the Grandfather of Richard Nopar, the present owner of the studio. Since coming to Jefferson Park in October of 1969, the studio has enjoyed a steady growth. Richard Nopar is the current president of the Jefferson Park Chamber of Commerce.

The Jefferson Park Fire House

Has served the community and its' environs from an efficient facility through the years located at Ainslie and Lipps Avenues. The city plans a new location in keeping with the changes time has brought, with a larger and more fully equipped facility to be located at Milwaukee and Laramie.

Today, we the Molays, have our business, Furniture Mart sales, repairs and resales, at 4845 N. Milwaukee avenue in a landmark building which is 119 years old. Originally occupied by the Leonard Seed Co., later by the Hoyne Savings and Loan which is now located at the corner of Milwaukee and Lawrence. Reflecting on the past and the history of Jefferson Park, has again reinforced my civic pride in this community. May this be an aid to others in appreciating a community that has always been a stabilizing force and factor of a Great Country, AMERICA. It is with deep gratitude that we celebrate its' [United States] Bi-Centennial year 1976.

Addendum

A few after thoughts, and details of previous stated recollections.

On the east side of Milwaukee avenue, from Gale street south to Ainslie street, were a variety of businesses. The corner of Gale and Milwaukee housed a tavern, next to it was a blacksmith shop, next came Peerless Federal Saving and Loan, (later in the same building, Loumanns drug store), next the old Ploen farm house, and next to that came George Edler and his moving and fuel business. In a large store south, after an auto agency moved out, Gateway Supply moved from Bath-Tub square to this location. Moving on south, Mr. Sugar sold hay and feed from the back of the lot of 4859 Milwaukee Avenue, where in the front Mr. Emil Michelini had his hamburger Shop. Then came Ray Wilkens accordion school and sales, with "Whimpies" as his neighbor owned and operated by George Chioles who now owns the Galestreet Inn. Whimpies, was a chain of popular hamburger places of the time. The Holiday Ballroom that we know today was the Times Theatre. 4845 Milwaukee Avenue where I am located today was then the Leonard Seed store and later, the Pioneer Camera shop, Hoyne S&L also quartered in this building.

The A&P Co. put up the building where Park Foods is now. Other businesses that at one time or another occupied that building were Jacks' Army store, and Lou Knobe Sr. with his typewriter store. Where Walgreens is at present, Frank Brykowski had his drug store. Crossing Ainslie, on the corner we had a National Tea store, the Jefferson Park National Bank (later occupied by Molays' Furniture House). South of this was a large fruit and vegetable store and a building that was later to be purchased by Wolke and Kotler. Next, Cripe Brothers had their hardware store, followed by Quicilli ice cream parlor which was later remodeled by John Kakasolis for a modern restaurant. Turning the corner here on Lawrence avenue eastbound, Spiegles had a sports and tackle shop, while Johnsons' had an electric shop. Across the street and down a bit, where the Jefferson State Bank is/was the Surface Lines car barn later occupied by a Ford auto agency.

Back on Milwaukee avenue on the northwest corner of Lawrence where Mels' Mens shop now is/was the Portes Drug store. Next to this northbound was Irv Eichorn and his shoe store, with Art Borman and his shoe store, as a neighbor. (Bormans' is one of the oldest businesses in Jefferson Park). Moving on up the street, Zoots' had a dry-goods store, followed by another restaurant and Annes'. At the end of the block

Cohen had his dry-goods store near the corner of Higgins. Later Oscar Lipman had a men's clothing store at this location.

1940 - May 1, Morton Steinman published his first issue of the Press newspaper which carried the following advertisements—500 cleaning tissues 14¢, Six bars of Lifebouy or Lux soap 27¢. A dry cleaning establishment would clean and press 3 mens shirts for \$ 1.00 with free pick-up and delivery. Wolke & Kotler had a three piece womans' suit at \$ 12.98. Annes department store offered a pair of boys overall pants for 44¢ and a mattress cover for 88¢, and a box of Cracker Jack for 2¢. The Times Theatre featured a super laugh show, Joe B. Brown in "Flirting with Fate." Laurel & Hardy in "Flying Deuces", and Joe Penner in "Go Chase Yourself."

1941 World War II broke out and Jefferson Park mobilized for the national emergency.

1942 the war deepened, defense block organizations, registration stations, waste paper drives, and ration boards, were set up. Every ethnic group in our community responded and millions of dollars of U.S. Defense Bonds were sold. The war ended in 1945 with the loss of 87 area service men. April 1949, the Central, Foster and Milwaukee Avenue and Northwest Highway traffic signals were set into operation, the culmination of a 13 year effort.

Portage Park

When Portage Park was settled, it like Jefferson Park was farm land and cow pastures.

1912 was a depression period and was at its' worst. Poverty prevailed with its' misery hand in hand, but it was also the turning point in the depression. Streets of mud and mire were paved and the economy began to improve up to late in 1928. During this time many big changes took place. The old Lowell estate was razed and Michael Flict put up the building on Milwaukee avenue between Cuyler and Belle Plaine Avenue. Molays Furniture House had their store in the north end of the building. The new addition of the Carl Schurz High School was finished and the new craft shops and classes were going in full swing.

1936 - Portage Park was the largest trading center on the North Side. Bernie Molay was President of the Portage Park Chamber of Commerce. Nate Shyer managed the "Spencer Coals Baseball Team." The Inland Trust and Savings Bank consolidated with the Portage Park National Bank, now occupied by the Northwest National Bank.

1948 - Jefferson Park survey made for traffic lights at Higgins and Milwaukee.

1948 - April, A & P store opened in Jefferson Park.

1957 - July, Pastor Irvine F. Huber of Calvary Ev. United Brethren church turned the first shovel of earth for the new parsonage at Lavergne and Ainslie on the northeast corner. Gottfried Herzog was chairman of the Board of Trustees and David Chrispens Sr. was Vice-Chairman of Council of administrations.

1957 - July, 11 young people of Eden Evangelical Lutheran Church, Gunnison and LeClaire, attended East Bay camp at Bloomington, IL, Kathy Altergott, Elaine Christ, Joan Guarise, Doreen Hollenbeck, Kathy Johnson, Laurette Laubach, Susan Oehlert, Conrad Seibel, Diana Somsel, and Lynda Syczmkowiak. Jefferson Park has one State Bank (Jefferson State Bank) and three savings and loan institutions (Hoyne S&L, Peerless Federal S&L and Western S&L) each having shown a steady growth since their inception. The two department stores of Wolke & Kotler and Annes having progressed right along with the community.

Alice Molay operated the cosmetic department at Annes under a lease agreement from 1954 through 1969, and from then to the present has been a part of the Edward Fox Studio under Richard Nopar. Glen Nadig became co-publisher of the Jefferson Park Press. Rev. Carl Zehner recently celebrated his 25th year with the Jefferson Park Evangelical Lutheran church.

1975 - April 25th, a Bronze Plaque was unveiled on the Terminal Building or the CTA honoring Maurice Begner, former Commander of the Jefferson Park 16th police district. The inscription reads "In reverent memory of Maurice Begner, commander or the 16th police district for Outstanding, Dedicated, Consistent and Unselfish service to his community, State and Nation." Respectfully, Jefferson Park Chamber or Commerce and Residents and Businessmen of the Community.

1976 - April 13th, another Bronze Plaque was unveiled in tribute to Thomas Jefferson, President, leader and servant of the people whose name the community is proud to bear.

April through May 1976 appropriate festivities sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce highlighted the Bi-Centennial of our country.

More about “Farmer” Kraus and his daughter Anna Kraus Smith

Mr. Friedrich Kraus, also known as “Farmer Kraus”, came to America in 1912 intending to work and earn money and then to return to his village and family. The thought of avoiding the military draft and the Russian army probably also was a factor in his coming to Chicago. However, WWI and the revolution in Russia interrupted the plans to return to Schwed and his wife and children followed him over here some years later.



Freidrick Kraus was known to his friends as *Naftza Fried* and was a loyal member of Edens Ev. Lutheran in Jefferson Park located at 5051 W. Gunnison St.

Pictured above is Friedrich “Farmer” Kraus and his wife, Elizabeth “Ansbet” nee Schulz. The photo of Elizabeth was probably taken in 1911 or 1912.

“Farmer” Kraus’ farm was located at the NE corner of Central and Wolf Roads in Mt. Prospect, just outside of Chicago. At this location “Farmer” Kraus did mainly truck farming, vegetables etc., and some grain for his livestock. (*Ed.Note; this location would be approximately 15 miles NW of the Jefferson Park neighborhood. Milwaukee Avenue runs right near this area. Located nearby on Milwaukee Avenue is Ridgewood Cemetery the burial place of many Germans from Russia including many members of the Kraus and Veller families.*)

At right is daughter Anna Kraus Smith who prepared the preceding Jefferson Park article.



Son-in-law Robert Smith recalls how *Naftza Fried* when trucking produce to market during the depression years in the dark of the morning people would jump on the back of his truck at stop signs and throw off produce to accomplices below for their own use. This plus the low prices at the market induced him to stop among his friends in Jefferson Park and give away farm produce for what he could collect. Some people couldn’t pay and still received his produce; this being the depression years.

Friedrich, “Farmer”, Kraus was active farming in the 1930-1941 period. During his time before and after the farming experience he was involved in construction; mainly cement work. During his time in Jefferson Park and also while on the farm he was a devout member and supporter of Edens church and also a regular member and leader of the Jefferson Park Brotherhood Prayer Group (*versammlung*).

“Being married to his daughter Anna (Anja) I always had a warm feeling when he referred to me as “Unser Bob!” I (Robert Smith) consider it my privilege to have cared for him in his last days.”