

Seward Neighborhood Group Collection

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Finding aid prepared by Wendy Adamson

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Describing Archives: A Content Standard

James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library

October 16, 2010

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Summary Information

Repository	James K. Hosmer Special Collections Library
Creator	Seward Neighborhood Group. (Minneapolis, Minn.)
Title	Seward Neighborhood Group Collection
Date	1888-2010
Extent	6.92 Linear feet
Language	English

History

Visitors to Minneapolis's Seward Neighborhood are often struck by its intimacy and relative compactness, and in fact the neighborhood has been described as a small town surrounded on all sides by a big city. One reason for this strong sense of community independence is that the neighborhood's boundaries are well-defined, literally setting Seward apart from the rest of the city. The neighborhood's eastern border follows the Mississippi River to the Soo Line Railroad, which traces the southern boundary as it moves away from the river to the west. In the west, the boundary is marked by Hiawatha Avenue, and to the north is Interstate Highway 94.

As one of the oldest neighborhoods in Minneapolis, Seward dates back to the first rapid expansion of the city in the late Nineteenth Century. Seward's history begins with its main commercial thoroughfare and cultural cornerstone, Franklin Avenue. Franklin originally ran along the southern border of the Town of Minneapolis, established in 1856. Over the next twenty-five years, the area expanded away from Franklin to the south and west. A major influence on the early growth of the neighborhood was the construction, in 1870, of the Iowa and Minnesota Division of the Milwaukee railroad, which runs parallel to Hiawatha Avenue on Seward's western border. With the introduction of the railroad, the western part of Seward began to develop into a small but dense residential area for the immigrant and working-class families who worked in Franklin Avenue's railroad shops and in nearby Minneapolis. Development in Seward was further stimulated by the Milwaukee Railroad "Short Line," built between Minneapolis and St. Paul in 1881, which came to form the southern boundary of the neighborhood.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s, residential development remained confined to the area adjacent to the railroad and the industrial district. During this time, a small tract of land between 26th and 30th avenues was used as a fairground by the Minnesota Mechanical and Agricultural Association. In the 1890s, the fairground would be abandoned, and much of the eastern part of the neighborhood would become settled at this time.

In 1888, the Franklin Avenue Bridge, which spans the Mississippi River, opened, and its introduction into the neighborhood fostered the commercial development of Franklin Avenue. That same year, Seward School was built at the corner of 24th Street and 28th Avenue South, near the old fairgrounds, joining Monroe Elementary School on Franklin to accommodate the neighborhood's expanding population. Between 1902 and 1905, the Park Board acquired the entire West River Road Park, a part of the green belt that connects so much of Minneapolis, and began making improvements that would eventually turn the park into the desirable residential location it is today. By 1930, the area had been built up into a fully developed neighborhood.

As the years passed, Seward began to deteriorate, and community members realized they would have to work to renew the neighborhood for the future. In 1960, the Seward Neighborhood Group (SNG) was formed to build the first school-park facility in Minneapolis. With the help of the school system, the Park Board, and Pillsbury Waite, SNG was able to create Matthews Park and Matthews Center, built to adjoin the new Seward Montessori School (which replaced the old Seward School and Monroe Elementary).

The success of the SNG's efforts encouraged more activism. In the 1970s, the community became politicized during the urban-renewal period in Minneapolis, mobilizing to ensure National Historic Preservation status for the small working-class homes that lined Milwaukee Avenue. Community interest also resulted in the construction of Seward's high-rise apartment buildings, which added hundreds of units of affordable housing to the neighborhood.

More recently, there have been more changes. Seward Redesign has worked to attract and develop new local businesses that serve the needs of the neighborhood's residents and keep the area's economy vital. Another great success is the Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). Seward residents have dedicated thousands of hours to dozens of community causes, including maintaining and upgrading housing stock, remodeling neighborhood institutions such as the Matthews Center and the Playwrights' Center, and putting badly needed computers in Seward Montessori. The program has enriched the community, and has made Seward into a model of development in Minneapolis.

SNG is a volunteer-driven organization with an elected Board of Directors and these currently active committees:

Community Development Crime and Safety Environment History Restorative Justice

Board of Directors (October 2010)

Diann Anders (term ends 11/10), Treasurer Anne Cronmiller (term ends 11/11) Peter Fleck (term ends 11/11) Myrtle Hall (term ends 11/10) Charlie Hoffman (term ends 11/11) Adrienne Hyde (term ends 11/10) Stephanie Jacobs (term ends 11/11), Executive Committee Hilarie Martin (term ends 11/11) Sheldon Mains (term ends 11/11), President Michael Trdan (term ends 11/11) Ken Webb (term ends 11/11), Executive Committee Annie Welch (term ends 11/10), Vice-President Marne Zafar (term ends 11/11), Secretary

Note: the source of this information is the Seward Neighborhood Group website, <http://www.sng.org/>

Collection Description

Seven boxes. Files including Seward history, people, businesses, houses and events. Four of the boxes contain photos. Box 3 contains oral histories on audio cassette and microcassette. There are also CDs, DVDs, Slides and other miscellaneous materials in box 5.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Controlled Access Headings

Geographic Name(s)

- Seward Neighborhood (Minneapolis, Minn.)

People

Collection Inventory

People		
	Box	Folder
Alm, Tony	1	10
Anders, Dianne	1	15
Chenault, Nina	1	27
Dahl, Borghild	1	13
Davies, Jack	1	14
Enebo, Stan	1	1
Erwin, John	1	11
Gilbert-Pederson, David	1	18
Green, Zollie	1	6
Greenwood, Carol	1	20
Hage, Al	1	7

People

Halvorson, Nancy	1	23
Hickman, Howard	1	22
Kreilkamp, Ben	1	28
Lee, Ingmar	1	21
Manzavrakos, Michael	1	26
Nelson, Gordon	1	2
Pautz, Richard	1	8
Rusten, Paul	1	9
Sabo, Martin	1	3
Saxton, Caren Dewar	1	16
Scallon, Tony	1	4
Spartz, Jeff	1	5
Storie, Tom	1	19
Supalo, Neil	1	17

Buildings and Architecture

Thomasgard, Richard	1	12
Trulen, John	1	25
Trulen, Loraine	1	24
Vikingstad, Ivar	1	29
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Buildings and Architecture		
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Businesses: Birchwood Dairy	1	32A
Businesses: The Diner	1	32B
Flour City Ornamental Iron Co.	1	33
Businesses: Metro Theater	1	34
Businesses: Ross Drug Store	1	35
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Mixed materials	1	37-38
	Box	Folder
Mixed materials	1	37-38

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Traffic Analysis of Minnehaha Mall Commercial Development	1	41
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Urban Renewal

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Citizen's Club	1	47
Block Clubs	1	48
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Seward West	1	49
Seward Southeast	1	50
Plans and Studies	1	51
Plans and Studies	1	52
Seward Southeast	1	53-54
Activities		
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Theater: Programs	1	56

Activities

Theater: Official Documents	1	57
Theater: Scripts	1	58
Art: Seward Neighborhood Creative Arts Festival 1972	1	59
Art: Seward Neighborhood Arts Festival 1973	1	60
Art: Seward Neighborhood Creative Arts Festival 1975	1	61
Art: Seward Neighborhood Merwyn Contest	1	62
King's Fair: History	2	1
King's Fair 1979-1981	2	2
King's Fair 1983-1985	2	3
King's Fair 1987	2	4
King's Fair 1989	2	5
King's Fair 1991	2	6
King's Fair 1993	2	7
King's Fair 1995	2	8

Institutions

King's Fair 1997	2	9
King's Fair 1999	2	10
	Box	Folder
Seward History and Demographics	2	11

Institutions

	Box	Folder
Matthews Center/Park	2	12-15
Seward School	2	16-17
	Box	Folder
Binder: History of Seward School and background materials	2	18

Seward Oral Histories

	Box	Folder	Cassette
Ruby Norman	3	1	125-126

Tape Summary

Camille Kudzia interviewed Ruby Norman at her home at 3007 E. 24th Street in November 1980. Ms. Norman describes attending Seward School and South High School (which was at 24th and Cedar), her teachers and classes and various school events. She remembers in great detail

Seward Oral Histories

thriving businesses along Franklin Avenue and at the intersection of 27th Ave. S. and 25th Street, where a streetcar ran. There were numerous bakeries, hardware stores, grocery stores, shoe repair shops, drug stores and even a movie theater.

She also recalls the controversy over urban renewal in the early 1970's, when Seward was divided by people who wanted the projects to proceed and those who were against them. It bitterly divided the community for several years.

She remembers a number of churches, their locations and congregations and buildings some of which were moved to new spots in the neighborhood. She was one of the original members of the Seward Neighborhood Group and was active in the organization from 1960 to 1973.

Transcript available.

Ralph Gilbertson

3

2

127-128

Tape Summary

In 1978 Dick Westby interviewed Ralph Gilbertson who was born in Seward in 1901. He attended Seward School and South High School, graduating in 1919. At the time of the interview he lived at 2320 30th Ave S. where he had been for many years. He maintained a well-known flower garden at the NW corner of 24th Street and 30th Ave. S. on the site where a grocery store stood for many years. People would come from around the neighborhood to view the garden.

Seward Oral Histories

Mr. Gilbertson names and describes the many businesses which were along Franklin Avenue and at the commercial intersection of 25th Street and 27th Ave. S.

Transcript available.

Rose Williams

3

3

129-130

Tape Summary

Camille Kudzia interviewed Mrs. Rose Williams in December 1980.

Rose Williams was born in Lonoke, Arkansas in 1914. She and her husband Brunswick, both Pentecostal ministers, came to Minneapolis in 1945, and moved into Seward at 2019 22nd Avenue S. in 1952. They later lived at 2015 22nd Ave. S.

Brunswick Williams was a minister at the church “on East 22nd Street and 25th Avenue.” Their home was very close to Milwaukee Avenue. They were one of the few Black families living in the neighborhood. Mrs. Williams describes a number of their neighbors.

Rev. Williams died in 1971, and Mrs. Williams remained in the house. In later years she was very active in the original Seward Co-op on Franklin, close to her house.

Transcript available.

Edith Lindberg

3

4

131

Tape Summary

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Edith Lindberg was interviewed by Dick Westby in 1978.

She was born in Minneapolis November 6, 1889. When she was four, her father bought a house at 2515 E. 25th Street. They later moved to 27th Avenue. She attended Monroe School, Seward School and then South High. She also attended the Minnesota School of Business.

She loved the neighborhood, and remembers walking along Cedar and Riverside Avenues, and going into many Swedish stores. She attended the Bethel Baptist Church at 25th Street and 29th Avenue while she was growing up.

At the time of the interview she lives in an unspecified high rise apartment in the neighborhood, where she moved in 1967. She has memories of many stores and other businesses including Hoppy's Bakery, the Hall Novelty Co. which was a "doll buggy factory," Hagman's Store, Peterson's Drug Store (at 7 Corners), Inges Funeral Parlor on Cedar Avenue, and Hoglanders Grocery Store on Riverside and 27th Avenue.

Mrs. Lindberg was took great comfort in religion, and describes at length her efforts to be a good Christian.

Transcript available.

Verona Walter, Evelyn Saterbo and Olga Prince	3	5	132-133
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Tape Summary

Dick Westby and Al Hage interviewed Verona Walter, Evelyn Saterbo and Olga Prince in July 1978 at 2244 Seabury Ave. All three women lived on the eastern edge of Seward at the time of the interview.

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The houses in this neighborhood were built about 1913. They describe lamplighters coming every evening, and wagon trails nearby. Most people owned cows, and they all went to 33rd Avenue between 24th and 25th street to graze.

They describe parts of West River Road as “just a little trail.” The children of the neighborhood played on the grass in front of their homes (at Seabury Ave) until the Park Board planted trees which prevented most games. They describe fashioning a nine hole golf course by sinking cans into the ground, and skating near the Franklin Bridge on a huge rink. They also used to go down by the river to play. They describe a number of street vendors - a beer truck pulled by white horses, a scissor grinder man who would walk down the street with a little bell, and even the fire truck (pulled by horses) at 21st and Franklin.

They all attended Seward School, and listed some of their teachers. This was in the 1920’s. They described the many games they would play. They also went to movies and list all the theaters nearby.

Transcript available.

Roy Lamere

3

6

134

Tape Summary

Camille Kudzia interviewed Roy Lamere in 1980.

Mr. Lamere grew up in the neighborhood between 25th and 26th Street S. and between 24th and 27th Avenue. He says this area was given the nickname “the Hub of Hell” because of all the saloons and the resulting fights and bad behavior. He attended Seward School which was then at 24th street between 28th and 29th Avenue. He graduated

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from Seward (eight grade) in 1916. When he was married to his second wife, Mr. Lamere lived at 2400 29th Ave. S. Mr. Lamere was a carrier for the US Postal Service for 38 years. He remembered delivering mail to Orville Freeman at 2316 Seabury Ave. He remember Elmer Freeman (Orville's uncle) starting a clothing store at 27th Ave. S. and 25th Street where SKOL Liquor now stands.

He describes a circus coming to town near Minnehaha Ave between 24th Street and 26th Streets. He also remembers some of the fights at the Hub of Hell. He also describes Cyerson's Dairy south of the street car tracks on 26th Street from 31st to 35th Ave..

He remembers playing football, boxing and ice skating in the neighborhood

Transcript available.

Hulda Anderson Marsh

3

7

135-136

Tape Summary

Camile Kudzie interviewed Hulda Anderson Marsh in 1980 at 2415 23rd Ave. S.

Ms. Marsh's parents came separately from Sweden, her mother at age 18 and her father at age 16. He arrived in 1884 alone and knowing only one English word "work" when he arrived in Minneapolis. Her parents met in Ortonville Minnesota and moved to Minneapolis when they married. Ms. Marsh was born in 1899 and raised in the house at 2309 E. 24th Street. The house had no bathroom, and no heat on the second floor where they slept in winter coats and hats.

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Her father wrote for the local Swedish newspapers. He was well known, and eventually got a job at the Capitol for Ernest Everhart (?) who eventually became Governor. (Adolph Eberhart was Governor 1909-1915.) He helped him campaign to win the job. Her father did many odd jobs for the Governor, including refinishing furniture in the Capitol building and serving as a guide when members of the public came to visit. He worked at the Capitol until Harold Stassen became Governor.

The area where they lived (near the corner of 23rd Avenue and 24th Street) was near the railroad tracks, and quite wild. The children would play in the fields and also go down to the river which was also quite undeveloped. She mentions lamplighters coming around in the evening.

She describes the home they lived in, the porch, the piano, and the lace curtains. She said they bought many items at Holsterman's store. She remembers taking a bath in a tub on Saturdays. There were eight children and each of them would have a bath, starting with the smallest. Then her mother would put all their dirty clothes in the bath water to soak overnight.

Ms. Marsh mentions a store called Huffies "in the middle of 23rd Avenue" where they bought many items. She describes decorating the Christmas tree with items purchased at Huffies. And she describes the delicious Scandinavian dinner they had on Christmas Eve.

In the teens they finally had water installed in their house, and in 1921 electricity. She had a job for four years as a ticket taker at the Star Theatre on Washington Avenue S. She married in 1921 and lived in Seward for the rest of her life.

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Transcript available.

John and Mabel Nordberg	3	8	137-138
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Tape Summary

Camile Kudzia interviewed John and Mabel Nordberg in 1980 at 2628 E. 22nd Street.

The interview starts out with Mr. Nordberg describing in detail horse-drawn street cars which ran on 22nd and 26th Avenues. He worked for a while at United States Homesteading Locating Company, and then later at Stillman Machinery, when he was a teenager.

They mention shopping for Christmas ornaments at Holsterman's store. Mr. Nordberg recalls knowing George Mainey (Mamey?) who became a well known structural engineer and professor at Northwestern University.

Transcript available.

Jim Craven	3	9	139-140
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Don Barton	3	10	141
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Henry Schauer	3	11	142
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Gordon Nelson	3	12	143
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Lee Greenfield	3	13	144
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Seward Oral Histories

Richard Pautz	3	14A-14B	145-146
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Tape Summary

Dick Westby interviewed Richard (Dick) Pautz in 1997.

Mr. Pautz came to Seward in 1933, living first at 2512 38th Ave. S. and then at 2554 38th Avenue S. He graduated from Augsburg College in 1937, and married Gertrude Erling in 1939. Their five children went to Seward School and South High School. Mr Pautz was on the faculty and staff of Augsburg College. When he opened a real estate office at 27th and Franklin in 1950, the neighborhood was “run down to some extent.” He describes the negotiations related to the building of the freeway (94) through the neighborhood.

He was President of the Seward Civic & Commerce Assn in 1950, and later active in the Seward Neighborhood Group. He did “a lot of work for the hospital.” He helped set up the Augsburg campus, when the school decided to stay in the city rather than move to the suburbs.

Transcript available.

Betty Woodward	3	15	147-148
James Cardy	3	16	149
Floy Cook	3	17	150
Avalea Hupp	3	18	151

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Helen Gabrick	3	19	152
Frank Hall	3	20	153

Tape Summary

Frank Hall, owner of **The Diner**, was interviewed by Ben Kreilkamp. (Lots of background noise on this tape; transcript difficult to read).

Mr. Hall has various memories. He remembers the Metro Theatre where in 1929 admission was 5 cents. He remembers Aura Lee Hopp who owned the Hexagon Bar in the “Hub of Hell” intersection.

As a teenager he raised pigeons and got the grain to feed them from sweeping out railroad cars. He also raised chickens and owned approximately 50. He sold them at Christmas and New Years for \$1 apiece.

At the age of 21 he got a job as a switchman for the Milwaukee Railroad. He married and eventually bought a house at 22nd street and 32nd Ave. S. for \$1500 in 1942 or 1943. He was in the Air Force as a turret gunner from 1943-46.

In 1950 he bought a diner called from then on **The Diner** at 2526 27th Ave. S. . He describes various bars, restaurants and other businesses in the area of 26th Ave S. and 26th Street E. He describes the variety sandwiches he served in his diner, including the “Elizabeth Taylor.”

After his divorce he said he “played the field” – all ages, 20 to 70. He reminisces about his childhood – ice skating in Riverside Park, amateur football. He played baseball at

Seward Oral Histories

Brackett's field. He went to Nicollet Park sometimes to watch the ball games.

He ran the diner and also owned a lumberyard in Farmington MN for 9 years. Many stories are included about **The Diner**.

Transcript available (handwritten).

Del Bursch

3

21

154

Tape Summary

Del Bursch, owner of the Burschwood (Birchwood) Dairy was interviewed by Camille Kudzia in 1980.

Ms. Bursch started working at the Burschwood Dairy in the early 1950's. At that time it was a dairy, selling primarily milk, eggs, butter and cheese. They sold almost no groceries, and the store was very tiny. She says the Dairy was built in 1926 as a creamery, selling primarily buttermilk. During the Second World War they sold the milk business, and concentrated on eggs. Then gradually they began carrying fruits, and then other groceries. As other small grocery stores in the neighborhood closed, the Burschwood started carrying more and more items.

Ms. Bursch's father-in-law Albert Bursch built the Dairy. Her own husband was Cy Bursch, one of Albert Bursch's four children. Cy worked for his father even as a child at the Dairy. At one point there were 30 to 40 people employed at the Dairy, as they had a large delivery business.

She then goes on to describe a typical day working at the Burschwood Dairy (store) in 1980. She enjoys meeting and making friends with members of the community and she

Seward Oral Histories

lists a number of them. She estimated that at that time they had about 200 customers per day.

Transcript available.

Ivar Vikingstad	3	22	155-158
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Tape Summary

Ivar Vikingstad was interviewed on a number of occasions in 2008 by Jean Johnstad.

Mr. Vikingstad faced numerous physical challenges, including deafness and throat cancer, but was nevertheless able to answer many questions. He was deaf from childhood, but became an excellent lip reader. He was born at Deaconess Hospital in 1928, and his family lived at 2510 25th Avenue. His father was a truck driver who lost his job during the Depression, and his mother worked in a laundry. He received no special education during school, and was simply promoted each year because he caused no trouble. He eventually went to a trade school where he learned electronics, and he opened a TV repair business in the Cedar Riverside area. He also held other electronics jobs at various times. He became an expert in electricity and even gave presentations and classes on the subject. Mr. Vikingstad was also the Minnesota State Champion weightlifter/bodybuilder in his weight class in 1955/56.

During the time when the Milwaukee Avenue renewal was taking place, Mr. Vikingstad was the last hold-out, as he owned a home at 2311 Milwaukee Avenue. The city tried many times to take the property, and he finally sold it to them.

Media

In spite of his deafness Mr. Vikingstad learned to play the harmonica and the guitar.

At one time he lived at the corner of 25th and 25th in a duplex, and he remembers the Agate Theater and the Metro theater nearby. He also recalls the trolley lines in the neighborhood.

He discusses his philosophy of life at length on these recordings.

Transcript available.

Steven Benson	3	23	159
Eleanor Suneson	3	24	160
Meryl Miller	3	25	161
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Microcassettes		3	27
Media			
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Photos			4
Assorted AV: VHS, CDs, Slides, Photos, Cassettes			5

Media

Photos

6

Oversized Photos

7