

RAMSEY COUNTY
History
A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society



Spring 2008

Volume 43, Number 1

From Swede Hollow to Capitol Boulevard

**Bethesda Hospital Celebrates Its
125th Anniversary (1883–2008)**

Donald B. Swenson, M.D.

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*A painting of Bethesda Hospital by artist Kairong Liu with the Minnesota State Capitol in the background.
Photo courtesy of Bethesda Hospital.*

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Ramsey County History is published quarterly
by the Ramsey County Historical Society,
323 Landmark Center, 75 W. Fifth Street, St.
Paul, Minn. 55102 (651-222-0701). Printed in
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RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 43, Number 1

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ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON DECEMBER 20, 2007:

The Ramsey County Historical Society inspires current and future generations
to learn from and value their history by engaging in a diverse program
of presenting, publishing and preserving.

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Publication of *Ramsey County History* is supported in part by a gift from
Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie Jr.
and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon

A Message from the Editorial Board

When we think of “family,” we often think of our close relatives. But this issue explores more inclusive definitions of “family.” Community values shape individuals, who in turn reflect those values. In early St. Paul, ethnic background provided a strong sense of family. Dr. Donald B. Swenson introduces us to the family of Bethesda Hospital—a group of caring people who came together to start a medical facility rooted in the Swedish Lutheran tradition. Swenson follows the rich history of the hospital, with portraits people who contributed their time and talent to the St. Paul institution, which is now celebrating its 125th anniversary. We all know the importance of neighborhood in defining family. Bernard Friel details the extended “family” of the business community at Selby and Snelling avenues, which gave him his first jobs in the 1940s and early 1950s. On the other hand, Janice Quick describes isolated loners like convicted murders Otto Wonnigkeit and Charles Ermisch, who were estranged from friends and relatives when they were executed in 1894. But Quick also provides snapshots of St. Paul community members who signed an unsuccessful petition against the death penalty, foreshadowing the Minnesota legislature’s prohibition of that penalty years later. Enjoy this spring issue, and write a letter to the editor to let us know your thoughts.

Anne Cowie,
Chair, Editorial Board

Growing Up In Saint Paul

When Selby and Snelling Had a Life of Its Own, 1943–1954

Bernard P. Friel

Our home on Selby near Griggs at 1237 Selby Avenue was the smallest house on the block. In fact I cannot recall in my entire life being in a smaller house, but it was perfectly adequate, and I don't believe I ever noticed its dimensions until I was in college. It had the customary living room, dining room, kitchen, bathroom, back hallway where we kept the icebox, a very small screened back porch, and two bedrooms upstairs. The back hallway was also where my grandfather's razor strap hung, my mother's instrument of discipline for my misdeeds, until it fell victim of a scissors in my hands after my grandfather's death. My grandfather had dug the basement by hand after the house was built. It consisted of carefully fitted stones mortared with concrete and whitewashed, though I don't recall that the whitewash was ever very white. It often leaked. In the basement there was a furnace room, a coal bin, a utility room, and a laundry room with a small gas two-burner stove for use in canning. The seven-foot ceiling was lowered further by the eighteen-inch warm air ducts that snaked through the basement.

I arrived on those modest premises in August of 1930 after a brief "arrival" stay at Ancker Hospital, which has since disappeared from the St. Paul landscape.

Sometime during the first six weeks of my life, my maternal uncle Preston, for reasons about which I am uncertain, bestowed upon me the nickname Wampy, and it stuck with such tenacity that my family, friends, teachers, acquaintances, virtually everyone called me Wampy. Bernard was the name used on formal documents, but it was a rarity if someone called me Bernie or Bernard, and that never happened in high school and seldom in college or law school. While not as rare today, my family and friends still use the nickname. It has served me well, and in retrospect had I been able to object to it, I would not have done so.

In the late 1930s eight of us lived in the house on Selby and it did not seem to create any crowding or unpleasantness, at least not from the perspective of someone who was then between the ages of five and ten. The occupants were my mother and father, my grandmother and

grandfather, who owned the house, my uncle, my brother, and in 1937 my sister was born and joined us. It was clear to me by my late grade school years at the old James J. Hill School at Selby and Oxford that I wanted to attend college, and it was equally clear that to attend I would have to provide for its financial demands myself.

Selling the *Saturday Evening Post* door to door even with Norman Rockwell covers proved to be an ineffective method of producing any helpful savings. My next effort was an after-school job when I was twelve delivering notions from the wholesaler, which had an office in a building on the southeast corner of Seventh and Wabasha streets, to the notions departments of the Emporium, the Golden Rule, Schunemans, Field-Schlick, and a variety of other retail stores in downtown St. Paul. It was only marginally better income than selling the *Saturday Evening Post* in the apartments on Grand Avenue between Syndicate and Snelling.

Mr. Bendel Hires Me

By 1943 my uncle had married and moved to a duplex next door with his new wife. She had worked, for a short time, at Park Drug Store on the southeast corner of Selby and Snelling avenues, and in August of 1943 she told me that the owner was looking for someone to do odd jobs at the store. She suggested I apply. I did and I was hired.

The proprietor and owner of the store, Arthur Bendel, was a very handsome and impressive person. He was a pharmacist by education and training. He was also one of the kindest and compassionate human beings I have ever known and over the next decade he and his wife, Clara, were for me a second family, and his store my second home.

My home at Selby and Griggs was a little short of a mile from the store at Snelling and Selby. I commuted by bicycle, walking, or running the distance, and on rare occasions took the Selby-Lake streetcar. Running was often my choice for I ran the mile and cross country in high school. I worked at the store every day after school (and after football, hockey, and track practice depending on the season) from 4:30 PM until 8 PM during the week, from 8 AM until 10 PM on Saturday and from 8 AM until noon on Sunday—34½ hours a week.

I was so happy to be hired in August of 1943 that it never occurred to me to ask what I was to be paid. At the end of my first week, Mr. Bendel presented me with three bills, which upon a quick inspection I concluded were "ones." I was too nervous to really look at the denominations, and after a thank you I put them in my pocket and left for home. When I found that one of those bills was a "five," I was ecstatic. That meant that I was going to



A photo taken from an elevated position looking east along Selby Avenue in about 1932 shows the intersection with Snelling Avenue in St Paul. The vertical post, near the center of the intersection and adjacent to the streetcar tracks, was a traffic control light. Sometime after this picture was taken, Park Drug and Park Liquor occupied the retail space shown in the top right-hand portion of the photo. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

be paid \$7.00 a week, and now I could really save some money.

Park Drug and later, Park Liquor which was next door to the south, and also owned by Arthur Bendel, was my school year job for the next eleven years, from my last year in grade school, the eighth grade in 1943, to my graduation from law school at the University of Minnesota in 1954. There were also a variety of summer jobs over those eleven years including dishwasher and third cook on the Northern Pacific and Great Northern dining cars; a brief stint as chef on the Red River, the Great Northern train from the Twin Cities to Fargo; a part of one summer on the 2 AM until noon shift as a stevedore at the Midway trucking ter-

terminal of Glendenning Motorways; and one entire summer as a compass man on a timber cruising crew for the Northern Pacific Railroad in Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

Dining Car Work

The dining car work, with few exceptions, consisted of a five-day round trip from St. Paul to Chicago where we had an overnight layover, then Chicago to Seattle where we restocked the dining car as necessary during a six-hour stop, and then back to St. Paul where we had five days off before the next trip. During those five days I returned to work at the store.

The exception to the five-day round trip followed by five days off was my first ex-

perience as a dishwasher on the Northern Pacific North Coast Limited, the railroad's first class train to the Pacific. It was 1946, and the round trip was six days. I was not quite sixteen and through the intervention of a family friend who was a steward on the dining cars, I obtained the job, though I was under minimum hiring age. I had never been on a train and I was excited about both the adventure of travel on the train and this new job.

The North Coast Limited was still pulled by a coal-burning steam locomotive, and the kitchen stoves in the dining car were also coal burning. While enroute the dining car crew of four cooks (the fourth cook was me: the dishwasher), seven waiters, and one steward slept in a

bunk car just behind the engine coal tender. This was the size of the summer diner crew. For the rest of the year the crew consisted of three cooks, six waiters, and a steward, and in that configuration the third cook's primary duties were preparation of the bread and vegetables, and also included dishwashing. The bunks were three high and fourth cooks slept in one of the top bunks, the bunks with the most lateral swing as the train moved.

The Northern Pacific diner offered a menu that would make a five-star hotel proud. It was quite varied and offered selections that included roast duck, whole squab, rabbit pie, veal schnitzel, Yorkshire pudding, halibut mornay, salmon, haddock, etc. together with an extensive array of salads, soups, dressings, breads, desserts, and side dishes as well as an array of breakfast and lunch items and beverages. And it was famously proud of its huge Idaho baked potato served with all the toppings imaginable. In fact its Seattle commissary bore the sign in large letters on its roof "The Route of the Great Big Baked Potato."

I soon learned that dishwashing was only one of my duties. There were a host of others. I was up at 4 AM. I first had to remove the "klinkers" from the kitchen stoves and drop them through the garbage hole in the floor of the kitchen onto the tracks below. Next was starting the fire for the kitchen stoves with matches, kindling, and coal, and then what came to be my most undesirable chore, cleaning the hen chickens (the fryers), which were stored in the dining car freezer. They were always filled with partially formed eggs, which broke during the cleaning and stuck to my fingers like ice-cold glue and made them numb with cold.

In 1946 we were still carrying large numbers of soldiers returning from World War II and the trains were packed. The dining car was serving over 200 meals three times a day. Meal service was continuous, and so was washing the dishes and the pots and pans, and it was all done by hand. There were no other dishwashers in the dining car. Only me.

At the end of the day my job was to pull the wooden grating on the kitchen floor and clean and hose down the grating and the floor and wash it all down the garbage hole onto the right of way beneath



Author Bernard Friel in his 1948 Student Council photograph at Central High School. Photo courtesy of the author.

the train, but never while stopped in a station. After dinner was over, washing the dishes kept me busy until near midnight. Because the railroad was short of crews in 1946, we doubled-backed out without a break between runs, for eighteen consecutive days. For me it had been eighteen consecutive 18-20 hour workdays, and because I found it difficult sleeping in the moving train, my waking hours were somewhat longer.

On the eighteenth day when our dining car was cut out of the train and parked in the yards near the Saint Paul Union Depot, I was left alone in there to finish the washing and drying by hand of a mountain of dishes, which I can still see piled high on the counter between the kitchen and the pantry.

We had been so busy for those eighteen days that though we were the food preparers, we had little time to eat and by bedtime I was just too tired. When I saw a doctor the day after my return, because my mouth was so sore I could not eat, I was diagnosed with trench mouth from malnutrition and spent the next ten days in the St. Paul Northern Pacific hospital being punched in the behind every three hours with a syringe full of penicillin, then a relatively new drug.

My GN Years

In later years, when I worked on the Great Northern Empire Builder diners with its diesel engines and the gas-fired kitchen stoves, the lighter passenger loads, and the 14- to 16-hour work days with five days off between runs, I had a much more manageable schedule, and on my five days off, my work week was back down to thirty-four hours at the Liquor Store.

The railroads supplied our cook "uniforms" except for our pants which had small black and white checks and were purchased separately. We wore white, hip-length, long-sleeved, loose fitting cotton jackets with "Nehru" type collars, a large apron under the jacket, and paper "sailor" hats with the railroad logo. The waiters wore similar jackets with some simple trim, the railroad shoulder patch logo, and black bow ties. In contrast the steward, who was in charge of the diner crew, wore a black suit with a white vest, white dress shirt, and a dark tie. The attire was virtually identical for both railroads. The dining area of the car contained ten dining tables each with immaculate white tablecloths and napkins and silver service and daily, fresh cut flowers in a vase attached to the inside wall of the diner at each table. There were tables of four and tables of two, five of each so that there were thirty settings in the diner.

In most of those later years I was the third cook responsible for preparation of the bread and vegetable parts of the menu and preparing the breakfast pancake orders. Whatever we prepared it was from scratch. We baked our own bread on the train and then it had to be sliced into uniform slices, a job I had to perform. It was not as difficult as I first thought, but required a bit of care so that the knuckles of the hand that guided the large French knife quickly across the loaf did not wind up on the cutting board.

The railroad pay was very good at about \$250 a month for fifteen days of work, but in the summers when I worked each day was fourteen to eighteen hours, so we managed a full month of time in just fifteen days. The crews were unionized, but there was never any pressure on summer workers, who were really only temporary, to join.

After that first summer, working on the dining cars was a really wonderful travel experience. The windows of the kitchen permitted me a magnificent view of the landscapes of our northwestern states from the badlands of North Dakota to the Rocky Mountains of Montana and Idaho, and the Cascades of Washington to the Pacific Ocean as we traveled along the coast from Everett to Seattle. We stopped at the entrance to Glacier Park where departing passengers were greeted by an American Indian wearing the full headdress of a chief. Off to one side of the station were several pure white Indian tepees, and a short distance away was the large and impressive Glacier Park Entrance Hotel framed by snow-capped mountain peaks.

Many times after we had served dinner and time permitted, I would open the upper half of the door of the dining car near the entrance to the kitchen, lean out the door, and let the wind wash over my face as I drank in the scenery to the musical beat of the click, click—click, click of the metal wheels of the dining car as they passed over the separations between the rail sections. I always tried to get to that side door as we traveled along the Pend Oreille and Kootenai rivers in Idaho as we headed south on our way into Spokane.

On the other end of the route was Chicago, where our layover permitted me an entire afternoon and evening to explore, and I did. There was the Museum of Science and Industry, Shedd Aquarium, the Art Museum, Marshall Field's, Bergdorf's, the Sunday Flea Market at Maxwell and Halstad Streets, and the Negro (we were not yet referring to them as "blacks" or "African Americans") waiters from my dining car crew who introduced me to the Chinese numbers game, which was remarkably similar, if not identical to, our Powerball lottery. And there were the trips for my girlfriend to the Capezio shop just off State Street to buy her ballet "point shoes" for her ballet classes.

There were many memorable experiences for me in Chicago, but one in particular I shall never forget was an evening in the late 1940s when I went to a downstairs bar literally blue with the cigarette smoke of its patrons to listen to a

relatively new female singer. I was at the Blue Note and she was Sarah Vaughn.

I have always considered myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to spend so many weeks traveling by train during a time generally considered to be the auspicious days of passenger railroading.

While the summer jobs permitted me to put away some savings, it was the employment at Snelling and Selby that paid my day-to-day expenses, particularly during college and law school. I was ecstatic in the late spring of 1944 to learn that instead of spending my next year at Maria Sanford Junior High School, I would go directly to Central for four years! Maria Sanford would no longer serve as a junior high school.

At Central High School

And it was for me a wonderful four years at Central. I played three sports for four years, though I did not letter in each and every year. I was successful in my ventures into student activities serving as president of my class and treasurer and president of Central's Student Council, chair of my Junior-Senior Prom, and Art Editor of the school paper. I was also voted most popular and "cutest" in my senior year. We had an outstanding staff of teachers

and I received a top-notch high school education. My great disappointment with Central shared with me by virtually all of my classmates was the reconstruction of the school in the 1970s, which destroyed a classic high school building with which we all felt a certain closeness, and substituted instead a prison-like structure. Our 1948 graduation class numbered about 430 and I developed wonderful, lifelong relationships with many classmates and am looking forward to celebrating my 60th reunion with many of them this coming August.

O'Gara's now occupies all of what in the 1940s and '50s was Park Drug and Park Liquor. When I worked on the corner, Park Drug occupied the southeast corner of the intersection of Snelling and Selby and the liquor store, the next storefront down Snelling to the south. O'Gara's was then a small bar that provided short-order food items and was the next storefront south on Snelling.

Around the corner on Selby was Carl Schulz's (Charles "Sparky" Schulz's father) Barbershop and he was my barber for those eleven years, and when I married in 1955 I went back to Carl for a haircut and my first professional shave. Carl often told me about his son's experiences



Arthur Bendel, left, owner of Park Liquor (at 168 Snelling) and Park Drug Store (at 172 Snelling), in about 1946 with two of the liquor store's employees. Photo courtesy of Lloyd Benson.

in the military and his efforts at producing a comic strip. The Schultz family lived in an apartment above the drug and liquor store. Behind this southeast corner complex, accessible by alleys from both Snelling and Selby, was Roy Ky Peterson's one-man auto repair shop. He was my car repairman and later one of my clients. It is a nice tribute to Carl and Roy that O'Gara's, which now occupies the entire southeast corner, has a barbershop section and a garage section.

Though I met Sparky Schultz during those years working on the corner, I never really knew him. During my college years, quite by accident, I did meet the real Charlie Brown, who had attended art school with Sparky. In 1989 Sparky and I were inducted into the St. Paul Central Hall of Fame; its first class of inductees, and I was disappointed that Sparky did not attend the ceremony.

Roy Peterson performed a miracle for me in 1950. I drove a 1936 two-door Ford sedan. Besides the bald tires and the passenger door I kept closed with an old belt, it had a variety of problems, but somehow I did manage to keep it operating. That is until I pulled up for work that Friday morning in 1950. As I parked the car, it seemed unresponsive, and upon examination I found that the car's passenger-side rear wheel extended out beyond the fender six to eight inches. My rear axle had broken.

I had to have the car that evening because I had an important date. I simply had to have that car. Through one of Mr. Bendel's connections, I located a rear axle at a local junkyard and with his permission took the store delivery truck and picked it up. Returning to the store I went to see Roy Peterson at his garage behind the store. I asked if he could replace the rear axle of a 1936 Ford and he said that he could. He was much less sanguine when I asked if he could do it before the end of the day, but he did, and I kept the date and that date later became my wife.

Many years later when Roy lost his wife, I helped him with several estate matters related to her death, and when he remarried several years after that, I prepared his prenuptial agreement, wills for him and his new wife, and attended their wedding.

Working at Park Liquor

My function at Park Drug and Liquor changed as I grew older, particularly after my twenty-first birthday when I could handle sales of liquor, but my primary functions as stock boy and janitor remained throughout. When beer and liquor was delivered to the store, I moved it to its proper storage area. The hard liquor and wine was stored in the basement. When it arrived, Mr. Bendel or one of the other employees, after I had stacked the delivery at the top of the stairs, would place it on a wooden drop-down chute that we had hooked up to one side of the stairs, and slide it down to the basement where I was waiting to catch each case. I would stack the order at the bottom of the stairs, sometimes 30 to 40 cases, and then I would relocate each case to its proper place in the basement after it had all been slid down the chute to me. I still remember that half-pints weighed 63 pounds, pints 54 pounds, quarts 42 pounds and fifths 35 pounds, all give or take two to four pounds. All sales at the store were cash or check except for a few of our good customers. I don't recall that we had any issues with purchases by minors, nor do I recall that we had any minors attempting to make purchases. As one who was a minor during those years attempting to make such a purchase at a bottle store was not something one attempted. Older siblings helped with those matters.

The store opened at 8 AM and closed at 8 PM sharp on weekdays and closed at 10 PM sharp on Saturday. We were closed on Sunday. Saturday was always our busiest day, and it was our busiest delivery day too. But it was the holiday season that was busy like a very busy Saturday from Thanksgiving until New Year's. The store had a basic staff of four consisting of Mr. Bendel, a part-time clerk, a delivery truck driver, and me. From time to time the part-time clerk was another student or a person with a second job, and by the early '50s the part-time clerk was full time.

We did not have a very significant turnover, and it is my recollection that Mr. Bendel had less than a dozen different employees during my eleven years with him. During the holiday season Mr. Bendel's former employees would spend their evening free time and on Saturdays clerking, helping with stocking, and delivering. This



Arthur Bendel. Photo courtesy of the author.

was all volunteer help. All of us employed at the store became friends. We truly enjoyed one another and working in the store. It was a wonderful collegial environment and we looked forward to seeing and working with one another again during the holidays. When I returned from my service with the Air Force in 1956, I worked holidays at the then relocated store at Hague and Snelling for several years.

By the early '50s after nearly a decade at the store, I had some ideas about how to market some of our wine products, which were just beginning to be more popular with our customers. One afternoon I put my ideas to work in rearranging several wine displays while Mr. Bendel was away from the store. Upon his return and after returning the display to its original condition, Mr. Bendel quietly reminded me that I was employed for my brawn not my gray matter. On that, however, I had the last word when he employed me as his lawyer in the early '60s.

The corner of Selby and Snelling had a life of its own in those years. Across Selby on the northeast corner was Weber's café, an after-school hangout for Central High students who transferred at that intersection from the Selby-Lake streetcar to the Snelling Avenue streetcar on their way home. Next to Weber's on Selby to the east was the Liberty State Bank and on

Snelling to the north was the Park Recreation, where "Whoopee" John Wilfahrt and Freddie Fisher's Schnickelfritz Band often played, as well as a number of jazz notables of that era.

Kitty-corner from Park Drug was Towey's Cut Rate Store and across Snelling to the west of Park Drug was the Five-and-Dime store. The Park Theatre was just down Selby west of Towey's, and just to the east of the theatre was Andy's hamburger shop.



Clara Bendel. Photo courtesy of the author.

The corner was also home to Sun-gaard's Refrigeration & Appliances, Harris Plumbing, Lux Liquor, a Pure Oil service station on the northeast corner of Hague and Snelling, and more than a dozen other businesses that my memory just now cannot coax to the surface.

On V-J Day (Victory in Japan, for those not familiar with the initials), August 15, 1945, the spider web of streetcar and electric lines over the intersection was festooned with toilet paper. Unfortunately my celebration (I was then fifteen) was to carry case, after case, of Four Roses, Old Fitzgerald, Jim Beam, etc., etc., etc. up from our basement liquor inventory as fast as I could because it was in heavy demand for the joyous celebration of the end of World War II.

The family-like nature of my relationship with Art and Clara Bendel is nicely illustrated by an experience in the summer of 1946. Mr. Bendel drove a 1941

maroon Pontiac sedan, which he kept in spotless condition. New cars were not being built during the war years so everyone was careful to keep theirs in good condition. Mr. Bendel had left the Pontiac for some light maintenance work at a service station at Marshall and Cleveland. His schedule that day didn't permit him to pick it up when the call came that it was ready; so he asked me to take the streetcar out to pick it up. No one at my home owned an automobile and all of my driving skills had been learned in the store's delivery truck on less than a dozen occasions when I had accompanied our deliveryman on a delivery. I had my license, however, because everyone was entitled to a license at age fifteen, but my driving skills were somewhere between weak and none.

I was scared to go on the errand but too proud to admit to my abysmal driving skills, so off I went. I decided to drive very slowly and carefully and avoid the busy streets like Snelling, Selby, and Marshall. I was almost back to the store, but as I drove south on Saratoga approaching Selby, a car entered Saratoga from Selby headed toward me, and in an effort to make sure he could get by, I pulled to the right and before I stopped I had struck three parked cars on the right-hand side of the street. I was absolutely petrified with a deep gnawing fear and to this day I feel pangs whenever I think about it. The first thing I had to do, of course, was find the owners of the three cars. There was a small variety store on the corner near where the cars I struck were parked and I decided to start there. No one can imagine my fear and embarrassment as I entered the store and made my confession, but luckily I found all the car owners there.

After exchanging information, I got back in the Pontiac, which had significant but not severe body damage, and proceeded to the store and the dreaded job of reporting the accident to Mr. Bendel. I parked the Pontiac in its customary spot behind the store and rang the doorbell to gain entry through the back door. Clara Bendel opened the door and without hesitation after looking at me said, "What happened?" After a brief description of the accident, she gave me a sympathetic hug and



Bernard Friel working as a stock boy at Park Liquor about 1950. Photo courtesy of Lloyd Benson.

told me that she would "take care of the explanation to Art" and I should just "forget about the matter." My relief at avoiding the pain of explaining to Mr. Bendel was unmanaginable. Of course the matter was discussed with him several days later when my emotions had mostly recovered, but he never expressed to me any scolding, criticism, or acrimony about the matter, nor was there any request for reimbursement for the cost of repair, and my offers to do so were summarily rejected.

On March 27, 1947, there was a disastrous fire at the liquor store. It is my recollection that the fire started in O'Gara's kitchen area, which was adjacent to about the center of the south wall of the liquor store. There was a large walk-in cooler in the store that sat about mid-store and it was salvaged. There was considerable smoke damage, but I believe that the store was operating on a limited basis within a few weeks and continued to operate through reconstruction. While much of the liquor inventory was lost in the fire, what was left, without the locked doors of the store to secure it, was "removed" by passersby and others motivated to improve their personal liquor inventories.



The scene at Selby and Snelling on March 27, 1947, when fire struck Park Liquor Store. The two unidentified spectators on the left are probably Arthur Bendel, owner of Park Liquor and his neighbor, Charles "Sparky" Schulz, whose father's barbershop was located around the corner from Bendel's store at 1574 Selby Avenue. *Minneapolis Star Journal* photo. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.

In order to reduce such losses, Mr. Bendel hired an off-duty police officer to provide security. A young Jimmy Griffin, whom I met at the time, provided that service. Jimmy was later elected to the School Board of the St. Paul School District. It was there that our paths crossed again in the early 1980s when we traveled to New York together, he as the treasurer of the district to sign bonds issued by the district and me as the district's bond counsel. And our paths crossed once again in 2000. We were both present at an annual Central "C" Club banquet at Mancini's that fall. At that time I was president of the North American Nature Photography Association (NANPA) and already knew that I was going to introduce Gordon Parks at NANPA's annual convention the following January. I knew that Parks had attended Central and on a hunch, I asked Jimmy if he knew him. Jimmy brightened up like he had seen an old friend and said "Of course I knew 'Old Blue,' that's what we called Gordon when we played pick

up basketball together." When I asked Jimmy if he could provide me with any humorous story that I might use in introducing Gordon, he promptly obliged.

Jimmy told me that he had been traveling with Gordon when Gordon bought his first camera in Seattle. They went down to the docks so Gordon could try it out. Jimmy related that he was watching a ferry pull away from a nearby dock when he heard a loud splash. He turned around to find that Gordon had stepped off the pier into Puget Sound. Gordon explained that he had been trying to properly frame a picture and had taken one step backward too many.

I have many memories of my years on the corner at Selby and Snelling from my first task on my first day, which was to sort literally hundreds of beer and soft drink bottles (all returnable in 1943) into their proper case containers, to my excitement at being permitted to work behind the soda fountain, to my Sunday morning janitorial duties, consisting of

mopping the entire store, to meeting then State Representative Peter Popovich (who later became one of my partners) who came in to buy a special bottle of Tennessee sour mash whiskey for Estes Kefauver who was campaigning in Minnesota for the Democratic nomination for U.S. president.

I went off to serve in the air force in 1954, and when I returned two years later, Park Liquor had relocated to the southeast corner of Hague and Snelling and my connection to the intersection had passed, but not my many memories of those halcyon years working on the corner.

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Paul Granlund's sculpture of the Bethesda Angel in place on the east side of the hospital. Photo courtesy of Bethesda Hospital. See Dr. Donald B. Swenson's article on page 3.

R.C.H.S.
RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Published by the Ramsey County Historical Society
323 Landmark Center
75 West Fifth Street
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55102

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