

Life in 1926

A year in the life of a growing city and parish

BY HEATHER CRAIG

The Rise of Radio

The first nationwide radio broadcast occurred in 1920. By 1925, it was estimated that one in five homes had a radio set — with over 90,000 sets sold in the Twin Cities that year. Local radio shows in 1926 included church services (though The Basilica did not live-broadcast until the 1940s), concerts, police reports, children’s programs, the Betty Crocker Radio Cooking School, on-air book clubs, and “Problems of Our Government” led by the League of Women Voters.



(Stromberg-Carlson radio ad — Minneapolis Star Tribune, Feb. 21, 1926)

Fashion

In the 1920s, women finally ditched the corset and embraced looser and lighter clothing. Skirts rose to knee length, and waistlines relaxed to the hips. They bobbed their hair and covered their heads with close-fitting hats. Men’s fashion changed as well. Bow ties and fedoras marked the stylish man, and the more jaunty sported a raccoon coat.

Sports

Baseball gained national prominence and popularity, especially New York Yankee Babe Ruth. Ruth paid a visit to the Twin Cities in 1926, stopping at the Catholic Boys Home to give the Casey Cubs team a few pointers.

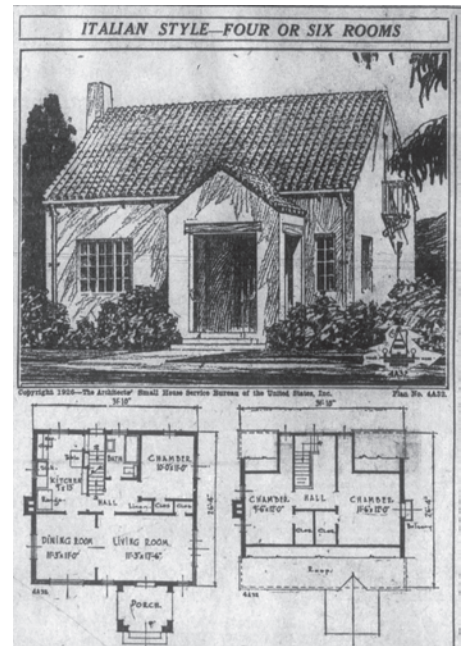


(Hennepin County Library Special Collections, Nov. 7, 1926)

In January 1926, Winter Sport Week featured hockey games, ski jumping and races, skating, sliding, a dog derby, and horse racing contests at parks throughout Minneapolis. They expected 50,000 participants and spectators.

City Building Boom

Between 1920 and 1930, the city saw a 20 percent population growth, due to increased rural migration to the city and a strong streetcar system. The Basilica parish in particular pushed north and west into the Bryn Mawr and Camden neighborhoods. Many of the new homes were based on model plans published in books and the newspapers.



(Italian-style house plan. Minneapolis Journal, Jan. 31, 1926)



(Powers ad — Minneapolis Journal, Jan. 31, 1926) Eighth-grade girls outside the Rectory on a snowy day, Basilica Archives.



(7th Street and 2nd Avenue S., 1928. Hennepin County Library Special Collections)

IN THE NEWS — 1926

Under President Calvin Coolidge, America entered the seventh year of Prohibition

The first transatlantic phone call, London to New York, was completed

Farmers protested the costs of tariffs, and Midwest Farmer's Cooperatives were held up as a model

The Ford Motor Company implemented a 40-hour work week

Minneapolis welcomed European royalty: Paul, Prince of Greece, took in the Glenwood ski jumping tournament in January. Crown Prince Gustaf Adolph and Crown Princess Louise of Sweden visited (more sensibly) in June

Vigorous debate surrounded the possibility of the U.S. joining the World Court, part of the League of Nations

John Logie Baird gave the first public demonstration of a television

Let's Go to Mass!

The Basilica priests kept a busy schedule:

Sunday Masses at 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 a.m. (Solemn High Mass). Weekday masses 6, 7, and 8 a.m. Confessions Saturday afternoons and evenings. Vigils of holy days: every morning except Sundays, holy days, and first Fridays before 7 and 8 a.m. Masses. Holy hour every Thursday 8 to 9 p.m.

Parish boundaries firmly established where you worshipped. While cars were becoming more affordable, most people attending Mass would walk or take the streetcar.

Let's Go to the Movies!

Movies were an inexpensive and fun way for Minneapolitans to spend an afternoon or evening. The 1920s saw the transition from silent films to "talkies," and the craze of matinee idols like Rudolph Valentino. His death in August 1926 left fans devastated.

Grocery Shopping

Neighbors generally shopped in small, locally owned markets. Charlie and Rose Kantor opened a small grocery market in 1927 at 1628 Laurel Avenue — providing a handy spot for Basilica schoolchildren to grab a snack on their way home. Charlie did not run weekly ads, but his prices were likely similar to the S. 5th Street Boston Market.

Heather Craig is the Archivist for The Basilica. ✚

(The Eagle Theater ad, Minneapolis Journal, Jan. 23, 1926)

BIG SPECIALS—7 A. M. Till 9 A. M.—SATURDAY		
Puro Lard 15c/lb.	Fresh Butter 40c/lb.	Nut Oil 17c/lb.
Above Items Sold With Meat or Fish Orders		
Pork Feet	6c	Sirloin Steak 12c
Pork Liver		Club Steak
Pork Hearts		Sirloin Roast
Beef Hearts		Round Roast
Neck Bones		Arm Roast
Ox Tails		Center Chuck
Sauer Kraut	POUND	Shoat Meat
ALL DAY SPECIALS		
SKINNED HAMS 19c/lb.	BACON SQUARES 19c/lb.	STRIP BACON 19c/lb.
Ring Bologna 12c	3 lbs. Cot'ge Cheese 25c	
Frankfurters 14c	Peanut Butter 18c	
5 lb. Sliced Ham 99c	5 lb. Sliced Beef 99c	
Steaming Chicken 23c	PK Sals 19c	Dried Beef 16c
GROCERY DEPARTMENT		
3 lbs. Bulk Corn	6 cans Tomatoes	
3 lbs. Navy Beans	6 cans Peas	
3 lbs. Sage 25c	6 cans Corn	
4 lbs. Brown Beans	2 cans Chili Pickles	58c
3 lbs. Marrow	1 can M. J. B. Coffee	
Fat Peas		
Strictly Fresh EGGS 38c	HOMA MALT SYRUP 75c	
PURITY CAKE, DONUTS, in cartons 23c		

(Boston Market ad. Minneapolis Star Tribune, January 16, 1926.)