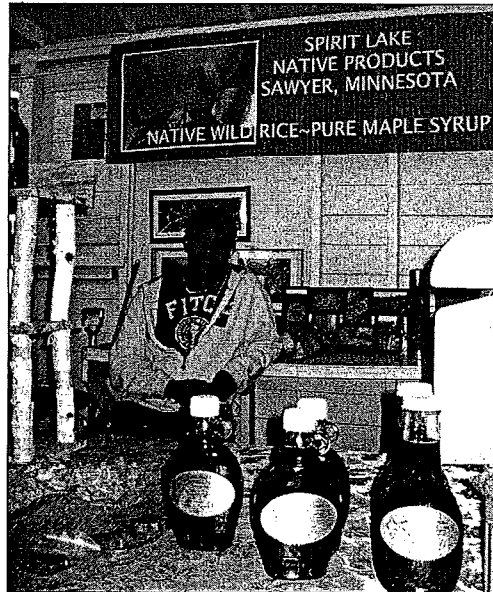


PHOTOS BY ROSEMARY E. HAMPTON

Upper left: Emily Miner, an intern with the Farmer's Market, is prepared to assist people in using their EBT and credit cards. Upper right: Blueberry House Bakery (Marilyn Wangen of Two Harbors, MN, proprietor) at the Farmer's Market. Lower right: Peggy Sobczak, owner, in her Sunlight Gardens booth at the Farmer's Market. Lower right: Tahkoah at the Spirit Lake Native Products booth at the Farmer's Market.



and customers a safer and more enjoyable experience have also arisen in recent years, but are as yet unrealized.

In a Duluth News Tribune piece from April 17, 1973, Mayor Ben Boo remarks that "It is obvious the public has regained interest in stopping at the street-corner produce stand.....Customers range from the chauffeur-driven cook for the elite families to the organic food faddists."

Doug and Lois Hoffbauer are among the "oldest" (28 years) farmers selling their produce (and free range chickens) at the market, which operates on Saturdays and Wednesdays, from 7:00 a.m. until noon. They grow tomatoes, peppers, lettuce, rhubarb, sweet corn, potatoes, cucumbers, apples, winter squash, pumpkin, and broccoli on their 12 acre garden in the midway area. When I visited the Market recently, I asked Lois if their produce is organic. It is not, but close to it - their production methods are very sustainable. They use a variety of "tricks", such as planting through plastic, which discourages weeds. They have no hired help, but one of their sons, a teacher, sometimes helps them. They have three "high tunnels", something like a greenhouse, but which has sides that roll up in summer.

Even "older" than the Hoffbauers is Barb Halliday, in her continuous participation for 30 years in the Duluth Farmers Market. Barb's parents, Ernest and Lucille, started the family market gardening endeavor in the early '70's. She lives on the original property purchased by her grandparents in 1916, in Duluth

Township on Shilhon Road, 12 miles from Lester River. Barb's children also participated in the Market, selling chokecherries to pay for school supplies.

After my visit to the Market, I received a call from one of the true "old-timers" - Richard Herman, of Caribou Lake, who is a former South St. Louis County Extension Agent, Ag and County Extension Director and Professor Emeritus of the University of Minnesota. Mr. Herman talked about the relationship of the Farmers Market to the back to the land movements, as they have come and gone throughout his lifetime, in particular, the Jackson Project, or Duluth Homesteads project, of the 1930's. This project involved the creation of 84 fortress-like, brick homes built during the New Deal era in the 1930's in Hermantown, still standing sturdily on the west side of Stebner Road, just south of Gordy's Market. Mr. Herman told me that many of these homes were paid for by the sale of raspberries (marketed at the Duluth Farmers Market). One stall belonging to the Herman family at one point was standing empty, and the Head of the Lakes Berry Growers were asked to come in.

All of the Jackson Project plots had enough space for a subsistence garden; some even had barns for raising livestock. Many homesteaders used their land to develop small businesses involving some aspect of local food production. Throughout the history of the Duluth Farmers Market, buyers have enjoyed the chance to meet and talk with growers - often the whole family, for whom the Market provided not only a large part of their income, but was also a social vehicle.

Mr. Herman adds to the story of the Market's development that the building on 14th Ave. East once had an open area (left of the front door) for washing produce. Also, in order to move this building to its present location, it was first cut in half lengthwise. Mr. Herman states that the University Experimental Station in Grand Rapids, Minnesota, and the former Experimental Station here in Duluth were a real complement to the operation of the Farmers Market.

"If you grow it or make it, you can sell it at the Duluth Farmers Market." This was highlighted by Richard Herman, and it remains true today and also is central in the Market's appeal to the public.

The Market is open Wednesdays and Sundays, 7:00 a.m. to noon. The Duluth Farmers' Market website - (operated by Lois and Doug Hoffbauer) announces the peak of the season is usually from mid-August to mid-September, although it officially opens the weekend before Mother's Day, and continues through late December, with the sale of Christmas trees. Customers may now use food support EBT cards, so more residents can enjoy the Market's freshness and variety of healthy produce.

Susan Schwaneckamp is the St. Louis County Historical Society Executive Assistant and the Editor for their newsletter Rootprints. The St. Louis County Historical Society is located in the St. Louis County Heritage & Arts Center (the Depot), 506 W. Michigan St., Duluth, MN 55802. For more information, visit www.thehistorypeople.org or call 218-733-7580.