

# The Duluth Farmer's Market

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and had begun to dabble in agriculture. They encountered many difficulties, such as rocky soil and removing stumps. The Club began to conceptualize a plan for a local food system for the city, involving both production and distribution, supplying fresh produce to area restaurants, grocers, and households. A lifelong farmer and teacher of farmers in agricultural institutes, A. B. Hostetter, was recruited from Illinois, to further develop and carry out their plan.

Educational trains, seed giveaways, growing competitions, use of land adjacent to the railroads for small agricultural production, and many other educational efforts were instituted at this time. The Greysolon Farm Company was also established in 1910, in a square mile area near Jean Duluth and Martin Roads. This company developed and rented and sold plots ranging from 1 - 15 acres. It also as part of the deal, helped remove obstacles to small farmers by teaching intensive cultivation and market gardening skills to the people renting or buying these plots. (Much material about this period of time and its early, and for decades, successful, local-regional food system, was researched by Dr. Randell Hanson and presented by him at UMD this spring in a Institute for Advanced Study Symposium on Food, Food Systems, and the New Regionalism.)

The Duluth Farmers Market

in its first year was used by 25 farmers; it has remained a part of the city ever since, despite the profound changes that came with WWII and its demand for industrial workers. From the 1950's through the 1970's, large scale commercial farming and increased worker specialization began to seriously threaten the viability of small producers. Urban sprawl, even here in Duluth, also contributed to this decline.

However, counter movements soon began to spring up, throughout the country, and here in Duluth. "Back to the land" and sustainability movements, new interest in food cooperatives (such as Duluth's Whole Food Coop, which has endured and grown in the Hillside for 40 years) and food quality, particularly in relation to health - human and planetary - have all kept the Duluth Farmers Markets, on 14th Avenue East and others, such as the market at UMD, alive and well, one hundred years after its inception.

Since the 1950's the participating farmers have expanded their line of 100% local products to include Christmas trees, syrup, honey, spring bedding plants and other greenhouse products, mixed potting soils and hand-made crafts. Lloyd Wagner, Secretary of the Duluth Market Gardeners' and Berry Association in August of 1987, included this description in a letter he wrote to the Duluth City Council advocating for the Association's right to maintain

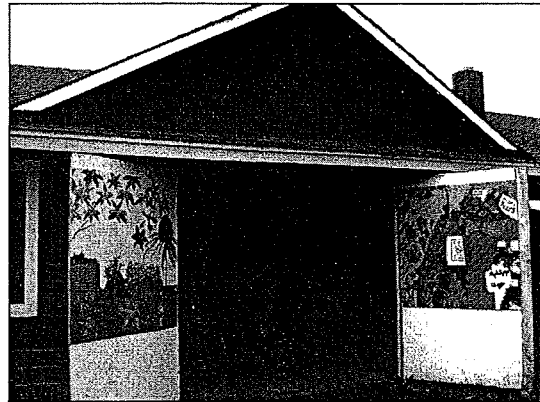
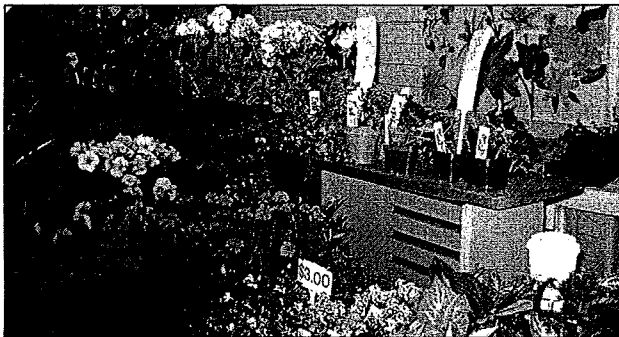


PHOTO BY ROSEMARY E. HAMPTON  
North entrance of the Farmer's Market at the intersection of N. 14th Ave. E. and E. 3rd St.

a roof sign alerting customers to the location of the market. In this letter, he also stressed that the entire product line is 100% local. The membership covered the southern half of St. Louis County and the northernmost tier of townships of Carlton County - certainly very local, as well.

Many challenges have come to the market building. The original market now located in the East End was first established at 6th Avenue East and 3rd Street by the Agriculture Committee of the Duluth Area Chamber of Commerce in 1922. This move came about in 1953 when a supermarket was erected at the former location.

At various times, the City of Duluth has considered proposals for sale of the land to private prospective buyers, but each critical time, the use of the market land and building has continued to be retained by the Duluth Market Growers Association, the formal name of the organization to which all Farmers Market vendors belong. The city acquired title in 1973 (from St. Louis County) and began leasing it to cooperative farmers' organizations for operation, chiefly the Duluth Market Growers Association. Hopes for a new building on the current site, to give the growers



## The Doors of the Market Building open at 7 a.m. every Wednesday and Saturday Morning.

PHOTOS BY ROSEMARY E. HAMPTON

Upper left: Holliday booth at the Farmer's Market. Lower left: Swenson Creek Soaps booth at the Farmer's Market. Lower right: Farmer Doug booth (Farmer Doug and Lois Hoffbauer, owners) at Farmer's Market

