

Scenes from a movie

When the CBS movie "The Melodeon" is shown this December 20 on television, many local people will be able to see themselves or friends and relatives in two scenes where local people were hired as "extras."

The first scene, one of the opening ones in the movie, was filmed at the Tom Belland farm in Royalton Township. Over 75 people from the area served as the "crowd" for the tractor demonstration.

The Pioneer received a list of extras used in that day's filming, but although several attempts were made, was not able to get a list of local people who will appear in the church scene in the movie.

Other people from the area who made a valuable contribution to the movie company during their month-long stay in the area were members of the Chisago County Posse and the Pine County Mounted Patrol. The patrol members provided 24 hour security at the location sites. Their primary duty was to control the crowd of curious people who drove to the locations to get a glimpse of the movie crew in action.

Area people who served as extras for the opening scene of the movie are: Bill Aldrich, Carrie Anderson, Dorothy Anderson, Frances Anderson, Alfred Barto, Doris Barto, Joseph Belland, Michelle Belland, Elizabeth Belland, Tommy Belland, Jack Belland, Jackie Belland, Tom Belland, Mark Biedahl and Tim Davis.

Maria Engler, Morris Engler, Douglas Faggerstrom, Sandy Faggerstrom, Dennis Faggerstrom, Shelia Faggerstrom, Pat Byrne, Nancy Grossinger, Lucas Grossinger, Dan Groth, Lee Gupfill, Vickie Harness, Bobbie Haegele, Gary Howe, Edward Johnson, Muriel Johnson, Mark Krantz, Lorraine Kunkle and Vickie Larson.

Frank Lozar, Mrs. LeMarie Mathew Meissner, Pam Meissner, Tony Meissner, Greg Mohrbacher, Vangie Mohrbacher, DeWayne Meyer, Beverly Neidorf, Elmer Neidorf, Lea Nelson, Mrs. Nelson, Blaine Norelius, Carol Norelius, Paul Norelius, Violet Norelius, Collette O'Donovan, Carl Olson, Marius Oliver, Vivian Ostrom, Neva Peterson, Nicole Pinotti, Nick Pitzen, Harvey Robbins, Maxine Rousu and Rufe Rousu.

Harry Sahlin, Mrs. Sahlin, Sharon Scanlon, Nancy Schaefer, Sandy Schaefer, Kurt Schiebel, Christy Schmidt, Elsie Scoggins, Bernard Sebesta, Harnie Sebesta, Marjorie Tangness, Nancy Trembley, Linda Volk, Bradley Williamson, Jodi Williamson, Myrna Williamson and Genny Witte.



Mary Hanson, North Branch, got a close look at the "stars" chairs at the Royalton Church location Saturday, October 21.

Text/photos by

by Jackie Anderson



MELODEON - n. A variety of small reed organ in which a suction bellows draws air inward through the reeds.

At first it seemed the namesake of the CBS movie filmed recently in the area would have a rich history. It had all the makings - beautiful curved spindles and candle holders, rich wood, and in good shape.

Pete Vork, owner of the Wooden Barrel antique shop in Hinckley, where the set director for the movie found the reed organ, said he had purchased the instrument about six months ago from the Ron Nelson family in Sandstone. Vork thought the organ had been in the Nelson family for years and prior to that had served as the source of music for one of the country churches in the area.

With some checking however, it was discovered the organ has less of an illustrious background.

Nelson didn't know his former possession was in the movie and didn't know that what he had owned was called a Melodeon. "I thought it was just a pump organ," Nelson said. He had purchased the organ from an antique dealer in Sandstone about five years ago, and no, it hadn't been in the family for years. "I didn't know it was a Melodeon. It was always a fancy organ, though."

Barney Barnick, Sandstone, a retired dealer in early century music boxes whom Nelson bought the organ from, isn't sure where he got the Melodeon.

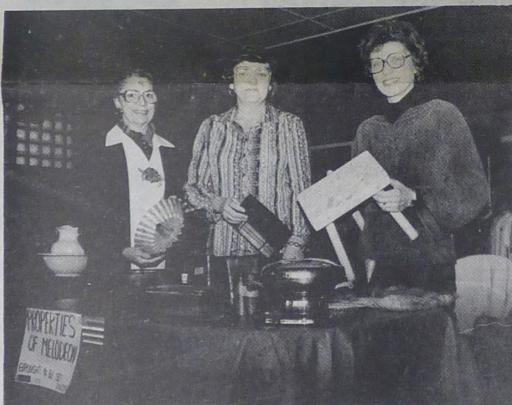
"We get Melodeons from all over," Barnick said. At the time Nelson bought his Melodeon, Barnick had about 49 organs on hand. Barnick had bought out a warehouse from Linder Piano in Duluth several years ago and thinks the Melodeon that eventually made its way to a Hollywood movie could have come from that purchase.

According to Barnick, production of Melodeons began in the middle 1800's and ceased around 1940.

"Melodeons aren't worth any more than an old organ," Barnick said. "It's actually just an organ with a bypass valve that changes the pitch."

"It's what you want to make it," Barnick concluded.

CBS wanted to make a movie about it.



Ruth Gillespie, Jan Poorker and Jo Lavigne with items used in The Melodeon.

How to succeed in business without really trying. . . .

What started out as a two-day rummage sale during this past summer's Polka Fest turned into a business, and no one is more surprised than the three women who run "The Store," Ruth Gillespie, Pine City, Jo Lavigne and Jan Poorker, both of Rush City.

The initial sale didn't go well because it rained that weekend, so the ladies decided to hold the sale the next weekend. Their items were kept nice and dry inside the old Gillespie garage, which is owned by Ruth and her husband, Ike.

People then started bringing items into the garage to be sold on consignment and asking what the store's hours were. Soon the ladies were opening on Wednesdays and Fridays and then added Saturday too.

The business didn't have a name until two weeks ago, when during an interview "The Store" was christened.

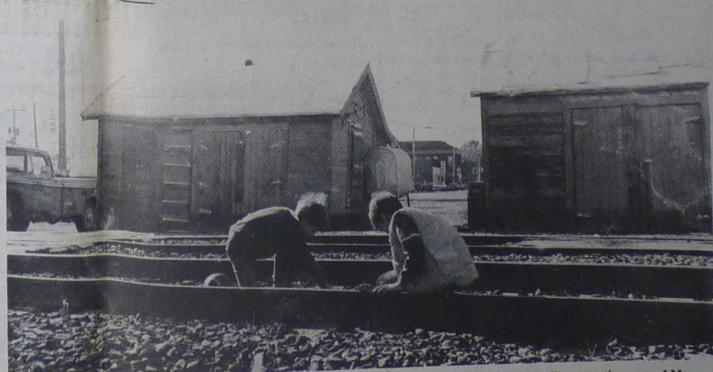
One day in early September a man and a woman came into the store and started looking over the merchandise and putting items they selected into a big pile. Jo asked if they were antique dealers from Minneapolis. "No, we're from Hollywood," came the reply from the woman.

"Sure you are," Joe thought to herself. The woman, who identified herself as JoAnn McDougall, set director for "The Melodeon" a George Englund Enterprises production for CBS television, was looking for set decorations for the movie. McDougall said they would be filming at the Fred Heinrich farm northeast of Rush City.

Still not believing this story and afraid the pair would try to pay for the items by check, Jo and Ruth asked to see credentials. As a precaution when Jo returned to Rush City that evening, she called her friend, a niece of Mrs. Heinrich's to check out the story. The story checked out and McDougall and her assistant came back to "The Store" the next day to pick up the items they had selected.

Most of the items have been returned to the Store for resale and have been placed on a separate table marked by a sign stating "used on the set of 'The Melodeon'." Mrs. Gillespie expressed surprise that the movie company looked for period props from the area. "I thought they would come in with their own wardrobe and props," she said.

Mrs. Gillespie offered suggestions and ideas on items to use that were authentic to the 1930's and helped in locating other items the film crew needed. Because of her assistance people from the Pine City area will be able to watch The Melodeon this December and say "There's my table, or there's my old coat . . ."



That's fake snow on the roof tops of the old Burlington Northern buildings in Rush City, compliments of the movie company that filmed a CBS movie in the area.

Bill Geisler, left, and Chris Knackstedt, watched the special effects crew spray the make believe snow on the buildings earlier in the afternoon and stayed around to pick up

stones off the track. They are the sons of Mr. and Mrs. Mel Geisler and Mr. and Mrs. Ed Knackstedt of Rush City.

The movie company spent last Tuesday evening from 7:30 to nearly 4 a.m. shooting a scene in the movie that will run about five minutes.