

## Museum Services

The Museum Services property, owned by Russell Belk, is located at 2921 Como Avenue SE. Belk's business involves the transportation, conservation, restoration, installation, and framing of museum-quality art pieces. Belk got his start in art services at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts in 1975, and has had his own business since 1985. He bought the current Museum Services property in 1990. Belk has been a valued supporter of the Como community, hosting the Museum Services Community Garden, which is farmed by University Student Cooperative Housing residents, on his property.

The property has an interesting history. The land title dates back to 1857. This and surrounding property was bought by the Woolery family in 1917. At that time this area was undeveloped, as you can see from the 1914 photograph.

The Woolery family was connected with the railroad industry. Woolery Machine made small, railway utility cars, much like the handcarts until recently seen on the railway, but motorized. One product was a small car that ran down the tracks and burned off the weeds. These cars were outlawed in the 1950's.

The Woolerys built the Museum Services' current building in 1946 as a warehouse to store car parts for Woolery Machine. The Woolery family owned the property from 1917 until 1984.

In 1984 Steve Anderson bought the property, along with the neighboring property (more recently known as 'Akasha'). Steve Anderson is a master printmaker, who ran Vermillion Editions, Ltd. from this site from 1977 through 1992. In 1990 Anderson subdivided his property and sold part to Russell Belk for Museum Services.



*Upper photo of Como Ave SE at 30<sup>th</sup> Ave SE, looking west: 1914, Minnesota Transportation Museum (Aaron Isaacs)*

*Directly ahead on Como Ave, there is a streetcar approaching, heading toward St. Paul. On the near right (North side) of Como is a sign for the old Rose Hill Nursery ("Branch Number 2"), apparently a cultivated plot of nursery stock plants? Nowadays the Como community vegetable garden is there. On the far right on Como is the building that appears to be the current location of Tea Leaf Gallery. The eastern portion of the Como neighborhood is still mostly an open, partly wooded field at this time. Some curbs are in; fire hydrants, manholes and street signs are visible. This is part of a series of pictures showing relaying of new track for the streetcar. Como Ave is dirt with fairly rough surface after track-laying work (crew and work are visible in other pictures in the series).*

*Lower photo of Museum Services building: L. Crawford, 2005*

