

Clara Barck Welles

When Clara Barck completed her artistic training, she discovered that there were few people who would hire women as designers and so in 1900 she created her own company, named Kalo, for the Greek word meaning "beautiful." Initially working in textiles, copper, leather, wood, and baskets, her interest shifted to hand wrought jewelry and silver after she married George Welles and moved to the Kalo Arts Craft Community House, 322 Grant Place, here at the corner of Grant and Clinton where Park Ridge's silver industry and the Artist Colony that flourished here around the turn of the 20th Century and beyond intersected.

The Kalo Shop later relocated to downtown Chicago, where it continued in business until 1970. Kalo was a major employer and helped to launch several dozen employees in their own silver and jewelry businesses. Clara also was a leader in the women's suffrage movement in Illinois and is credited with helping women in this state win the right to vote in Presidential elections in 1913 seven years before the 19th Amendment which gave women full voting rights was passed in 1920.