

Division Avenue, N.

34 Division N. Grand Rapids Civic Theatre. Formerly known as the Majestic Theater, the building was constructed in 1903 by architect Colonel J.M. Wood. At the time, it featured the largest stage of any theater in the state, and a stage entrance so large that it was possible to drive a team of horses directly from the street onto the stage. Built for stage presentations, it moved through the vaudeville era to a combination of vaudeville and movies. The last of the big downtown movie houses, it was slated for demolition in 1979, when it was purchased by the Grand Rapids Civic Theatre, which is the second-largest community theater in the U.S. Pipe organ repairman Stan Stone of Muskegon estimates (1993) that the Majestic Theater's twin-chambered Barton Theater Organ was built about 1926. In those days, canaries sang in cages against the theater walls as organist Johnny Milanowski rode up from the orchestra pit, playing in prelude to a movie. Installed at the dawn of the "talkies," instead of providing musical background and thrilling sound effects, it was used to entertain before and after shows. Eventually it fell into disuse, and lay dormant for years until it was refurbished and enjoyed a brief revival in the 1970's. An organist played on Saturday nights; but the theater closed by 1974 as business and shoppers fled to the suburbs. The Grand Rapids Civic Theatre obtained the building in a land swap in 1978 and renovated the building for live theatrical productions, with the address of 30 Division N. The Civic Theatre was established in 1926. After using the old Center Theater at 240 Monroe N.W. in the late 1950's and early 1960's, the Civic Theatre moved to the old Our Theater at 737 Leonard N.W. and then to the former Majestic. In the final days of the movie theater, manager Jack McCarthy, then 59 years old, sold the organ to members of the Muskegon-based West Michigan Theater Organ Society. Parts of the organ were used to rebuild another now in the Frauenthal Center in downtown Muskegon. The console was sold privately to Ken Bohn of Hastings, and is now used as the keyboard to control a complex modern organ in the basement of his home. In 1993, a deal was made to combine the organ with two similar instruments in the Music House museum near Traverse City. (Cf. GRP 12/26/1993 A23. Also GRP Northwest 03/16/1995 14.)

42-54 Division N. After 1856, the original St. Mark's Episcopal Church was moved from the northwest corner of Division and Crescent to the northeast corner of Division and Library, and was occupied by the First Reformed Church. Eventually it became commercial property, and was used as such until demolished to permit the construction of the Murray Building.

43-47 08/23/68 2816 Riverside
Michigan Consolidated Gas Co.
Photos: GRPL, 125-C022810, C031602.

48 01/05/72 4084 Capitol
Murray Building. Photo: GRPL, 125-C009072.

51-53

55 09/13/68 2830 Riverside
Grinnell's. 5-story brick commercial.
Photos: GRPL, 125-C022810, C000963.

56-60 Division N. Keeler Building. Designed as a furniture exhibition center by Grand Rapids architect Eugene Osgood, whose firm of Osgood & Osgood had a nationwide reputation and was in business from 1875 to 1952. The "showcase of the Furniture City" was built in 1913-14 by Minor and Isaac Keeler, owners of the Keeler Brass Co. It was used for its original purpose until 1940. The building, including its windows, was designed with a Chicago style, which addresses the aesthetic problems and opportunities created by steel frame buildings. In 1940 the building was converted to office use and had a series of owners. The Amway Corporation bought the building in 1980 with plans to move some of its office staff there. In 1984, it was sold to the United Development Management Co., led by Edward Havlik, a developer who gave it the name "Two Fountain Place" and set about renovating the interior. Havlik sold the property to an investment company, which in turn sold it to Prentiss Properties Superior II, a limited partnership affiliated with a giant real estate management company, Prentiss Properties of Dallas, TX. In March, 1995, it was announced that the Ellis Parking Co. planned to purchase the building for \$275,000 and raze it for a 120-140 space surface parking lot. In April, 1995, Kent Records Management expressed an interest in purchasing the building.

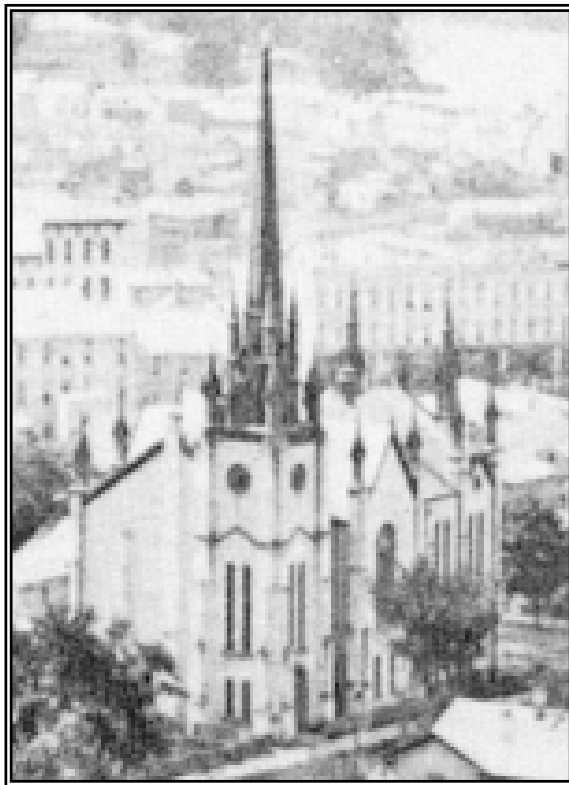
56 03/06/95 8481 On hold.

65 05/29/79 5748 Houting & Meeusen
No cutoffs.

72 Division N. The Methodist Episcopal Church, also known as the “Church of the Holy Toothpicks” because of its dozen spires or minarets, was designed by David S.

Hopkins, and stood at the southeast corner of Division and Fountain from 1869 until it was sold and replaced by the Keeler Building in 1913. The congregation dedicated its present

structure at 227 Fulton E. in 1916. (Photos: top, 1909, Morrow postcard collection; bottom, 1872 view from northeast, Lynn G. Mapes and Anthony Travis, *Pictorial History of Grand Rapids* [Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1976], p. 113, from GRPL, Johnston collection. Also cf. James D. Bratt and Christopher H. Meehan, *Gathered at the River* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1993, p. 29, for an excellent photo from the congregation’s archives.]



104-14 Division N. Michigan Bell Telephone Company. Built in 1924 on the northeast corner of Division and Fountain. The architects were Smith, Hinchman & Grylls, of Detroit.



Once the central offices and company headquarters, and home to banks of long-distance operators, the building's purpose changed with the dynamic developments in telephone technology after the 1960's. In the 1970's, two stories were added to the building.

In the home which this building replaced, Virginia Randall, a wife suspected of adultery, was supposedly murdered and mutilated by her husband, Warren Randall, who then slit his own throat. Their bodies remained undiscovered for two weeks. Legend says their unhappy ghosts continue to haunt the premises. (Cf. Troy Reimink, "Feel the Fear," GRP 10/29/2006 E1.)

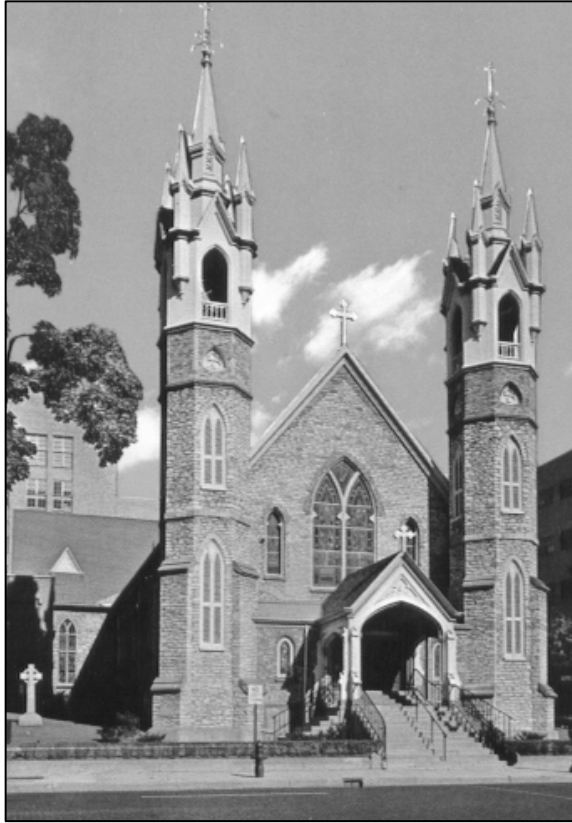
111 Division N. Kendall College of Art & Design. Built as Manufacturers' Building. Also addressed as 110 Ionia N.W., especially when occupied by Lear-Siegler, Inc., in the 1950's and 1960's. (Photo: 1916, Morrow postcard collection.)



120

123-25 Division N. Brick veneer house and office. Photos in GRPL: Lorensen, 125-H013711, and partial in 125-E2002.

134 Division N. St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The congregation was established in 1836, when this historic church was housed in a frame building at the northwest corner of Division Avenue and Bronson (now Crescent Street).



In 1844-45, Mr. Amos Rathbone offered to exchange two lots at this location for two lots on Prospect Hill owned by St. Mark's Episcopal Church. The present structure was built in 1848-49 as a composite of Grand River limestone, brick, and painted wood, and is one of the regions's few examples of Gothic Revival architecture from that era. Substantial additions were made in 1851 and 1855. The transepts, recessed chancel, towers and stained glass windows were added to the original rectangular building by 1872. The general plan is now in the shape of a Latin cross, although that was not part of the original design. At one point the building was plastered over, probably to prevent weathering, and the roof was covered with slate in alternating colors spelling out "St. Mark's" on each side. The plaster has since been removed. The congregation founded a college in 1850 (for which College Avenue is

named). In 1873 it established what was to become Butterworth Hospital. St. Mark's was the cathedral church of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan from 1943 to 1964. Always an important part of Grand Rapids community life, the church itself is a building of great historic importance. Much of the building fabric is original, including the pews. Significant details of the 1848 Grand River limestone building include the twin spires, the elaborately-arched front porch with three sets of converging steps, the nave ceiling with its 1855 stenciling, and the chancel ceiling. The beautiful, high-ceilinged main sanctuary features a cross which is claimed to have been carried in the Crusades. Attached to the church on the north is the 1902 parish house, the first of its kind in Grand Rapids. (Photo: 1970, Morrow postcard collection.)

136 Division N. This 3-story brick and frame building stood on a 50' x 170' lot. There was a partial basement. The floors were hardwood, with a heavy load capacity. The



heating plant was low pressure steam, fueled by gas. The building was sprinklered, and had one freight elevator. The roof was tar and gravel. There were sanitary facilities on each floor. For many years, this was the home of the White Printing Co. (Photo:

G.R. Real Estate Board, February 14, 1964, C 1997, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)

136

10/10/67

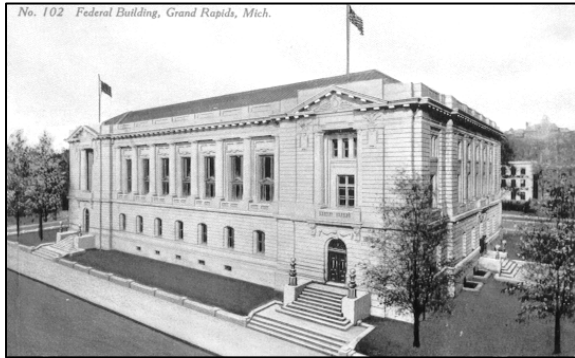
2531

Houting & Meeusen

144-4603/14/73 4342 Capitol
Dickinson Printing. Photos: GRPL, 125-C035921, 125-C035977.

152-58 Division N. Parking.

155 Division N. Grand Rapids Art Museum. The building was constructed in 1909 in the Beaux Arts style based on plans by James Knox Taylor, supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury Department. It originally housed the post office, federal courts, F.B.I., and National Weather Service.



The major-league baseball reserve clause was upheld in a case decided in a second-floor courtroom in 1914. The building was the site of a fatal gas explosion in 1924. The post office moved to 225 Michigan N.W. in 1962, and the building became known as the Federal Building until 1974. It reopened as the Grand Rapids Art Museum in

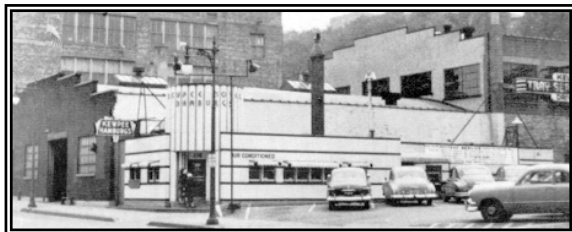
1981. (Photo: Morrow postcard collection, Ionia Avenue and Pearl Street elevations, c. 1915.)

216 Division N. The air-conditioned Kewpee Hamburgs diner later became part of the locally-owned Mr. Fables restaurant chain. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, May 21, 1953, G 869, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



216 03/28/90 8030
Mr. Fables Restaurant.

220-226 Division N. This 80' x 163' brick building (behind the Kewpee Hamburgs shop in the photo) stood on an 82' x 163' lot. There was floor space of 23,000 square feet on the first floor, with an additional 6,400 on the second floor. The first floor could hold 80 cars. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, May 21, 1953, G 869, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



222 03/12/79 5720 Pitsch

234 Division N. This 4-story brick building was built by the Board of Education in 1910 as North Division School to replace an old structure at the southwest corner of Division and Michigan.



With amazing foresight, the Board realized that the neighborhood would not long be residential in nature; and they directed the building to be constructed with a view to its later sale and reuse for commercial purposes. The basic building size is 38' x 104', with a one-story addition on the south side. As late as 1963, the building had a steam heating plant with a coal stoker furnace. The floors were of concrete and hardwood, and had a heavy load capacity. The building featured a very fast freight elevator. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, November

4, 1963, B 3227, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)

234

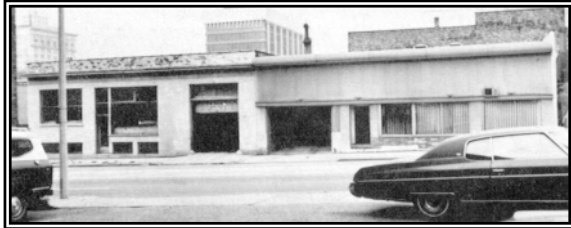
11/19/89 7988

Partial demolition for remodeling.

235 Division N. This 2-story brick structure was built about 1913, and formed one parcel with 230-32 and 236 Ionia N.W. It occupied the entire east half of Lot 112, a 50' x 85' building on a piece of land the same size.



The building was only partially heated, and that by gas. The floors were concrete. The lower story was a full basement, taking advantage of the slope of the land from Division west to Ionia. The three parcels were purchased by the Ellis Parking Co. in 1973 for a total of \$145,000 cash, and removed for parking. The lot was later leased to the Grand Rapids Area Transit Authority as its Downtown Transit Center. (Photos: Grand Rapids Real Estate Board, [top] December 30, 1957, A 042; [bottom] September 25, 1973, 08590; in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



238

240 Division N. This 2-story brick building was built in 1926, and owned by the International Order of Odd Fellows, an organization similar to the Masons. The Odd Fellows and about a dozen other organizations met in the building. I.O.O.F. membership peaked in 1938, then steadily declined until 1975. Al & Sons Garage purchased the building in 1975. The last indication of any lodges or meetings in the building was in 1978. The lower floor of the building was designed for auto-related purposes, complete with a garage door. Fraternal organization meetings were held on the second floor, which also at various times housed a boxing ring and an exercise facility. On November 1, 2006, the City's Historic Preservation Commission found that the building had no architectural significance or historic merit, thus allowing for its demolition.

245 Division N. This one-story brick building with a basement was occupied for many years by Meulenberg's Down Town Auto Service. In the 1960's it became the home of

the Tea Garden Café, relocated from 347 Division S. Since the end of March, 1984, it has been Magoo's, a noted--or notorious?--singles bar. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, November 19, 1963, B 3783, in GRPL, Real Estate collection. Another photo is in GRPL, 125-H006641. Note the 1963 traffic light at Division & Crescent.)



246 Division N. A 2-story frame dwelling converted and expanded into the very popular Bono's Barber & Style Shop, operated for many years by Russ and Nick Bono. It was one of the prime places downtown to get a haircut, until the owner moved his

business to Plainfield near Eleanor. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, June 19, 1972, 83974, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



246 07/07/90 8053
Riverside

300-02 Division N. Texaco service station. was constructed as early as 1924, when,

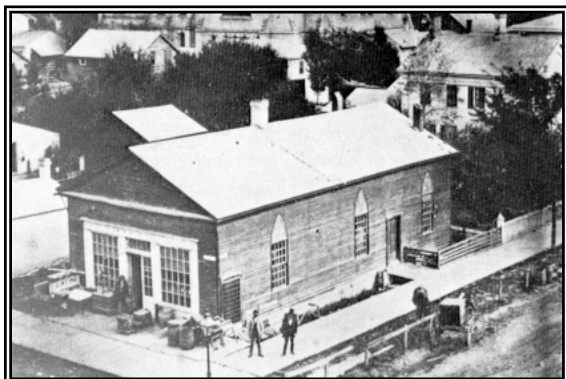
A portion of this brick and frame building it seems, the Julius Berkey house was removed. The rest of the building was constructed in 1950. It occupied an irregularly shaped plot of land, 100' x 100' at the northeast corner of Crescent Street and another 100' x 170' parcel north of that, for a total of 6,217 square feet of building space. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, July 8, 1974, 21102, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



300-02 01/27/83 7189 Pitsch

No cutoff. Additional photo: GRPL, 125-E1302.

301 Division N. Charles H. Carroll and Lucius Lyon donated a lot to St. Mark's Episcopal Church, and the parish purchased one adjoining for \$100. Here on the northwest corner of Crescent (Bronson) and Division, they erected in 1840 this modest frame structure, 27' x 41' in size with a capacity of 170 persons, at a cost of \$800. The chancel was in the east end, and a loft in the west served as the choir. On leaving this original church building, St. Mark's vestry sold it to the Baptists, who used it from 1848 to 1856. Later it was moved to the northeast corner of Division and Library. (Photo: GRPL, Hooper collection, in Mapes & Travis, *Pictorial History of Grand Rapids*, p. 112.)



301 *Gas station.*

302 Division N. The Julius Berkey house was built in 1891, and demolished for commercial purposes about 1924.

305 02/20/63 1535 Boerema & Sons

311 03/27/63 1545 *Boerema & Sons*
 Dwelling.

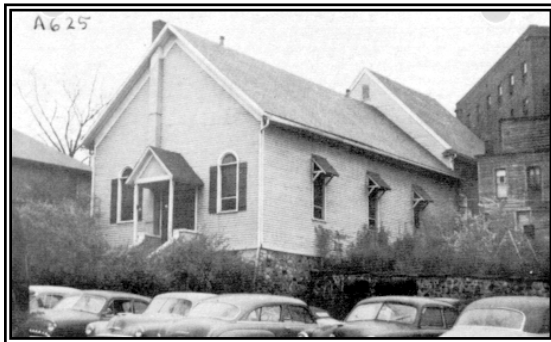
316

317 02/20/63 1530 *Boerema & Sons*
 Dwelling.

318

322 Division N. Built in 1873 by the Free Holland Christian Reformed Church, and occupied by that congregation until it moved in 1951 to 540 Crescent N.E., where it is known as the First Netherlands Reformed Church.

It was purchased by the Jehovah's Witnesses North, and used as their Kingdom Hall from 1951 to 1953. This frame and brick church stood on a 50' x 170' lot. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, A 625, September 19, 1953, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



323 Division N. This brick veneered flat was built as a one-family dwelling. Built on a 50' x 100' lot, by 1956 it had been converted to a 9-unit apartment and rooming house, still in excellent condition.

It had a fireplace, and also a hot-air heating system with a steel coal furnace. The first-floor floors were hardwood. A pleasant backyard also boasted a fireplace. The building was owned in the 1940's and 1950's by Mrs. Norva T. Callaghan, who had a 2-bedroom apartment on the first floor. In addition, there were 6 one-room apartments and 2 sleeping rooms. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, G 1524, February 8, 1956, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



323

03/27/63

1544

Boerema & Sons

326-28 01/14/76 5012 *Neighborhood Improvement--Pitsch*

327-29 02/14/63 1523 *Boerema & Sons*

330 *Immanuel Lutheran Church gym and auditorium.*

331 Division N. This brick building was built as the stable for the Grand Rapids Brewing Company, hence the fancy pair of horses' heads over the door. It later served as a truck service garage. It was demolished by Capitol Wrecking on June 1, 1957. Photo: GRPL, 125-C005224-A.

332

338 *Church address.*

S.W. corner of Division N. & Michigan N.E. The old North Division Street School stood on this corner. It was sold to the neighboring Grand Rapids Brewing Co. for \$14,000 on February 5, 1907. The Board of Education was allowed to use it rent-free until January 1, 1908.

921 04/16/68 2683 E. DeVries & Sons
Garage.

965 04/15/88 7755

1009 06/30/87 7641

1011

1041 Division N. This old frame 5-room house was on a 25' x 110' lot just north of the Coldbrook School playground. The assessed valuation in 1964 was only \$1,150. (Photo:

G.R. Real Estate Board, C 5252, April 21, 1964, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



1041 09/14/64 1831 Alfred Hoekstra
To reuse water line.

1043 09/29/64 1835 *Hoekstra Truck Equipment*

1047 09/24/64 1834 *Hoekstra Truck Equipment*

1049 Division N. Clearly built as a one-family home, in its later years this house served as an office and store with an upper apartment of 3 rooms and bath. The floors

were of pine, and the house was heated with gas space heaters. It occupied a 25' x 101' lot. (Photo: G.R. Real Estate Board, K 8363, August 19, 1957, in GRPL, Real Estate collection.)



Jay J. Timmer

1049 03/10/69 2999

(Hoekstra Truck Equipment)

1051