

BANKING IN THE BRIGHTON AREA (Cont.)

One other bank located in the Brighton Area early in the 20th century was the First National. It was housed in the building most recently known as the Canopy. This structure, on the southeast corner of W. Grand River and St. Paul's St., was built in 1927 by Thomas S. Leith, a mayor of Brighton during the 1950s. It was originally constructed to serve as the Lincoln Hotel and included space for the bank.

This two story building had rooms to rent on the upper floor, a restaurant on the south side with the bank on the north side of the first floor. The bank closed in 1932 before the state and national bank closings referred to previously in this series. This writer assumes the bank went into receivership, from which it never recovered. The building has been vacant for several years and was in a rapidly deteriorating condition. Preview Properties' recent remodeling and renovation retained most of the original exterior design characteristics of the building. (For which they are to be commended.)

The potential of the development of the Brighton area into a vibrant and commercially progressive place in which one would enjoy living made it a desirable community in which a bank could prosper. The construction of nearby interstates were a major factor. Beginning in the 1960s branches of other state and national banks began locating in the area.

D & N Bank, formerly First Federal, has been at its site, 9880 E. Grand River since 1960. The site is on a former orchard.

A branch of First National first appeared in 1972 in a mobile office on E. Grand River. Since June, 1975, they have been at 9911 E. Grand River in a permanent structure. A two story frame house was originally at that location.

At 205 W. Grand River Ann Arbor Federal SAVings appeared in 1974. This branch is now titled Great Lakes Bancorp. During the last half of the 19th century Fred Stuhrberg had a home and blacksmith shop on that corner.

First of America appeared as a branch of McPherson Bank in 1977 at 8130 W. Grand River. A second branch was opened in 1991 at 10014 E. Grand River. During the 30s 40s a Standard Service station was located on the corner there prior to the construction of the strip mall, Brighton Gate Commons, where the bank is located.

At one time, 1981, Michigan National Bank operated from three offices in the area. Coming first in 1979 to a site on Hilton Road then for several years in the former Mellus Hospital, 218 E Grand River (presently occupied by Leah Gold Confectioners). A branch was also located for several years at 10816 E. Grand River. Their only branch is now at a new building at 8661 W. Grand River, where they've been located since 1989. (By Marieanna Bair. To be continued.)

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