

# Old Grace Hotel Demolition Wipes Out 60-Year Landmark

The old Grace Hotel, home of the Farmington Elks Lodge for more than a decade and a prominent landmark in the community for 60 years, went under the wreckers' ball last week to provide badly needed parking facilities for the north-east quadrant of the downtown business section.

The Elks, who purchased the large, three-story building from the Grace family in the late 1950's, recently completed a swap of their building with one owned by the City of Farmington several doors to the west which formerly housed the Municipal offices. The razing of the Elks building will provide more area for off-street parking than would the clearing of the former City Municipal building. The Elks are also far enough away from church property to the east to qualify for a liquor license at their new quarters.

**THE OLD GRACE HOTEL** was built in 1915 by Benjamin F. Grace, great-grandfather of Gerald Grace who has the Grace Insurance Company and local Secretary of State's office in the building right next door at 33304 Grand River Avenue.

The Grace Hotel was the center of social life in the surrounding area with regular festive gatherings held in the large ballroom on the top floor. As many as 100 couples and more would journey by horse and buggy to the Farmington hotel for an evening of dancing and gaiety. Old horse stables were located behind the hotel as recently as the 1950's.

**THE HOTEL** was operated by Ulysses A. and Lydia Grace, grandparents of Gerald Grace, with their son, Clare J. Grace, who helped in the construction of the building.

The construction of the building featured a Mansard roof and solid cement blocks which

were hand tamped on the site. The superintendent of the construction received \$2.25 per day in wages and the carpenters were paid \$1 per day. Workmen usually put in a full 12-hour day.

The Grace family began using the hotel as a private residence in the late 1920's. Five generations of them have lived there over the years. The Grace family, itself, located in the community some 135 years ago with Gerald Grace still maintaining residence here at 32329 Vallyview Circle.

**THE GRACE HOTEL**, at the time it was built, rivaled the Owen House which was razed in the 1950's, as the biggest building in the community. These two boarding houses along with the Botaford Inn were the only stopping-over places for travelers in the area for many miles around when Farmington was still a village. Farmington incorporated as a City in 1927.

The wrecking crews may have gotten into more of a job than they bargained for in the demolition of the old hotel. The foundations of the building are reported to be three feet thick. The cement-poured steps

in front of the building will also require a good effort to move. Razing of the building leaves very few of the early landmarks still standing in the community.



**BENJAMIN F. GRACE** is pictured above on the front steps of the Grace Hotel which he built in Farmington back in 1915. He died in May of 1918 but the building remained in his family for five generations before the Farmington Elks took it over in the late 1950's.



**THE OLD GRACE HOTEL** as it looked in 1918. Pictured are members of the Grace family and friends.

## FARC Program Registration Opens June 28

A large turnout is expected on opening day registration, June 28, for youngsters who will be participating in the Farmington Area Recreation Program.

Youngsters should turn in their registration forms on opening day to the counselor of whichever of the eight schools they will attend this summer. The North Section schools to be used are: Beechview, Eagle, Kenbrook, and Ten Mile. The South Section is made up of: Cloverdale, Flanders, Shawassee, and William Grace.

**REGISTRATION** forms can now be picked up at each of the elementary and junior-high schools as well as at Our Lady of Sorrows Elementary School. On swimming days the buses will load at the playground between 8:20-8:45 and will leave at 8:50 sharp. Children must bring their own lunches and duffel bag for their clothes. Provisions have been made for the children to buy milk for 23 cents. Buses will return about 3 p.m. There will be playground activities on opposite days from swimming.

The schedule calls for the North Section to swim on Monday and Wednesday excluding the opening day of registration. Other activities will have this group visit the zoo on July 2 and attend a Tiger Baseball game on July 17.

**THE SOUTH SECTION** will swim on Tuesday and Thursday. This group will visit the Zoo July 9 and see the Tigers play on July 24. The Zoo trip will cost 20 cents. The Ball Game is free.

A trip to Bob-Lo Island is planned for both groups combined on August 6. The cost of the boatride is 75 cents for youngsters 12 years and under, and \$1.50 for those over 12 years of age. This does not include the cost of entertainment on the island.

Youngsters should plan to bring a lunch to all field events and whatever spending money they will need for refreshments, etc.

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