

Building served many

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The I.O.O.F. building at 118 E. Commercial, which was recently purchased by Prairie Coast LLC (Gaylord and Shirley Shields family) from Hansen's Plumbing, and Air Conditioning, has housed many businesses over the years.

According to a story in the 50th anniversary edition of *The Oberlin Herald*, published on June 20, 1929, it reported, "On the completion of the Odd Fellows building on Jan. 19, 1928, Cal Fringer started up his tire shop, specializing in the repair of tires, and gives free service within a two-mile radius of his shop. He has the agency for the Goodrich tires also, and has enjoyed a good business in both departments. His assistants are Everett McGee and Delbert Wolfe."

In the same edition, the following announcement was made by Ray Mungor and Howard Hanson, owners of the Oberlin Cleaners: "You are invited to visit us in our new location in the Odd Fellows Hall anytime after Friday, Jan. 20. Visitors always welcome. Come and look over one of the most up-to-date cleaning plants in northwest Kansas."

During World War II, Everett McGee was still operating the tire shop and many people of all ages stopped by to use the outside tire pump to fill their vehicles and bicycles with free air. The building was also used as a gathering place for students to bring old newspapers to help with the war effort during World War II.

Information has not been found about the decision by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows Lodge to construct the building or who the contractor was,

The lodge members and Esther Rebekahs met in the upstairs of the building for meetings, schools of instruction and drills and the basement was the place to be on Saturday night for many years when old-time square dancing was enjoyed by all ages with live music by Goldie Macy, John Euhus and others in the 1950's. The basement was also a popular place for rummage sales by various groups and churches.

According to the Forty-First Annual Session of Rebekah State Assembly of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows of the State of Kansas, held at Parsons on Oct. 10 and 11, 1928, the Esther Rebekahs of Oberlin was the 290th lodge organized in the state. The first was begun in 1888. It shows 171 members. Lula Zimmerman was president and Ina Smith, secretary for the Esther Rebekahs of Oberlin; Edith Nelson, president, and Cecil Kump, secretary for Lilac Rebekahs of Jennings; and Bessie Canfield, president and Mae Sebaugh, secretary, for Golden Rod Rebekahs of Norcatour.

Edna Mott said that her mother, Grace Pavlicek, was an active Rebekah member and she remembers when the Rebekahs performed their



THE I.O.O.F. BUILDING, (above) located at 118 E. Commercial, has housed numerous businesses and offices on the main floor since it was completed on Jan. 19, 1928. Shown are the first two businesses to use the main floor: Fringer Tire

Shop, and the Oberlin Cleaners. It was built by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the second floor was used by that lodge and the Esther Rebekahs for many years.

drills on Main Street for the public.

A record book from 1935 of Oberlin Lodge 128 gives among members: Myron Raymond, W. W. Plotts, W. W. McGee, Frank Robertson, Ed Hunt, John Spiers, Frank Spiers, P. L. Worcester, Andy Castle, A. I. Coulter, V. R. Bradley, Alvin Gunthert, R.F. Landau, Roy Thornburg, V.R. Caster, W. O. Pennington, H. W. McClure, and J.S. Leake,

It was reported in the 1935 minutes: "Mrs. Elam Reist was reported better; Dr. Taylor was reported improving, and Archie Hamilton's little boy was reported home from the hospital."

Among other businesses over the years on the main floor were Hess Photo Studio, Loyd Waldo Photo Studio, Dr. Don McCoy, Dr. Phil Lauber, Dr. Joan Albrecht, and Leake's Flower Shop.

If anyone has further information about the lodge or history or pictures of the building, it is requested that they send copies to: *The Oberlin Herald*, 170 S. Penn, Oberlin, Kan., 67749; email ml.olson@nwkansas.com or call (785) 475-2206 and we will update the history in the newspaper.



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