aside your petty jealousies and spite and work together for the public good"
Quoted from the Assistant city Attorney S.W. Baker

1931 "The Herald and Merchants of District will sponsor a fairy queen contest"
Vaudeville, other entertainment, band concerts, circus acts, and center of activities will be at Plainfield and Coit.

1931 "HAPPY THRONG OF 6000 ATTENDS CRESTON "
5 year old Ailene Anderson Fairy Queen.
Ad from News paper Clipping BUY GRAND RAPIDS "PATRONIZE HIM WHO PATRONIZE YOU"

-Jenn Schaub

Schools in Creston

Plainfield School was where Star Collision now has their office. 1912 maps show that Lafayette dead-ended into Quimby and the space occupied by Lafayette Street at Plainfield was part of this huge old school called Plainfield school. Further up Plainfield Creston High School used to have a large green lawn between it and Plainfield Avenue. When you enter the main (old) entrance (under the 7 gargoyles) The first space in the main hall is the Library, which used to be an ornate auditorium. The stage, balcony, wings, and ornate trim can still be seen. The structure still exists and is used for some storage. The original gym has been split into offices and classrooms including the art room.

-Paul Wittenbraker with contributions from David Lyons and Helen Lehman

The Civic Studio is a project of the Grand Valley State University department of Art and Design and operates with the support of the Johnson Center for Philanthropy at GVSU. The Project in Creston was sited in Creston at the former Aleta's Rock Shop from January through April 2005.

http://civicstudio.org

History In Creston

Written by members of the Civic Studio in Creston and edited by Kate Aughey of Kinston University in London. Thanks to local residents and the History Department at the Grand Rapids Public Library.

April 2005

The Creston Citizen's Association

20s and 30's

This association is strictly non-partisan and nonsectarian "Its purposes, broadly speaking, are to advance the industrial, economic, educational, and recreational interests of the community and to generally promote any idea calculated to the general benefit and welfare of the community"
No Date
From a Letter to Mr. EB 120 Waverly Ave SE City

The Creston Citizen's Association described as the, "Mouth Piece of 15000 people," has been working on Creston Park, Briggs Park, and Riverside Park. Along with building a Sidewalk on Knapp just across the City Limits the sidewalk will be used to access Fair Plains Cemetery. The Association has also contributed to the building of the Ann Street Bridge, Leonard Street Bridge, and the Street Car extension
From a Letter
James Richard Secretary,Creston Citizen's Association, 1924

1924 Meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month at Pages Hall Corner of Plainfield and Quimby. A change of location occurred and meetings were relocated to Coit Ave and Quimby St.

-Jenn Schaub

St. Alphonsis

The St. Alphonsis Parish referred to as "St. Al's" by local Crestonites, was built in 1888 when John Clancy gave sixty thousand dollars for grounds and the building of the orphan asylum (the first building of the parish). The first masses were held September 2, 1888, and the congregation grew steadily; in 1893 it had 225 families and by 1932 it had 520 families and 414 children in the St. Alphonsis Parish School system. Presently, the church gives out free hot meals to anyone in the neighborhood on Thursday nights. The parish is different from any other in town as it is served by the Society of the Redemptorists, a religious order with a strong social justice agenda.

-Anne Hale

The Kent Country Club

The country club is the oldest golf club in Michigan, and was built in 1901. Edward Lowe was inspired in 1896 after a trip to the Royal and Ancient Golf Club in Scotland. His vision was of a place where the affluent of Grand Rapids could go to enjoy nature. As the "Country Club", they originally leased property at Fisk Lake on the corner of Plymouth and Wealthy and animals such as deer were supplied to provide for a natural atmosphere. Members (both men and women) were elected annually, paying $5 and $2.50 per year respectively ($2.50 = the daily wage of a furniture factory worker).

The Club bought the farm of Martin Sweet, one of the many farmers in debt during the 1890s. The Sweet farm was also at the original city boundaries. North of Sweet street was considered outside the city. The location was convenient because it was close to the city. Members could get to the club easily via the North Park Streetcar line, which was extended as far north as the Club gate. All Streetcar Company officers were members. In the agreement with the bank, 58 remaining acres of wheat were reserved until harvest time and to solve the problem of having to work around the wheat crop; it was bought by the club.

As Creston developed through the years, there's has been some struggle over property use, specifically with roadways and land surrounding the Kent Country Club. Owners of the club bought property along the south side of the Club land (Kent Hills Rd, Sweet St), which served to protect it from the city's efforts to develop it. Around 1923, The Citizen's Association proposed an extension of College Ave to allow for traffic to the northern business district of Creston. This proposal included turning the Club into a municipal club but the proposal never made it to the ballot. Instead, the Club generously offered to donate a site north of Knapp for the municipal club. Another dispute arose over extending Sweet Street. The Kent Hills community didn't want to disrupt their property and so a plan was made to develop the "Keeler property", a strip of land along the east side of the Club (along Fuller). Public utilities were allowed through the Keeler lot, but not roads.

-Rachel Jacques

30 Sweet Street

Number 30 Sweet NE, is one of the older houses in the neighborhood. Built in 1890 the house was owned by a John H. Hanrahan. He married and then had three daughters, one who died quite young. The two surviving daughters died unmarried and so the family line died with them. The family lived in that same house for over 50 years. After the two daughters sold it, it went from owner to owner. Hanrahan worked at the Reynolds furniture factory and passed away on the sidewalk on his way home from lunch.
-Becky Siegwart

The old theatre was also owned by the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barbershop Quartet Singing in America. The Neighborhood Association once held a Las Vegas style fundraiser there. Other than the removal of the seats, it was in its original shape and had art deco style wall sconces. It also had a barbershop chair in the lobby! The guys kept a beer fridge in the old concession area.

The theatre went up for sale and sometime after 1983 it was converted into an office building, encased with a new veneer, and painted gray.

-George Wieler with contributions by Helen Lehman

The Frosty Boy

The Frosty Boy ice cream parlor has a sinister story attached to its history. In October 1992 a 15-year-old girl was kidnapped from the parking lot, and eventually raped and murdered. Her body was dumped in the woods about four miles from her house. The murderer was a convicted sex offender. For many years, before the Frosty Boy, the location was a gas station.

-Jesse Hora

The Grand River

The Grand River is known for having riverboats traveling up and down and the last time a steamboat traveled down the Grand River was in April of 1971.

As with all rivers the Grand has flooded many times, some years more than others. In January of 1973 the Grand River flooded so much that in the downtown area they were providing people with supplies by boats down the main roads of Grand Rapids. Presently the Grand River is 8 feet above flood levels and homes are still flooded today.

In 1883 logging on the river was a major way of life and there were series of "big booms" along the river in Grand Rapids. Big booms are multiple planks on the river where the mills pick their choice logs for the mills to process. During this time in 1883 the river began to flood and there was a huge logjam.

-Jennifer Zona

The Water Filtration Plant

The water filtration plant, on Monroe north of Leonard was placed in service in 1912, and wiped out typhoid fever in Grand Rapids. In 1940 a pipeline was built from Grand Rapids to Lake Michigan to add to the stations water supply. In 1945 this plant was the first in the nation to add fluoride to the water supply. In 1960 a new plant was built on the shore of Lake Michigan to cover the water needs of the expanding city. Then in 1983 there was a coli form bacteria scare, which led to the plant being closed in 1993. In 2001 a group rited to turn the plant into a research facility but the plan was abandoned due to lack of funds. Currently developers are looking to convert the aged facility into office space, or condominiums.

Creston in The Grand Rapids Herald

July 10, 1910 Extract from "The Building News and Gossip" column.
"Building Lively in Creston region"
" Cheapness not considered-Many houses of Good Medium class are being erected out there."
The houses are described as two story frame, cement foundations, with 7 or 8 rooms, bath, gas, electricity, heated by furnaces, full sized cellar, a cistern- well or city water, oak and yellow pine floors, built by perspective occupants.

March 25, 1914 Mention of possible association projects; a new light of stairs up Newberry to Lookout park and a bubbling fountain soon installed at the square in Creston.

August 12, 1914 An annual Picnic of The Citizen's Association held at North Park
New Issues enforcing the auto ordinance and extension of Plainfield Ave.
Car Line
Electric lights installed on Plainfield Ave. and Leonard St.

Undated "The Fifth Ward will now be known as Creston and the residents will now be known as Crestonites", no longer to be known as fifthwarders or Northenders.
A meeting will be held at Shannanah's Hall on Plainfield to celebrate the name change.
Said of The Citizen's Association, " a movement of this kind, a movement for the good of the community has no ulterior motives. You can cast

The building is surprisingly ornate, built with Flemish redbrick, green tile roofs, and intricate metalwork over the entranceways, looking more like a mansion, or a seat of government, than a public service building. This building represented public pride and a celebration of new technologies, a thing to be marveled at.

Neil Huber

The Creston Theatre

In June 1924 G. Glenn Fleser constructed the Creston Theatre at 1516 Plainfield. As the proprietor of the Crestonite Vaudette (built in 1920) at 1408 Plainfield. Fleser was already well invested in community entertainment venues. As it was built in 1924, three years before the introduction of synchronized sound, it can be logically concluded that the Creston began its life as a silent theater, and likely made the conversion by the mid 1930s.

At some point (perhaps the 1940s) it came under the control of Harry Himmelstein, who ran it as a second run children's theater until February 1972. Himmelstein would proudly declare, "The popcorn is the best in town, the restrooms the cleanest, and the price the cheapest." By the early 1970s these attractions, however, were not filling the seats. On February 6, 1972 a cover article was published in Wonderland Magazine, an accompaniment to the Grand Rapids Press, called "The Himmelstein Decision". Reporter Jon Halverson covered Himmelstein's decision to change from a children's theater to more "adult fare." It closed its scies of Saturday Disney double features with 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea and King of the Bears, and by Monday was showing pornography. Alongside mainstream film adverts (Dr. No, etc.) were show times for The Butterfly, the first title shown at the new Creston Theatre. (incidentally, the butterfly was also playing at the Cascade Blue across town. Many local people have personal recollections of the theatre. The theatre would offer door prizes at its Saturday matinees and you could win "40 strings of REDDDDDDDDDD licorice."