

## *Arterial Scrapbook No. 41*



**KRESGE'S DISAPPEARING** - The once-attractive East Main St. corner presents startling contrast as the big shovel bites again and again into "one of the best buildings on Main St." Here was the Railroad St. corner when the Detroit headquartered company offered wares in well arranged window displays. Gone is the big store and the businesses that occupied office

space on the second floor. Gone is the personnel, many of whom had been greeting the shopping public at the spot for more years than was readily admitted. Left only are the memories and a lot of room for the new Route 30 that will head north along Church St. Hundreds who have watched the demolition will be saying in years to come, "I remember when..." (Donlon)

# *Kresge, Central Hotel Sites, Once Path To Ferry, to Become Roadway Again*

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By H. P. DONLON

A part of downtown Amsterdam that began as a public thoroughfare in the early part of the last century will be returned to that same use when the new Route 30 northbound is constructed over the sites formerly occupied by the Kresge Building and the Central Hotel.

Along about 1825, this was the route leading from Main St. to the ferry connecting Amsterdam and Port Jackson. It was aligned with Church St., and bore the name of Ferry St. There was no Railroad St. at the time.

To early Amsterdamians, this was known as the "Corey Property," purchased by David P. Corey in 1837, and it remained in the Corey family for 90 years. Part of the Corey tract was sold in 1871 to Margaret Fox, and soon after that date a hotel (recognized today as "The Central" after many changes in name) was erected.

The Corey homestead stood at the corner of Main and Railroad St. before the lot was given over to business purposes in 1878. The business block built on the site was a two-story frame structure, set below the street level and about 20 feet back from the sidewalk.

## **Aids to Recollections**

There were several stories, and so many occupants over the years that a complete list of businesses would be impossible to compile. The Storrie & Dunlap Dry Goods Store was on the corner until Lurie's took over in 1912. The 1910 listing would include James A. Sheridan's Hardware Store, Philip G. Rider's China Shop, Thomas Mansfield Candy Shop, and Richard Fufford's bootblack establishment at the easterly end.

Mansfield's was there for 50 years from its start in 1878. Reason for fond recollection might

be the homemade candies, including the molasses "spiders" with an appetizing aroma that spread for at least an eighth of a mile, or the longtime personnel: Tom Mansfield, George McFarlan and Bill Davidson.

On the second floor, too, were widely known professional men: Attorney Jacob H. Dealy who served as mayor in 1912; Photographer Fred G. Morse and Dr. Harry M. Lewis, dentist.

## **Kresge Bought in 1925**

Developments that led to modernization of the corner started when the owner in the early 1920's, Mrs. Jacob H. Dealy, sold the property to Edward C. Klapp.

On Oct. 6, 1925, it was announced that the old building had been purchased by the S. S. Kresge Co. up to that time a 5-and-10 company that was starting a chain of "Dollar" Stores. Kresge at the time was operating a five-and-dime business at 41 East Main St. (With Al Heck as Manager.)

The plans in mind by Kresge were unfolded Feb. 27, 1926, as construction of a two-story brick building with company space of 35 feet on East Main and 169 feet on Railroad. Two stores in the eastern section were to be made available. Sixteen offices were included, five facing East Main and five facing Railroad, the others in the rear.

## **Built in 1926**

Demolition of the Corey property was started on March 3 by the Eaton Wrecking Co., Albany, and on April 1, 1926, Kresge announced that the new building would be erected by S. Carlson Co., Springfield, Mass. Two Amsterdam firms were among the nine bidders. Work was started a few days later and a fall completion date was announced.

As originally constructed, Kresge did not occupy the entire ground floor. On the east-

erly side were stores occupied by the Home Dairy and Rudolph's. When time came for the Dollar Store expansion, the floor space of the two stores was taken over by Kresge and the stairway, which had been centered in the beginning, was moved to the easterly side. It was a well-constructed building that always enjoyed good occupancy. The location was the only one in Amsterdam in which Kresge was interested.

## **Memories Linger**

Memories of the old Corey Bldg. linger and the 1966 demolition brings to mind 1927 when the new Kresge Bldg. was making a major contribution to Main St. and also some of the early lessees in the impressive business block. Among the "original settlers" were Attorneys Carl S. Salmon and Floyd J. Reinhart, Tailor Anthony Pellicciotti, Chiropractors Neilson and Neilson, Jeweler Harlen J. Gallagher and Watchmaker Percy Wheadon.

Some of these established record occupancies, also others came in the 40's to remain over long periods. These included the Miller-Kavanaugh Insurance-Travel Agency, Beneficial Finance Co., Dr. P. J. Dunning. Almost to the end were second generation occupants Robert J. Dunning and Jeweler Harvey Gallagher, in joint occupancy with Watchmaker Robert Trull. The Kresge Bldg. was the kind of a business and professional center where an occupancy of at least 10 years was needed for indication of an intent to stay a while.

Another couple of years and the "road down to the ferry" will resume transportation interest as the arterial up from the bridge." About a century and a half was required for the cycle.