

ONCE UPON A TIME IN NORTH PARK
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NEWMAN/I.O.O.F. BUILDING

The building now occupied by the Sunset Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and two business establishments at University Avenue and Kansas Street was designed in 1929 to house a department store. The building was planned by one of the pioneer builders in North Park: Edward W. Newman. Mr. Newman and his wife Fanny lived in North Park as early as 1914. At the time of construction of the I.O.O.F. building they were living at 3970 Kansas Street. During the 1920's, he maintained an office in the 3800 block of 30th Street. Edward Newman was also a builder of houses in University Heights, Normal Heights and Kensington as well as North Park.

The building on the northeast corner of University and Kansas was planned in June of 1929 to be a four story building and has a full basement with reinforced concrete and steel foundation to allow the load of such a structure. However, during construction, plans were changed and the building turned out to be two stories with the second floor planned as a mezzanine around a central open space. The Spanish Colonial exterior of the building featured a prominent series of round arch windows mimicking a glazed Roman arcade. In the 1950s the translucent arches were covered in a mistaken effort at modernization.

Following completion of the building in December 1929, E.N. Mudd Department Store became the first tenant. In June of the following year, the Norman F. Maw Music Company moved its store from downtown to the Newman Building. As well as musical instruments, the Maw Company also stocked Frigidaire refrigerators and Brunswick radios. At the public opening of Norman Maw's new store, representatives of the Frigidaire Company served frozen desserts "to illustrate the advantages of electrical refrigeration in the home." Entertainment was offered by the thirty voices of the Treble Clef club, and the San Diego State College Men's Glee Club. Several ukuleles and banjos were given away during the grand opening.

The business of those first two tenants of the Newman Building must have foundered during the darkest months of the Great Depression as in September 1932, Edward Newman sold the building to the I.O.O.F. A remodeling project began immediately under the direction of Lee Brendt, a Marine officer and member of the fraternity. The project resulted in lodge facilities facing on Kansas Street and three business spaces on University. The first tenants after the 1933 remodeling included *Smith Shade Company* and *Siebert's Barber Shop*. Today [1997], those spaces are occupied by *April's Attic* and soon to open, *Claire de Lune* coffee house and cigar bar.

Edward Newman also owned the four lots directly across Kansas Street now occupied by the North Park Rug and Carpet Company building. In the summer of 1930, Newman leased those lots to James Truax who promptly laid out a "Midget Golf" course on the

property. With the Maw Music Company, and the new North Park Theatre and vaudeville house directly across the avenue from the miniature golf course, the corner of Kansas and University became North Park's first center of entertainment for the local community in the early 1930s. It may become so once again in the late 1990s if the current North Park renaissance continues. Our community's first historic restoration project is currently being completed on the Newman/I.O.O.F. Building as part of the North Park Main Street Project.