

169 N Central Avenue

The store has a history going back to 1891, when the original building, still part of today's greatly enlarged structure, was erected. This original M. Steinmetz store was sold in 1911, after the death of Mr. Steinmetz, to Kestel Bros., which operated the firm until 1922.

The business was reorganized in 1924 as Consumers Store Inc. During 1926, a one story addition was added in the back of the building. It was remodeled in 1928 & 1934. The 3rd floor was added in 1946 with the 4th and 5th floors and elevators being added in 1947. Another extensive 4-month remodeling program took place in 1958.

In September, 1961, the store was sold to A. Landauer & Sons, Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Johnson Hill's Inc. On October 7, 1971, the Marshfield News-Herald reported that John H. McCauley purchased Johnson Hill's and it would be known as McCauley's of Marshfield and would continue as a brand-name department store. In 1977 the Super Valu Grocery occupied a portion of the building and Sears & Roebuck Catalog, was in the basement. The store was then purchased in October 1981 and opened in December of that year as the St. Vincent De Paul Community Center.



*M. Steinmetz General Store located on the southeast corner of Arnold Street and Central Avenue, currently 169 North Central Avenue, ca. 1891-1892.
(photo from the North Wood County Historical Society)*



*Kestel Brothers Company—The Spot Cash Store located at the Southeast corner of Arnold Street and Central Avenue.
(photo from the North Wood County Historical Society)*

*The first large store reached by persons entering the city on Central avenue from the north, is that of Kestel Bros., located in a substantial brick building near the A street corner. This growing business was established by the enterprising young men who constitute the firm about three years ago, and has already taken its place among the substantial business houses of the city. Ever obliging and thoroughly acquainted with the needs of their trade, Messrs. Kestel have no difficulty in supplying the demands of their customers for first-class merchandise of all kinds. In addition to a good city trade they deal extensively with farmers and handle a large amount of produce. Tight goods at right prices is their motto.
(from the Marshfield Times, August 26, 1908)*

Kestel Bros. Co.

The substantial building at 133 –135 North Central Avenue which is occupied by the business of Kestel Bros. Co., is owned by the company. A general merchandise business is conducted, and in the six hours that the company has been in operation it has a reputation for integrity which extends far beyond the limits of our city.

On the first floor dry goods, notions, women's goods, clothing, gents' furnishings, hats, caps, shoes, groceries, flour, feed, etc., are sold. On the second floor are the women's ready-to-wear goods, coats, suits, furs, millinery, wash dresses, raincoats, etc.

The basement is used for storing surplus stock and is generally well filled with the same. This and each floor of the building measures 50 x 80 feet, and all space is utilized.

The company are also large buyers and shippers of butter and eggs, handling the best grades and enjoying quite a big trade in these two lines.

The officers of the company include John A. Kestel, president; and H. W. Kestel, secretary. The unquestioned success of their enterprise has established these gentlemen as two of our city's most progressive merchants. They are considered men of integrity and energy in every respect. The firm's slogan is: "If not good, we make good;" and they live up to their slogan in every case.

(from the Marshfield Times, April 19, 1916)



J. A. Kestel, President.

The Consumers' store has been the scene of extensive remodeling during recent weeks. Changes there have resulted in increasing the size of the grocery department, the ready-to-wear and shoe departments, doubling warehouse space and enlarging the millinery department. Installations of a new refrigerator of the latest type and the addition of more dressing booths are other improvements effected there.

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 29 Sep 1934, Sat • Page 5)



Before Renovations
in 1946!



After the renovations
in 1947!

*Southeast corner of Arnold Street and Central Avenue, ca. 1940's.
(photo from North Wood County Historical Society)*

McCauley Purchases Johnson Hill's Here

Donald H. McCauley, manager of Johnson Hill's Department Store at 169 N. Central Ave., today announced that he has purchased the store from Johnson Hill's Inc., Wisconsin Rapids.

The new owner said the store name would be changed to McCauley's of Marshfield and will continue as a brand-name department store. The enterprise employs 25 persons, making it the largest home owned department store in the city.

Three members of the family will be active in the store operation, with McCauley as president and general manager; his son, Don Lee McCauley, as assistant store manager, and another son, Randy, a junior at Marshfield Senior High School, serving as a part-time stock clerk.

Secretary of the corporation is John H. Stauber, Marshfield. Chester O. Bell, Wisconsin Rapids, president of Johnson Hill's, and Joseph L. Pilsner, Madison, who will be the manager of the new Montgomery Ward store in Janesville, are members of the board of directors.

McCauley said he has planned a few changes in the store, such as expanding the third-floor level into a complete furniture, drapery and carpet floor. He said he has already converted half of the lower level into the only combination fabric and yarn shop in the area.

He added that Johnson Hill's credit cards will continue to be honored at McCauley's, as all the present charge accounts will stay in Marshfield.

McCauley, 38, a native of Astoria, Ore., graduated from high school there in 1951, served in the Army Engineering Corps for two years and then entered the retail business. That was in 1953.

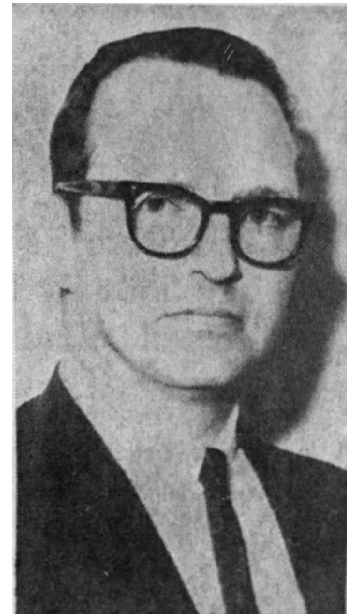
His first association was with a variety store chain. He was then employed by Montgomery Ward for 10 years before joining Johnson Hill's March 21, 1966.

He came to Wisconsin at that time as manager of a junior department store in Waukesha. In August that year he was named assistant manager of Johnson Hill's store in Manitowoc. McCauley came to Marshfield to assume the managership of the store here Sept. 22, 1969.

McCauley is serving his second one-year term as chairman of the Retail Division of the Marshfield Area Chamber of Commerce, which he also serves as director.

Mr. and Mrs. McCauley, who reside at 312 E. Third St., have five children. In addition the two sons active in the store, they are Lon, 13, Ricky, 11, and Douglas, 6.

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 07 Oct 1971, Thu • Page 1)



Donald H. McCauley
(News-Herald Photo)

83-Year-Old Store Here Will Close

Because of financial difficulties, McCauley's of Marshfield, 169 N. Central Ave., is ceasing operations soon.

"Due to local economic conditions and the high cost of operating a business of this size, McCauley's department store will discontinue business soon," Donald H. McCauley, president of the firm, has announced.

A going-out-of-business sale is slated to start Monday. The permit for such a sale has been taken out for a 60-day period, but McCauley said the closing is expected to be effective about Feb. 1.

"We know of no future plans for the use of the building at this time," he said. The five-floor store, including four stories and the basement, is the city's largest home-owned department store facility with 30,000 square feet of floor space.

It employed as many as 30 persons, but recently the operating staff was reduced to 20.

As to his future plans, McCauley said that "my family and I wish to stay in Marshfield if suitable employment can be found."

The store has a history going back to 1891, when the original building, still part of today's greatly enlarged structure, was erected. This original Steinmetz store was sold in 1911, after the death of the owner, to Kestel Bros., which operated the firm until 1922.

The business was reorganized in 1924 as Consumers Store Inc. It was extensively renovated in 1958. In September, 1961, the store was sold to A. Landauer & Sons, Inc. (a wholly owned subsidiary of Johnson Hill's Inc., operator of a group of stores with headquarters in Wisconsin Rapids).

McCauley, a native of Astoria, Ore., who was associated with a variety store chain and Montgomery Ward for 10 years, joined Johnson Hill's in 1966. He was assistant manager of the store at Manitowoc before being appointed manager of the Marshfield operation in September, 1969. He purchased the store in October, 1971.

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 14 Dec 1974, Sat • Page 11)

Center to open in December

The St. Vincent De Paul Society and the Family Resource Center will join forces in the middle of December.

The new St. Vincent De Paul Community Center will open in the middle of December in the former Sears and Roebuck Co. catalog center at 169 N. Central Ave.

After the Family Resource Center, 100 S. Chestnut Ave., closes the week of Nov. 23, it will maintain its outreach service at the new location. The food pantry, a food dispersal service used in emergencies, will also be continued.

The two groups are merging to coordinate the services that both offer into one location to serve the needy, Delores Phaneuf, coordinator of the family center, said.

"It's just going to be a bigger and better operation," she said.

Phaneuf said that although the center has been federally funded since the early 1960s, that agency is one that has been affected by President Reagan's budget cuts. The objective now is to turn the responsibility for funding the center over to the community, rather than the government, she said.

Donations of used clothing, furniture, appliances and household supplies are being accepted at the new location through the rear entrance. Transportation is available for larger objects, she said.

Volunteers are also needed to work at the center, in such areas as maintenance, sales, and pricing. Additional information is available from 387-4425 or 397-2626.

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 05 Nov 1981, Thu • Page 18)



St. Vincent de Paul Society is here to help

By CARLA DAVID
Of the News-Herald

In 1923, the St. Vincent de Paul Society was formed in Marshfield to help people who need it.

Today, that simple goal, of providing help to as many people as possible, is still going strong — as is the Society itself.

The SVDPS will soon open a new community center, replacing the former Family Resource Center which was located on S. Chestnut Avenue.



Frank Wesley, 805 Columbus Ave., (at left) checks out the clothing racks at the St. Vincent de Paul Society Center, located in the old Sears' building at Central Avenue and Arnold Street. The store has set Tuesday as a target opening date. Clothes, home furnishings and furniture, food, and even just plain old conversation will be available at the store to those who want to drop by. The store replaces the former Family Resource Center. Workers have been busy the past month fixing the store up for the opening, and most of these photos were taken a few weeks ago. The store now is almost ready for business.

News-Herald photos by Gary Klein

The new Center is located in the old Sears building at Arnold Street and Central Avenue. Target date for opening is Tuesday.

Just what is the St. Vincent de Paul Society?

According to Andrew Felker, SVDP president, the answer is simple: Members like to help people who need them.

"We are do-gooders if you will, and proud of it," Felker said. "Some people say the world would be better off without do-gooders, but then who would help the people in real distress?"

Felker said that although the government provides the basic needs, such as food and shelter to the poor, it's the "little things," that make life just a little nicer for those who do not qualify for welfare, but still have real needs.

And that's where the St. Vincent de Paul Society comes in.

"There are infinite ways to help people," Felker said. "However, we should distinguish at least two methods of helping: One involves material aid in the form of food, clothing, shelter. The other involves comforting and counseling."

The latter, Felker added, sometimes proves the more difficult.

"It takes a great deal of time to comfort and counsel and I believe that all of our charitable and service organizations encourage their members to practice this virtue. Even after you have left an organization you still do your bit in this needed area of charity," he said. "But it is much easier to write out a check than it is to visit the needy, the lonely or the sick."

The history of Marshfield's SVDPS is somewhat vague, Felker said, since no lasting records were kept from its start in 1923 until about 1950. But the probable founders were Albert Felker and Jacob Thomas. In 1950 there were five active members who helped raise funds to help the needy in various ways, including help in kind from local business places.

The Marshfield society is just one small part of a worldwide organization. The society, founded in 1833 in Paris, was placed under the patronage of St. Vincent de Paul and inspired by his thinking and works.



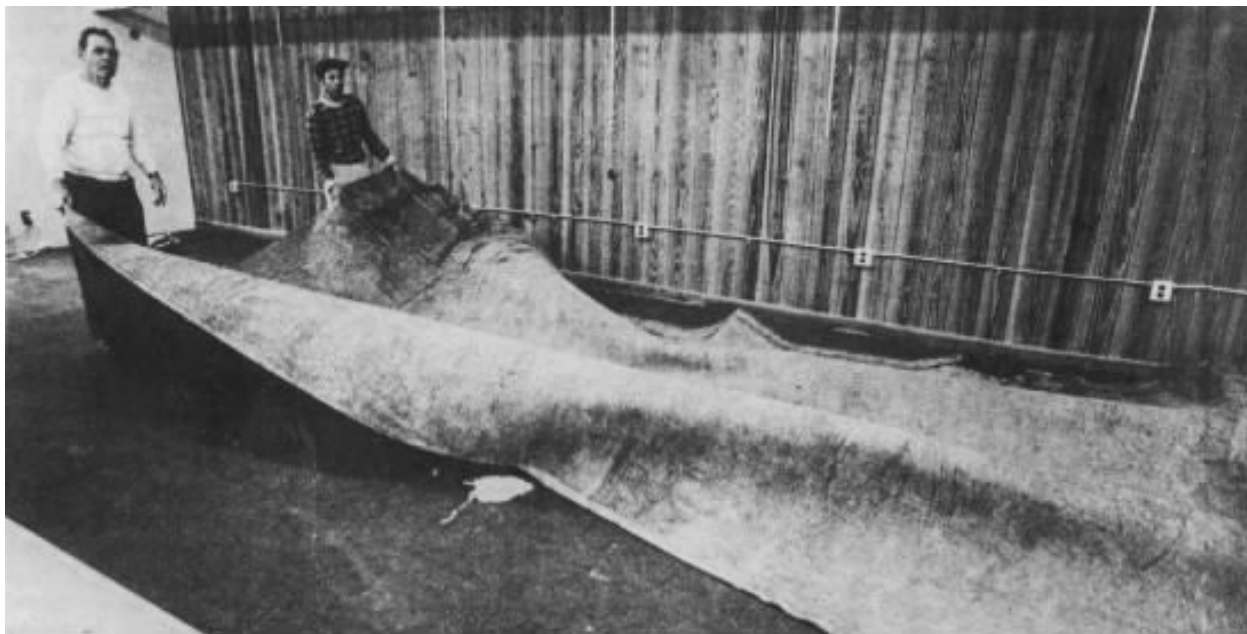
Two mannequins await new clothes at the St. Vincent de Paul Society Center in the old Sears building. The center features many attractive displays of clothing and other items, priced so the poorest can afford them.

News-Herald photos by Gary Klein



Marie Grevel, 1914 S. Maple Ave., worked in the toy section at the soon-to-open St. Vincent de Paul store. Grevel is one of many volunteers that are needed.

News-Herald photos by Gary Klein



John Brayer, (left) 504 W. 13th St., and Nguyen Phuc Pham, 108 S. Cherry Ave worked on laying out the carpet at the St. Vincent de Paul Center. The store is almost ready to open now, with clothing and furniture neatly displayed. News-Herald photos by Gary Klein

The basic unit of the society is the conference, and there are some 38,000 conferences throughout the world, all with the same goal in mind — of helping those in need.

But while many of the conference! have their seats in Catholic parishes, Felker stresses that while the SVDPS is a Catholic organization, membership is open to all faiths.

"We are open to all who need help, and need many volunteers, both men and women," Felker said. "We feel there are a lot of people in our community who feel a desire to do something for others, and here is one opportunity being offered."

Persons wishing to help at the new Center, may contact Dolores Phaneuf, manager, or Marcella Wesley, volunteer coordinator, at the Center. The telephone number is listed under Family Resource Center in the telephone book. Persons interested in the society may contact Felker or any other member.

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 10 Dec 1981, Thu • Page 32)



St. Vincent store to play many roles in community

The soon-to-open St. Vincent De Paul Community Center will offer a lot more to Marshfield and area residents than a place to purchase inexpensive clothing.

Although that will be a primary role, the Center will also provide many other services. Target date for opening is Tuesday.

According to Andrew Felker, SVDP president, the Center will first solicit good clothing and household furniture and furnishings that is no longer needed. Center workers ask that all cloth-

ing which will come in contact with the body be washed before being offered.

The clothing will be sorted, priced and displayed at the store, and offered at prices the poorest can afford.

"As you look at today's prices for clothing and other furnishings you can well imagine what a boon the bargains will be to many in our community," Felker said. "And we hope the Center will offer items of interest to everyone in the community, so please come in and shop around anytime."

But clothing and furnishings will not be the only things offered. The Center also will be the headquarters for a Food Pantry, which was started by the Marshfield Clergy Association a couple of years ago.

The Pantry, Felker said, will accept canned foods which may be offered to Marshfield churches at various times. Society members and volunteers will pick up damaged canned goods from stores and warehouses.

"In short, we will be a clearing house and storage center for all surplus food the community has to offer," Felker said. "We will not charge for any food."

The store will even provide room for women who like to knit and sew for the Center. Materials and equipment also will be provided.

A social worker will be on hand three days per week to discuss economic and other problems with community people who request it.

"As the successor to the Family Resource Center that served Marshfield the past 12 years, we have learned that the needs of this community are not confined to food and clothing, so we expect to offer help in every way we can," Felker said. Clergy and the churches of the area also are invited to share the Center.

Any profit generated from sales will be added to the income the Society already has from churches and private donors, to further carry on works of charity.

And, Felker said, volunteers of all faiths are needed and welcome. "Our Society Center will be the 31st of its kind in Wisconsin, and the first one in the diocese of La Crosse," Felker said.

"We are very proud of it already and are praying that the community of Marshfield will respond to the challenge it puts out."

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 10 Dec 1981, Thu • Page 32)



New opening date

The St. Vincent De Paul Society will open its community center Dec. 14 at its new location at Arnold Street and Central Avenue. The organization had planned on opening the center Dec. 15.

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 11 Dec 1981, Fri • Page 20)



PDC has new locale

The St. Vincent de Paul Community Center is the new home for Personal Development Council Inc. New hours for the PDC staff will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays in their second-floor office.

Joining the United Way affiliate is peer counselor Mary James. Trained to work with women and their concerns, she will be available for walk-in clients from 12:30-2 p.m. and for individual appointments from 2-4.

In addition to local funding, PDC has been awarded money from the state to coordinate work with the Wood County Task Force on Domestic Violence. Goals for this Domestic Abuse Project, according to Director Mary Pat Swamy, include help for victims, special training for community agencies and public education.

"The link between St. Vincent de Paul Community Center and PDC is a natural one," says Swamy. "We have clients who donate items to the center, clients who shop there and clients who feel good about volunteering at the site.

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 05 Feb 1982, Fri • Page 6)



Plans Outlined for Cheese Distribution

By CARLA DAVID
Of the News-Herald

The Marshfield St. Vincent de Paul Society was named Monday as Wood County coordinator for the distribution of free surplus cheese.

The federal government has allotted Wood County 17,610 pounds of the surplus cheese, divided into 587 30-pound cases.

According to Andy Felker, St. Vincent de Paul Society president, plans for the distribution have already been laid out.

"Our duty as coordinator is to coordinate the work of other organizations like our own to help in this distribution," Felker said today. "We're empowered to control the whole thing."

Felker said the Society contacted the State Department of Agriculture last week with the offer to coordinate the distribution efforts.

"So they called us, back and discussed it with us, and yesterday we were named coordinator," Felker said.

Felker added that at least two other organizations in south Wood County have offered to help. The South Wood County Pantry, and the Wisconsin Rapids Future Farmers of America also will help distribute the cheese, under the control of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

"In other words, we have to keep the books," Felker said. "We are going to coordinate these different efforts to see the cheese is distributed properly all over the county."

In Marshfield, Felker said he expects the cheese, which will come in cases of six, five-pound blocks, to be distributed March 11-13 at the Marshfield Armory.

"This cheese will be delivered to the Mosinee Cold Storage Plant, and from there it will be picked up by the various nearby counties," Felker said. "We have a truck available to us, and will pick up as much of that cheese as we feel is needed in Marshfield."

The cheese will then remain in the truck until its distribution to those eligible.

"We're not going to unload it. In this type of weather, the truck is a natural refrigerator. Cheese will stay fresh between 35 and 55 degrees, so we're going to leave it in the truck," Felker said.

"We've already arranged to have use of the Marshfield Armory where people will come to register for it. When they do that, they'll walk out the back door and pick up their cheese right from the truck."

The Society will also have the authority to allot amounts of cheese to the other organizations in Wood County for distribution.

"They'll pick up as much as they feel they need and take it to their distribution point and report back to us as far as bookkeeping and records are concerned," Felker said.

Those plans could change somewhat between now and mid-March, Felker said, adding "this is where we're at right now."

Cyril Marx, a Society member, has been named chairman of the project.

According to Gary Van Lysol, county Social Services Department assistant director, the department did not get involved because of the lack of funds for the project.

"Most county social services departments were not really being asked to distribute the cheese," Van Lysol said today. "The (state) Department of Agriculture has control and it was working with Community Action Agencies. To my knowledge, all other Community Action agencies in the state have taken it on. Only Wood County's didn't."

The Department of Social Services isn't handling the distribution, Van Lysol said, because "there is no money attached to this for administration, and anyone who handles a program of this nature recognizes that it costs some money for manpower, for distribution and for book-keeping."

And his department, he added, doesn't have those kinds of funds.

"Right now we're already taking in money to handle federal and state programs that have been passed down," Van Lysol said. "And we didn't feel we should go to the County Board and ask for more for another program."

Most people, Van Lysol said, don't see the cheese distribution as a welfare program, "but that's basically what it involves."

"It appears, though, that community organizations, which is what the state wanted in the first place, are going to get involved," Van Lysol said.

Eligibility requirements for the free cheese will be released shortly, according to Felker.

(from the Marshfield News-Herald, Marshfield, Wisconsin, 23 Feb 1982, Tue • Pages 1 & 2)