

Grand Rapids, Michigan Stake – The First Decade

Without the resources of many personal records, and with the fading memories of that period, the author has appreciated, and will further appreciate, the reflections of those who experienced that first 10 years of this stake as this document is posted and it becomes available to others to read and possibly contribute, to make this a more complete record.

The Lansing Michigan Stake Conference convened on Saturday, March 2nd in 1975, presided over by Thomas S. Monson, then of the quorum of the Twelve. He was there to divide the Lansing Stake, thus creating the Grand Rapids Michigan Stake. Interviews were conducted that Saturday around the evening session of Conference in order to conduct the business of sustaining of new officers in both stakes in the Sunday morning session. As for the Grand Rapids Stake, Glenn Laverne Goodwin was called and sustained as president, with Darrell B. Thomas as 1st Counselor and David C. Wadsworth as 2nd Counselor, also with Glen Barrett as Stake Clerk and Larry Sheneman as Stake Executive Secretary.

At the time, most wondered who this person was that was being called as the Grand Rapids Stake President because no one knew of him. Since there were those who didn't know him then, and there are likely readers who now are not acquainted with him, there may be some merit in briefly sharing a little about him, so as to appreciate the foundation for this stake that he provided as a result of his call.

He had moved so recently to Michigan that when Elder Monson visited with him at their home, they were yet using packing boxes for furniture. It was during that visit that they clearly understood why his CPA practice in California had been purchased by a large firm that moved him to their main office in Grand Rapids to be a partner, though the firm had no other purpose than to benefit from his skills as an accountant. Elder Monson explained that the Lord needed him in Grand Rapids, and needed him to be the first President of the Grand Rapids Michigan Stake. From there a great legacy was begun by one whose mother described him as "born responsible", and one who had a great ability from an early age to identify problems and seek solutions.

Along with the insights to the foregoing, his daughter reminds us of some principles that he taught, and that guided his life and service; such as:

- "Don't ask the Lord to guide your footsteps, if you're not willing to move your feet."
- "The Lord ALWAYS prepares a way – many times it is unexpected, and not an easy path, but being willing to follow in faith takes you to where you need to be."
- "Most callings are by inspiration, but every once in a while there is a call made by desperation! The Lord makes up the difference and qualifies those that are called."
- "...Miracles can be accomplished by a two person team, if One of them is the Lord."

Along with his service in the Air Force, eventually achieving the rank of captain and the command of a remote Radar Base in Newfoundland, he also served as the

Chicago Temple President after serving as Stake President and retiring to Utah. After serving as temple president he served as a sealer in the new Nauvoo Temple before passing through the veil following complications resulting from an accident while helping one of his children trim trees. Though it may be considered untimely, his passing will have found him greatly rewarded for all the service he rendered to so many. Through the following recollections of the events and activities of the this Stake in its first decade, one will further see a testament to the leadership of this first Stake President and the many who labored with him in this part of the Lord's vineyard.

It was a late Saturday night of prayer and deliberation for the new Stake Presidency as there were many positions to fill before the Sunday General Session of that conference to prepare calls for sustaining that next morning. Clerks and High Council members were recommended and calls issued. And the work didn't end there. In fact, the process that we see ongoing in the Church was the course ahead for this new Stake Presidency as the work of the Lord continued and progressed. Mention has been made of many who served to forward the work of the Lord in this newly formed stake, several of which were stalwarts of earlier periods in the church here. For example, Betty Simons was called as the first Stake Relief Society President, eventually succeeded by Jean Emery, then Mary Larkin and Keena Price. Also, Brother Allen Campbell was called to serve as a Stake Patriarch to serve the saints in the Kalamazoo and more southern units of the stake, while Kenneth Simons continued as Stake Patriarch for the Grand Rapids and more northern units of the new stake.

In May of 1975, mere months after its creation, the first Grand Rapids Quarterly Stake Conference was held in Kalamazoo at the Chenery Auditorium. With a population of about 2500 members and geography extending along the western half of the state from the Indiana border to the north beyond Muskegon, this new stake was without facilities sizable enough to accommodate all the members who would attend such a gathering, and there would be a great burden for as many traveling extended distances to do so. Subsequently, another session was conducted in Grand Rapids for the northern wards and branches.

The year was not ended before a branch was formed in the Niles area being added to the Kalamazoo, Benton Harbor, Muskegon, Greenville and the two Grand Rapids Wards; South Haven, Sturgis, Holland and Hastings Branches. In 1976, boundary changes of the Midland Michigan Stake caused the Big Rapids Branch to be organized in the Grand Rapids Michigan Stake with Clark Volz as President. Also late in 1976 the Fremont Branch was created, with Jerry Tripp as President, to help build the members that were spread throughout a sizeable rural area around Fremont Michigan. Small in membership, eventually boundaries were extended in 1977 to take in some of the north Muskegon area and from the Ward there. In 1978, another boundary change between the stakes brought the members of the Ludington area into the Grand Rapids Michigan Stake as the Ludington Small Branch, with Robert Newman as President.

In 1976, we had our first General Authority visitor to Stake Conference in the person of David B. Haight, the newest member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Richard Thomas, the Stake Executive Secretary by that time has a vivid and memorable reflection of the occasion. *"In his communication with President Goodwin before the stake conference, he asked that the executive secretary prepare a presentation of home teaching statistics for the priesthood leadership meeting. Our statistics were appalling and I was extremely nervous about the presentation. I used a little method I had seen Veldon Thacker of CES use once. I told the story of the Little Red Hen, but as a reference to President Goodwin, called it the story of the Little Bald Rooster."* (President Goodwin was quite bald and would often allude to his "attractive hair style" to those who were similarly coifed.) *"I assigned an animal to each of the stake units, told the story with no verbal reference to home teaching, but putting the statistics for each ward on the overhead. I can't remember all the animals I used for the units in the story, but I do remember a few. I would put the name of a unit on the overhead along with that unit's home teaching percentage, and would say:*
-- (For Grand Rapids where the 2 wards had just been combined into 1) 'Not I', said the dinosaur who was having trouble adapting to change.
-- (For Kalamazoo where they thought they staffed the whole stake) 'Not I', said the steer who was concerned that so much of him was steak material.
-- (For Holland where we had moved a boundary a long ways south so Brother Gaddis could serve as branch president) 'Not I', said the giraffe whose head was far removed from its body.
Never did I say anything about home teaching or percentages. All the application was on the overhead.

I was too nervous to look at Elder Haight who had moved to the front row of the chapel for the presentation. As I recall he never said a word about the presentation and I was left wondering if my membership was in jeopardy. At our next high council meeting, President Goodwin read a letter from Elder Haight, where he said, 'You have an excellent executive secretary in Brother Richard Thomas. Use him as an executive, not as a secretary.' When President Goodwin read that part, he stopped, looked at me, and said, 'The Bald Rooster flew.'"

As was mentioned in Brother Thomas' recollections, the Grand Rapids 1st and 2nd Wards were combined at about this time, as boundary changes were made in an attempt to balance ward membership and leadership. This opened the way for the creation of the Wyoming Ward and a Grand Rapids Ward out of the two Grand Rapids Wards. Over the next several years there were other attempts to that same end, which saw the formation of the Comstock Park Ward, and the reforming of the boundaries of each, at times.

As Ward and Branch conferences were conducted in each unit annually, the Presidency traveled over the far reaches of the Stake with other stake leaders monthly. One of the earliest of memory was a conference visit to the Niles Branch, which did not have a regular meeting place that would accommodate the members, though few in number, and the Stake visitors, for the conference. Charles Stoddard,

a Michigan National Bank executive, made arrangements to use the bank's community room for the conference. Adjustments made to accommodate the different auxiliary sessions required some creativity; such as the Young Men's section, with one young man in attendance, where a video was projected onto a hall wall near where the attendee sat, with the projectionist sitting on the toilet seat in the men's room to get adequate distance for the focus. Another class was conducted with the attendees sitting on the stairway. The saints there were very appreciative—despite the challenges surrounding the arrangements for the occasion.

Visiting Authorities from Church Headquarters continued to visit, among them Elder Henry D. Taylor, then of the Seventy – pictured below with the first Stake Presidency, their wives and some of their children.



Though the Stake was participating in the Regional Welfare Farm in Merrill, Michigan with assignments each year to hoe weeds out of the sugar beets, the stake acquired a Stake Welfare project in 1978 by purchasing a 59 acre apple and cherry orchard in Bangor, Michigan. It had been left abandoned for a few years, so there was much to be done to prepare it for production. A lot of pruning and spraying was applied before the crop could be realized. Soon there was a swarm of members going to the farm in the fall to harvest apples and cherries, which were sold to local markets and the proceeds donated to the church welfare program. When the Stake was divided creating the Kalamazoo Stake in 1979, the two stakes shared the work of the farm until the church halted stake welfare projects a short time later, but the work of the regional welfare projects continued.

Gordon B. Hinckley presided over a Stake Conference in Kalamazoo in the afternoon, after presiding over the other Stake Conference in Grand Rapids in the morning, wherein the business of the division of the Stake was conducted. Don Lykins was

called as the new Kalamazoo Michigan Stake President, with Darrell Thomas and Richard Thomas as counselors.

The Grand Rapids Stake Presidency was reorganized with Glenn Goodwin continuing as President, David Wadsworth and Charles Stoddard as counselors, David McMonigle as Executive Secretary and Dale Emery as Stake Clerk. Sister Jean Emery continued as Stake Relief Society President.



David Wadsworth

Glenn Goodwin

Charles Stoddard

The Grand Rapids Stake continued to grow with it's geographic area being reduced on it's southern extremities, but was extending it's northern boundaries. At this point the units of the Stake were the Grand Rapids, Comstock Park, Wyoming and Greenville Wards, and the Fremont, Big Rapids, Holland, Hastings and Ludington Branches. In the next year the Grand Haven Branch was formed with Richard Blackmer as President, and the Hart Branch the following year, with Raymond Tracy as President.

With the number of units comprising the stake, and the distances involved in the geography, monthly unit visits by High Council and Presidency members were a very active part of the responsibilities of this stake presidency, especially given that most of the units were branches struggling for survival and growth. Even the wards had their challenges in that regard as many stake officers from those units reduced the available leadership. The Presidency split up and went to three different units individually as well as High Councilors making their visits on a monthly basis. Many of the priesthood auxiliary responsibilities were also assigned to the High Councilors to minimize the additional draw on the Wards and Branches for more stake leadership in those areas, such as Young Men's Presidency and Stake Mission Presidency. Three Annual Ward and Branch Conferences were also conducted simultaneously on a given Sunday, allowing the presidency to focus more individual visits the balance of the year.

In 1978 Clark Hinckley, son of Gordon B. Hinckley, in a job related move, came to the area with his family, and was soon called as Executive Secretary to Bishop

McMonigle of the Grand Rapids Ward. His observation at the time was *"With over 850 members [the Grand Rapids Ward] may well be the largest ward in the Church. Attendance runs about 25%..."*. In May of 1979, he was called as Bishop of what remained of that ward following a division of the ward. When President Goodwin extended that call, Bishop Hinckley recalls him saying, *"Bishop, you have a wonderful Protestant congregation. Your challenge is to make them Latter-day Saints."* He further reflects, *"I wondered what he meant by that, but I soon learned that it was not in any way a criticism of the wonderful members of the ward – of which he was one. Of the 450 members of our ward, only a handful were second-generation members of the Church and only a handful had ever lived in another ward or stake where they had had a chance to see the Church fully organized and functioning or where they had had the opportunity of being trained in their calling"*.


Thus, was the condition of most of the stake - so the challenge continued. The temple district that the stake had been assigned to prior to 1974 was the Salt Lake City Temple. This was a significant challenge for those who sought the blessings of the temple in their lives. In 1974 we became part of the Washington DC Temple district, and while much closer, getting there was no easy task. The trip there took some 12 to 13 hours, so temple trips organized by the stake to facilitate members in this quest, at times included commercial bus transportation and hotel arrangements for special rates, and spending a long weekend for the excursion.

Current as of
19 February, 1983

MOTEL AND HOTEL INFORMATION
(ALL RATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE ANYTIME)

NAME AND ADDRESS	PHONE	RATES *	DIRECTIONS
Bethesda Motor Hotel 7740 Wisconsin Ave. Bethesda MD 20014	656-2100	\$26.40 1-4 persons Tax included SPECIAL LDS RATES	Exit 34 Wisconsin Ave. South off I-495
Bethesda Marriott 2 Pooks Hill Road Bethesda MD 20014	897-9400	\$42.00 1-4 persons SPECIAL LDS RATES	Exit 34 Wisconsin Ave. South off I-495
Econo Lodge 7990 Georgia Ave. Silver Spring MD 20910	565-3444	\$28.00 1-4 persons SPECIAL LDS RATES	Exit 30 or 31 South off I-495
Gaithersburg Marriott 620 Lakeforest Blvd. Gaithersburg MD 20877	977-8900	Same rates as Bethesda Marriott	Exit 35 or 38 I-270 North off I-495
Hampshire Motor Inn 7411 New Hampshire Ave. Langley Park MD 20783	439-3000	\$28.00 1-4 persons SPECIAL LDS RATES	Exit 28 or 29 South off I-495
In-Town Chevy Chase 6800 Wisconsin Ave. Chevy Chase MD 20015	654-1400	\$30.00 single \$35.00 2-4 persons SPECIAL LDS RATES	Exit 34 Wisconsin Ave. South off I-495
Linden Hill 5400 Pooks Hill Road Bethesda MD 20024	530-0300	\$39.00 1-4 persons SPECIAL LDS RATES	Exit 34 Wisconsin Ave. South off I-495
Sheraton-Silver Spring 8727 Colesville Road Silver Spring MD 20902	589-5200	Group Rates \$34.00 1-4 persons SPECIAL LDS RATES	Exit 30 Colesville Rd. South off I-495
Walter Reed Hospitality 6711 Georgia Ave. Silver Spring MD 20012	722-1600	\$25.00 1-4 persons SPECIAL LDS RATES	Exit 30 or 31 South off I-495
Best Western MD Inn 8601 Baltimore Blvd. College Park MD 20740	474-2800	\$34.00 single \$41.00 double - \$3 ea. additional	Exit 25 Route 1 South off I-495
Connecticut Inn Motel 4400 Conn. Ave. NW Washington DC 20008	244-5600	Apr-Oct Nov-May \$35.00 \$31.00 1 person \$45.00 \$41.00 2 persons (Group Rates 10+ rooms)	Exit 34 Wisconsin Ave. South off I-495 (Group Rates 10+ rooms)
Howard Johnson Motor 2715 University Blvd. Wheaton MD 20902	933-1300	\$40.00 single \$44.00 double-\$4 ea add'l children under 12 - free	Exit 33 Conn. Ave. North off I-495
Quality Inn 8040 - 13th Street Silver Spring MD 20910	588-4400	\$28.00 1-4 persons	Exit 30 or 31 South off I-495
Ramada Inn 8400 Wisconsin Ave. Bethesda MD 20014	654-1000	\$55.00 - weekdays \$41.00 - weekends \$ 6.00 ea. add'l	Exit 34 Wisconsin Ave. South off I-495
Royal Pine-Best Western 9113 Baltimore Blvd. College Park MD 20740	345-4900	\$31.00 single \$38.00 double \$ 3.00 ea. add'l	Exit 25 Route 1 South off I-495

* Plus tax



WASHINGTON TEMPLE

Bus Routes and Motel Information

With the temple work for the brothers significantly lagging behind the sisters, a Stake Melchizedek Priesthood temple trip was organized under the direction of the Stake Temple Coordinator, Kent Price. Sisters were invited to participate but the brothers could apply a subsidy by the Stake to help defray their costs and thus encourage attendance. It was week long, and while many could not take the whole week, all were invited to attend to some extent during the event and participate in the work, and surrounding activities of dinner together late in the week and trips to the LDS bookstore in the area. Otherwise, members were encouraged to arrange for themselves or with others to go to the temple as much as possible, and increase their temple experience. Great blessings came to the whole stake in the form of increasing faithfulness as a result. One thing that helped many of those anticipating their own first temple experience (not to mention those who had had an initial temple experience and were confused by it) was the initiation of temple prep classes. President Goodwin felt very impressed with this need and arranged for anyone going to the temple for the first time to have this preparation as a pre-requisite.

It was also early in the history of the stake that a Branch Genealogical Library was formed. Harriet McAnally, a convert who was moved to join the church through a dream of relatives seeking help out of some sort of prison, became the first Librarian. She, being taught about the plan of salvation, became intensely involved with her family genealogy and was a great help and inspiration to many as a result of her experience in that work. With the Spirit of Elijah increasing in the world, there were even some non-members called to serve in the library sharing their expertise as well. In fact, the facility was most popular among non-LDS, providing an opportunity for missionary work on both sides of the veil.



Grand Rapids Michigan & Fort Wayne Indiana Stakes Youth Conference 1977

Many other events and activities on a ward/branch and stake basis continued to help strengthen and nourish the church in this part of the Lord's vineyard, such as

the Gold & Green Ball, Youth Conference and Young Women's Camp (often in combination with adjoining stakes), Road Shows (involving youth and adult alike), Welfare and Home Storage Fairs, visits from BYU performing groups (such as "Sounds of Freedom", and "Lamanite Generation"), "Know your Religion" classes presented by prominent LDS authors and lecturers, visits from General Church officers (such as Ardeth Kapp, Paul Dunn, Elaine Cannon, A. Theodore Tuttle, etc.), and the like. Of particular note on this latter, was the occasional visit of President Gordon B. Hinckley to his son and the family living in the area as he returned home from church business in the east. Sister Kathy Hinckley (his daughter-in-law) would, at times, press him for an impromptu fireside when here.

One cannot speak of the "Goodwin years" in this stake without mentioning Scouting. President Goodwin was very involved with Scouting, eventually even on the national level. So it is no surprise that he would recruit participants for Boy Scouts from church members. Since the church is among the world's greatest supporters of Boy Scouting, it was a natural opportunity for benefiting both the church and the BSA. Practically all Priesthood leaders and others connected with the youth of the church were all but required to participate in training. He conducted at least a couple of "Woodbadge" courses for LDS scout leaders as well as others in the local council. In this connection, the Grand Rapids Stake spearheaded a Boy Scout Camporee for the LDS scouts in the state of Michigan, attended by L. Tom Perry, as the keynote speaker for the event. The stake, together with many other stakes and several General Authorities, also participated in an LDS Scout Encampment in the Kirtland, Ohio area in the early 1980's, affording many, the opportunity to connect with church history of the Kirtland period.

As the Stake grew in population and activity, the Grand Rapids ward building, doubling as the Stake Center, became increasingly inadequate. Reportedly, President Hinckley always complained of how cold the building was when he visited in the winter. (Admittedly, it did seem to have been designed for a warmer climate.) Toward the end of this first ten years, a property search for a new, larger Stake Center was begun. A local real estate broker and member of the stake, Larry Coombs, located a parcel (less than a mile from the first church-built chapel in Grand Rapids) on Leonard Street near the I-96 interstate highway. It seemed ideal for location with its proximity to the interstate, making it easily accessible by those visiting from other units of the stake. The church real estate and building department however wouldn't approve the property, as it was too large for the facility in question. So Larry Coombs, Glenn Goodwin, Charles Stoddard and Dennis Larkin formed a partnership to purchase the property, sell off the surplus and then sell the acreage needed for the new building to the church at cost. Bishop Larkin recalls, "Since our partnership owned all the land under consideration for the development of the stake center, we had approached the Church representatives with a proposal to include the land to the south of the stake center so we could develop a recreation area with a game area, picnic area, a pavilion of sorts for parties, picnics, and special outdoor events, etc. Surprisingly, the brethren turned down our request – in spite of the fact that our partnership owned the land and

were selling the property to the Church at our cost. During the planning of the site plan, we noted the comments by the adjacent residents who obviously were being impacted the most by whatever we proposed on our site. Therefore, we arranged for neighborhood meetings with the adjacent residents to identify any concerns the neighbors would have. Comments mostly centered on mutual property lines, fencing, landscaping on the property boundaries, noise, aesthetics, traffic issues etc. All those items and probably more were addressed during those meetings. Therefore, the neighbors appeared satisfied with our plan. The results of the public hearings where citizens were invited to stand and voice questions and concerns about our plan went smoothly. In fact, I do not recall anyone voicing concerns about the proposed site plan. We had done our homework!"

Incidentally, the surplus property was initially sold to the Gerald R. Ford Council of the Boy Scouts of America for a headquarters building. They would have been a nice neighbor for us, given our support and association with the BSA. However, the property was subsequently sold to Grand Valley Health, the current owner, netting the BSA with a substantial profit.

President Goodwin continued to persist with the church building department to see that the building was approved for construction. In fact, his tenure was extended so that he could accomplish that task. Some have considered this new Stake Center as the "the church that Glenn built" because of his efforts. By the time ground breaking commenced for the new Stake Center, President Goodwin with his two counselors were released and Kent Price was called and sustained as Stake President, with Grant Worth and Larry Sheneman as counselors, and the next decade begins.



Attachments:

A SOCIETY OF SISTERS
IN
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

About 1908 the Grand Rapids Branch was established. From 1908 until 1943 the meetings were held in various members homes and miscellaneous meeting places. About 1943 the Branch purchased the old Bell Telephone Building at Carlton Avenue. The sisters labored diligently to prepare the building for their meetings.

Sister Amber Davis was the Relief Society President during this time. Edna Hansen and Betty Simons served in her presidency. Many times Sisters Hughes and Simons would be the only sister to attend the Relief Society meeting. So they would have an opening song, prayer and take turns giving the lesson, and saying the closing prayer.

In 1958, a ground breaking ceremony was held at the corner of Bradford and East Beltline. Construction of the chapel began in 1960. Sister Barbara Ybema was the Relief Society President during the building, which was completed in 1964.

When Sister Ybema was released, Shirley Cannon was called as President. Sister Jean Emery was the next sister to hold that position. The records do not indicate the time periods that these sisters served.

Sister Nellie Wadsworth was called as the next President in the spring of 1970. She and her presidency worked very hard to reach the inactive sisters. Looking back, Sis. Wadsworth says she grew most from this call in two ways: 1) She received a new understanding of the needs of the sisters, and 2.) she learned to look into the hearts of the sisters to see who they really were. Nellie was released in 1973.

Sister Betty Simons was then asked to serve as president. Her presidency continued the efforts of finding the lost sheep. This was a priority because there were so few sisters in attendance. (Some even came with curlers in their hair.) Sis. Simons was released in December of 1974.

In January 1975, Pam Wadsworth was called to replace Sis. Simons. Visiting teaching was emphasized during her presidency. In addition, priority was given to having good lessons. Because so many of the sisters were new members, it was necessary to teach them the basic principles of the gospel.

A new member of the ward, Jan Stoddard, replaced Pam Wadsworth in March 1976. Their goal was to promote unity among the sisters and provide opportunities for them to fellowship with each other. Because of a difficult pregnancy, Jan was released in November of that year.

Sister Roni Brown was then called and she proved to be an excellent example for the sisters. Visiting teaching was very good during her presidency. She served until the fall of 1978.

Called in the fall of 1978, Sister Debbie Sugiyama was sustained as president. This presidency emphasis was to give the sisters an opportunity to improve

2. Grand Rapids

their homemaking skills. During this time there were a lot of young families in the ward struggling to raise their families in the right way. Most of the sisters were able to be home. There were a good number of new converts, and helping these sisters gain a testimony was very important. Sis. Sugiyama feels that her presidency was a time of preparation and learning. She was released in 1980.

Rosemary Goodwin was called to serve as President while her husband, Glenn, served as the first Stake President of the Grand Rapids MI Stake which was organized in 1975. Her spirituality was a strong example and emphasis in her presidency.

Darlene Fegal was called after Sis. Goodwin was released in September 1982. Sis. Fegal and her counselors worked very hard to reactivate the less active sisters. The economy was in a recession during this time, so the welfare needs of the families was a constant concern.

In July of 1984 Sis. Fegal was released and Sister Francene Molnar took over the rein. The focus during this presidency was to build individual testimonies and to strengthen the sisterhood. They planned several activities to bring the sisters together. A retreat was held at the Larkin cottage on Lake Michigan in conjunction with the award ceremony for the Pursuit of Excellence program. Thirty-five sisters came and spent the night and enjoyed each other. A fireside was held on a New Year's Eve at the Maher's home. There was a terrible snowstorm that night, but twenty-eight sisters were there to enjoy an inspirational meeting. Another activity that is well remembered is the production of the spoof of the Wizard of Oz. An 80% visiting teaching record was consistently maintained.

Sister Lottie Roberts was called to be president in September of 1986. The stake was in the process of rearranging ward boundaries during this time, and it was a period of adjustment for some families. The sisters were admonished to follow the prophet's counsel to have a years supply of food and to prepare every needful thing. Many of the homemaking lessons were given by guest speakers who helped the sisters with taxes, budgets, wills and depression.

In May of 1988 Joyce Offhaus received her call to serve as president. The emphasis in her presidency was homemaking with the hope of bringing the sisters closer together. Many were now working outside of the home, and it was becoming more difficult to find time to fellowship. The Wyoming Ward was dissolved in 1989 and the Grand Valley Ward was organized. When Sister Offhaus was released in July of 1989, Raquel Taylor was called and served for a short time until June 1990 when she moved from the Ward.

Sister Robin Heredia has served as president since June 1990. Their focus has been to help the sisters become more service minded, as well as to bring the sisters closer together.

The Saints in the Grand Rapids area have come a long way since 1908. The Lord has been with us, and we will press on.

Compiled by Virginia Hallwachs.