

THE SECOND STAKE PRESIDENCY

SEPTEMBER 1985 - OCTOBER 1994

The Grand Rapids Michigan stake conference of September 28 and 29, 1985, was presided over by Elder Rex C. Reeve, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy and president of the North America Northeast Area. In the Sunday morning session Elder Reeve extended a release to Glenn Goodwin who had faithfully presided over the Grand Rapids Michigan Stake for more than ten years. In his place, Kent Price was called to serve as stake president with Grant Worth as first counselor and Larry Sheneman as second counselor. Over the course of the next nine years, Richard Blackmer, Lon Green and Charles Perry also served as counselors in the stake presidency.

Of course the better part of memories for most members of the church come from the ward and branch level. The stake is there to help these units as they minister to and support their families and individual members. Leadership seminars, quarterly auxiliary training meetings and multi-stake training events all contributed to the fine leadership throughout the stake. The stake also provides many opportunities for larger groups of saints to gather together, build testimonies and share wonderful memories.

One of the major events of the stake took place in 1986 as we moved into our new Stake Center on Leonard Street and I-96. For years, the Grand Rapids wards had been meeting in an older facility on Bradford Street and urgently needed a larger facility. There was no provision in that building for stake offices. Thanks to the tireless efforts of President Glenn Goodwin and the leadership serving with him, the groundbreaking for the new stake center took place on October 20, 1985. In 1986, the new building became home to the Grand Rapids, Comstock Park, and Grand Valley wards and provided a new stake wing complete with offices and a high council room.

In 1985 the stake consisted of the following units and leaders:

		<u>Members</u>
Big Rapids Branch	President G. Olof Larson	104
Comstock Park Ward	Bishop David Harmon	364
Fremont Branch	President Paul Bunnell	107
Grand Haven Branch	President Richard Blackmer	115
Grand Rapids Ward	Bishop Dennis P. Larkin	272

Greenville Ward	Bishop Ralph Brown	186
Hart Branch	President Raymond Tracy	59
Hastings Branch	President Russell Solmes	157
Holland Branch	President Robert A. Baird	112
Ludington Branch	President Robert C. Newman	81
Muskegon Ward	Bishop Harvey F. Kieft	303
Wyoming Ward	Bishop Kent Price	<u>416</u>
Total Membership		2,276

During the next nine years, several changes took place. Some units were formed and some consolidated.

In 1986, many members of the Fremont Branch had moved from the area and the branch was struggling with very low membership. In order to provide larger and more complete church programs, the branch was discontinued with the membership assigned mostly to Big Rapids and Muskegon. By 1998, the membership in the Fremont area had grown sufficiently for the Fremont Branch to be reopened.

In a similar effort to provide larger congregations and programs, the Grand Haven Branch was blended into the Muskegon Ward and the Holland Branch in 1988. Most of these members later became members of the Spring Lake Ward and are now meeting in the newly constructed Spring Lake building.

By 1989, the Wyoming Ward was confronting a different kind of a problem. The membership had outgrown its small building on Bellevue Street on the south side of Grand Rapids. With the larger capacity of the new stake center, it was decided to consolidate the Wyoming Ward into surrounding units until a new facility could be built in Wyoming. Most of the Wyoming members then attended the Grand Valley ward with others becoming members of the Holland Branch. The new Wyoming building was constructed and the Wyoming Ward was reconstituted in 1996 under the leadership of President Charles Stoddard.

In 1988, the Grand River (deaf) branch was formed to serve the needs of our hearing impaired members. Several members, chiefly the Rackham and Harmon families, had been providing translation services during our normal meetings. While the Primary and YM/YW activities were integrated with the Grand Valley Ward, the formation of a

separate branch meant that Sacrament meetings could be held using ASL (American Sign Language) as the main language. It also provided leadership training and opportunities for hearing impaired members. Several additional families who were interested in learning ASL were called to be members of the new branch.

As mentioned above, most church activities take place at the ward and branch levels. However, many stake and regional events add to the total church experience and foster friendships and memories in a wider circle. Many of these were recurring events taking place every year or so and others were one-time events. These included, among many others.....

Youth conferences - sometimes with our own stake and sometimes with others - frequently held on college and university campuses in the area, including Grand Valley State University, Olivet, and Ferris.

Gold and Green Balls - usually held in the Spring

New Year's Eve dances with youth and adults together bringing in each new year.

Canoe trips - ostensibly for the youth but with many adults getting very wet.

Young Single Adult activities - picnics, outings, dune trips and yes, even skydiving!

Boy Scout and Girls Camps every summer

Klondike Derby in the winter

Youth Handcart Challenge experiences

A two-day Marriage Enrichment experience attended by about 150 members.

Many wonderful temple experiences - The Chicago Temple was opened in August of 1985 allowing us to get to the temple in about 3 hours instead of the 14+ hours it took to get to the Washington D.C. Temple. And, when our former stake president, Glenn Goodwin, became president of the Chicago Temple, he initiated a program whereby stakes were encouraged to attend the temple together and provide their own staffing. Many members of our stake thus had the privilege of becoming temple ordinance workers. What a blessing!

On May 13, 1994, the Chamber Choir of Grand Rapids presented an evening of "Music of the Mormons" featuring well known numbers from the Tabernacle Choir repertoire as well as portions of Crawford Gates' "Savior of the World." Sister Karen Brunsdale, a member of the Chamber Choir, was instrumental in selecting the music and arranging for Brother Gates to come to Grand Rapids for the performance. Brother Gates was so impressed with the presentation that he arranged for the Chamber Choir to travel to Salt Lake City to join with the Tabernacle Choir in their "Music and the Spoken Word" broadcast on July 23, 1995. President Price and Brother Gary Nash were also members of the Chamber Choir on that trip. The contacts made during these events eventually led to President Stoddard getting the Tabernacle Choir to include Grand Rapids and Interlochen, Michigan on their Northeast tour of 2003. What a coup! For more details, see the account beginning on page 5 of the "Third Stake Presidency" narrative.

During all these experiences and changes, the church experienced significant growth. Membership grew from 2276 in September of 1985 to 3317 by June of 1994, an increase of approximately 50 percent.

By the summer of 1994, the stake consisted of the following units and leaders (including, in parentheses, leaders called subsequent to September of 1985 and released prior to the leader serving at the time):

		<u>Members</u>
Belding (Greenville) Ward	Bishop (Roy Killinger), Richard Armstrong	419
Big Rapids Branch	President (Lon Green, Scott Crowley), Ray Edge	207
Grand Rapids Ward	Bishop (Dale Fegal, Charles Stoddard), Dan Stevens	471
Grand River Branch	President (Scott Bloomfield), Jeff Lewis	88
Grand Valley Ward	Bishop (Charles Perry), C. Jarakae Jensen	639
Hart (Shelby) Branch	President (Rodney Stovall), Rodney Kurzer	147
Hastings Branch	President (Glen Steorts, James Bailey), Alfred Pandl	221
Holland Branch/Ward	Pres/Bishop (Joseph Kozlarek, Robert Miller), Lee Allen	350
Ludington Branch	President (Mike Ziegenfelder), Robert Overholt	107
Muskegon Ward	Bishop (Curt Atkinson, Mark Bingham), Zachary Soelberg	<u>668</u>
	Total Membership	3,317
<u>Discontinued Units:</u>	<u>Last Bishop/Branch Pres.</u>	
Fremont Branch	Paul Bunnell	
Grand Haven Branch	President Daniel Betts	
Wyoming Ward	Bishop (David Ploehn), Jack Eveland	

(Note: For listings of all stake, ward and branch leaders at various times, see selected directories linked on the home page of this history.)

On October 9, 1994, Elder Don Ladd of the Seventy, presided over our stake conference. He released President Kent Price with his counselors, Richard Blackmer and Charles Perry and called Brother Charles Stoddard as the new stake president.

Scroll further down for pictures of selected stake events.

Breaking Ground for our new Building



President Goodwin Shares some history



The choir sings



The Audience Listens



The kids are ready



On Your Mark ! Get Set !



GO !! President Goodwin gets the first dirt



A Team Effort



The New Stake Presidency and Executive Secretary at the Chicago Temple
Kent & Keena Price, Grant & Margaret Worth, Tom & Kathy Maher, Larry & Char Sheneman



Our old building on Bradford Street. We used it until 1986.



Our new building on Leonard Street. Ground breaking was on October 20, 1985.
The first stake conference held in the building was on December 13 & 14, 1986.



Glenn Goodwin, Charles Stoddard, Dennis Larkin and Kent Price
check out compliance with the specifications.

THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY
SAINTS

You and your family are
cordially invited to attend the
Open House
for Our New Building
Saturday and Sunday
December 6 and 7, 1986
4-9 pm
2750 Leonard NE, Grand Rapids
(just east of I-96)



Congratulations!

ARCHITECT
WBDC INC.
GENERAL CONTRACTOR
OWEN-AMES-KIMBALL CO.

**WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE BEEN PART
OF YOUR CONSTRUCTION TEAM**

SUBCONTRACTORS
GRAND AMERICAN ELECTRIC INC.
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VARANO GLASS
ALLIED PAINTING CO.
AIRECONOMICS, INC.

VENEKLASSEN CONCRETE
CONSTRUCTION CO.
BOUMA CORPORATION
THOMPSON McCULLY CO.
OSHTEMO HILL, INC.
RELIABLE FIRE PROTECTION, INC.
EMCO MILLWORK INC.
MODERN ROOFING INC.
TWIN LAKES NURSERY INC.

Congratulatory Ad in the Grand Rapids Press



Aerial View of the new Stake Center

Youth Handcart Challenge



This looks
easy so far.

Hmmm Maybe
not so easy.

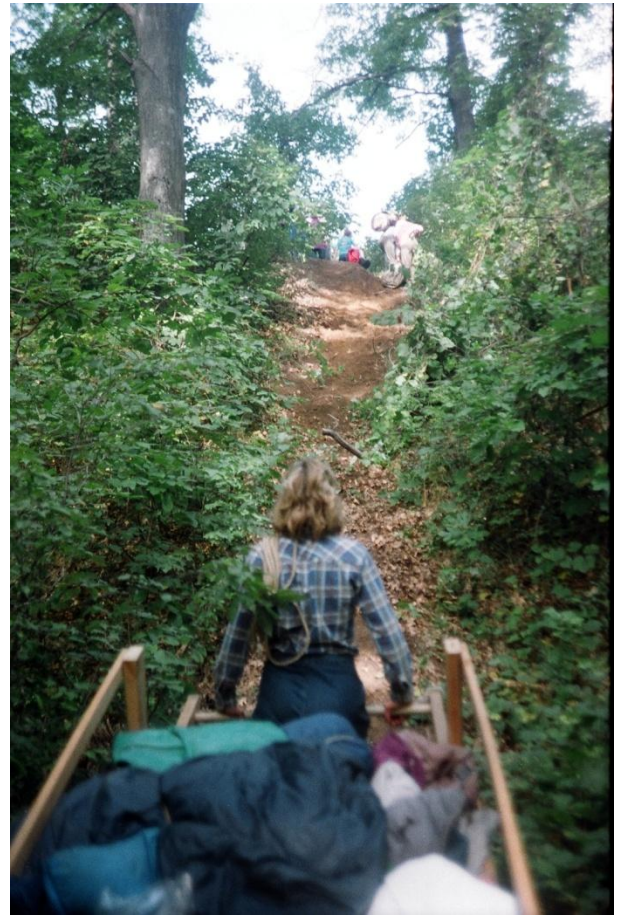
You mean the
path is not
paved?



Hey, This is
WET !!



more WET



And Hey, This is STEEP



We'd better think this over



Hmmmmm. More contemplation



WE DID IT !!

Stake Dance - "A Sentimmental Journey"



The Merry Melchizedeks Play



Bishop Carey REALLY gets into the music !





Stake Youth Canoe Trip - 1986



Getting ready for the big splash



Launching the Boats

Multi-Stake Scout Jamboree - 1988



Youth Conference with Bary Mayo as Guest Speaker - 1994



Girls Camp - 1989





1993 - President Stoddard and President Price visit our Michigan students at BYU and UVU.



The Stake Presidency in 1994
Richard Blackmer, Kent Price, Charles Perry