

Mount Clemens Public Library

Local History Sketches

The Price [Macomb Daily] Building

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In 1929, construction was begun on what was at the time the tallest building in Mount Clemens. The seven-story Price Building, located on the southwest corner of Cass and South Walnut, was planned as the home of the *Daily Leader* newspaper offices and mechanical plant, as well as host to tenant offices and retail concerns.



The building was named for the Price family, owners of the *Daily Leader* at the time. The family's newspaper interest had begun in 1900, when Samuel Cheney Price acquired the *Mount Clemens Press*; he then established the *Leader* in 1901. When Samuel C. Price died in 1913, control of the newspaper passed to his widow, Frances Norton Price, and their son, Samuel Norton Price, under whose leadership the modern new offices were planned.

The *Leader* began its move from 61 North Walnut in June, 1928, when a new mechanical plant was constructed at the corner of Cass and South Walnut. The new presses rolled from that location for the

first time on June 8, 1928. One year later, the *Leader's* front page announced that a new office building had been designed for the site by the Detroit architecture firm of Weston and Ellington. The general contractor was the Otto Misch Company, which would win the contract for the new, 13-story Macomb County Building in 1931, thus eclipsing almost immediately the Price Building's place as the tallest in Mount Clemens.

In early 1930, as final construction was being completed, the *Leader* advertised available office space in the "modern new Price Building," at a rate of \$37.50 per month for a private office and reception room. Potential tenants were told that they ought not miss out on the prestige of a fireproof building with terrazzo and marble floors and a mail chute on every floor. The new structure was, indeed, the first high-rise, modern office building in Mount Clemens.

The *Leader's* business and editorial offices moved into the Price Building during the weekend of March 2, 1930, and the company's new address became 67 Cass Avenue. The classified advertising department was located on the main floor, and the remainder of the business, executive and editorial offices occupied the second floor.

In the early 1940s, ownership of the *Leader* passed out of the hands of the Price family, and in 1942 the newspaper was merged with the McKee family's *Mount Clemens Daily Monitor* to form the *Daily Monitor-Leader*. The building then became known as the Monitor-Leader Building, and in 1964, after another merger, it became the Macomb Daily Building.

Another local media milestone was reached at 67 Cass on May 1, 1947, when WMLN-FM, dubbed the "Voice of Macomb County," began broadcasting from studios in the Monitor-Leader Building. The station, also owned and operated by the Macomb Publishing Company, was the first in county, and one of the first post-war FM stations in Michigan to provide regularly scheduled programming. However, as FM receivers were not widely owned at the time, the station survived only a few years, and quietly dropped from the radio dial in early 1954.

During the 1940s and 1950s, the building was also home to the Emsee Theatre, which opened on the main floor on August 10, 1946, with a screening of *Devotion* starring Ida Lupino and Paul Henreid. The movie house was operated by R. Roy Shook, and featured 1,000 seats on the main level and 300 more on the mezzanine. In 1958, the theatre changed its name to the MC-Art and featured foreign art films exclusively. It soon returned to screening Hollywood fare, but finally succumbed to pressure from the more popular area drive-ins. The MC closed in early 1959 and the newspaper offices expanded into the theater space.

In all, the Price Building housed the newspaper business for which it was designed for 64 years. In 1994, the *Macomb Daily* vacated the building for new quarters along North River Rd. The Price Building, by now known as the Macomb Daily Building, has stood substantially vacant since that time and awaits redevelopment

For further information about the Price building, we recommend:

- "Samuel C. Price [obituary]," *Mount Clemens Monitor*, February 21, 1913, p.10, col.3.
- "Clear Leader Building Site: Prepare for Construction of Newspaper, Store and Office Edifice," *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, June 7, 1929, p.1.
- "Price Building Opening Set: Seven Story Structure to Be Entirely Completed About January 1," *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, November 27, 1929, p.1.
- "The Leader Moving Into New Offices: Newspaper Will Be Published in Seven-Story Price

Building Monday," *Mount Clemens Daily Leader*, March 1, 1930, p.1.

- "Emsee Theatre Ready: Modern Movie Opens Saturday," *Mount Clemens Daily Monitor-Leader*, August 9, 1946, p.1, col.2.
- "Macomb's First Radio Station to Make Debut: 'Voice of Macomb' Begins Seven-Hour Daily Broadcasts," *Mount Clemens Daily Monitor-Leader*, April 30, 1947, p1.
- "Foreign Art Films to be Movie Fare at Remodeled New MC-Art Theatre," *Mount Clemens Daily Monitor-Leader*, February 24, 1958, p.2.
- "S. Norton Price [obituary]," *Mount Clemens Daily Monitor-Leader*, December 5, 1960, p.4.
- Fleming, Bill. "Macomb Daily to Relocate," *Macomb Daily*, September 21, 1993, p.1A.
- Fleming, Bill. "Movin' Along," *Macomb Daily*, July 24, 1994, p.1A.
- Wowk, Mike. ["Old News Building Awaits Its Fate."](#) *Detroit News*, May 30, 2001.
- Hotts, Mitch. "City Wants Landmark Torn Down," *Macomb Daily*, March 10, 2002.
- Hotts, Mitch. "Mount Clemens Sued Over Landmark," *Macomb Daily*, March 24, 2002.