

Lafayette Building

1922, 1998

The Lafayette Building was constructed in 1922 at the southwest corner of Eleventh Street and Nicollet Avenue by the Lafayette Investment Company. The company was owned by W.C. Redlin, A.R. Chesnut, and Warren Hopwood. The site had been owned by H.G. Harrison whose home sat on the site. A one-hundred-year lease was obtained on the property.

The Lafayette Building was designed by Ernest Croft and Francis Borner in the Renaissance Revival style, typical of the 1920s. The door facing Nicollet Mall is highlighted by an ornate Baroque split pediment and flanked by fluted Doric pilasters to look like classical columns. The exterior is covered by motifs of twisted columns, cherubs, garlands, urns, cornucopias, dragons, and snakes. The terra cotta colors are fired into the clay, so that, despite weathering, the surface retains its original colors. The floors were terrazzo.



Minnesota Historical Society

The Lafayette was one of the few historic buildings in Minneapolis not built for a single occupant. The Lafayette was designed to have eight stores on the Nicollet side of the building and five stores



Star Tribune, March 12, 1922

on the Eleventh street side, with entrances on both sides of the building. The second floor was designed for offices and additional shops. The building was to have 165 feet of frontage on Nicollet Avenue and 170 feet on Eleventh Street. The structure was estimated to cost between \$150,000 and \$165,000.

Croft & Boerner was an architectural and engineering firm based in Minneapolis. The firm was known for designing the Minneapolis Municipal Auditorium (demolished in 1988 to make way for the Minneapolis Convention Center) and high schools in Minnesota and Iowa. The building was constructed by the Carlsted Company. Thorp Brothers sold the bonds yielding seven percent

in denominations of \$100, \$500, and \$1,000, with personal guarantees from the Lafayette owners.

True to its intent as a multiple tenant building, Lafayette was soon filled with a variety of businesses. During the 1920s, it was home to, among others: A.J. Lofgren's tailoring business; Junior League headquarters; Jacob Lundh, violin maker; Women's Club; and Parisian Beauty.

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1108 Nicollet Ave., Mpls.
LaFayette Building
Tel. Gen. 3237

Minneapolis Star, September 21, 1924

Although its tenants changed over the years, Lafayette continued to lease to small businesses. In the 1930s, one of its long-term tenants was John Seaman Garns and his School of Psychology and Religious Science, various religious organizations, and Speech Club.

In the 1940s, the building housed American Business College and its program for training women for the war effort. It was also home to Koppers Coke. The 1950s' tenants included Minnesota Costume College.

SCHOOL of PSYCHOLOGY and RELIGIOUS SCIENCE	JOHN SEAMAN GARNES 11:00 A.M., "What Easter Means to Me" 7:45 P.M., "The Man Who Opened Eyes" Both Services at WOMAN'S CLUB AUDITORIUM 407 W. 15th St.—Opposite Loring Park Monday noon, 12:10—Free Psychology Talk 1108 Nicollet Avenue, Suite 210
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Minneapolis Star, April 4, 1931

**WOMEN FOR
WAR WORK!**

Thousands of women, 20 to 45, are needed in local and mid-west plants, making ammunition, guns, planes, etc. Good pay for those who can qualify. One large manufacturing city estimates a need for 190,000 more women for factory work.

HOW TO QUALIFY

Attend this interesting FREE program. See a moving picture that presents America's greatest war production problems. Learn exactly what women are expected to do in modern mass production. Hear briefly why many applicants have failed and how to gain certain simple qualifications for necessary jobs.

Come to 1108 Nicollet Avenue, 2nd floor, at 2:30 P.M. or 7:30 P.M., TOMORROW (Tues.). Program under auspices of AMERICAN BUSINESS COLLEGE, MAIn 2467.

Minneapolis Star, April 27, 1942

The 1960s' tenants included multi-year tenant, Murphy Plan. Masterson Personnel and Gene Smiley, Inc. were tenants in the 1970s. The 1980s' included long-term tenant, Eberhardt Company. The 1990s' tenants included JKW International and Shirly, Lund, Foley & Mansfield law firm.

STOCKROOM \$600

Male-Female needed for sorting & stocking light merchandise. D8.

Masterson Personnel

1108 NICOLLET AV. 339-7562
 3307 NO. HWY. 100 533-2137

An Employment Agency

Minneapolis Star Tribune, August 21, 1973

In the June 6, 1972, edition of the *Minneapolis Star*, Barbara Flanagan, famed newspaper columnist, decried the appearance of the Lafayette Building:

It looks well-scrubbed and very European with its frieze of tile and stonework on its façade. Much of its elegance, however, is covered by a too big and too gaudy Gold Bond Stamp sign.



Star Tribune

Vincent's anchored the corner of Nicollet and Eleventh for fourteen years. Vincent Francoual arrived in Minneapolis in 1998, working first at Café Un Deux Trois. Three years later, he founded the highly successful Vincent's. Francoual determined in 2015 that it was time for a new chapter in his career and closed the restaurant at the end of the year.

In 1990, Brit's Pub became Lafayette's largest tenant. Brit's started as a two-room bar which grew into a much larger and more comprehensive establishment hosting soccer events, theatre, comedy, music, and dance.

Brit's owners purchased the entire building including tenant space in 1998. Owning the entire building allowed Brit's to create an English garden on the rooftop of a parking structure.



Minneapolis Downtown Council



Star Tribune, September 5, 2015, Aaron Lavinsky photo

The 11,000 square foot green space can accommodate five hundred people for events, lawn bowling, and private gatherings. Twelve inches of topsoil and four inches of peat were installed over a waterproof membrane covering a concrete deck. The total cost

was \$850,000. In 1998, the grand opening of the garden took place.