

## Butler North

1900, 1910

Built in 1900, the six-story Butler North building, located at 500-514 First Avenue North, is a Renaissance Revival-style structure. It was designed by Long and Long for the McDonald Brothers Company. The building was expanded with a taller eight-story addition in 1910, designed by Long, Lamoreaux, and Long, also in the Renaissance Revivals style.

The original building features a heavy limestone base with banded brick above the first floor and multiple storefronts. The first floor is topped with a band of stone trim, a simple red brick façade with double-hung windows, a band of stone trim at the base of the sixth floor, and a decorative cornice at the roofline with brackets and dentils. The second building features a simpler cornice and a Doric loggia on the eighth floor, as well as a façade with pilasters and stone window lintels, and a shorter stone base. The building has been adaptively reused as commercial office space, with retail spaces on the ground floor.



*Hennepin County Library*

The original McDonald Brothers Building was erected in 1879, but that building was destroyed by a fire in 1895. In 1897, T.B. Walker and C.B. Heffelfinger jointly purchased land from the McNair Estate on which both Butler Square and the McDonald Building rest. A baseball park previously stood on the block. Construction required removing an immense wall that had enclosed the ball park.

C.B. Heffelfinger, referred to in the newspapers of the time as Major Heffelfinger, was the developer. He was also responsible for the North Star Boot and Shoe Company (Kickernick Building), Printer's Exchange Building, and the Wyman, Partridge & Company Building.



Heffelfinger was quoted in *The Minneapolis Tribune* on July 27, 1902, "The Northwest, great as it is, is but in its infancy, and will continue to greet new settlers with the smile of prosperity for many years. If that is a certainty, and I think no one can dispute it, it is no less certain that Minneapolis will increase its trade of all kinds with proportionate rapidity."

Heffelfinger invested heavily in Minneapolis and the Warehouse District, and he was correct in that Minneapolis became the wholesale center of the Northwest. Heffelfinger had served in the Civil War and was wounded at Gettysburg. He later accepted a commission as major of the 1st Minnesota Heavy Artillery, where he served until his discharge in 1865. After the war he moved

his family to Minnesota and became one of its most prominent citizens. He is buried in Lakewood Cemetery.

In 1906, Heffelfinger announced plans to build an eight-story addition and to add two more floors to the original building, so that the two buildings could be symmetrical. In 1909, construction began. F. G. McMillan was the contractor. The structure was to cost \$100,000 and would double the capacity of the business.

**BUTLERS BUY  
M'DONALD BROS.  
Wholesale General Mer-  
chandise Establishments  
Both 50 Years Old**

*Minneapolis Star, March 2, 1927*

marvelous indication of the fine business outlook for Minneapolis.”

The area was doing so well that wealthy individuals outside Minneapolis were investing in its downtown. The *Minneapolis Journal* on September 10, 1911, reported that the McDonald Building had been sold for \$350,000 by its then owner, A. B. Newman of Chicago, to Senator T.C. Power of Montana. At the time, the building was under a thirteen-year lease to the McDonald Brothers. The announcement noted that the building was of the mill construction of the highest type with a sprinkler system throughout.

In 1927, Butler Brothers purchased the McDonald Brothers' business transferring goods from the McDonald Brothers' building to the adjacent Butler Brothers' building. In 1928, extensive remodeling and repairs were done. A new ornamental entrance was created on the First Avenue side leading into an entrance lobby finished in tile and terrazzo, a new passenger elevator, two new freight elevators, wide stairways, and modern sprinklers. Each floor had 22,000 square feet divided into 8,000 and 12,000-foot sections.

The changes in Minneapolis' Warehouse District during the years between 1900 and 1910 were enormous. As the *Minneapolis Journal* reported on September 12, 1909, "To businessmen who only a few years ago used to knock off from work occasionally on an afternoon to go to a baseball game back of the West hotel, or to attend a street carnival there, the transformation of the district in less than a decade is a



Space Now Available at

**Trade Center**  
(Formerly McDonald Bros. Building)  
**500 FIRST AVE. NO.**  
*In the Heart of the Loop*

This well known corner is on the beaten path of commerce—handy to reach and convenient to the wholesale trade, financial district, and main shopping thoroughfares.

WELL LIGHTED                      WELL HEATED  
LOW INSURANCE                      REASONABLE RENTALS  
Passenger Elevator Service—Two Freight Elevators

Let the "TRADE CENTER" Be Your Home  
For Space Reservations See

**THORPE BROS.**  
RENTAL DEPT.  
519 Marquette Avenue                      At. 2133

*The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune,  
November 4, 1928*

The building, now a multiple tenant building and known as the Trade Center building, hosted the fourteenth semi-annual Twin City Market in 1929 featuring more than forty merchants.

*The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* reported on March 30, 1930, that the Trade Center Building was rapidly becoming one of the foremost marts for industrial and light manufacturing in the Northwest. The Trade Center itself had sixteen new tenants since the first of the year occupying 70,000 square feet. The building had been remodeled the year before for \$75,000. Seven garment manufacturing businesses occupied space.

In 1932, Fine Dress Company moved into the Trade Center Building, leasing four thousand square feet. The Earl Partridge Company was also a tenant in the 1930s, doubling its space in 1932. The *Minneapolis Star* noted on January 16, 1932, that the move of Li Perl from St. Paul to Minneapolis and leasing 12,000 square feet was in “recognition of Minneapolis as the logical trade center for women’s apparel.”

By 1933, after five years in the Trade Center, Boulevard Frocks occupied 70,000 square feet of the building with six hundred machines and seven hundred employees. (Records indicate Boulevard Frocks was still in the Trade Center in the 1940s.) In 1934, Manhattan Cloak Company leased 7,500 square feet for its manufacturing process. It had fifty employees. In 1936, John Alexander leased the entire eighth floor.

The Manhattan Cloak company leased 7,500 square feet in the Trade Center in 1934. Li Perl Dress Company leased 7,000 square feet in 1940 with sixty employees. Display Food Company, manufacturing animated and food display advertising, occupied 10,000 square feet in 1941.

**New Home of  
Northwestern Woolen Co.**

Now conveniently located in the heart of the wholesale and garment manufacturing district.

NEW HOME OF N.W. WOOLEN CO.

6TH ST. HENNEPIN 5TH ST.

**FREE PARKING**—One hour credited with your purchase of \$5 or more. Just bring your ticket.

Trade Center Building—510 1st Av. No.—One block off Hennepin

We have completely remodeled and want you to visit our **NEW LARGE SELF-SERVICE SHOWROOMS**

Warehouse SALE—Men, women and children's clothing

★ Salesman samples ★ Mail order samples

Men's Thermal underwear, 100% of bottoms, "Shrink resistant" Sizes S-M-L-XL each .....	Girls' washable car coat with convertible hood ..
\$1.25	\$4.50
Men's 100% nylon tanket jacket Warehouse Sale price .....	Girls' Bathed unlined corduroy slacks, Sizes 7 to 14 Colors, assorted. ....
\$6.00	\$1.30
Men's hunting coat, made with heavy weight wool with quilted lining. Red. ....	Boys' Orton Crew Neck, pull-over sweater .....
\$13.50	\$2.20
Men's wash-wear flannel shirts, Sizes S-M-L-XL .....	Ladies' washable car coat with Orton pile collar .....
\$1.50	\$8.75
Boys' wash-wear flannel shirts, Sizes 4 to 14 .....	Ladies' Wool slacks imported from Italy .....
\$1.00	\$2.45
Boys' washable Narpale three-piece sweater, Orton pile lined, Sizes 3 to 6x .....	Ladies' 100% Virgin wool skirts .....
\$10.00	\$3.00
Girls' 1st elderlon wadded jacket-print pajamas, Sizes 4 to 14 .....	Ladies' two-piece flannel pajamas .....
35¢	\$2.15
	Boys' Narpale nylon parka jacket-Orton pile-lined, Same Warehouse Sale price ..
	\$9.00

**NORTHWESTERN WOOLEN COMPANY**

OPEN DAILY 9:30—MONDAY AND THURSDAY 9:30-9 P.M.

510 1st Ave. No. — 5th Floor — FE 8-3869

*Minneapolis Sunday Tribune, October 21, 1962*

The size of the tenancies decreased over the years with many different small square footage tenants.

The *Minneapolis Star* reported the purchase of the 210,000 square-foot Trade Center Building by Northwestern Bag Company on October 5, 1962, for an undisclosed sum. The purchase was from John Alexander who had leased the eighth floor of the building in 1936. At the time of the purchase, the building housed light industrial businesses. Extensive remodeling was planned. That same year, the building became the new home of N.W. Woolen Company.

By the 1970s, the buildings in the Warehouse District, according to Karen Winegar of *The Minneapolis Star* on December 14, 1978, had changed: “The warehouse district is the city primeval; it is unslick, unplanned, unpredictable. It is a perfect Left Bank, with Hennepin Av. as the Seine. It is a classic artists’ quarter with vast raw, affordable space for studios, lofts and galleries west and north of Minneapolis’ main drag. The warehouse and garment district is also Minneapolis artists’ last stand against the developer’s wrecking balls.”



*Star Tribune, October 21, 1962*

The building continued to house small businesses. In the 1980s, the Trade Center in downtown St Paul was built, and the name, Minneapolis Trade Center, fell out of use. The building was then renamed Butler North. The original Loon Cafe was established in 1982 by Mike Andrews and John White. Taking a risk, they transformed an abandoned hat shop and haberdashery in Butler North into the cornerstone of the now iconic Warehouse District. It was the first restaurant to move into what would become the entertainment district in Minneapolis.

At present, Butler N, LLC owns the building under the umbrella of Swervo Development. That building name does not reflect the independent history of the building as it has had no relationship with its neighbor, Butler Square. Swervo Development, which headquarters in the building, has purchased and restored many of the classic buildings in the Warehouse District including the Textile Building, Wyman Partridge Building, Resler Building, Frisk Turner Building, and the Colwell Building.