

The Maples

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C1946 - Originally built by August Nelson as a rooming house until it was turned into a motel by Mr. Helble and enlarged by the Upmans. The house which later served as the office was razed in 1961.

An ad from September 1941 indicated you could get a well-furnished modern room for rent for \$2.50 up per week at the Maples.

Albert Helble and his wife Josephine moved from Muskegon to Whitehall in 1945 and opened the popular Maples Motel. In 1949 it was mentioned that Helble had added two new motel units, forming an "L" with the original units. The new units had lavatories, full baths with shower, hot and cold water, innerspring mattresses and new furniture. In March 1950, the establishment was referred to as The Maples Motel & Lodge. Arthur Helble died in December 1950.

A 1950s advertisement for The Maples Motel & Lodge indicated it had large rooms with tile floors and rugs, private bath and dressing room, automatic oil heat, hot water, twin or double & single beds with box springs and innerspring mattresses, desk, lounge chairs, reading lamps and tables.

Walter D. Upman owned the Maples in 1951. According to a history of the Maples that appeared in the local newspaper in 1999, when Upman owned the large home, he built 6 rental units (pictured above) alongside the house to become the area's first motel-style lodging.

In 1956 Upman sold the Maples to Walter and Erna Delaney. Walter became known as "Mr. Christmas" after founding the White Lake Christmas Parade along with Russell Klinefelter. Delaney added another unit around 1960 and built a beautiful home and office behind the old building. The original house was razed in early 1961. The site of the old building became additional parking and a garden spot. Delaney owned The Maples for about 15 years.

On May 1, 1972, Bob & Virginia Payton of Grosse Ile became the next owners of the Maples Motel. Bob suffered a heart attack and died on July 26, 1973. Virginia continued to operate the motel with the help of two of the couple's five children until October 30, 1976. Ginny then moved to Palm Beach, Florida.

In November 1976 it was announced that Bruce Kendorski and his wife Pennie from Dearborn Heights were the new owners of The Maples Motel. Bruce had been employed by Interstate United Vending for over 10 years before they made the move along with their two daughters Kellie (age 12) and Kim (age 9). They had always hoped of someday having a business in a small town and were very excited when they found The Maples Motel. In November 1983 their daughter Kelli opened a Chocolate and Gift Shop at the motel.

Some additional information from the 1999 article mentioned that several dignitaries such as former Governor Williams, Senator Phillip Arthurholtz and the entire 1980 Detroit Football Team were guests at The Maples.

In 2005, Brent & Gwyn Kellis moved their family to Whitehall and bought the Maple Tree Inn, which they operated until Brent's sudden death in March 2023.

In 2024, Sally Schrock became the new owner of The Maple Tree Inn and will continue to add to its long history.