

## 29 AND 31 NORTH GORE AVENUE WEBSTER GROVES, MISSOURI

People who own Meskers are frequently unaware of the history behind the building and facade they own, yet the building's unique appearance is often the reason behind their purchase. Dan Warner is an investor in real estate who owns two Mesker buildings in Webster Groves, Missouri, but he had no idea either was a pressed metal storefront until being interviewed for this article. "I like to invest in older buildings instead of shopping malls or warehouses," he says. "It is rewarding to help preserve something that is historically unique and cannot be duplicated with today's architecture."

Although Warner's buildings stand side by side, the fronts were supplied by different Mesker factories. George

L. Mesker and Company from Evansville, Indiana, supplied the cornice for one, which in 1903 cost \$2.10 per linear foot. The second building has a Mesker Brothers Iron Works 1906 cornice supplied by the St. Louis factory, which cost \$0.30 per linear foot. Of more than 1,000 communities with Mesker facades, Webster Groves is one of 172 towns with examples from both Mesker companies.

Mesker cornices also span the tops of two buildings across the street from Warner's. However, the nameplates on both identify the builder as Scherpe and Koken of St. Louis. The discrepancy is not too unusual, according to facade expert Darius Bryjka, who says the combination is usually the result of remodeling the storefront at street level or replacing an older cornice.



*Pressed metal cornices manufactured from two different Mesker factories are side by side in Webster Groves, Missouri. Photographs by Jim Winnerman, 2012.*