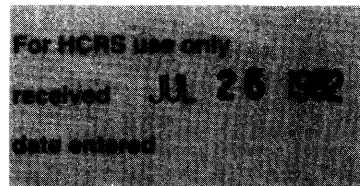


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



**1. Name**

historic Ax Billy Department Store (preferred)

and/or common Ardel Building

**2. Location**

street & number East 10th Avenue <sup>and</sup> at Willamette Street N/A not for publication

city, town Eugene N/A vicinity of congressional district Fourth

state Oregon code 41 county Lane code 039

**3. Classification**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Present Use</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>N/A</u> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<u>N/A</u> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Eugene Renewel Agency, Housing and Community Conservation Department

street & number 72 West Broadway, Suite 200

city, town Eugene N/A vicinity of state Oregon 97401

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Lane County Courthouse

street & number 125 East 8th Avenue

city, town Eugene state Oregon 97401

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Statewide Inventory of Historic Properties has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date 1981  federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records State Historic Preservation Office

city, town Salem state Oregon 97310

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date <u>N/A</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Ax Billy Department Store, completed in 1910, is a two story structure constructed of cream-white terra cotta brick. Designed by W. T. Campbell, a local architect, the building is a small-town rendition of the Commercial Style of architecture. The building is situated at the northeast corner of the intersection of East 10th Avenue and Willamette Street. It extends east from Willamette Street to a public alley between Willamette and Oak Streets. It thus has 80-foot frontage on Willamette Street, and a 160-foot frontage on East 10th. The intersection of Broadway (9th Avenue) and Willamette Streets is still considered by most people to be the epicenter of the downtown Eugene business district; the building is just one block south of this location.

The Ax Billy Department Store fronts Willamette Street, the major commercial street in downtown Eugene. Its 80' frontage was originally divided into four bays at the first-story level. Three of the four bays were designed as large display windows, the fourth provided the major entrance to the store. The bays were divided by simple round columns with plain square abacci. Four square windows were located above each display window at the mezzanine level. (Photograph 2).

A simpler stringer course of corbeled brick divides the first and second stories. At the second story a row of four Chicago-style windows is flanked at each end by one-over-one double-hung windows. On both sides of each double-hung window are indented vertical panels of ornamental terra cotta tiles (Photograph 5). Above the second-story windows and two feet below the top of the wall is an entablature constructed of corbeled bricks and specially molded Doric cyma recta tiles. The bricks are laid up in such a way as to provide a simple cornice, dentil frieze, and incomplete architrave. At the north edge of the building, the entablature ends approximately one foot from the common party wall (Photograph 6). The Willamette and 10th Avenue facades are crowned with central, rectangular parapet crests.

The 10th Avenue facade of the building duplicates the detailing of the principal facade on Willamette Street. At the first story, the display window wraps around the corner of the building, one bay-width. Originally, east of the display window 11 one-over-one double-hung windows were located at the mezzanine level with a solid brick wall below. As the city expanded southward in the late 1910s, 10th Avenue became a major commercial street and the Schaeffers brothers, in response, redesigned the first story into a series of display windows duplicating those on Willamette Street (Photograph 3).

At the eastern end of the 10th Avenue facade, there were three bays of display windows and entry ways. While two of these duplicate the detailing of the Willamette Street facade, the third bay at the eastern end of the building was detailed and painted in an individual manner. From a Eugene Daily Guard account of August 17, 1909, it appears that this space was rented separately and not part of the Ax Billy Department Store. The other two entrances on East 10th Avenue provided access to the grocery section and a secondary entrance to the department store.

# 8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

**Specific dates** 1910 **Builder/Architect** William T. Campbell, Architect

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

The two-story Ax Billy Department Store, completed in 1910, occupies the northeast corner of the busy intersection of East 10th Avenue and Willamette Street in the central business district of Eugene, Oregon. The Ax Billy building is one of the four substantial commercial buildings of one and two stories which formed a related group at this intersection. Each of the buildings was owned and operated by the Schaefers brothers - Frances, George, Charles, and Albert - businessmen who contributed significantly to Eugene's economic revitalization between 1900 and 1910. Across 10th Avenue to the south stands the Schaefers Building, the Art Deco landmark of 1929 designed by Truman Phillips which was entered into the National Register in 1979. The other remaining building of the historic ensemble, one which also is being nominated to the National Register, is the McDonald Theater (1925) at the southwest corner of the intersection. The D. A. Paine Block which once occupied the northwest corner is no longer standing. The Ax Billy building, having a ground plan measuring 80 x 160 feet, is of mill construction with exterior walls of cream-white terra cotta brick, unusual--unique, even--in Eugene. With its cream-white street facades, its Chicago School windows and continuous classical entablature of brick, it embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Commercial Style. The Ax Billy is, in fact, a small town rendition of the "latest" in architectural fashion. It was designed by local architect W. T. Campbell. As is commonplace, ground story facades were remodeled in later years following subdivision of the interior into four separate stores. Among original features remaining in the interior are the metal ceiling, chamfered posts, and mezzanine staircase. The second story was utilized for office space beginning in 1947 under the title Ardel Offices, and a separate entrance was added from the 10th Avenue level at that time. Documentary views provide evidence of the earlier configuration of shop fronts and may serve as the basis of some reversal of the latest improvements. The building is presently held by the Eugene Renewal Agency and will be rehabilitated for continued commercial use in the near future. The Ax Billy Department Store possesses integrity of location, design, setting, feeling, and sufficient integrity of workmanship and materials to meet the criteria of the National Register. Moreover, it is associated with the Schaefers brothers and the city's great period of up-building after 1900. It is significant locally as a component of the best-preserved ensemble of early 20th century commercial buildings now standing in Eugene's downtown core.

The Schaefers brothers were part of the wave of business people who moved west for greater opportunities after the troublesome decade of the 1890s and the depression of 1893. During the ten years between 1890 and 1900, the rate of Eugene's growth had declined. The Eugene Morning Register's Anniversary Edition of 1904 stated "This is easily accounted for by the great depression that existed in financial circles during the last eight years of that decade, and the general paralization of all branches of industry; the exceedingly small immigration to the state, the depreciation of property and other causes, all tending to retard the growth of the state in general. With the beginning of the new century, the feeling of depression began to slough off, and things to look brighter. Real estate became more in demand and gradually efforts were put forth again to induce settlers to locate in Oregon, until in 1902 the tide of immigration again began to flow toward Oregon... By nearly every train people are pouring into this state, intent on finding a suitable location, settling down and making Oregon the home for all future years... The tide has set toward Oregon a permanent wave that will know no abatement for the next ten years, and it is safe to put the population of Oregon in the year 1914 at over one million..." Indeed, between 1900 and 1910, Eugene's population quadrupled.

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one

Quadrangle name Eugene East, Oregon

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

UMT References

A 

1	0	4	9	2	6	9	10	4	18	7	17	1	10	10
Zone	Easting		Northing											

B 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

C 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

D 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

E 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

F 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

G 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

H 

Zone	Easting		Northing											

Verbal boundary description and justification

See continuation sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state N/A code county N/A code

state N/A code county N/A code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Judith Rees, Historic Preservation Specialist

organization Eugene Department of Housing and Community Conservation date August, 1981

street & number 72 West Broadway, Suite 200 telephone (503) 687-5443

city or town Eugene state Oregon 97401

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local


As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer date July 22, 1982

**For HCERS use only**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

 Entered in the National Register date 8/26/82

Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date \_\_\_\_\_

Chief of Registration

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The cream-colored terra cotta brick and entablature wrap around the southeast corner of the building. The rest of the eastern alley facade is constructed of red brick. The fenestration is irregular with two windows high in the first-story wall toward the north end, and six large one-over-one double-hung windows, grouped in pairs, and one small double-hung window at the second-story level. All of the windows have segmental arches with a wooden lintels filling the arched spaces. Iron hinges for shutters flank all the original doors and windows (Photograph 9). The outlines of the two original doorways are apparent, although the openings have been bricked in. Three new openings have been cut in this wall. These openings appear to have been made in the 1930 s when the adjacent interior space was used as a restaurant.

The Schaefer brothers operated the Ax Billy Department Store until about 1926, when they sold the business to J. C. Brill, a major department store chain. Subsequently, the building was leased by the Mays Store chain until 1932 when the Depression forced its closure. Upon the demise of the Mays Store, the interior of the building was redesigned to accommodate small shops and offices. The Willamette Street facade was broken up into four separate shops, one-bay wide each, and the 10th Avenue facade into three, at the eastern end where the three original entrances had been. At this time, the display windows which had been added by the Schaefer brothers in the 1910 s were filled in and stuccoed over (Photograph 4). In the 1970 s the stuccoed area was painted with murals, one of which depicts Ax Billy's Market (Photograph 7). Although the interior spaces were in some cases extensively altered when the building was divided into shops, a number of important elements of the original design remain. Most dramatic is a beautiful ornamental metal ceiling made of 2'-square panels detailed with rosettes and fleur-de-lys. A border pattern finished with egg-and-dart moulding surrounds the ceiling edge and the tops of the interior posts. The original 9"-square chamfered wooden posts are visible throughout the building. The 15'-tall posts, though simply detailed, appear light and delicate. Finally, a staircase and handrail with vertical 1 x 1's remains from the original mezzanine.

It appears that the second story remained vacant until 1947 when it was remodeled into office space. A separate entrance to the "Ardel Offices" was built on 10th Avenue at that time. The entrance was surrounded with black carreau glass and a top light of glass block. Above the double wooden doors is a neon sign "ARDEL OFFICES." A second neon sign is attached to the parapet crest (Photograph 8). Rath and Morris were the general contractors for this remodeling job. Shortly prior to the completion of the remodeling of the second story, a serious fire occurred throughout the second floor, extending down through the first floor, which required much of the remodeling work to be redone. On the second floor there are 50 offices. Most of the walls and ceilings are plastered. However, the hallway wainscoting and some of the office walls are paneled with wood.

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The basement area has been partitioned off so that each of the businesses on the first floor has a storage area. For the most part, the basement's foundation walls are of poured concrete with brick used in a couple of places. Throughout, the basement floor is a poured concrete slab. Except for a small portion, none of the walls and ceilings throughout the basement have been finished.

Although the first story has been altered, the integrity and rhythm of bays have been maintained. Because of the excellent photographic documentation of the building, and existing remnants of detailing, restoration of the first story appears possible. The rest of the building, and particularly its major street facades on Willamette and 10th Avenue, are entirely intact and need only minor maintenance, i.e., washing of the brick and painting of the window sashes.

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Of a family of nine siblings, five Schaefer brothers came to Eugene from Clermont, Iowa in 1908. Of the five, four became business partners, Frances X., George B., Charles J., and Albert T. In November 1908, they purchased the Ax Billy Store, a small general merchandise store on East 9th Avenue, between Willamette and Oak Street (1902 Sanborn Map). The Ax Billy Store had been established earlier and its name was a result of the owner's broken English. "When a customer wanted something, he would say "Ax (for ask) Billy."<sup>1</sup>

As a result of the increase in Eugene's population, the number of new buildings constructed during the period between 1908 and 1910 was phenomenal. In 1909, building projects totaled over one million dollars and in 1910 exceeded "anything before known in the history of Eugene" (article on building operations). The November 1, 1909 edition of the Eugene Daily Guard reported that "Building Inspector McFarland during the month of October issued permits for 27 new residences, two brick business blocks, one concrete business block, and a number of remodelings and repairs. The total estimated cost aggregating \$89,685." The two brick blocks mentioned were the Eagles Building (\$15,000) between 5th and 6th Avenues on Willamette Street and C. S. Frank's Building (\$30,000) at 10th and Willamette, otherwise known as the Ax Billy Department Store.

On August 17, 1909, the Eugene Daily Guard announced "C. S. Frank had employed W. T. Campbell, the architect, to draw plans for a handsome two-story block to be erected by him on his property on the corner of 10th and Willamette Street now occupied by an unsightly, old, wooden feed stable and blacksmith's shop. Work of erecting the structure will begin sometime next month. It would begin sooner but Thomas Bailey, the occupant of the stable has a lease on the property until about the middle of September, immediately after that the old buildings will be torn down and the work on the brick building begun."

"The new building will be 80 feet by 160 feet and face Willamette Street. An agreement has been executed between Mr. Frank and the proprietors of the Ax Billy Department Store (G. B., C.J., and F. X. Schaefer), whereby they are to occupy the building which, according to the agreement shall be completed if possible by the first of April, 1910. The room to be occupied by them will be 80 feet by 140 feet. Another room, 20 feet by 80 feet will face on East 10th Street, and will be occupied by someone else. Mr. Frank has not yet decided how he will finish the second story, whether it will be divided into living rooms or office rooms.

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"This will be a great improvement for that corner, as Mr. Frank intends to put up a thoroughly modern and substantial building in every respect." In September, Frank, a locally prominent businessman let contracts for the foundation, brickwork, and general construction to T. H. Ellis, L. D. Bell, and Buley and Applewhite, respectively, and on October 18 construction began (photograph 1 and 1912 Sanborn Map).

In June 1910, the Schaefers Brothers moved their business to the large new building at 10th Avenue and Willamette Street (photograph 2). The new store was advertised as the "largest department store in the state outside of Portland" and "providing everything for the home, and to eat, and to wear"<sup>2</sup> (1918 Polk's advertisement). A symbol of their innovativeness as merchants and businessmen was the City's first electric sign which they erected at the new store and was a feature on Willamette Street for 20 years (photograph 10).

The Schaefers brothers ran the Ax Billy Department Store until about 1926. It was during this time that they acquired the four properties at the 10th and Willamette intersection, including the D. A. Paine building on the northwest corner, in which they had their business offices (photograph 12). In 1925, with A. H. McDonald, they built the McDonald Theater Building on the southwest corner (photograph 13), and in 1929, with the completion of the Schaefers Building on the southeast corner (photograph 14), all four corners were in some manner Schaefers brothers buildings (photograph 11). During this time, "their business interests expanded rapidly. Schaefers' items take up some five pages in the pertinent volume of index of Lane County Records."<sup>3</sup>

Upon their acquisition of property at 11th and Willamette, the Eugene Daily Guard of November 1, 1929, reported "that the Schaefers Brothers will develop the property at the first opportunity is entirely probable because of their aggressive policy with their downtown holdings, which are very large . . . With their very large holdings on all four corners of 10th and Willamette their acquisition of the Burden property is regarded as a step toward extending and strengthening their interests."

Most of the buildings constructed in the downtown during this period, such as the Osborn Hotel, YMCA Headquarters, and Federal Post Office have not survived. Exceptions to this trend are buildings which were located outside of the Eugene



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Urban Renewal Area boundaries, such as the Eagles Building, Southern Pacific Depot, and Bible University (Northwest Christian College) or buildings which have remained in family ownership, such as the Schaefers Brothers' Ax Billy Department Store and the Quackenbushes' Hardware Store.

Of the four Schaefers brothers buildings at 10th and Willamette, three still exist and are essentially unchanged, the Ax Billy Department Store, McDonald Theater, and Schaefers Building. "These three buildings embody an unusually intact contribution to the economic and social history of the community, as well as being each of significant architectural merit. The surviving Schaefers are unusual in their personal sense of responsibility to the past and their affection for the buildings. There is no comparable street crossing in Eugene."<sup>4</sup> (obituaries) In about 1926, they sold their business interest in the Ax Billy Department Store, but not the building, to a major department store chain, J. C. Brill. Subsequently, the store was leased by the May Stores until 1932 when the Depression forced their closure. Upon the demise of the May Stores, the interior of the building was redesigned to accommodate smaller shops and offices (photograph 4 and 1968 Sanborn Map).

The Ax Billy Department Store is a small-town rendition of the nationally popular Commercial Style of architecture. Designed by a local architect, William T. Campbell, and built in 1909-10, its detailing, although simple in comparison to big-city examples, displays the salient features of the style. As Marcus Whiffen notes, the character of the Commercial Style building's facade "derives from the fenestration, to which any ornament--often there is none--is altogether subordinate . . . The windows themselves are rectangular, very large, and variously divided; a common type, known as the Chicago window, has a broad central light of plate glass, fixed, and narrow side lights with opening sash . . . The total area of glass normally exceeds that of the brick . . . with the result that walls have a skeletal appearance . . ."<sup>5</sup> The broad horizontal display windows, the band of mezzanine windows, and the Chicago-style windows at the second story result in a skeletal appearance and in the horizontal rather than the vertical being dominant, a change from earlier styles of commercial architecture.

Although simplified, the Ax Billy Department Store exemplifies the then-current architectural philosophical view that form should follow function. "The department store required broad horizontal open spaces where goods could be displayed; at the ground floor the windows were to be showcases highlighting selected wares."<sup>6</sup>

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The design of the Ax Billy followed these dictates with showcase windows lining all of its frontage on Willamette Street, Eugene's major commercial avenue, and East 10th Avenue (photograph 3).

The Ax Billy Department Store is also notable for its use of cream-colored terra cotta brick. The Eugene Daily Guard, on September 28, 1909, noted that "C. S. Frank has secured brick from Sheridan, Oregon, for his block to be erected at 10th and Willamette streets. The building is to be faced with white pressed brick." And on November 16, 1909, that "the bricklaying started this a.m.--with its white pressed brick exterior, this building will be one of the handsomest in the city."

As a result of the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, implied classicism in commercial structures was in vogue. "The primary building materials were white or cream enameled terra cotta and enameled brick, reflecting color sensibilities propounded by the . . . Exposition . . . Additionally, predominant Beaux-Arts attitudes in design tended towards monochromatic schemes."<sup>7</sup> However, the use of terra cotta and enameled brick "went into a decline in the Twenties, and practically disappeared by the second World War, replaced by less expensive and more modern materials."<sup>8</sup> The Ax Billy Department Store is unique in Eugene as the only surviving example of the Commercial Style of architecture constructed in terra cotta brick, dating from the early 1900s.

<sup>1</sup>Eugene Register-Guard, March 20, 1975.

<sup>2</sup>Polk's 1911 City Directory, advertisement.

<sup>3</sup>National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form pertaining to the Schaefers Building, Dorothy M. Dole, November 1978.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>American Architecture Since 1760, Marcus Whiffen, p. 183-184.

<sup>6</sup>A Concise History of American Architecture, Leland Roth, p. 182.

<sup>7</sup>"A Survey on the Use of American Terra Cotta in American Commercial Architecture: 1870-1930," James Marshall Hamrick, Jr., p. 43.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

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MAJOR REFERENCES

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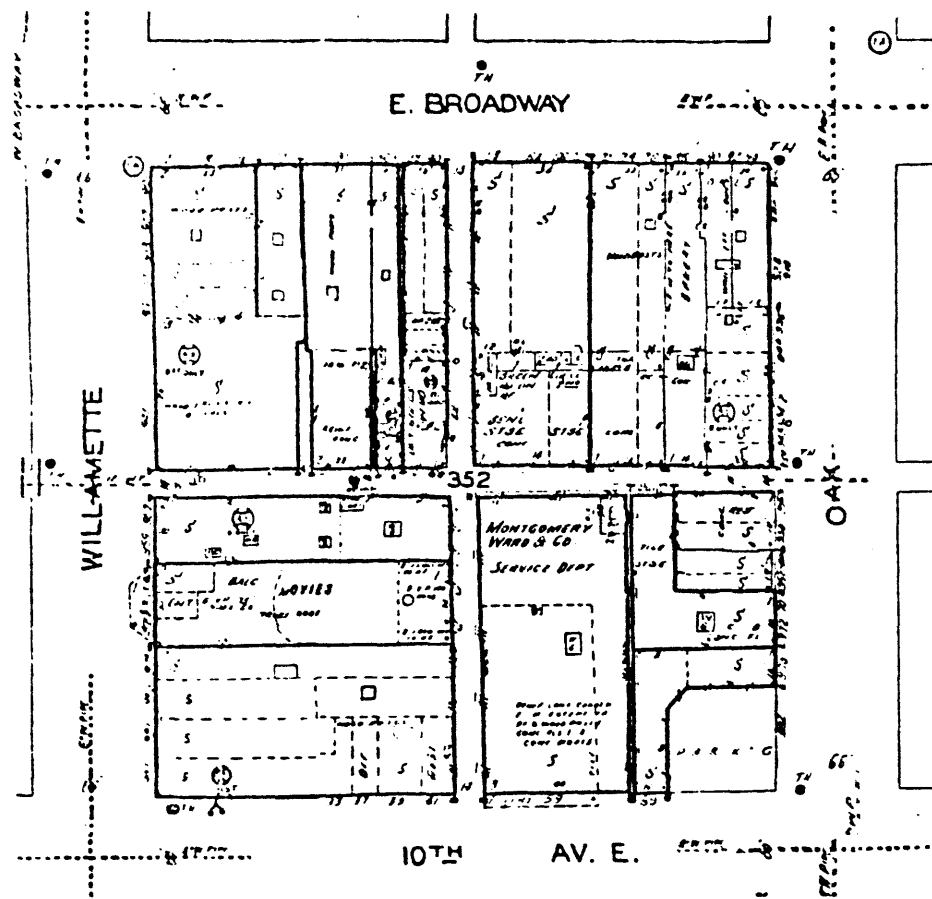
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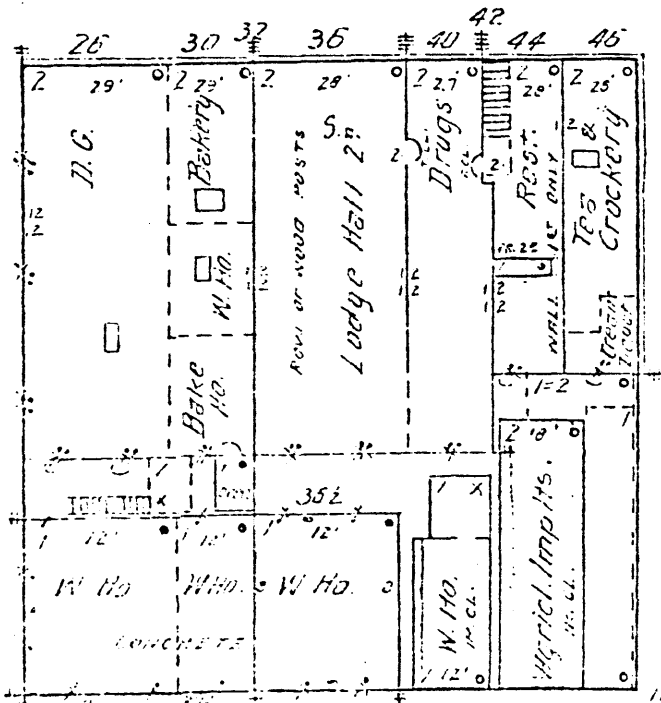
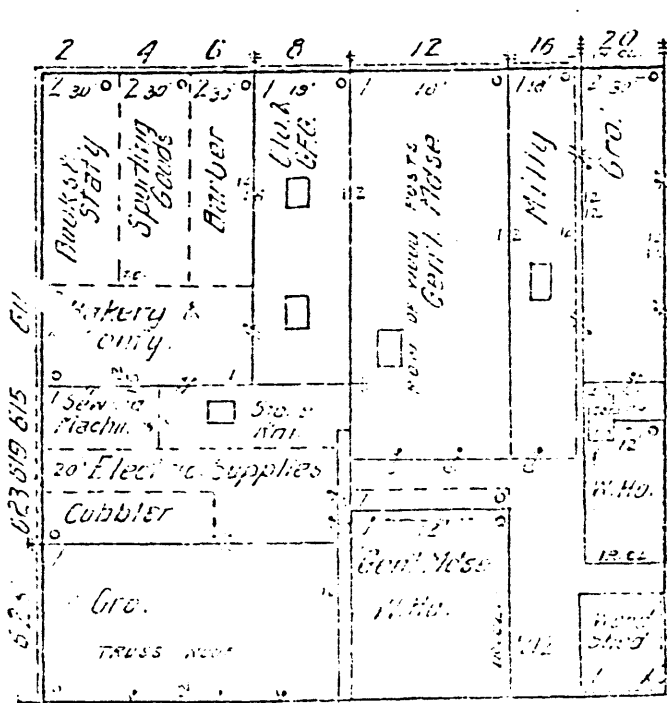
The Ax Billy Department Store occupies the parcel particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the Southwest corner of Lot 5, Block 14, of that part of the City of Eugene, Lane County, Oregon which was originally donated to said Lane County by Charnel Mulligan and wife, and running thence North along the East line of Willamette Street in said city approximately 80', more or less, to the center of the wall between the building located on the property herein described formerly known as the "Ax Billy Department Store," and the building upon the property adjoining on the North known as the "Rex Theatre Building," thence East along the center of said wall 160 feet to the West line of the alley running North and South through said Block; thence South along the West line of said alley 80 feet to the North line of Tenth Avenue East in said City of Eugene, and thence West along the North line of said Tenth Avenue East 160 feet to the place of beginning, in Lane County, Oregon.

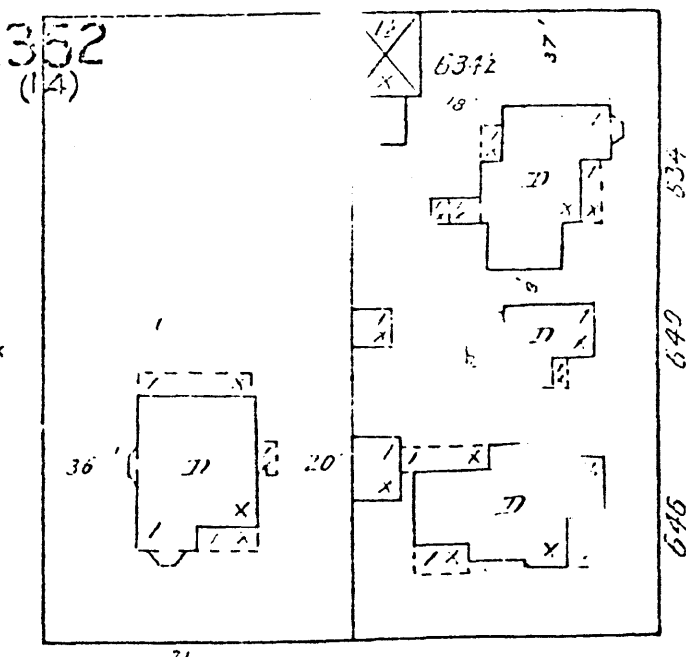
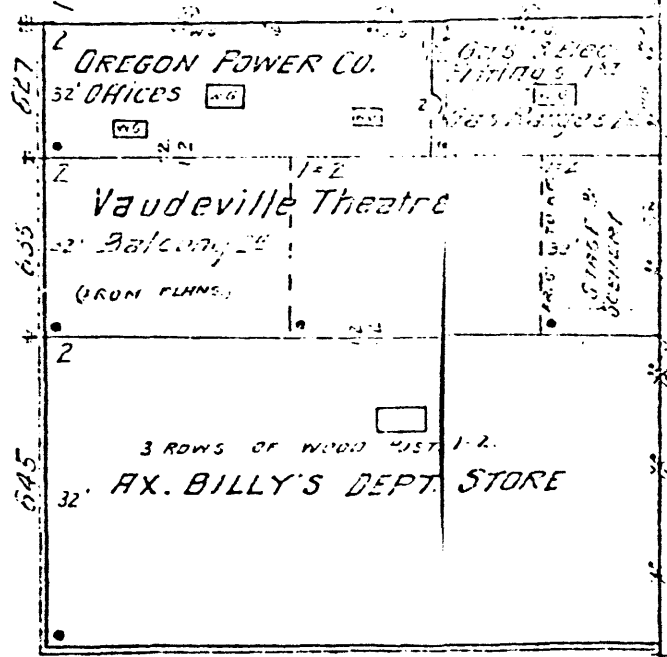


66

E. 9<sup>TH</sup>



WILLIAM ST



OAK

24

4" W.P.

66

E. 10<sup>TH</sup>