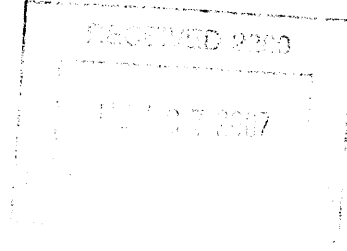


**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**



1359

**National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

other names/site number

**2. Location**

street & number 210 Court Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Sioux City [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Woodbury code 193 zip code 51101

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination [ ] request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [ ] nationally [ ] statewide  locally. [ ] see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Ronell J. Sarke, Deputy SHPO, November 14, 2007  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date  
**STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property [ ] meets [ ] does not meet the National Register criteria. ([ ] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

- hereby certify that the property is:
- entered in the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
  - determined eligible for the National Register.
  - See continuation sheet.
  - determined not eligible for the National Register.
  - removed from the National Register.
  - other, (explain:)

for  
Signature of the Keeper Edson H. Beall Date of Action 1.10.08

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

- (Check as many boxes as apply)
- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

- (Check only one box)
- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing/Extraction/manufacturing facility

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing/Extraction/industrial storage

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late Victorian

\_\_\_\_\_

Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation stone

walls \_\_\_\_\_ brick

roof \_\_\_\_\_ asphalt

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B** removed from its original location.
- C** a birthplace or grave.
- D** a cemetery.
- E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F** a commemorative property.
- G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

### Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

### Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Industry

Architecture

### Period of Significance

1883-1927

### Significant Dates

1884

1891

### Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

### Architect/Builder

McLaughlin, William D.

Wakefield, Elijah C.

### Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository: #Sioux City Public Museum

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	[1]5]	[7]1[4]0[6]0]	[4]7[0]7[5]3[0]
	Zone	Easting	Northing
3	[ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]

2	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	
	Zone	Easting	Northing
4	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	[ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ] [ ]	

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title James E. Jacobsen

organization History Pays! Historic Preservation Consulting Firm date July 25, 2007

street & number 4411 Ingersoll Avenue telephone 515-274-3625

city or town Des Moines state IA zip code 50312-2415

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the complete form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name State Steel

street & number 214 Court Street telephone 712-277-4000

city or town Sioux City state IA zip code 51101

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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Section number 7 Page 1

Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

Woodbury County, Iowa

**7. Narrative Description:**

The Sioux City Linseed Oil Works is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Court and Second streets in the east downtown of Sioux City, in Woodbury County, Iowa. The building is part of a grouping of industrial and warehouse buildings that developed in this part of the city, along the north side of the Missouri River and to the west of the Floyd River.

The building occupies most of a half block area and six city lots (oriented east and west) and a vacated north/south-running alleyway that divides the half block. The oil works is a single brick building that comprises a five-story "ell" and an eastern two-story section. Figure 1 identifies the key parts of the building. The main building, five stories, is labeled "A"; the oil press house, also five stories high, is labeled "H." The surviving 1883 south wing, two stories high, is labeled "C/D." Two two-story warehouse buildings, originally located east of the alleyway (labeled "E" and "F") are now connected by virtue of the infilling (two stories) of the former open courtyard and alleyway (labeled "B"). Finally the boiler, engine and coal buildings, all two stories high, are labeled "G."

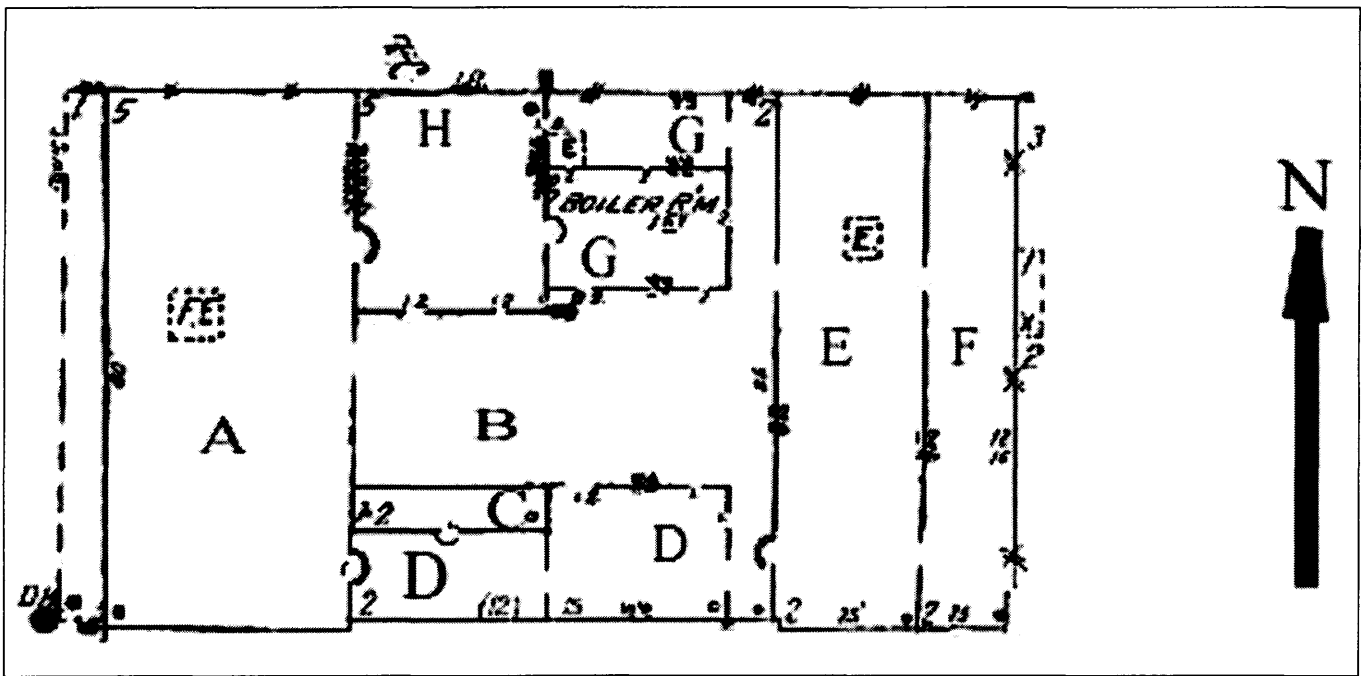


Figure 1: Current building layout (1949 Sanborn Map as template)

All of these component parts have flat roofs with raised parapet perimeter walls, save for the 1883 south portion (labeled No. D in Figure 1) which is a gable roof with a raised end wall on the east end.

The style of the building is best described as Late Victorian or Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revival industrial design. The principal stylistic characteristics are the high brick bracketed parapet walls, the raised end walls on the surviving gable roof portion, and the faux elongated windows on the main building. These windows are of particular interest given that the original windows had operable openings only at the top and bottom of each of the elongated window opening. The central sections of each window were apparently filled with brickwork and were blank wall sections that were recessed within the larger window form. These same window features were replicated in the design and construction of the 1891 replacement main building. The surviving 1883 gabled section of the east wings represents the original building design and appearance.

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Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

Woodbury County, Iowa

The west façade (Figure 2) is an elongated five-story high “box” with a flat parapet and is 11-bays in width (the five story west section measures 127 feet in width, 60 feet in depth, and the ell, also of five stories, along the north alley, measures 45 feet in depth and 48 feet in width). The façade echoes the structural bays in a symmetrical though changing pattern. There are two single-bay wide bays on each end of the façade, a double-wide bay follows as one proceeds towards the center of the façade plan, and the central bay is three-structural bays in width. Plain brick pilasters define these bays across the façade. Closely spaced and elongated brick dentils form brackets across the top of each of these bays. Fenestration is vertically aligned within each bay save for the middle one, where two first floor windows are used in lieu of the expected three openings. First floor windows are full length. Second floor openings are square cut and these are topped with a broad flat or jack arch, and a segmental arch above that, the interior arch area being filled with brick. The combination of arches appears to function as a relieving arch. The upper three floors are linked by the faux elongated windows. These consist of small rectangular openings at the base of each window set, on the third floor. A rectangular brick spandrel separates each of these from an identical opening on the fourth floor. Another spandrel caps each of these and the open arch of a segmental arch is used as a fifth floor window opening. Each of the three successive openings has a projecting stone sill. The whole window area is recessed behind the exterior wall plane. An unusual feature of this façade is the absence of any ornamental entrance. The present façade has two single-width entry doors that are located in the second and tenth bays from the north end.



Figure 2: Façade overview, view northeast  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, 2007)

The building is of brick construction and a soft-fired red brick was used throughout. The walls of the main building are a uniform two and a half bricks thick up to the attic level. The raised foundation is of Mankato Minnesota Quartzite stone. The

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Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

Woodbury County, Iowa

stonework is coursed and the five-story portion has a broad water table stone as an upper course. Footings are pyramids of the same stone. A most exceptional feature is that the basement of the five-story section is fully occupied by exposed spread stone footings that support each of the wooden columns. This support system is not used in the other five-story section but is used beneath the west half of the 1883 south wing.

The building has a flat roof with raised parapet walls and tile coping. There are three elevators (Figure 1), each of which has a frame penthouse. One of the most striking components of the building, and dating to the original construction, is the brick chimney, constructed in an obelisk form with square footprint and tapered walls. The chimney is very ornate and has recessed wall planes set between raised pilasters on each corner. The chimney has a matching denticulated parapet cap. Horizontal bands are the result of metal reinforcement tie rods that are fairly regularly spaced along its mass.



Figure 3: above-grade spread-stone footings, view southwest (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

The north and south end walls of the main building are un-fenestrated above the ground floor. Three window openings, each one being located within center structural bay, have been enlarged as shipping doors, filled in with brick or survive on each end wall. The form of these openings match those found on the first floor façade. Each end wall is divided into three bays by flat pilasters. Five thin brick belt courses add detail to each end wall. These are placed at the first floor sill level, the spring stone level of the first floor windows, the mid-point of the second floor, the sill level on the third floor, and the sill level on the fifth floor. This same ornamental treatment appears on the surviving 1883-84 south-side wing, so it was replicated during the rebuilding in 1891. Square-cut shipping doors occupy the central first floor bay on each end wall. There is no fenestration on

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Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

Woodbury County, Iowa

the exposed east/rear wall of the main building. Figure 4 depicts a surviving 1883 window, the shipping door and the cadence of stone foundation, water table and decorative brickwork, all located on the north end wall.

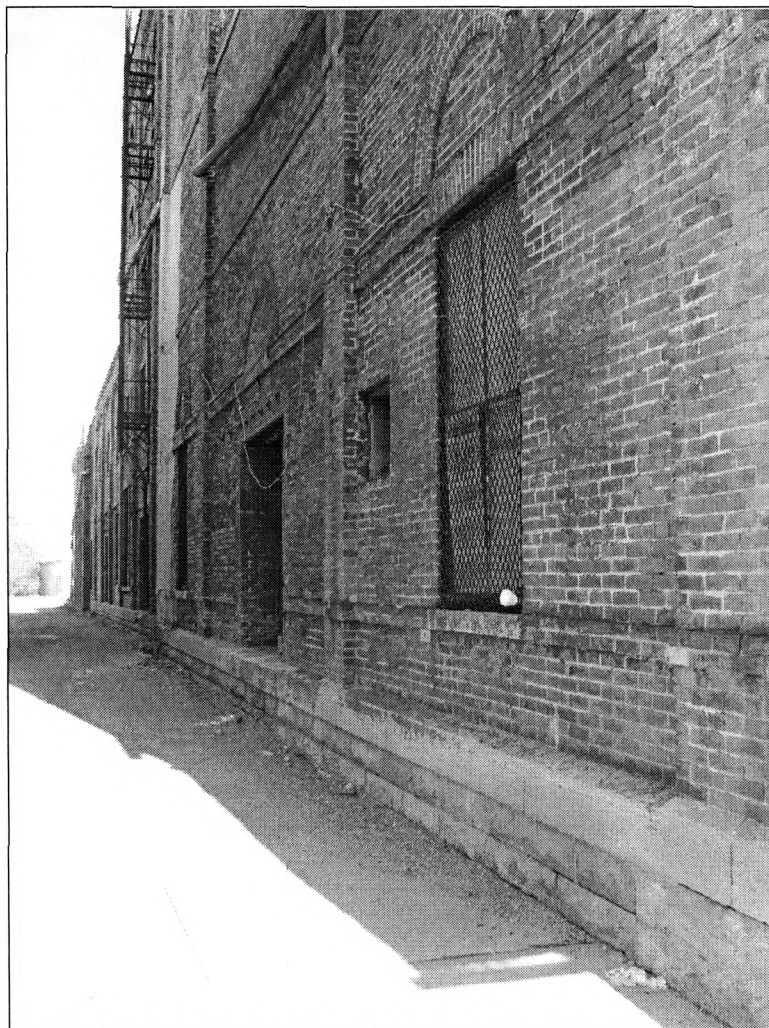


Figure 4: North end wall of main building, view southeast along alley (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

The basement is full under the five-story portions of the building. Only the main building's basement is obstructed by the above-grade stone footings. The latter directly support the floor structure. In the main building four rows of ten square wooden posts form four bays east/west and eleven bays north/south. The structural system consists of successive single-story columns being superimposed between the floor beams, at a point below each floor level. Iron rods and bolts tie the base of the next column base into the beams and the metal column capital ties in the beams to the lower column section. This is an unusual and fairly complex reinforcing system. The floor joists are 3.25 inches by 12 inches in section and are placed twelve inches on center, a system that is designed to support a very heavy load. The fairly close spacing of the columns, just under 12-feet square, was also reflective of a heavy live load in this part of the building. The columns are reduced in section only slightly by the time the fifth floor is reached. Wooden capitals are used on the fifth floor without any metal collar system.



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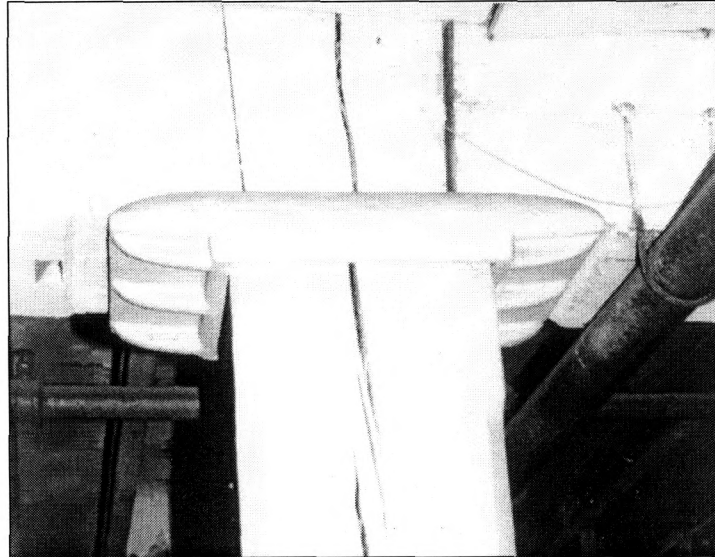


Figure 5: Main building column and beam junction with iron collar (note mortise at lower left that allowed for a nut to secure a bolt that tied the beams and the next column together)  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

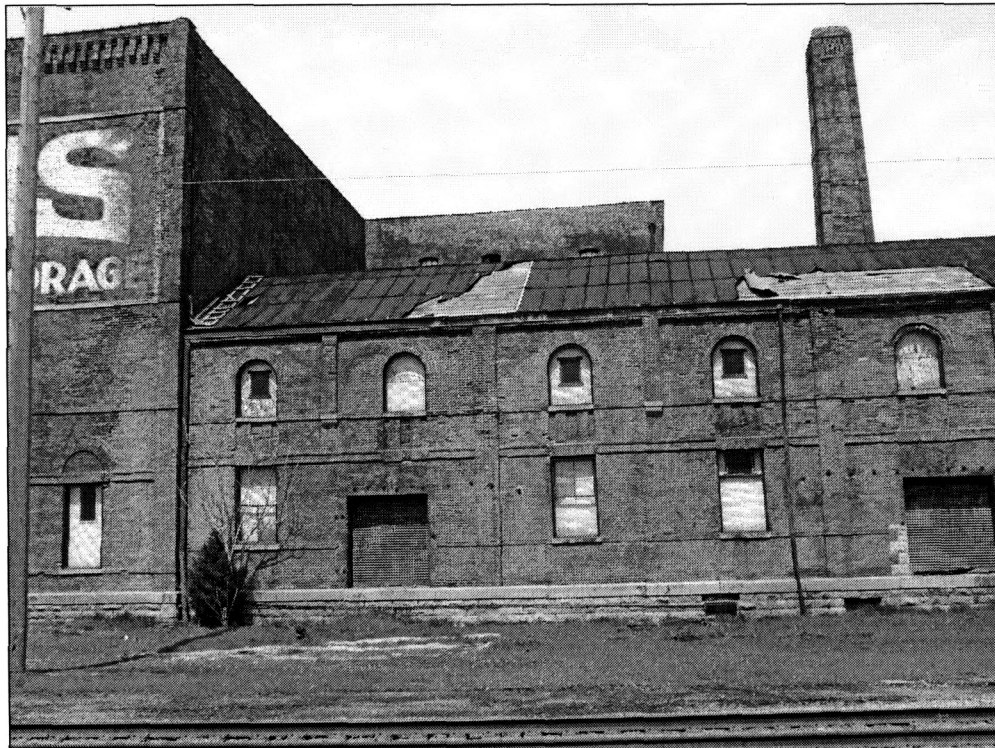


Figure 6: The south rear wing, view north (photo by J. Jacobsen, 2007)

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Woodbury County, Iowa

Figure 6 illustrates the original surviving exterior wall ornamentation of the 1883-1884 building and shows how the press room projects to the east of the main west section. While the same use of belt courses was employed, the vertical ornamental elements, apart from the pilasters, begin only at the second floor or the sill level on the upper floor. Flat pilasters define three structural bays. Two vertically aligned sets of six windows on each floor remains largely intact, save where two square-cut shipping doors have replaced two of the windows. Like the façade, a sense of elongated windows is created by linking the two window levels by the use of an infill of a flat arch, brick panel, and a stone sill, all within in a recessed plane. The upper level windows have segmental brick window arches. All windows have the stone sills. Short pilasters, centered in each bay, begin with a spring stone at the upper sill level and define six bays across the upper floor. The roof over this section is gabled but its two pitches are uneven, the north roof plane being considerably higher and steeper. This is due to the fact that the north roof plane has to cover the row of separation tanks that will be discussed below.

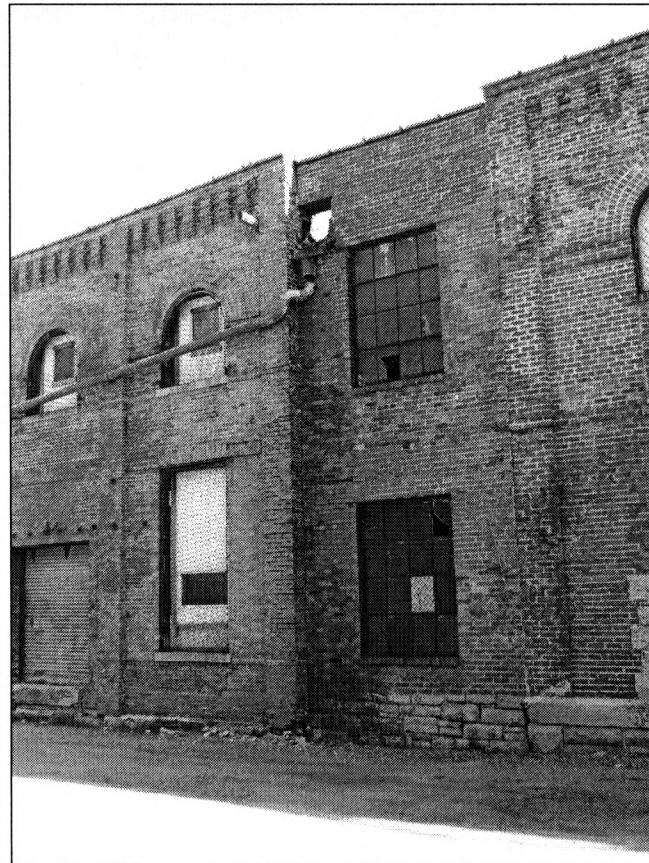


Figure 7: Alleyway infilling, c.1928, view southwest (photo by J. Jacobsen, 2007)

Until September 1928 the building consisted of two distinctly separate sections, the two being divided by an open alleyway. Even before the alleyway was officially vacated by the city, the Bekins Transfer and Storage Company built end-walls (Figure 7) and roofed the alley (Figure 8) and an interior courtyard area over, unifying the complex into a single building. An effort was made to match the stone foundation of the west part of the building when the infilling was done. An effort was made to replicate the stone foundation, using un-coursed stonework. Then-modern square-cut industrial metal sash windows were placed on each floor.

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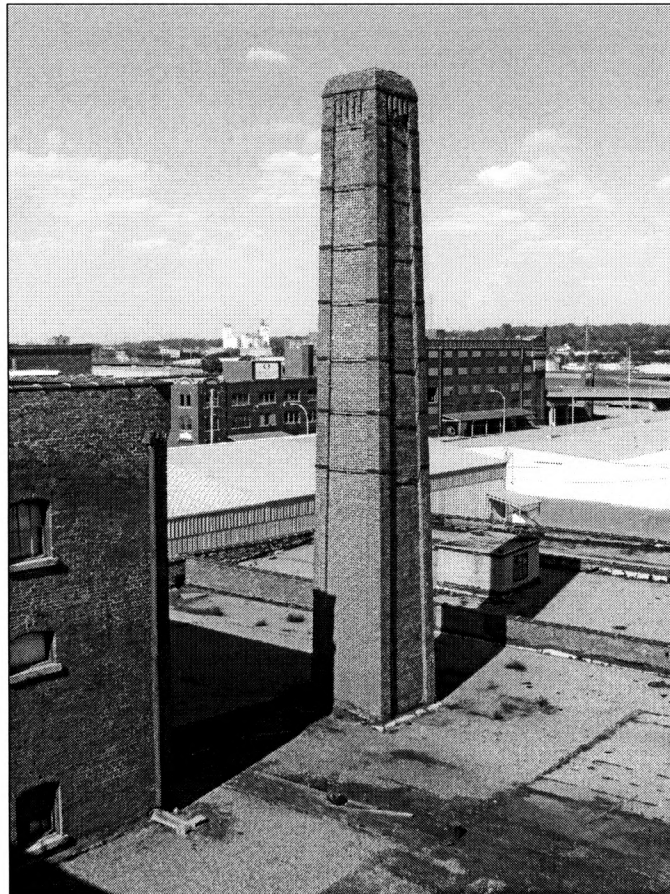


Figure 8: Overview northeast of roofed-in courtyard area (foreground) and chimney  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

The east or rearmost portion of the building (c.1895) consists of two elongated narrow two-story brick buildings with plans that orient north/south. Neither has a basement and both have smooth concrete floors. The larger building to the west is three bays in width and has two rows of ten columns and an elevator centered near its north end. The narrower east end building is a clearspan on both floors. The end wall fenestration (Figure 8) of these buildings is of interest given that its design and construction represents a third phase of the building's evolution. Thus the design attempted to copy both the 1883-84 and the 1891 building exteriors. Considerable design attention went into ornamenting what were otherwise fairly prosaic functional buildings. On the upper floor, the same shorter window openings used on the adjacent south rear wing, with segmental brick arches and projecting stone sills, were used, not only on the end walls but all across the rear (east) wall as well (three of the latter of seven windows, survive). Ground level fenestration was not identical on both buildings. The windows on the west section were full-height to the upper floor, with one window centered in each of the three bays. Those on the east section were rectangular with flat arches and these were shorter, although full sized. The end walls employ the same flat pilaster system, and doubled brick belt courses (actually the wall is slightly stepped out twice, forming a horizontal banding effect) cross the west building section at the first floor level (or lintel level relative to the tall windows) and at the sill level and spring stone levels on the upper floor. The upper level belt courses are also used on the eastern section. The rear (east) wall now has a concrete loading dock and angled metal canopy similar to that on the façade. There are five doors along the ground floor, of various sizes, all of which post-date 1929. The north and south end wall fenestration is identical, but the north openings have been paneled over on the ground floor and reduced within panel infills on the upper floor.

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Figure 9: Easternmost two buildings, north end wall, view southeast  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

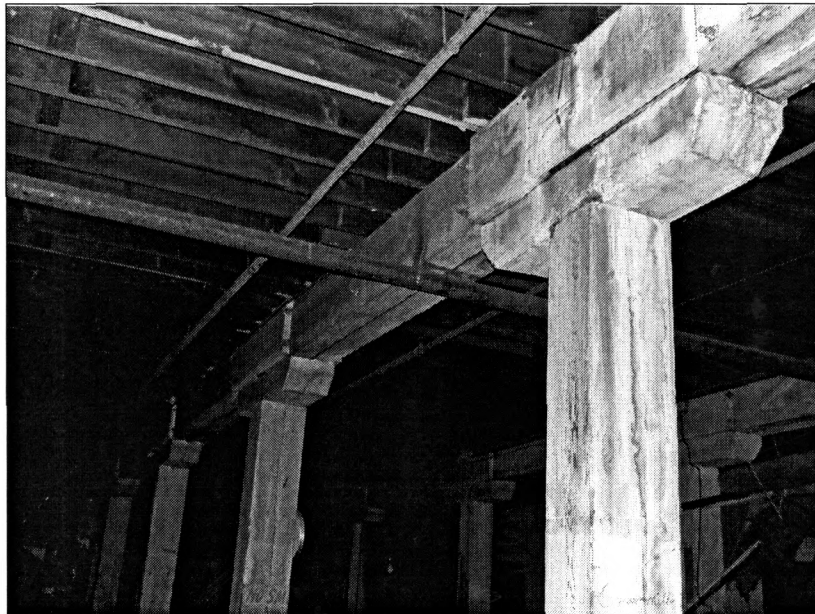


Figure 10: Column and beam junction (with plank covers) in building to east of former alley, view northeast  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

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A two-story brick (41 feet by 31 feet) coal house and engine room section (Figure 11) occupies the center of the north part of the building, nestled between the now enclosed alleyway (to the east) and the five-story press room. The section likely dates to the same era as do the two eastern sections, c.1895 given that the façade treatment and fenestration patterns are identical on both. All of the exterior detailing, with one exception, matches that on the oil cake warehouse (west portion of the building to the east of the former alley). The dentils are stepped out, the upper windows have segmental arches and the same double belt course, and the same spandrel brickwork between the lower and upper windows. The difference is the use of stone as quoins on only the lower portion of one of three doors. This same treatment is found on half of an enlarged door on the south rear wing, and on an interior former alley door that is on the east end of that same wing.



Figure 11: Engine and boiler house, north wall, view southeast  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

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Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

Woodbury County, Iowa

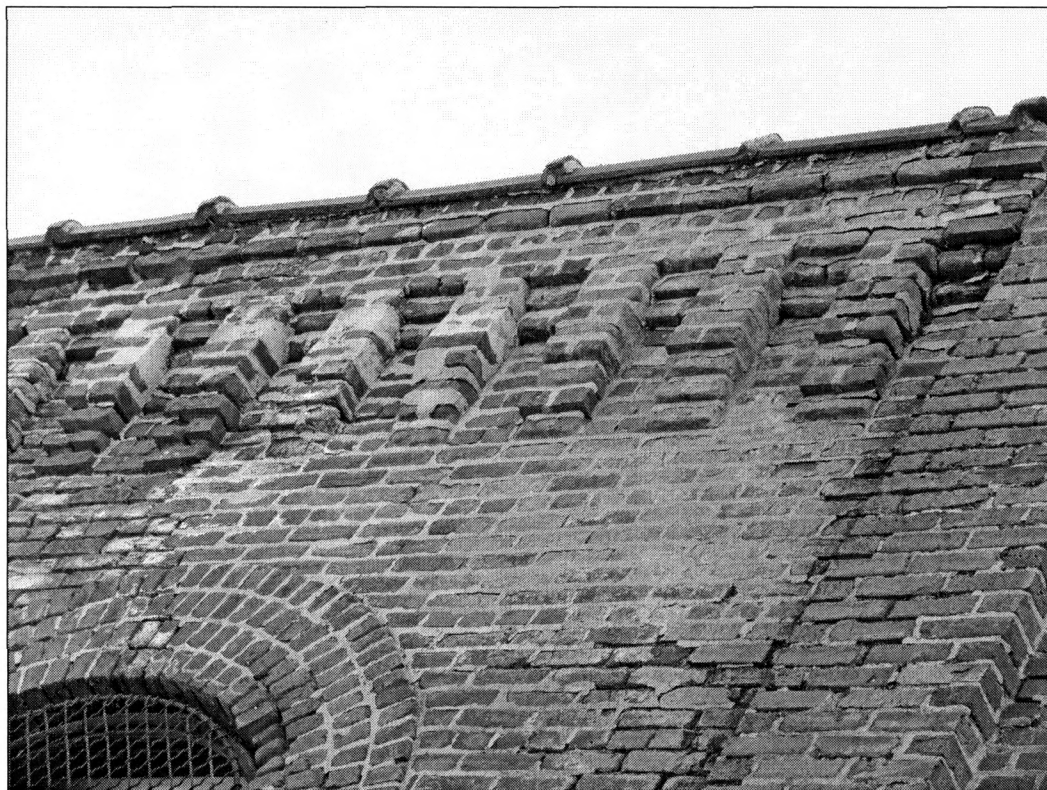


Figure 12: Representative brick denticulation on parapet front  
(same corner area visible in Figure 11), view southeast (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

The five-story former press house (Figure 13) is the next building section to the west along the north side alleyway. This building has parts of three exterior walls exposed, the east and south walls are visible above the second floor level, while the north wall is fully and generously fenestrated (compared to the rest of the building). The exterior is divided into three-equally wide bays by flat pilasters. Horizontal lines, still for the most part well recessed behind the pilaster wall plane, consist of the ground level sill line (a belt course connects these and wraps around the flanking pilasters); the flat arches and sill line between the ground and second floor level windows; the spandrels on the third and fifth floors, which are framed or boxed by a horizontal and vertical brick lines; the lintel line on the third floor, and the sill line on the fourth floor (which again is continued with brick and wraps around the flanking pilaster fronts). The ground level windows are full height with transoms, with two openings in each outer bay, and a centered shipping door in the central bay. Square window openings, paired in each bay, are found on the second and third floor levels. These have projecting sills and flat arches. The uppermost have the same relieving arch system as do the identical windows on the façade. The fourth level windows are short rectangles, again with projecting stone sills. The fifth floor windows have segmental openings and stone. The same denticulated parapet front is employed and there is a metal fire escape in the central bay. Most obvious on this façade, all of the window openings on the building have interior wooden lintels set behind the brick window arches and all segmental window arches are backed with the same straight wooden lintel (Figure 15). This is a most unusual feature of the building. The south and east walls of this part of the building are fenestrated. On the south wall three rows of three segmental arched openings provide light for the upper three floors. The openings on the fourth floor are the smallest. These windows have hopper or pivoting window frames for ventilation purposes and a third floor window, hinged sideways, provides egress to the roof. The east wall has similar openings on the third and fifth floors.

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Woodbury County, Iowa

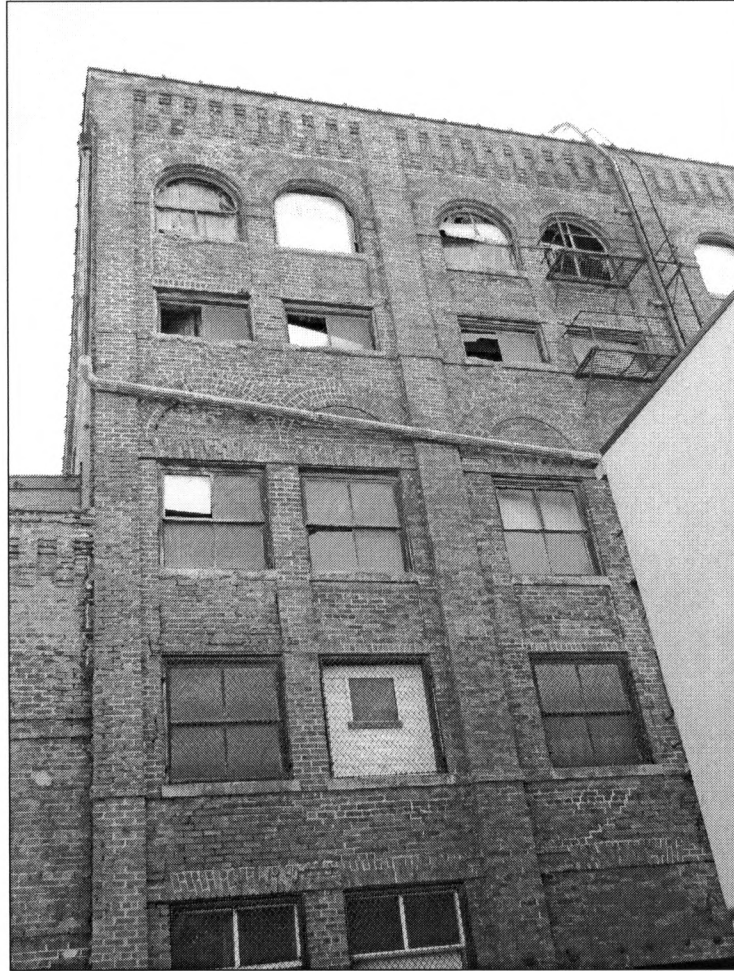


Figure 13: Press House, north wall, view southwest  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

The press house has an open basement, unlike the main building which has its stone footings set above ground. The basement stone walls have exposed stone footings (Figure 14). Extensive soot on portions of the foundation walls might date to the 1891 fire or a later one. The basement is divided into three bays by two rows of five wood square-cut columns. Each of the five floors above have twin rows of six columns, with beams running north/south. Floors are wood. A wood series of stairways links all levels with the basement and is located in the northeast corner. The ground floor is level with that of the main building to the west, but above that point, the floor levels are offset by two feet. Sliding metal fire doors cover entrances into the main building, all being in the southwest corner of each floor, on the west wall. Single-light windows are found on the east and south walls, including the lower levels (now bricked in on those levels) and there is a first floor door in the east wall. The windows on the south wall all have segmental brick arches (Figures 15, 17). These are side-pinned and operated as hopper type openings for ventilation. One central opening is side-hinged for roof access on the second floor. The press house lacks any elevator and there is no penthouse. The industry literature speaks of two-story tall oil presses but there is no evidence that this building had exceptionally high ceiling levels or combined floors to suit such equipment.

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Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

Woodbury County, Iowa

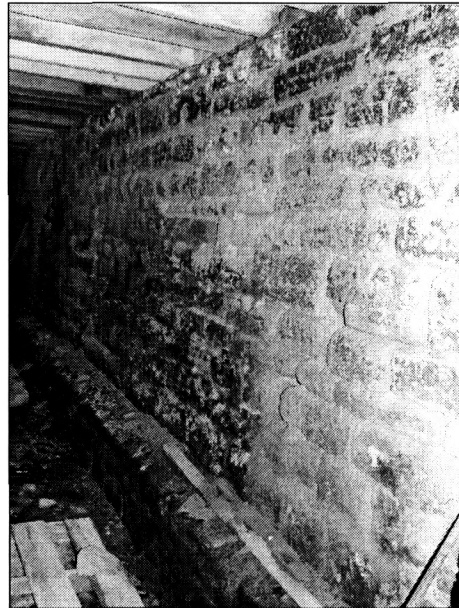


Figure 14: Profile of press house stone foundation wall with exposed footing at lower left, view northeast  
Along the east wall (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

The former open court comprises the center of the building, east of the main building and between the press house and south wing. There is a partial basement beneath the north half of the area, where the two-story brick engine house stood. Given the fact that this area is a later infilling, the six rows of three square-cut wood columns each are oriented across the long dimension of the space and the beams also run north/south, in line with those in the adjoining sections of the building. The columns are much smaller in scale given that they support only the second floor and the roof. The interior space opens into the former north/south alleyway along its east side and it two has a second floor.

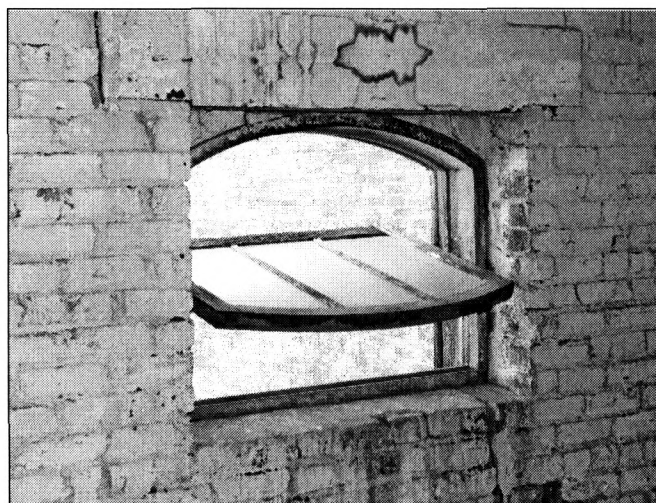


Figure 15: Third floor south wall window in press house, view southwest  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)



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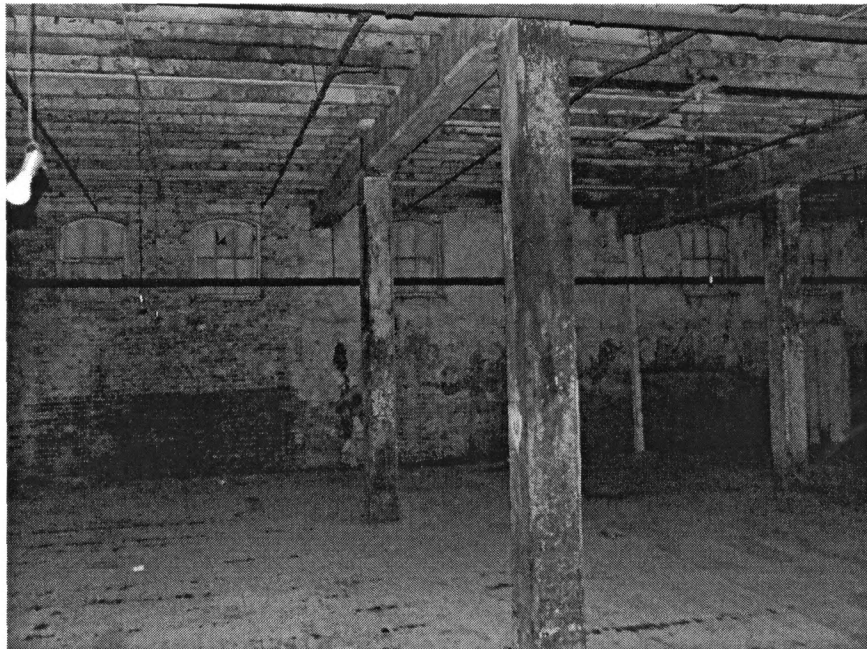


Figure 16: Press house, first floor interior, view southwest (this floor was four feet higher prior to The 1891 fire) (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

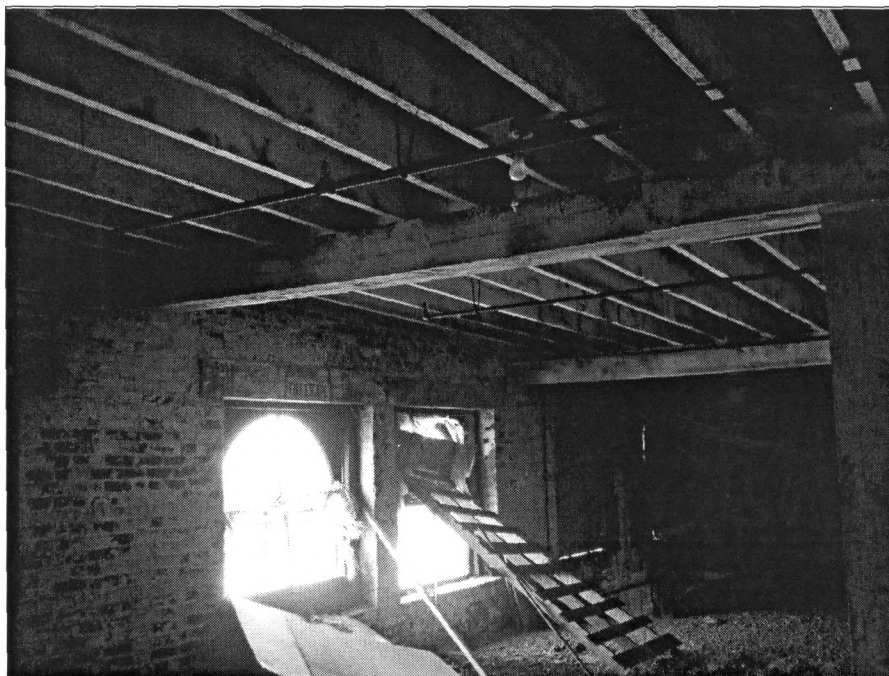


Figure 17: Example of interior flat wooden lintels behind exterior segmental arches (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

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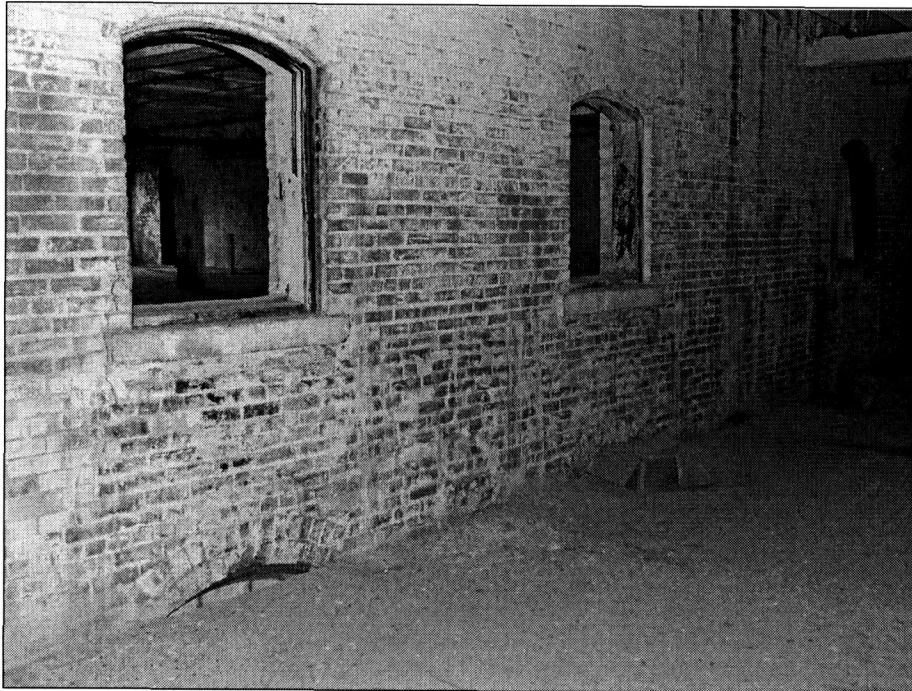


Figure 18: The second floor level of the courtyard infill cuts across windows in the south, evidence of the re-use of the 1883 walls in conjunction with different 1891 floor levels, wall of the press house, view northeast (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)



Figure 19: Column/beam transition from first floor to second floor column in courtyard area and simple metal collar, view northwest (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

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Elements of Special Interest:

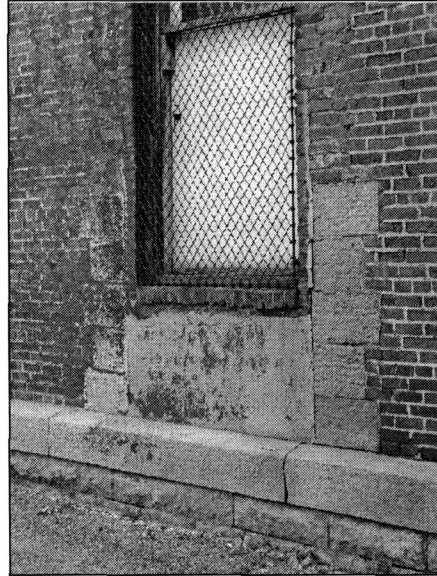


Figure 20: Stone quoins framing a former door base, north alley sidewall, view southeast  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

A number of the exterior doors on the façade, side walls and the east door on the south wing, have stone quoin-like bases (Figure 20). The original shipping door dimensions were single-width doors and a number of these openings have been enlarged so that just one original door base survives in place. All of these door treatments are found on the pre-1891 portions of the building.

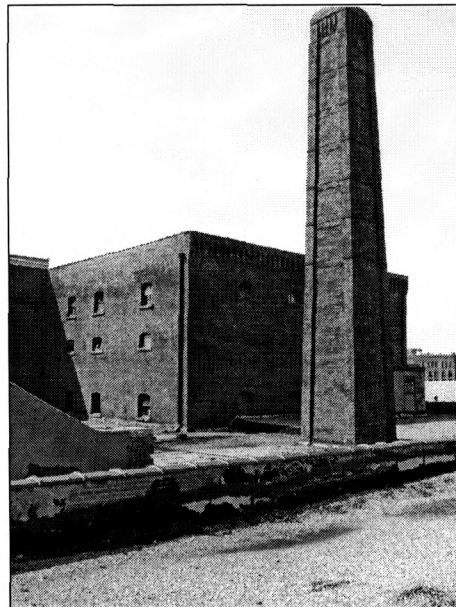


Figure 21: The five-story high oil press house, chimney, and gable end of the south wing, view northwest  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

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The obelisk-like chimney (Figures 8, 21) is a defining element of the building and there is some indication that this chimney form, square in section with tapered walls, was typical of the linseed oil mill architecture. What is different in this instance is the carrying over of the pilaster pattern, found in all of the exterior walls, to highlight the corners of the chimney. Similarly, the identical cornice/parapet treatment found on the exterior walls was used on the chimney. Its survival at all and in this state of preservation is a wonder. The horizontal pattern observed in the photograph is the result of metal reinforcement bands.

The south wing roof framing closely resembles that expected in barn framing. It is doubtful that this is the original roof framing given that the first roof was a heavy slate roof. However given that this building did not burn in the 1891 fire, the date of origin for this framing remains an open question. The wing consists of two rooms with differing roof framing arrangements. In the east room, the two trusses are open, with angled braces meeting each roof plane half way, being braced upwards from the central column side braces (Figures 22-23).



Figure 22: Roof framing, east room, south wing, view northwest  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

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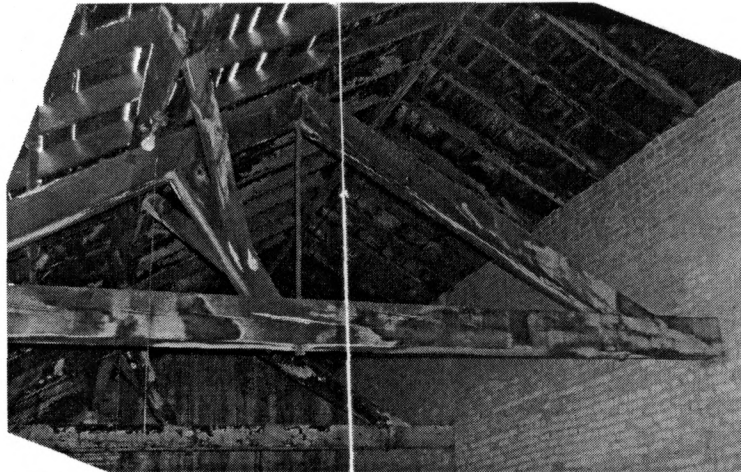


Figure 23: Ceiling trusses in former engine room, view east  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

The west room has a narrower span because the storage room for the oil filter tanks runs along the north side of the room. The trusses can bear on the south or inner wall of that void, while the north plane extends to the north or outer wall. As a result there are no columns and the truss braces only the south roof plane and the north half the truss runs below and parallel to the roof plane (Figure 23).

Another truss system (Figure 24) created a clear span within the boiler room. It would appear that only the three wooden trusses with twin tension rods, infilled the upper level of the space. A floor was later added, using a flat truss system to raise it above the lower chord of the trusses. These heavy timber trusses have flat upper chords and angled ends, with only the tension rods being within the truss.

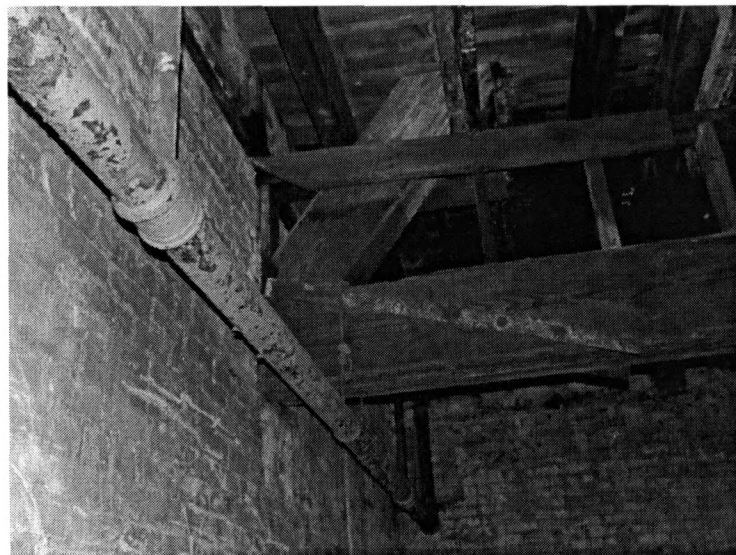


Figure 24: End of roof truss system in engine room, note spacers on lower chord to support floor, view east  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

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From a standpoint of industrial archaeology, the outstanding surviving component is a row of ten 16 feet high riveted iron oil settling tanks, each of which is six feet in diameter (Figures 25-27). The ten tanks are encased within a two-story high brick walled narrow room that runs along the north side of the west half of the south wing. The tanks are documented as being fabricated in 1883 and the enclosing walls had to be built around them. The tanks retain their piping attachments along the south side of their bases. There is a wood catwalk at the second floor level, accessed by chain ladders still in place. Counter weights on chords, performing an undetermined purpose, still hang in place.

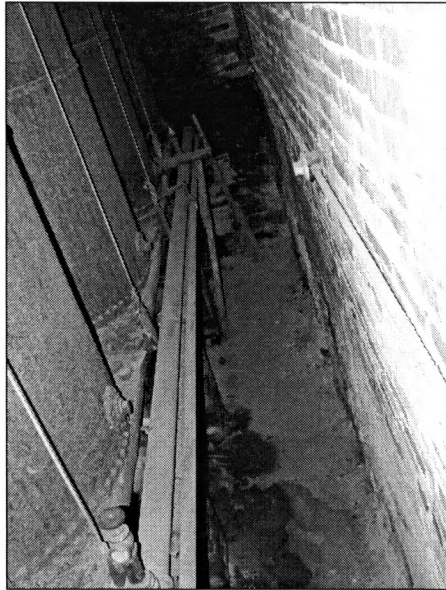


Figure 25: base of iron tanks, view east from entrance door  
(photo by Jim Jacobsen, May 2007)



Figure 26: base of iron tanks, view west from entrance door  
(photo by Jim Jacobsen, May 2007)

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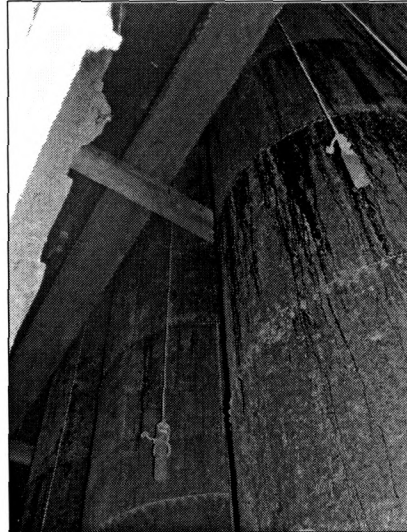


Figure 27: upper reaches of iron tanks, catwalk, hanging weights, view northwest from entrance door  
(photo by Jim Jacobsen, May 2007)

Structurally the exposed spread tone footings (Figure 3) in the basement of the main building are simply astounding for several reasons. It is unusual to not leave a basement area of this size obstructed in this manner in an industrial setting, and it is at least curious that the same above-grade system was not also used in the press house (although when first built it was just three stories high). This feature has been discussed but it is worth noting that some of the lower stonework appears to have pinkish hue and considerable soot caused by the 1891 fire. Further investigation is needed to determine if this is simply a different stone. Most of the stone is yellow in color however.



Figure 28: Scale in wall on ground floor of main building, view northeast  
(photo by J. Jacobsen, July 2007)

The main building interior retains some office areas on its lower three floors, all located within the westernmost structural bay. All of these partitions are of recent vintage however, apart from two clapboard covered walls and the scale that

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is set into the south plastered wall of the elevator enclosure (Figure 28). These office areas are reflective of the post 1927 building use history. The linseed oil company offices were located in a separate building after the 1891 fire. The narrow single stair system within the main building is located along the north side of the freight elevator near the west center of the plan.

Building Alterations:

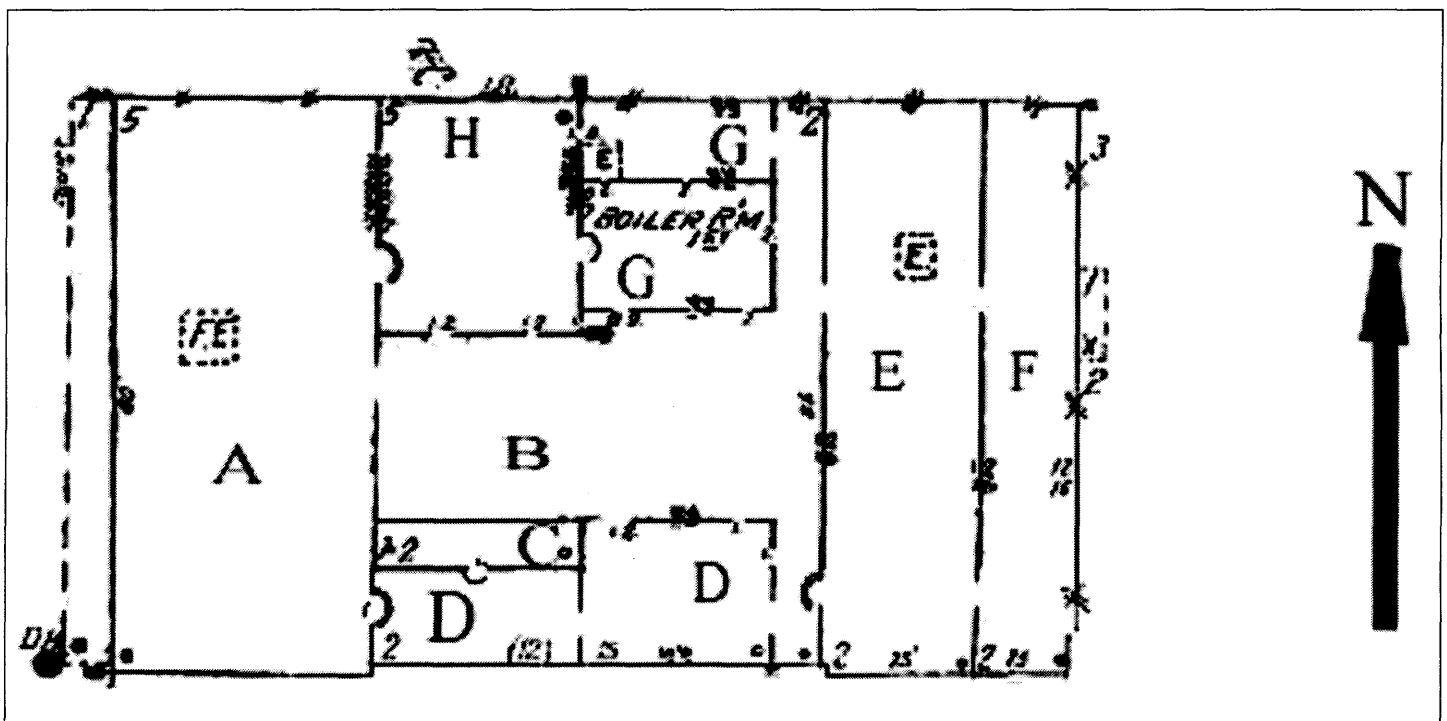


Figure 29: Floor plan (ground level) (1924/1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map as template) (repeat of Figure 1)  
(letters added to identify building areas)

Area	Name	Year Built	Dimensions
A	Main Building	1883, 1891	130 by 60 feet
B	Court infill, former alley	1928	36 by 90 feet, alley 16 by 130 feet
C	Oil Filter Room	1883	35 by 8 feet
D	South Wing (includes "C")	1883	100 by 30 feet
E	East end, east of alley	c.1895	130 by 30 feet
F	East end, east of above	c.1895	130 by 14 feet
G	Boiler/Engine Rooms	c.1895	61 by 41 feet
H	Press House/Room	1883, 1891	60 by 36 feet



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Chronology of Alterations:

- 1883: Original construction of which the lower two stories of section "A" and the west, south, and north walls (lower three stories) of section "H," sections "C" and "D" and the chimney survive (see 1891).
- 1885: \$10,000 invested in new machinery. Ironclad elevator (36x131) and brick tank room (20x130), valued at \$20,000, built this year (these were the two long buildings located east of the alleyway) (*Weekly Tribune*, December 17, 1885; *Journal*, January 1, 1886).
- 1886-1891: Sanborn Maps identify a range of single-story brick buildings including an engine house, boiler room, coal room, and a boiling house, none of which survive in the current building. The 130 horsepower steam engine is replaced with a 250 horsepower engine by 1890.
- 1891: Disastrous fire destroys the upper floors of section "A", guts section "H" and triggers the rebuilding of the dependency structures. The press house (section "H") is extended east one bay and remnant stone corners in the end walls denote the location of the old east wall. and its floor levels were readjusted, the ground floor being lowered to match that in section "A". The new sections gain flat roofs, while sections "C-D" retains its gable roof. Surviving 1883 components are the lower two floors of exterior walls in the main building, the walls of the oil press house, the south wing and the engine/boiler room and chimney.
- 1893: A separate office is built on the northeast corner of Court and Third streets, valued at \$3,000, and there is no longer an oil works office in the building (*Journal*, January 1, 1893).
- 1895: The enlargement of the press house forces a realignment of the dependencies immediately east and south. The engine room remains in place but the old boiler room is transformed into a new pump house. The boiling house remains east of the pump house, west of the alleyway. The present two-story boiler rooms (section "G"), and sections "E" and "F" replace a metal clad elevator and a metal clad housing that enclosed seven iron tanks. The tanks were now housed within section "F". Section "F" was initially a story and a half high. Twin catwalks cross the alley and link the two sections of the complex. The elevator in "E" appears to date From that building's construction.
- 1902: Two iron outside tanks occupy the east end of the open courtyard area. These remained through the closing of the oil mill. The west end of the same area (section "B") was infilled with several small areas, of brick and frame construction.
- 1924: The north room in "G" has lost its boiler but continues to be used on the basement level as a coal room. There is no elevator present. A 1923 photo shows a round steel extension on the chimney
- 1928: The alleyway and section "C" are built in with an intervening second floor and flat roof system. The former engine room and pump house and boiling room all disappear above the basement level, and their volumes are incorporated into section "C". The basement of the engine room remains as an extension of the basement of section "H". The interior storage tanks in section "F" were likely dismantled as were the large exterior storage tanks on the east end of the property. Shipping doors along the side walls were also likely doubled to facilitate Bekins' movement of large objects in and out of the building. The west concrete loading dock and metal canopy might have been built now or soon after. The fire escape on the north wall of section "H" post-dates

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1924 and is first depicted on the 1949 Sanborn Map update.

1949: The updated Sanborn Map shows the west dock and canopy but only a short east frame loading dock. The elevator in section "H" is present by this time.

1950: Building permit for three floor drains, two lavatories and two closets in 210 Court for B. Dillon.

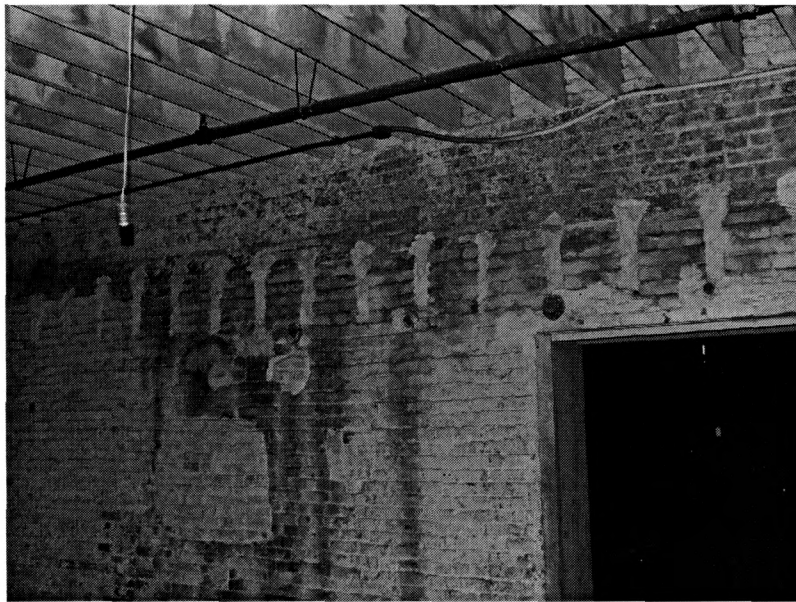


Figure 30: Post-1891 fire adjustment of floor level in the oil press house, second floor, view southeast (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 2007)

The exterior of the Sioux City Linseed Oil Works maintains a high degree of all seven aspects of integrity, location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The integrity of the immediate commercial setting of the building, is largely retained, although the former railroad yards to the north are now occupied by a metal warehouse. The railroad tracks and the open area once occupied by many other lines of track, remains open. Industrial buildings surround the subject building, save to the immediate north as noted. The building retains its ability to maintain integrity of feeling and association. The overall form of the building has remained unchanged once it assumed its present overall form by 1895. The majority of its changes over time reflected the evolution of the building as a linseed oil mill. The original 1883 complex survives sufficiently so as to include those elements within the period of significance, but the 1890 fire substantially rebuilt the upper reaches of the complex and the eastward extension of the building and the courtyard infill largely make this an 1895 industrial complex. Large exterior iron tanks, located on open ground to the east and several lesser nearby buildings have been lost, but the core complex survives intact, as it stood in 1895. Later alterations by subsequent tenants enlarged some shipping doors, added concrete loading docks front and back and metal canopies. The majority of the original architectural materials and detailing, including cornice, almost all window openings and sash, and ornament brickwork remain as built.

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**8. Significance Statement:**

The Sioux City Linseed Oil Works is significant on the local level under Criterion A for its association with the emergence of agricultural derived industries in Sioux City, a vital advantage that led to that city's rapid growth during the 1880's and early 1890s. The Sioux City oil mill is also historically significant for its impressive scale of operations and its successful operation for half a century. There is a strong potential for state level significance based upon its association with the regional development of flax/linseed oil production and processing, but this nomination focuses only on its local role. The building is also architecturally significant (Criterion C) on the local level as a virtually unaltered example of an early and large-scale linseed oil works, parts of which date to its original 1883 construction, and the rest to its 1891 post-fire reconstruction along virtually identical architectural lines. While its style is that of a utilitarian late-Victorian industrial facility, a number of special design features (pronounced raised stone foundation and water table, decorative stone inserts at the base of exterior door openings, corbelled brick parapet fronts, stone capped raised end wall, the exposed spread stone footing system) survive from both the original 1883 and the 1891 partial-reconstruction to make this a significant example of industrial design. The relative rarity of a large-scale example of a linseed oil works, particularly one so very much intact, combined with the survival of original oil filtering tanks and original roof framing, also add to the architectural significance.

The period of significance, 1883-1927, represents the actual years of the building operation as a linseed oil works. The early years of this period were those most significant for the plant's association with the industrial development of Sioux City, particularly as it related to agricultural product processing. This era ended in the late 1890s, being symbolized by the departure of the founder of the works as manager. The period 1890-1927 was significant for the association of the plant with the several national linseed oil trusts and the survival of this plant long after most other operations had been closed down, attests to its continued importance to the industry. The survival of substantial portions of the original 1883 building and their incorporation into the 1891 re-building after the great fire, justifies the extension of the period of significance back to 1883. The surviving elements include the lower two stories (exterior walls) of the main building, the lower three stories of the oil press building, the raised stone foundation of the whole building, the south wing, chimney, and power/engine house. Enough of the 1883 building survived the fire so as to dictate the design of the reconstruction along almost the exact same lines. The principal difference was the use of flat parapet roofs and the addition of two stories on the two principal sections.

Flax and Linseed Oil Production:

Linseed oil is produced by using a solvent extraction process in combination with pressed flax seed. A cold press extraction of flax seed produces flaxseed oil. The waste, in the form of crushed seeds, or oil cake, is used as an animal feed. Historically linseed oil served as the binding agent in oil based paints. The oil shortened drying time and as a paint "carrier" it improved the fluidity, transparency and glossiness of the paint. Linseed oil is also used as a wood finish, and serves to fill and re-hydrate the wood surface. It also is used as a key ingredient in putties, caulk and the manufacture of linoleum flooring. More recently, pure un-boiled linseed oil has been valued as a dietary supplement for human consumption. As was the case with most natural components, the development of synthetic materials displaced the use of linseed oil in paint production and for other manufacturing purposes (<http://www.britannica.com/eb/topic-342617/linseed-oil>).

Flax was favored as a breaking crop on freshly cleared farmland. Associated crop diseases led farmers to believe that it was hard on soil so it couldn't be repeatedly raised on the same ground. The crop as a result, tended to follow new settlement and was used to break in new acreage. Consequently ranged ever westward as new land opened up. Linseed oil was produced by crushing the flax seed. The lighter weight seed could be transported some distance but linseed oil mills were still closely tied to the flax growing regions. Imported flax seed, from Russia beginning in 1839 and soon after from India spawned numerous East coast crushers (30 plants by 1870) that were also centered in the major urban market areas for linseed oil and its products (Eastman, pp. 25-27).

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American flax production, while on the move, failed to increase in output until the late 1880s and by 1874, imports of 4,000,000 bushels equaled domestic production. This was accomplished despite a substantial import tariff. Domestic production reached 10,000,000 bushels by 1889 and a higher tax on imports the next year further boosted production to 19,000,000 bushels. Population in the Midwest was the driving force in the increased production, but the importation of a new strain of seed ("Russian") was a key factor as well. This strain had a considerably higher oil content and it performed best in the northernmost states so it set the stage for the eventual dominance of North Dakota in flaxseed production. There are two types of flax, a bushy variety valued for the oil content in its seeds and a straight stemmed variety valued for its fiber. The new imported strain tipped the scales in favor of producing the oil type. Given this higher output, the United States entered into the flaxseed export market for the first time

By 1850 Ohio was the leading flaxseed region and it retained that title for a quarter of a century. Most of the leaders in the consolidation of the industry could trace their first involvements in it to Ohio and particularly the Piqua region. By the mid-1870s two-thirds of the national crop was being raised in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin. Ten years later the lead states were Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa and North Dakota was just entering into production. By 1900 the northernmost states accounted for 90 percent of the crop, with North Dakota being by far the leading grower. Minnesota farmers were the leaders 1921-1950 when North Dakota again ruled flax growing (ibid., pp. 28-30).

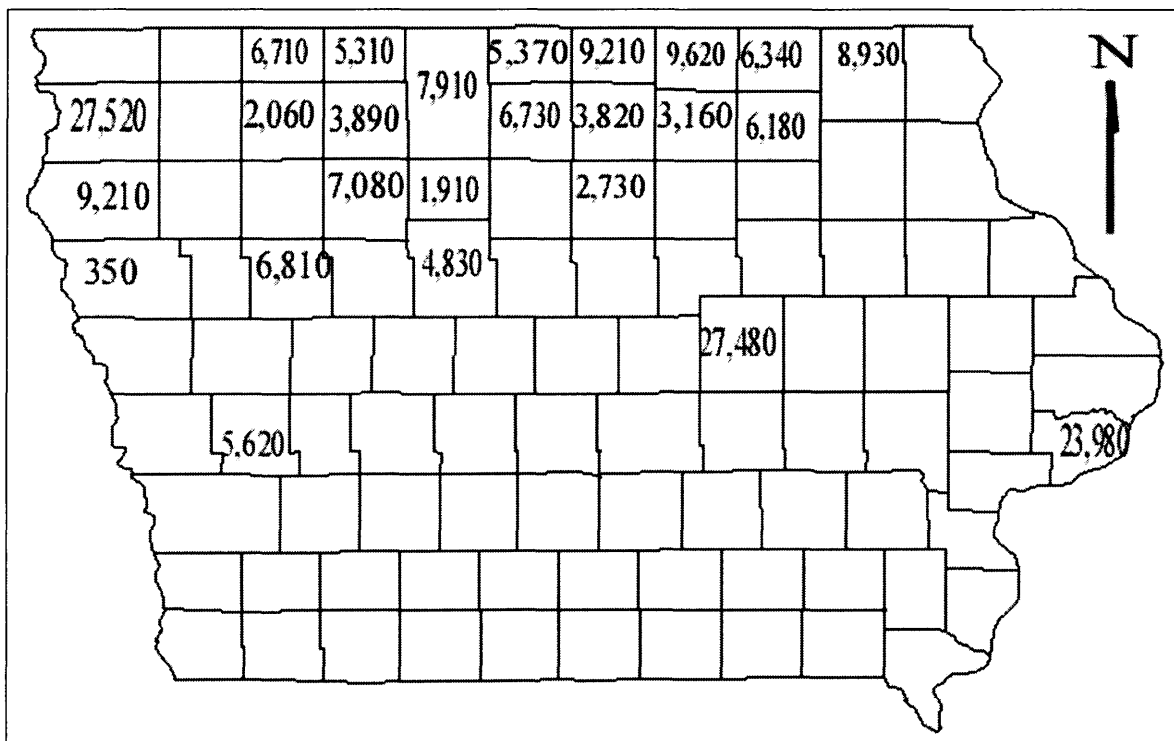


Figure 31: Iowa Flax Production in acres planted, 1900 (The Iowa Yearbook of Agriculture, 1901, p. 265)

The development of a seed crushing industry in the Upper Missouri River valley reflected the westward movement of the crop and dilemma faced by industrial entrepreneurs. The plants were very expensive and experience showed that even a good location could quickly be superseded by a better one. An improving railroad network played a key role as well and the experience of the plant in Sioux City shows that long-distance imports were necessary for that plant to survive. The development of the Russian strain was another boon to the Sioux City operation. A continuing importation and the use of Great

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Lakes and the Erie Canal kept the competing East Coast plants in competition although the number of crushers drooped to just 13 by 1900. Argentina became a major exporter of flax seed in 1909 and new plants were built, including three by the surviving Midwest independents (Spencer-Kellogg, Midland Linseed Oil Products Company and the Archer-Daniels Linseed Oil Co.) (ibid., pp. 29-30, 35-37).

The development of synthetic alternatives to linseed oil after World War I reduced the industry to a point where just two processors remained active as of 1968. Imports of flaxseed stopped in 1948.

Iowa Flaxseed And Linseed Oil Production:

Figure 31 locates the heaviest flax-producing Iowa counties as of 1900. North central Iowa counties dominate the crop production. Two large-scale producers, Tama and Scott counties, and Shelby County, in the southwest, are anomalies. Crops of fewer than 1,500 acres are not depicted. Surprisingly, Woodbury County was resistant to the trend despite the proximity of the Sioux City crusher, with just 350 acres of flax planted.

The growing of flax was hindered by its special requirements and misunderstandings on the part of farmers. Flax seed was very small and it was intolerant of being planted too deeply or shallowly. The planting bed had to be finely broken up and leveled. Planting with drills was optimal but that special equipment had to be purchased. Ground that was suitable for barley or wheat was equally good for a rotation or two of flax. The complete growing cycle required at least 110 days and the crop could stay in the field right through a frost, so the harvest was later and more leisurely than other crops. The crop was susceptible to various diseases and was a poor competitor with weeds. In an apparent effort to educate reluctant area farmers, the *Weekly Tribune* noted that "Farmers are finding out that flax does not injure land that is broken up early in the season" (*Weekly Tribune*, November 20, 1884).

Despite its great hopes for flax, Sioux City was not to be the symbolic focus of flax production. The first and only flax palace was not raised up by Sioux City in 1890. The city residents were busy with their corn palaces to be sure. Mason City did erect a flax palace that year, a four-story high 40 by 40 feet design with matching side wings, covered with flax, oats and wheat and the flags of every nation on its roof (*Journal*, September 17, 1890).

State gazetteers track the number of linseed oil plants in the state. The 1884-85 gazetteer listed just the Des Moines Linseed Oil Mill, but by 1887, 14 plants were in operation in Boone, Burlington (two plants, J. R. Burnham and Jaggar & Simpson), Cedar Rapids, Davenport (Holdship & Irwin), Des Moines (two plants, Heimer & Hippee and Des Moines Linseed Oil), Dubuque, Iowa City (C. D. Close), Marshalltown (Hawkeye), and Ottumwa (two plants, W. T. Harper and Iowa Oil Tank Line). Nine plants were in operation as of 1891 but the National Linseed Oil Company was listed at its Sioux City location, in addition to the Sioux City Linseed Oil Works, even though it wasn't an actual producer. It is interesting to note that these early lists do not indicate any trust ownership outside of the Sioux City plant and this is still true as of 1895, when eight plants were listed. By 1901 the American Linseed Oil Company owned the plants in Cedar Rapids, Des Moines and Sioux City, while those in Dubuque and Ottumwa remained independent. Five plants were in operation in the state at that time. By 1905, just the Des Moines and Sioux City operations, still under American ownership, were listed. By 1910 there were three plants, the Dubuque plant having been acquired by the Midland Linseed Oil Company of Minneapolis (Iowa State Gazetteers, 1884-85, 1887-88, 1891-92, 1895-96, 1901-02, 1905-06, 1910-11).

The Industry Joins the Trust Movement:

The National Linseed Oil Company was established in 1887. What started out as a voluntary cooperative venture was transformed over time into a trust and later acquisitions were aggressively acquired. The plant in Sioux City, bought out in 1890, was purchased in the face of owner opposition and at a great loss to its founders. At its height the combine consisted of 70 crusher plants, 20 of which were located in Ohio. The problem was that the company never controlled more than two-thirds

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of the linseed oil industry and the plants that remained independent were the strongest companies with the most modern and largest plants. The member plants had a freedom to go independent and when higher prices were secured, they did so, again taking away the best and higher-capacity crushers. Stock dividends were completely suspended with as of 1891 as anti-trust suits ate away at company resources. The common stock faltered but the company limped on until 1898 when its final effort to corner the linseed oil market failed (Eastman, pp. 31-32).

The defunct company was acquired by the American Linseed Company on January 1, 1898, a replacement trust. Stock valued at \$33,500,000 was issued, in equal proportions of common and preferred stock. The National Linseed Oil Company, with 45 working crushers valued at \$3,000,000 and a total of 280 presses, was acquired for \$4,500,000 in preferred stock. Nine member companies of the new trust, who were not members of National, with a total of 180 presses, received the same amount of preferred stock to join the new organization. The common stock failed to perform well for the same reason, that American lacked an effective monopoly in the industry. Three successive preferred stock dividends were paid out but a short 1900 flax crop weakened the company and the Rockefeller family took control of the company in 1901. The company paid six preferred stock dividends and three common stock dividends over its history. Inefficient plants were closed and the real value of the company resided in its successful food division known as the Gold Dust Corporation. That division was sold off. In 1928, the five functioning crushers, valued at \$4,695,453, were purchased by the two remaining independents, Archer-Daniels-Midland Company (it had purchased the Midland Linseed Oil Company in 1923) and the Spencer Kellogg & Sons Company. The last five plants (Portland, Staten Island, Buffalo, Chicago and St. Paul), of which the Sioux City plant was not one, were then closed down (*ibid.*, pp. 32-34).

The company achieved national notoriety when it was the defendant in the landmark legal case United States versus The American Linseed Oil Company (262 US 371) that ended up in the Supreme Court. The case was argued in April and a decision was issued on June 4, 1923. The company was charged with restraint of trade and commerce and violating the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. The particular charge was that a dozen "crushers" had entered into a subscription agreement/relationship in late 1918 with one Julian Armstrong of Chicago, the head of the Armstrong Bureau of Related Industries. Each crusher supplied industrial price and cost data to the bureau and a set market price was established for the industry based upon that data. Just two years later in another case the Supreme Court determined that such an assemblage of corporate price data could not have the "explicit purpose of standardizing industrial prices." As a result the trusts were free to assemble the information as long as they stopped short of calculating a specific commodity price (<http://wean1.ulib.org/Books-Finished/-the.Wars/TXT/00000055.txt>).

**Sioux City Contextual Background:**

The idea of establishing a linseed oil mill in Sioux City followed the successful implementation of similar, but smaller-scale plants in Mankato, Minneapolis and Omaha. Indeed, the growing of flax, the source of the necessary linseed, was first established as a major crop in the Dakotas, Nebraska and Minnesota well before that crop was introduced on any large scale in Iowa. Regionally, this area, particularly that area that ranged to the northwest from Sioux City, was termed the "northwest." The Sioux City Linseed Oil Works as a result represented a regional consortium of investors and operators and the plant, claimed to be the largest such in the country, represented a southeastern extension of flax production into northwest Iowa and a consolidation of the linseed oil industry to Sioux City.

Sioux City was on the bubble of its first era of explosive growth. The town of 7,400 (1880) exploded in population, having 38,000 residents by 1890. The original small flood-prone town, hemmed in by surrounding loess soil bluffs, was ready to expand east, west and north as soon as those bluffs could be cut down. Much of this initial growth was driven by industrial growth, largely agriculturally based. The region was largely immune to severe drought, which gave it a real agricultural advantage. Railroad development provided the impetus. The Sioux City Linseed Oil Works was one of the earliest new industrial plants and it occupied a site in the heart of what would become an industrial and warehousing district in the southeast

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part of the city's downtown. In fact the plant was finally straddled by the principal railroad networks. The local promoters of the industrial district were largely the same as those who built the oil mill works. Thomas Parke Gere (1842-1912) and Arthur Samuel Garretson (1851-?) later formed the Sioux City Terminal Railroad and Warehouse Company (1889) in an effort to better exploit the opportunities of the city's industrial expansion. Garretson's role in the linseed oil works was either quite direct or more indirect, depending upon how one interprets this notice from the *Weekly Tribune*:

...the public spirit of A. S. Garretson is almost wholly responsible for it [the new oil mill]. But for him the market it will create would not be here, the men it will employ would abide elsewhere, and the capital it represents would be invested in rival places.

Presumably, Garretson set the stage for the city's explosive growth, but was not an actual investor and was certainly not a company officer. Yet he clearly was locally credited for making the oil mill a fact (*Weekly Tribune*, September 4, 1884; Haefner, pp. 56-63).

Garretson arrived in Sioux City in 1874 and entered the field of banking. By 1880 he was able to organize his own bank, the First National and would serve as its cashier for a decade. His importance to Sioux City was his leading involvement in most of the key new ventures. These included the Sioux City and Northern Railroad (1889-90), the Union Stock Yards (1887) and the Live Stock Exchange (1888), the construction of two Missouri River bridges, the Boston Investment Company (which brought over two million dollars in East Coast investment to the city), Morningside College, and others (*Weekly Tribune*, September 4, 1884; 1904 Woodbury County History, pp. 657-58).



Figure 32: Thomas P. Gere  
(1891 Woodbury County History)

T. P. Gere is described by many city history sources as being the principal local Sioux City promoter and manager of the oil works although, in fact, he came to the city only with the construction of the plant. Gere was clearly the junior partner, the new firm was titled "Hubbard & Gere." Gere was a civil engineer who boasted a Medal of Honor that was earned when he

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seized a Confederate regimental flag during the Battle of Nashville, Tennessee, on December 16, 1864. Postwar he received his education and did railroad and river survey work prior to his being posted to Sioux City as the division superintendent of the Chicago, St. Paul and Minneapolis Railroad, in 1881. He retired from that position on 1 April 1883 when the line was acquired by the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad. Atypical of industrial promoters, the 1891 county history stressed that he was "in no way connected with real estate" but rather was "in the councils of those who were." Gere's promotional efforts, apart from the linseed oil mill, were railroad-based and he oversaw the engineering work on four successive Sioux City railroad building efforts (1891 Woodbury County History, pp. 677-80; *Tribune*, January 9, 1912).

The other key partner in the oil mill venture was Rensselaer D. Hubbard (1837-1905) of Mankato, Minnesota. Hubbard brought direct expertise in linseed oil production to the leadership team. Born in New York, Hubbard had lived on both coasts, and was involved in railroad survey, farming, gold prospecting and banking, prior to finally taking root in Mankato in 1871. His first local venture was the founding, in 1872, of the Mankato Linseed Oil Company with partner J. A. Willard. He was associated with that company until 1883. In addition to the oil mill he built and managed the Mankato Flour Milling Company until his death and he established a 42-grain elevator network that extended across southern Minnesota and South Dakota. Hubbard was one of an undetermined number of partners in the Sioux City Linseed Oil Mill. As late as 1894 the *Weekly Tribune* observed that apart from "Captain" Gere, the "other [company] officers are non-residents" (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~mnbechs/house.html>; *Weekly Tribune*, December 31, 1894).<sup>1</sup>

The important point is that the oil mill preceded the local growing of flax. Woodbury County Agricultural Society secretary Jonas M. Cleland submitted his 1884 annual report to the Secretary of Agriculture, and stated:

Flax heretofore has been a small crop. The price this year \$1.16 per bushel, obtainable at this point [Sioux City] by reason of the location here of the largest oil mill in the United States, will unquestionably have a tendency to increase this crop.

The key phrase in this excerpt, is of course, the first one. Flax growing in northwest Iowa was in its infancy at the time the plant was located in Sioux City (Report of the Board of Directors of the Iowa State Agricultural Society For The Year 1884, p. 681).

The Sioux City Linseed Oil Works:

The oil works venture was abruptly announced locally in Sioux City in early August 1883. The lack of any forewarning and the failure of Sioux City newspapers to name the plant's original architect, was due to the fact that this was a welcome, yet imported new business. The architect more than likely was Mankato-based, as were the two principals. The absence of the expected announcements of incorporations and stock offerings is at least partly explained by the provision of investment capital (assumed) from the Mankato partners. The local board of trade was well aware of the project. Its secretary admitted "I would have mentioned it before, but the business was not closed until to-day." The new plant was to occupy the south half of Block 18, Middle Sioux City Addition. The two square quarter blocks were divided by a north/south running alley and were bordered on the north by an east/west running alleyway. Captain Gere obtained the three lots in the southwest quarter of the block on August 8, 1883, and he secured parts of the three lots in the southeast quarter in mid-October of that same year. The same board of trade source explained why this site was selected:

That was selected after looking the city over because it is handy to the railroad tracks. The union track on Second street, used by the Milwaukee, the Illinois Central and the St. Paul, is just south of the lots bought and

<sup>1</sup> By August 21, a third Minnesota capitalist, unnamed, had "been added." This was likely Ira W. Hubbard, who was listed in city directories from 1887 through 1896 as plant superintendent, the probable son of R. D. Hubbard (*Journal*, August 21, 1883).



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the track to the new St. Paul depot site just across the alley north. The Pacific track is not far off, and can be reached by a spur if desired.

The selection of the city was also explained:

The company has asked nothing of the city or citizens. The mill is simply built here because it is believed it will pay. This city is selected because it is a railroad center, and so a convenient place to collect flax seed, and there are competing lines for shipment of the product.

Regarding the entrepreneurs:

The heavy man is R. D. Hubbard of Mankato. He built and is operating the oil mill at that town, and besides owns a flouring mill there. Capt. T. P. Gere, who used to be superintendent of the Sioux City division of the St. Paul, is to have charge, and will come back to the city to live.

A contract with John Rochelle had been made for 800,000 brick and Capt. Gere left the city on August 9 to place orders for the foundation stone. The total mill cost was estimated at \$75-80,000 and that the factory would have a daily capacity of 1,200-1,400 bushels of flax seed day and a workforce of 25-30 men (Transfer Books, City of Sioux City, *Daily Times*, August 8, 9, 1883; *Journal*, August 9, 1883).

The first descriptive announcements stressed the scale of the venture. The complex would include six fireproof brick buildings with slate roofs, and a massive chimney:

Main building, 60 by 130 feet, four stories high  
Press room, 36 by 160 feet, also four stories high  
Engine-room, 20 by 48 feet  
Boiler room, 24 by 90 feet  
Cooperage and tank house, 36 by 100 feet  
Boiler house, 20 by 20 feet  
Chimney, 10 by 10 feet square base, 100 feet high

The massive plant would require five million brick and the construction workforce would number 300 men. Once in operation, 78 "artisans" would be employed. The public was told that this new plant would be "considerably larger" than its Mankato predecessor, the latter having been "heretofore acknowledged to be the largest [linseed oil] mill in the northwest." The sheer scale of the building effort is reflected in the fact that a full year was allowed for its construction. By the third week of August 1883 the building perimeter lines were being staked and the arrival of the first shipments of Mankato quartzite stone was expected even before the excavation was begun. Charles Sulsbach (also given as Joseph Sulsbach), builder of the Jandt & Tompkins Block was contracted to do the brickwork. A. Nystrom had the excavation contract and the barrow was destined to fill Third Street. Joe Griffith, of Mankato, was the stone contractor (*Daily Times*, August 21, December 20, 1883; *Journal*, August 21, 1883).<sup>2</sup>

The new oil mill was one of a number of building projects in the city in 1883. The list included a new depot, church and waterworks and the year's tally of new or enlarged buildings was 457. While most communities of the day avoided the use of the word "boom" to describe record growth (such phrases as "solid conservative growth" were preferred), Sioux City

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<sup>2</sup> Griffith, the stone contractor, is identified only because of his untimely death while home with his family for the holidays after his work was done (*Daily Times*, December 20, 1883).

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newspapers flaunted the term with gusto. The *Daily Times* reported "The building boom booms right along and bids fair to last until the freeze-up time comes. New buildings are going up all over town and hardly a day passes in which from one to half a dozen buildings are not started..." The historical irony was that Sioux City would become the poster child of unsustainable over-development, urged on by massive amounts of Eastern capital and the assurance that the city would become a second Chicago. The national financial collapse provided the opportunity and the bubble burst on April 25, 1893. It would take 15 years for the city to recoup lost population and momentum (*Daily Times*, August 24, September 1, 1883; Haefner, p. 63).

The excavation work for the mill was underway by August 25, and was nearly finished by September 4. No stone was on site as of the latter date, but it was expected daily. The foundation work was delayed by the continued non-arrival of the stone but by September 27, 25 masons and laborers were setting the stone as fast as it was received and unloaded. The chimney foundation was done by that date (*Journal*, August 25, September 5, 11, 27, 1883).

R. D. Hubbard came to the city on the 5:00 a.m. train and attempted to make a site inspection of his new mill. The watchman drove him off so Hubbard returned at 7:00 a.m. as the builders arrived. He praised the vigilance of his guard (*Journal*, October 14, 1883).

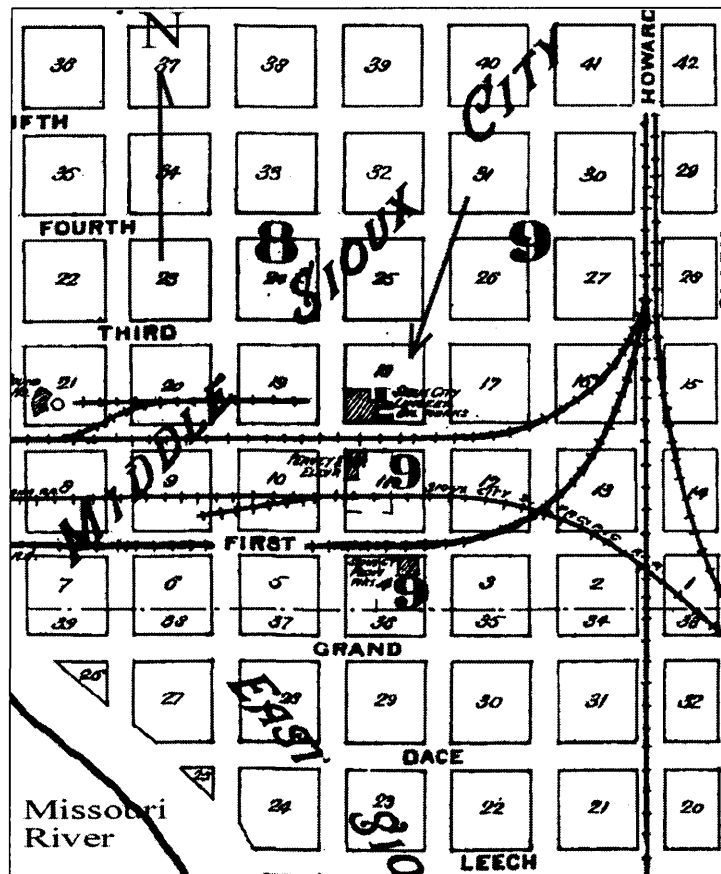


Figure 33: Overview of oil mill site (arrow), 1884 Sanborn Map, Sioux City (directional arrow and river label added)

The first of a reported total of 300,000 board feet of lumber began to arrive on site on September 28. By October 10 the brickwork of the chimney was "well under way" and the overall foundation work was nearly finished (finished the week after

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October 17). Work on the perimeter walls started October 17 and a force of carpenters was already at work “getting out materials for the buildings.” By mid-month the new chimney “begins to show away up over surrounding buildings.” The work site was a public attraction. The *Journal* observed “The big chimney to the oil mill from a distance looks not unlike a shot tower, and the laborers on the structure and on tracks near by are sufficient to make a small town in themselves. It is a busy sight and well worth a visit” (*Journal*, September 29, October 10, 11, 16, 17, 1883).

A brick shortage was experienced by early October and an early frost (October 20) failed to affect the boom. It is probable that locally-produced bricks were used in the building construction but the specific source is not documented and any construction delays due to the brick shortage is also not found. Later that same month a severe labor shortage struck the city. The *Times* observed “It is next to impossible to find any person what wants work of any kind from the laborer to the skilled artisan, and the prices they receive are in advance of anything ever heretofore known.” The same source noted at month’s end, “if the weather is anyway favorable, there will be building going on here all winter, and that next spring there will be more done than in any previous spring in the history of the city” (*Daily Times*, October 2, 30, 1883; *Journal*, October 21, 1883).

Figure 33 places the oil mill site within the context of a planned industrial corridor that would develop along the developing grid of rail lines that crossed the city’s riverfront.

The massive obelisk-shaped chimney was finished in early November. The chimney “looms up high above all surrounding objects” noted the *Daily Times*, adding “work is progressing on the main building, about one half of the material being on the ground” (*Daily Times*, November 8, 1883; January 17, February 21, March 7, 1884).

Work on one of the back buildings, unspecified, was pushed so that it could serve as a carpenter’s shop while the main building was underway. The construction force was increased during the first week of November and the first cold weather shut down the laying of bricks on November 13. Brickwork on the main building started the next day, by which time the walls of the first stories of the storage and cooperage wing were finished. The second floor joists were being set in place. J. P. Dennis & Company fabricated 20 iron oil tanks for the new mill, 16 of these measured from 6 to 10 feet high. Four of the largest, measured 16 feet in diameter, 23 feet in height, and each one weighed 8,500 pounds. The last described “will be put together where they are to stand in the building” (*Journal*, October 24, November 7, 14, 15, 22, 1883).

On November 25, the *Journal* predicted that a part of the complex would be “got under roof” that week. Two days later what had been an unusually warm fall turned wintery with an icy fog and “uncomfortable” winds from the north. By the 28<sup>th</sup> the ferry on the Missouri River was unable to land due to accumulating ice on the Sioux City bank (*Journal*, November 25, 27, 28).

By December 5, the main building’s brick walls were well underway and largely up to the second story level. Work on the third story was to begin the next week. Outside work was curtailed due to the cold weather on December 6. More mild weather allowed work “particularly with smaller buildings” to resume by December 11. The *Times* assured its readers that “the mason work on the oil mill will continue through the winter.” A day later 50 men were working on the oil mill buildings and it was predicted “if the present favorable weather continues, the walls will be completed in three weeks time.” It didn’t continue and the bricklaying was again suspended on the 15<sup>th</sup>. By December 20, the Missouri River was completely frozen and the “ice bridge” offered a free crossing to the daring. Work on the walls again resumed on the 19<sup>th</sup> and the third floor joists were being put in place. By year’s end Hubbard & Gere were credited with the completion of \$30,000 in work on their new oil mill in the end of year progress report (*Journal*, December 5, 7, 11, 12, 20, 1883; January 2, 1884; *Daily Times*, December 20, 1883).

Brickwork once again resumed as weather allowed, on January 9, 1884. By January 23, the final story of the main building was “well along” and only the main end gables remained to be erected. “If the weather holds” this work would be done

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in a week. The weather, once again, declined “to hold” and work was, and remained suspended as of February 12. By that time it was reported that “the roofs are partly on the wings” (*Journal*, January 10, 23, 27, February 12, 1884).

The workmen were back on the building site as of February 15 and the goal remained the same, to rush the enclosing of the main building while work could be done. The main roof was being put in place by February 24. As of the 28<sup>th</sup> the *Journal* noted “The slate is on the wings and the smaller buildings of the oil mill plant. The roof of the main building will be ready for the slaters this week with fair weather.” The brickwork was finally finished the last day of February and only the capping of stone had to be placed on the main building’s roof, apparently on the cornice ends, as is still seen on the surviving 1883 south wing. The *Daily Times* specified “The slate roof and cornice are being put on the new oil mill.” Winter’s final surprise took the form of a blizzard on March 11, shutting down any renewed building or trading. The roof work, already shut down had just been resumed when the storm hit. The roofers came back on the 13<sup>th</sup> and it would take five or six days to finish the roof. That done, the next tasks were laying the floors and putting in the machinery as it arrived (*Daily Times*, March 7, 13, 1884; *Journal*, February 15, 24, 28, March 1, 11, 12, 13, 1884).

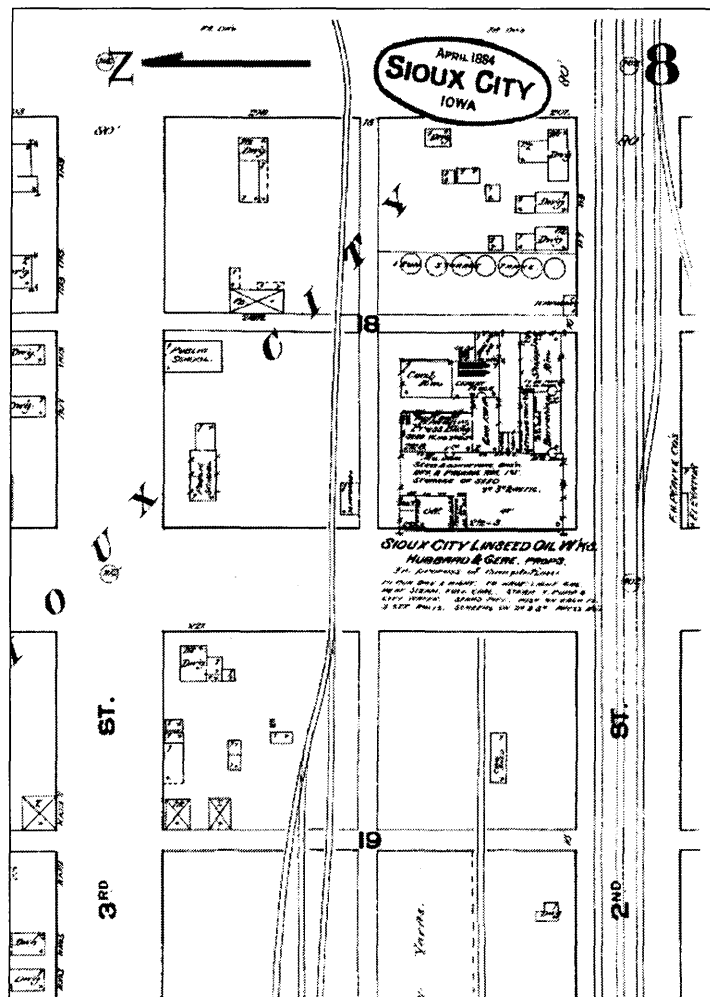


Figure 34: 1884 Sanborn Map, showing the immediate area around the new oil mill, note the flanking rail lines and the storage tanks to the east of the alleyway, the area is still mostly residential with scattered small cottages

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That work was underway by late March when the Journal reported:

The floors are being put in the oil mill and foundations made for the engines and boilers. Across the alley, south [east] of the present buildings, some kind of structure will be built to shelter a nest of oil tanks, for which there was not room in the main building.

A late January notice announced plans to build a flaxseed storage warehouse, measuring 44 by 130 feet, in the same area as the tanks. The total expenditure for all of the oil mill machinery was given at \$35,000 (*Journal*, January 20, March 25, 1884).

By April 1 the first machinery was on site and being put in place. The plant start-up was still four or five months out. The *Times* reported in mid-May that "The finishing work on the oil mill is steadily progressing and will be finished some time in September. Seven immense oil tanks are in progress of erection on the east side of the building." Stone for the foundation for the engine was being received on May 1 and the engine, oil presses and other machinery was to be installed within the next few weeks. With major construction work completed, attention could be finally directed to interior work and ancillary structures. The *Journal* noted "The work is going on leisurely, as no seed can be got for the crushing until the new crop is in." A most impressive parade occurred in mid-month. The *Journal*, again was a spectator: "The immense boiler iron tanks hauled down Fourth street yesterday were made by the Sioux City Foundry and Machine Works for the linseed oil mill." Near month's end the same source noted "The oil mill has its huge out-door tanks mostly in place. They hold several hundred barrels each, and are on stone foundations" (*Daily Times*, April 14, May 14, 1884; *Journal*, May 1, 8, 25, 1884).

The imposing edifice was too substantial to be missed by the July 4 tornado that struck Sioux City's downtown. The *Daily Times*' damage report stated:

The new oil mill received considerable damage, for besides lifting off a portion of the slate roof, one of the great tanks that rest on stone foundations east of the mill, was badly dented and two others shifted from their positions."

That of the *Journal* indicated greater damage, particularly to the outside storage tanks:

...until the linseed oil works were struck. The tall buildings themselves suffered only the loss of a few feet of slating. The heavy iron tanks on stone foundations beside the building fared worse. One was blown over and smashed so as to be useless, and two more were shoved nearly off and hang almost on a balance (*Daily Times*, July 10, 1884; *Journal*, July 6, 1884).

The plant machinery and the steam piping were being tested on August 28-29, 1884. The *Journal*, ever descriptive, penned the following:

Steam was got up yesterday in the boilers of the linseed oil mill. The pump that furnishes the boilers with water was tested and worked well. Steam was turned [on] in the heaters, which are to purify and heat the water before it is forced into the boilers. These needed a little tightening, but otherwise were all right. The engine will be tested after the other parts are made all right. It is planned to begin taking in flax seed about September 5, and to begin crushing seed a few days later.

The factory was abuzz with activity more than a week later, the same source continued:

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The building reporter paid a brief visit to the oil mill yesterday. He found the rooms alive with workmen. The heavy machinery is in place, but there is still fitting up and connecting to do, and it will be several days before the crushing of seed begins.

Final steam tests were performed on September 11, a few days before the plant went into operation. Kinks in the new system were still being iron out as of early October when a steam pipe burst and operations halted for repair. A piston on the hydraulic pump failed in early November but operations continued as its replacement part was awaited (*Daily Times*, August 29, October 8, 1884; *Journal*, August 29, September 6, 12, November 8, 1884).

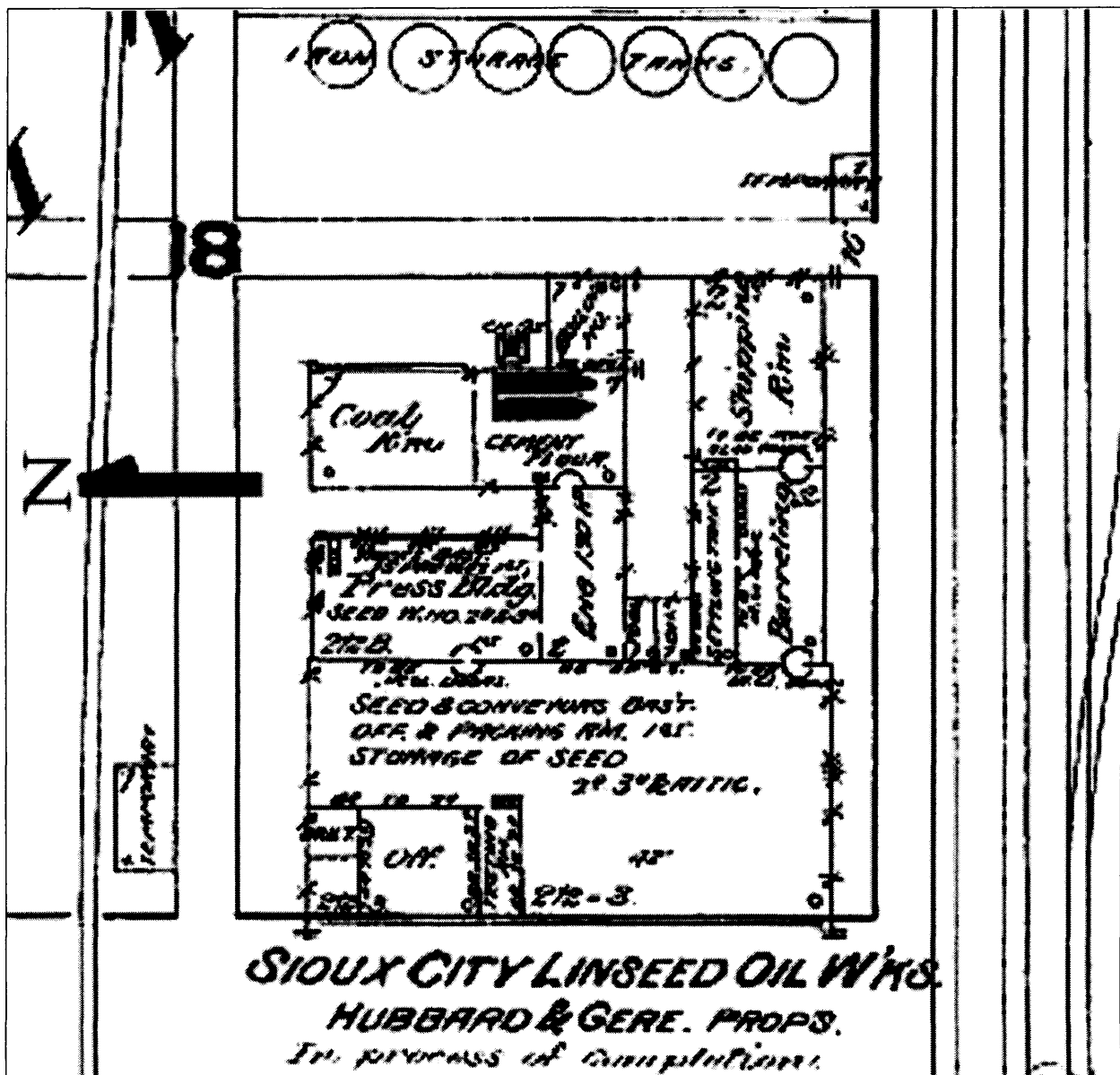


Figure 35: 1884 Sanborn Map detail, showing a still incomplete factory complex

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An associated flax-related industry, a bag and twine or rope works, was established in Sioux City in the spring of 1884 by other entrepreneurs. The *Journal* observed:

This new enterprise will be a valuable adjunct to the oil mill, and the latter will be a heavy patron of the former, for oil cake is packed for shipping in course sacking, just such as the flax mill will make. The two mills must give a must give a big impetus to flax culture in the tributary country, for with the oil mill taking the seed, and the flax mill the straw, it must be a profitable crop to raise. The straw as it comes from the thresher would be worth as much as hay, or, say \$3 per ton; but as soon as farmers could familiarize themselves with the proper methods for curing the straw they could make it a source of much greater profit, for it would then be worth from \$20 to \$30 per ton...

This allied operation reflected the boosterism of the day and hopes for the fullest exploitation of the flax by-products. The tow plant appears to have had a short life, probably due to the fact that two different strains of the flax plant produced oil or fiber, but not both from the same plant (*Daily Times*, April 3, 10, May 15, June 3, July 22, and September 23, 1883; *Journal*, September 23, 28, 1883; April 26, May 17, September 27, 1884).

Starting Plant Operations:

Threshed flax seed was shipped to the new plant, so this relatively light-weight commodity could be shipped some distance. As previously discussed, there was little locally-grown flax available when the plant construction was begun in mid-1883. The plant's promoters acted immediately to begin to promote its growth. The *Daily Times* recalled:

Our flax mill company sowed the seeds of business last year, by distributing large amounts of flax seed amongst the farmers all through this region. The company is reaping the benefits in the carloads of flax daily arriving at the mill.

As early as April 1884, the *Journal* had reported "the linseed oil mill company is furnishing a great many farmers here abouts with seed flax" (*Daily Times*, October 1, 1884; *Journal*, April 4, 1884).

The *Journal* was monitoring the beginning of plant operations. On September 7 it reported "the oil mill is expected to start about the middle of this week. Considerable flax seed has been taken in, both from car and wagon, the wagon price being \$1.08 [per bushel]." Several weeks later, it was noted "the linseed oil works is rapidly getting down to harness. The machinery does its work well and the workmen are rapidly growing skilled." By mid-October, another report: "The oil mill is running steadily day and night, excepting from midnight of Saturday to midnight of Sunday" (*Journal*, September 7, 23, October 17, 1884).

Money talks and the new oil mill quickly commanded the locally available flax seed crop. Again, the *Journal*: "The fact that the new oil mill pays a higher price for flax seed than is paid anywhere within a radius of forty miles of the city is bringing a great deal of flax seed to this market." This special local subsidy continued. As of early November it was noted "The mill is, and has been, paying about 5 cents more per bushel for wagon lots than could be paid for shipment" (*Journal*, October 2, November 8, 1884).

Despite this locally high price, the best flax seed wasn't the locally produced crop and the majority of the seed was coming to the plant from some distance to the west:

The oil mill is receiving flax seed by the train load these days, mostly from Dakota. The best seed comes from that territory. The Russians that settled in Yankton and Bon Homme counties in 1876 brought over with them a

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new variety of flax, the grains of which are much larger and plumper than the common kind. It is from this little start of Russian seed that most of the flax of southeastern Dakota is now grown.

Clearly the Hubbard and Gear operation was able to tap into this precious seed oil source, likely using Hubbard's chain of elevators (*Journal*, October 7, 1884).

Initial Accolades and Operational Plaudits:

The new plant was lauded for its potential well before it began operation in the fall of 1884. The *Weekly Tribune* compiled an end-of-year progress report at the close of 1883, and the new mill was highlighted at that time:

THE NOTABLE EVENT OF THE YEAR was the commencing in midsummer, by Messrs. Hubbard & Gere, of the erection of a linseed oil mill, upon which already \$50,000 has been expended, and which will require, when completed and fitted up with the designed plant and machinery, an expenditure of over \$125,000. This acquisition is valuable, not only to Sioux City, but to the tributary agricultural country for 200 miles around it, giving a home market for flax, which is fast becoming a staple product in this section" (*Weekly Tribune*, January 1, 1884).

The *Weekly Tribune* explained why Sioux City was "a booming place" as of early 1884, and highlighted the potential for the mill as one key reason and proof of great things to follow:

The linseed oil mill is another gigantic industry that will greatly benefit Sioux City. The capacity of the mill will be larger than any similar one in the country and will encourage the raising of flax by our farmers, for which a good price will be paid."

The *Weekly Tribune* rated the new oil mill as marking "an epoch" in the city's history. Continuing, "it is a magnificent enterprise, worthy of a great metropolitan place..." A month later, that same source reported on the mill operation, finally underway:

The new oil mill is running regularly every day. There are between forty and fifty men employed there at present. The manager states that all the flax that is needed for the present is on hand. It is worth \$1.15 per bushel on the track in this city. It should be remembered that Sioux City has the largest single oil mill in the world. Des Moines boasts of the largest distillery, we prefer the former.

On October 9, the *Tribune* added "The oil mill is now shipping oil cake and linseed oil to Europe." Near month's end, the following report appeared:

Some idea of the business done by the great oil mill may be had when it is remembered that they pay the Milwaukee [railroad] company for freight charges alone between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per week (*Weekly Tribune*, March 20, September 4, October 2, 9, 23, 1884).

During its first full month of operation, October, the plant shipped 800 barrels of linseed oil

The Inside Scoop:

With a factory of such scale and promise, it is no surprise that at least one reporter thought it newsworthy to obtain a tour of the new facility. The *Weekly Tribune* provided the investigator and at least his initial report:



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**THE GREAT OIL MILL**

A TRIBUNE reporter called at the new linseed oil mill Thursday to get a few points of interest for our readers in regard to the workings of that industry which is to be of such vast importance to Sioux City and the surrounding country.

The building is a mammoth three-story brick, which, with the machinery now in use, has required the expenditure of about \$150,000. Some idea of the magnitude of the business now being done may be obtained when it is remembered that an average of 25 carloads of flax seed are received daily. Two carloads of oil cake and 3,500 gallons of oil are made every day, the former being shipped to New York and Europe, where its value as a food for stock is well understood. In answer to a question regarding this point, Mr. Gere, the manager and one of the proprietors, said; "The farmers do not understand yet, that oil cake is the best thing in the world for stock. But such is the case. It gives a healthy tone to the system, is easily digested and assimilated and makes the animal plump and sleek.

Two samples of oil from the first lot made were shown the reporter, one thoroughly refined, the other partially. The first was the purest and cleanest we ever saw, not a particle of sediment being deposited in the bottle. "We are making the best oil in the country," continued Mr. Gere, "and wish the people to understand that when they want a first-class grade of oil, it can be found in Sioux City."

To give some idea of the greatness of this industry and its importance to the business of Sioux City, a simple mathematical calculation will suffice. The mill will use 450,000 bushels of flax seed annually. If the yield when grown averages 15 bushels to the acre it will require 30,000 acres of land to produce the required amount of seed. Farther, this means an average of at least \$1 a bushel, and the distribution among the farmers of the northwest of nearly half a million dollars annually. But this is not all. It will be interesting to explain the workings of the mill, -- how the oil is pressed out and the oil cake made, and describe the intricate and powerful machinery used in the process, but we will defer that until some future day [not yet found] week (*Weekly Tribune*, October 16, 1884).

The *Journal* sent its own reporter, not to be outdone by the *Times*:

**THE OIL MILL**

**Lots of Flax Seed Coming In-Works Smoothly-Exporting Oil Cake-An Improved Variety**

A visit to the great linseed oil works yesterday found everything permeated with activity and the smell of raw oil not unpleasant, much like that which comes from newly cooked beans. The workmen have grown much more skillful than at first, and execute the varied and rapid movements required in putting the ground grain to press with a brawny grace that is full of interest to the leisurely looker-on. On either side of the mill the cars on track are unloading their slippery treasures. So far over 200 carloads of flax seed have been received, mostly from Dakota. A variety of flax brought to Dakota by the Russians proves much the most prolific of oil. The grain is larger than the native variety and the yield per acre proportionately more. The oil mill company will give out a great deal of this Russian seed the coming season, and it is planted in a year or two to entirely crowd out the inferior native flax with the imported variety. The oil cake, the board-like pumice left after the oil is pressed out, is shipped to England, where it is fed to cattle. Probably in time stockmen here will wake up to the value of this oil cake for fattening cattle, and will use it in making beef instead of feeding corn exclusively. So far about 30 carloads of oil cake have been started for New York to be put on board ship for the English market. Flax seed is mostly marketed by the flax farmers during the later fall and early winter. The oil mill will continue to receive here until its storage capacity is exhausted, and will then store in elevators at the flax-buying stations. Quite an amount of flax seed is coming to the oil mill by wagon, mostly from the northeast part of this county and the southern part of Plymouth. The oil mill is able to pay somewhat more for flax seed than buyers at Kingsley or LeMars can pay for shipment, and this higher price brings in the seed from the

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farmers near these stations. The ponderous and somewhat intricate oil machinery works with unusual smoothness for so new a mill...(*Journal*, October 25, 1884).

The *Journal* account documents the high level of competition between the crushers. A huge storage capacity was a pre-requisite and a seed supply had to be quickly acquired and stored before the competition could secure it. Farmers had to retain a considerable part of this valuable crop as well. A mid-December railroad grain report from Sheldon, Iowa, noted "there is yet considerable flax in the farmers' hands, but they will carry over more to use or sell for seed than they did last year" (*Journal*, December 12, 1884).

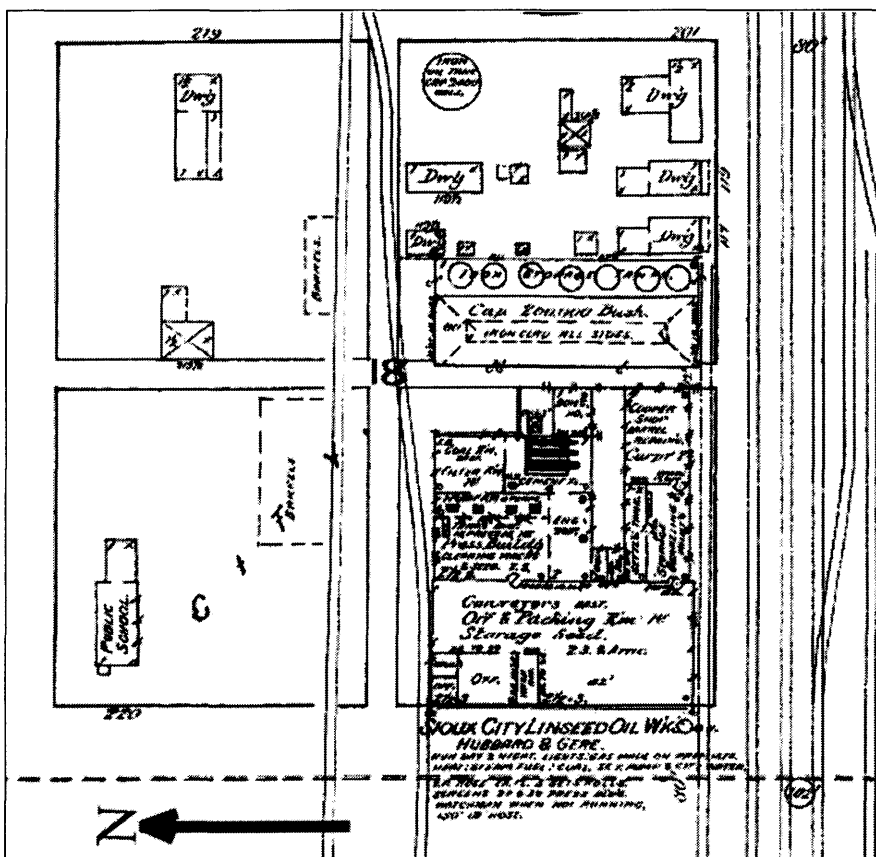


Figure 36: August 1886 Sanborn Map detail

Company Operations, 1884-1891:

Figure 36 depicts the operating plant two years after it began operation. The neighborhood remains largely residential and there is a small school immediately north of the factory. Several barrel storage areas are north of the alley and a metal-clad elevator with monitor roof has been completed along the east side of the back alley. There is one large iron tank on the east end of the half block. Note the spur railroad line running along the south side of the factory. The Sanborn Maps are the only source that specifies the number of oil presses in use in the building, that being 15 presses. That same number is given for its entire period of operation.

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Woodbury County, Iowa

The *Weekly Tribune* included the following oil mill account in a review of major local manufactories which ran in late 1885:

The Sioux City Linseed Oil mills, run by Hubbard & Gere, is another large concern. Capt. T. P. Gere is in charge of the business here. Most of the work is done by machinery, in which \$10,000 was invested this year. A new elevator was also erected at an expense of \$20,000.

The entire plant is now, including the immense buildings and machinery, is valued at more than \$250,000. The amount of business done may be estimated from the fact that it requires \$400,000 to buy the seed used annually. About 50 men are employed. The product is sold in Boston, New York, New Orleans, San Francisco, and other points as rapidly as it can be supplies (*Weekly Tribune*, December 17, 1885).

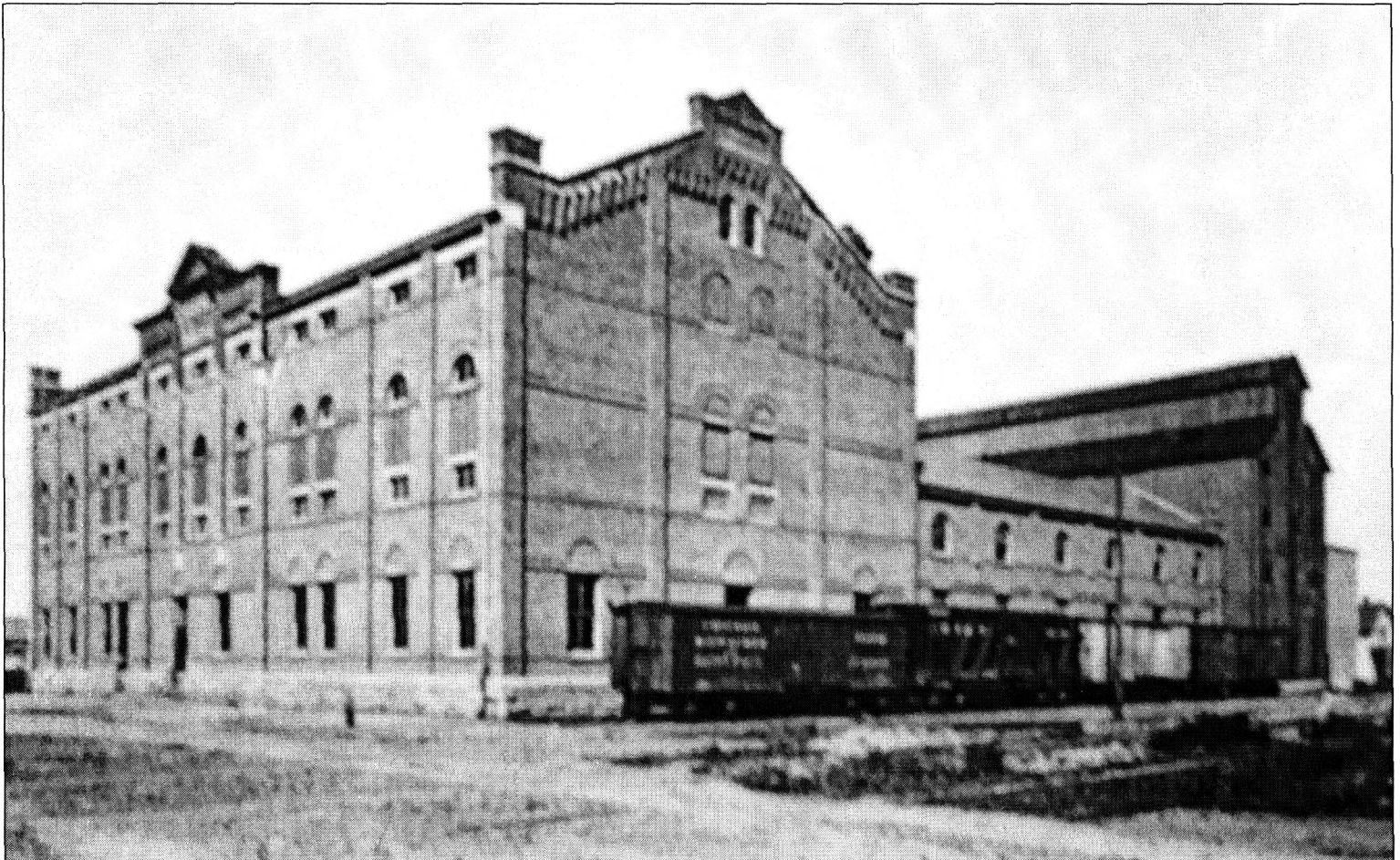


Figure 37: The new plant viewed towards the northeast, c.1888  
(Sioux City, Iowa, c.1888)

Figure 37 is an exceptionally detailed view of the new plant. Note the stone foundation line, the fenestration pattern, the lack of any formal front entrance, and the rear (south) wing and elevator. The row of seven standing storage tanks, formerly exposed to the weather, has been protected by a flat-roofed frame building (visible to the right of the rear elevator)

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The immediate success of the oil plant and its impact on flax growing is reflected in the claim made that by 1889, half of the nation's flax was being grown within a 150-mile radius of Sioux City. The plant operation during the year 1889 yielded a total of 25,000 barrels of linseed oil, worth \$625,000 and 10,000 tons of oil cake, worth \$175,000. Total product value thus was \$800,000. The company stock was valued at \$400,000 and 50 men worked at the plant (*Journal*, January 1, 1890; July 24, 1940).

The firm operated as Hubbard and Gere until 1887 when it was re-titled the Sioux City Linseed Oil Works. In that year its capital stock was valued at \$300,000 and a surplus of \$66,000 was reported. Ira W. Hubbard, a city resident, was first listed as plat superintendent, while Gere was company treasurer and manager.

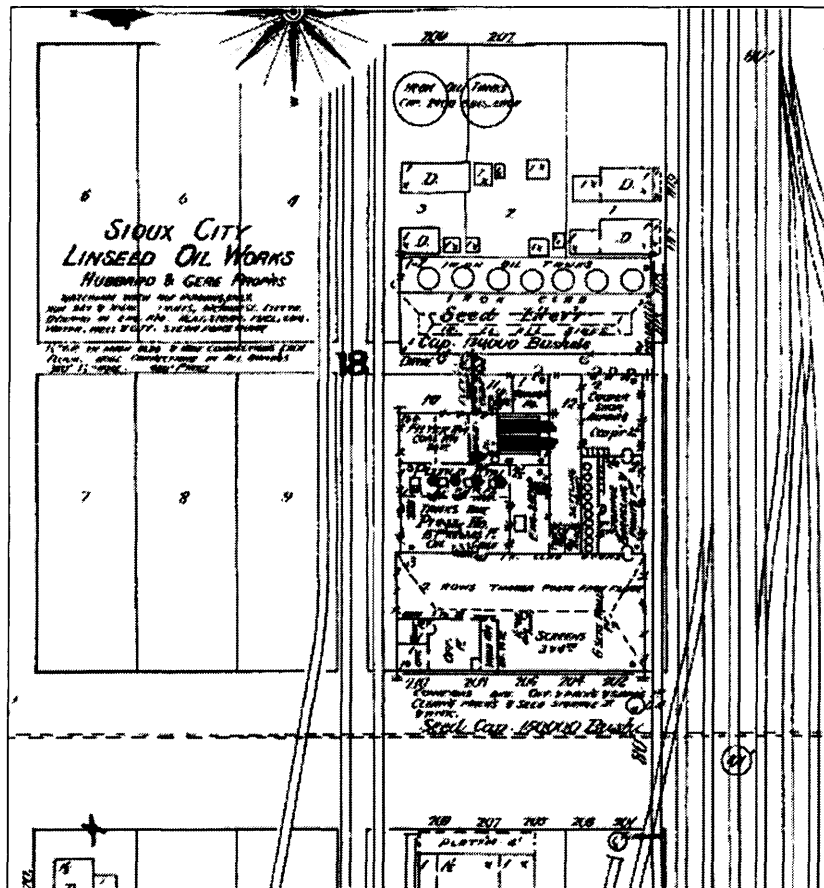


Figure 38: Detail, 1890 Sanborn Map

Industrial consolidation was a national reality by the early 1890s in most lines of business. The management of the plant by R. D. Hubbard and T. P. Gere ended c.March-April 1890 when the National Linseed Oil Company acquired the company. The date of acquisition is yet to be specified. As early as 1887 the National Linseed Oil Company is listed in city directories with offices at the same address as the oil mill. It is possible that the Sioux City oil works had some form of voluntary association with the trust at first, but that an unfriendly takeover followed in early 1890. The new owner was a voluntary business collective that included 65 of the leading oil mills in the country including “nearly all of the mills in the Central States” with a combined stock of \$18,000,000. It was rated “one of the strongest organizations in the country” given its

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Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

Woodbury County, Iowa

broad membership and corporate assets. The *Tribune* described the unfriendly takeover and its effect on Captain Gere's financial resources:

At the height of financial career, Mr. Gere was said to be worth between \$250,000 and \$300,000. He lost more than half of this fortune in the linseed oil business when the trust bore down upon him and his partner. He was reluctant to close the oil concern and, backed by several other local men, he held on for some time until he was losing money at the rate of as much as \$60,000 in two weeks, according to competent authority. After sinking a large amount of money this way, he was forced to sell out at a great loss

R. D. Hubbard, in this account, stood by Gere, but in truth, the 1887 city directory identifies Hubbard as the vice president of the National Linseed Oil Company! Captain Gere stayed on as manager and Hubbard is no longer listed with the local company. By this time the plant was considered to be "one of the best in the combine" with a value of \$800,000. Its daily output was 80,000 pounds of oil cake and 100 barrels of linseed oil (*Weekly Tribune*, May 20, 1891; *Daily Tribune*, January 9, 1912; *Weekly Journal*, May 21, 1891).

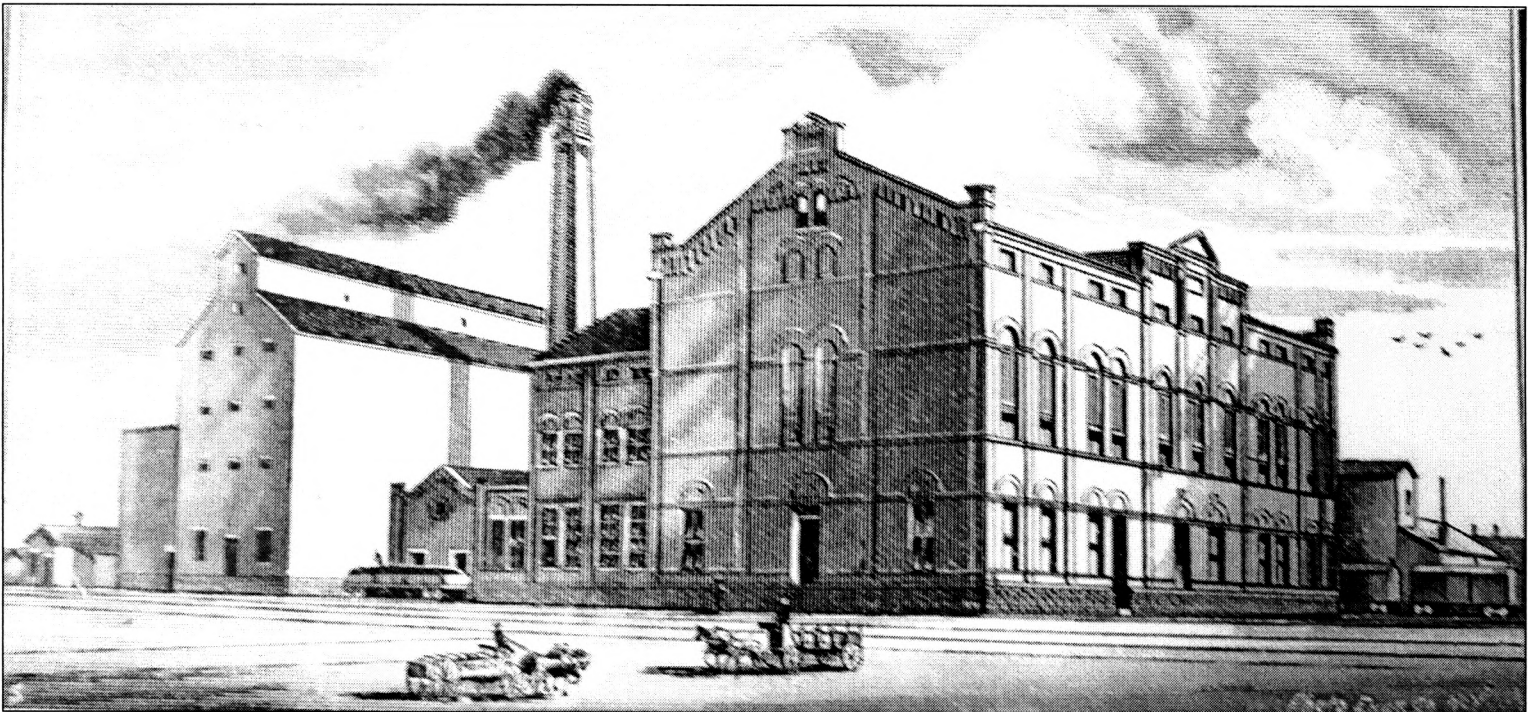


Figure 39: Sioux City Linseed Oil Works, view southeast, c.1890  
(*Sioux City Illustrated*, c.1890)

By 1890 the north half of the block had been cleared of buildings to allow for rail yard expansion. The area was slowly gaining other factories but the linseed oil plant was increasingly isolated by expanding railroad tracks on the north and south sides. The east end factory appendages were increasingly connected with low-level frame buildings. The original purpose for the separations of the wings was presumably for fire-risk reduction. An open courtyard separated the rear two wings. Cottages still occupied the east end of the company's half block and there were two large storage tanks at the east end of the property.

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Figure 39 clearly shows that the supposedly elongated second floor windows are not open, but are covered with some type of infilling panels. There is but a single off-set façade entrance. A coal car stands alongside the coal house at the back of the complex. Notice that the northern part of the block is devoid of any buildings.

The 1891 Woodbury County History was equally enthusiastic about the oil mill. The mill was “prominent among Sioux City’s gigantic business enterprises” and was “one of the largest linseed oil-mills in the United States.” The same source continued “The plant is a model of modern skill, and ranks second to none in the world in amount of oil produced...the location being influenced by the fact that Sioux City was in the center of the flax-growing belt...Five hundred thousand bushels of flax seed are consumed annually by these mills (1891 Woodbury County History, p. 221).

**NOTICE.**

---

**STOCK MEN** who are using **GROUND OIL CAKE** are delivering the best stock and getting the best prices. Large feeders are buying in lots of 200 to 300 tons. We deliver large or small lots in 100 lb. bags ground fine, pea or nut size, as preferred. This is the very best feed known for cattle, sheep and hogs. Write to us for circulars and prices.

**SIoux CITY LINSEED OIL WORKS.**

Figure 40: Local oil cake sales are realized (*Journal*, January 2, 1891)

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Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

Woodbury County, Iowa

**MAKING LINSEED OIL**

This is One of Sioux City's Leading Industries

**CAPACITY OF THE BIG MILL**

It Is the Finest Equipped Plant in the World

**THE PROFITABLE FLAX CROP**

During 1890 It Brought More Money to the Farmers of the Northwest  
Than Any Other of Like Volume—Some Facts and Figures

One of the leading industries of Sioux City, and one of the most valuable to the country outside, is the great linseed oil mill located here, which furnishes a market for a large portion of the flax crop of this section each year. The works turn out daily 100 barrels of oil and 80,000 pounds of oil cake. To produce this it will use over 600,000 bushels of flax seed during 1891, most of which has already been purchased, at a cost of over \$750,000. This amount has been distributed to the farmers of this vicinity during the past few months. Ninety percent of the flax crop of 1890 has already been marketed, according to Capt. Gere, manager of the works. The captain states that the crop of the past season was better in the section of country immediately tributary to Sioux City than in any other part of the country. Owing to the shortness of crop in the country at large, the farmers have received unusually high prices. In this region, the crop was one of the best ever raised, and was larger than any raised for the four years previous. This, taken with the high prices, has been an important factor in the generally prosperous condition of the farmers in the country tributary to this point.

The mill here is probably the most complete and finely equipped in the word, and although it is perhaps not the largest, it handles an amount of flax, and produces an amount of product equal to any other mill. The \$750,000 paid to farmers for their flax, becomes about \$1,000,000 in product, when cost of manufacture, transportation and profit is added.

The plant as it stood, when ready for operation had cost \$465,000.

Fifty hands are employed and the work is steady, the mill running regularly through the year. The work, however, is mainly done by machinery.

One of the notable features of the business of 1890 to which Capt. Gere called attention is the rapidly increasing demand for oil cake, which is the meal remaining after the oil has been pressed out of the flax seed. It is valuable to stock raisers, as it has been proved to be one of the best and cheapest condition powders that can be had. A very small amount of it fed each day, keeps stock in good condition. Until recently the home demand for this article has come largely from abroad, and it was shipped from the greatest cattle country in the world to Europe. But the last season has seen a rapid change in conditions for the last few months the home demand has been such that very little of the product has been left for exportation. Capt. Gere considers this an indication that American stock raisers are coming to an appreciation of the fact that quality is as important a consideration as numbers, and that a little care and attention will greatly increase the profits of the business (*Journal*, January 1, 1891).

The Fire Fiend Strikes:

The uppermost floor of the main building was found to be filled with smoke at midnight on May 20, 1891. The night shift fought the blaze using the standpipe hoses on several floors. The fire alarm was delayed due to technical reasons and by the time three fire companies reached the scene, the fire was out of control, in fact the flames were bursting through the roof even before any water was thrown. Firefighters directed their efforts to containing the blaze in the main building and the press room annex that adjoined it on the northeast rear. The roof fell in at 2:00 a.m. and it carried the successive floors into the basement. The brick walls were already glowing red from the heat but the continuing blaze doomed the very thick walls. The south and east walls fell outwards from the second floor up, being joined by a part of the north wall soon after. The falling of the walls actually aided the firemen by giving them access to the fire that had by then entered into the pressroom annex. By

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3:00 a.m. the fire was under control. Total loss to the factory was estimated at \$150,000 with insurance coverage of \$62,000 (*Tribune*, May 20, 1891; *Weekly Journal*, May 21, 1891).

The wonder was that the entire plant did not burn. The *Tribune* observed "...the engine room, elevator, oil room, and cooper department escaped. There were several thousand barrels of oil in storage, and if the flames had reached this building it would have furnished the hottest fire on record in the history of the city" (*Tribune*, May 20, 1891).

Captain Gere saved his desk and company papers and he put on his bravest affect as crowds massed about the still-smoking ruins the following day, and reporters badgered him with rumors that the plant would close or relocate to nearby Leeds, an industrial suburb. Gere optimistically stated that if the mill had to burn, there was no better time for it to do so. The present season was in its final days and just enough time was available to have the plant back in operation by the time the present flax crop was ready for harvest. He discounted the rumors of a move as "unfounded" and continued:

Our present site is the most valuable one in Sioux City to us because of the superior railway facilities we have there and the fact that the most valuable of our buildings are still there and not damaged. The foundation walls of the burned building I do not think were damaged in the least, with the exception of the stone column supports in the center of the building" (*Weekly Journal*, May 21, 1891).

There was time but not a lot of time and it took three weeks for the insurance adjusters to finally tally the exposure of the numerous Chicago-based insurance policies. This was accomplished by the end of the first week of June 1891 and Captain Gere was satisfied with what he said was a settlement of between \$40,000 and \$50,000. The fire ruins were cleared away by mid-June, the unsteady sections of wall being pulled down, and it was determined that the north and south end walls of the main building were salvageable from the second floor level up. The rows of stone foundation pyramids, exposed in the basement as their 1891 replacements are today, were disintegrated by the heat of the blaze and were replaced. Given the re-use of the original stone foundations, the new main building had the same dimensions and would be "of the same architectural style," but with an additional story, was to be a true and consistent five stories high. The plant capacity was not reduced but the additional space was "large enough so that the capacity can be materially increased if occasion demands." The *Weekly Tribune* stressed in mid-July that "the capacity of the new mill will be considerable more than the old one." Opportunists were at hand and on June 27, the *Daily Tribune* noted "The ruins of the oil mill were pilfered Thursday night and a large amount of brasses were taken" (*Weekly Tribune*, June 13, July 13, 16, 1891; *Daily Tribune*, June 20, 27, 1891).

**A New Architect Steps In:**

Architect William D. McLaughlin (1864-1897) of Duluth, Minnesota, was called to Sioux City to take on the uncompleted work of the ailing Sioux City architect E. W. Loft (1854-1890). Loft was highly skilled and designed the prototype Corn Palace (1887) and all of the Boston Syndicate-financed business blocks. McLaughlin appears to have solely designed a four-story block for the same investors in 1891. McLaughlin was partnered with J. Walter Stevens of Minneapolis as of 1891, when he designed the replacement oil mill buildings. The significance of architect McLaughlin's re-design of the mill is difficult to evaluate given that architecturally, he pretty much copied and made taller the pre-existing building. He also rebuilt the press room annex, adjusting its floor levels and adding floors there as well (Shank, pp. 108-09, 114-115; Sioux City Public Museum, Orwig).

McLaughlin's most significant designs included the Bolton Block (Romanesque style, Hamilton and West 2<sup>nd</sup>, non-extant); the Security National Bank (Romanesque style, stone exterior, 1895, 4<sup>th</sup> and Nebraska, non-extant); Hanford Produce (Virginia and Court, extant); Union Stock Yards (particularly the Livestock Exchange Building, 1894, non-extant); Lindholm Block (5<sup>th</sup> and Douglas, 1894, non-extant); Shepard Apartments or Flats (14<sup>th</sup> and Pierce, altered beyond recognition); Sioux City and Northern Railroad Freight House (non-extant); T. S. Martin's Store (4<sup>th</sup> Street, actually a new façade for an 1885



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At the height of financial career, Mr. Gere was said to be worth between \$250,000 and \$300,000. He lost more than half of this fortune in the linseed oil business when the trust bore down upon him and his partner. He was reluctant to close the oil concern and, backed by several other local men, he held on for some time until he was losing money at the rate of as much as \$60,000 in two weeks, according to competent authority. After sinking a large amount of money this way, he was forced to sell out at a great loss

R. D. Hubbard, in this account, stood by Gere, but in truth, the 1887 city directory identifies Hubbard as the vice president of the National Linseed Oil Company! Captain Gere stayed on as manager and Hubbard is no longer listed with the local company. By this time the plant was considered to be "one of the best in the combine" with a value of \$800,000. Its daily output was 80,000 pounds of oil cake and 100 barrels of linseed oil (*Weekly Tribune*, May 20, 1891; *Daily Tribune*, January 9, 1912; *Weekly Journal*, May 21, 1891).

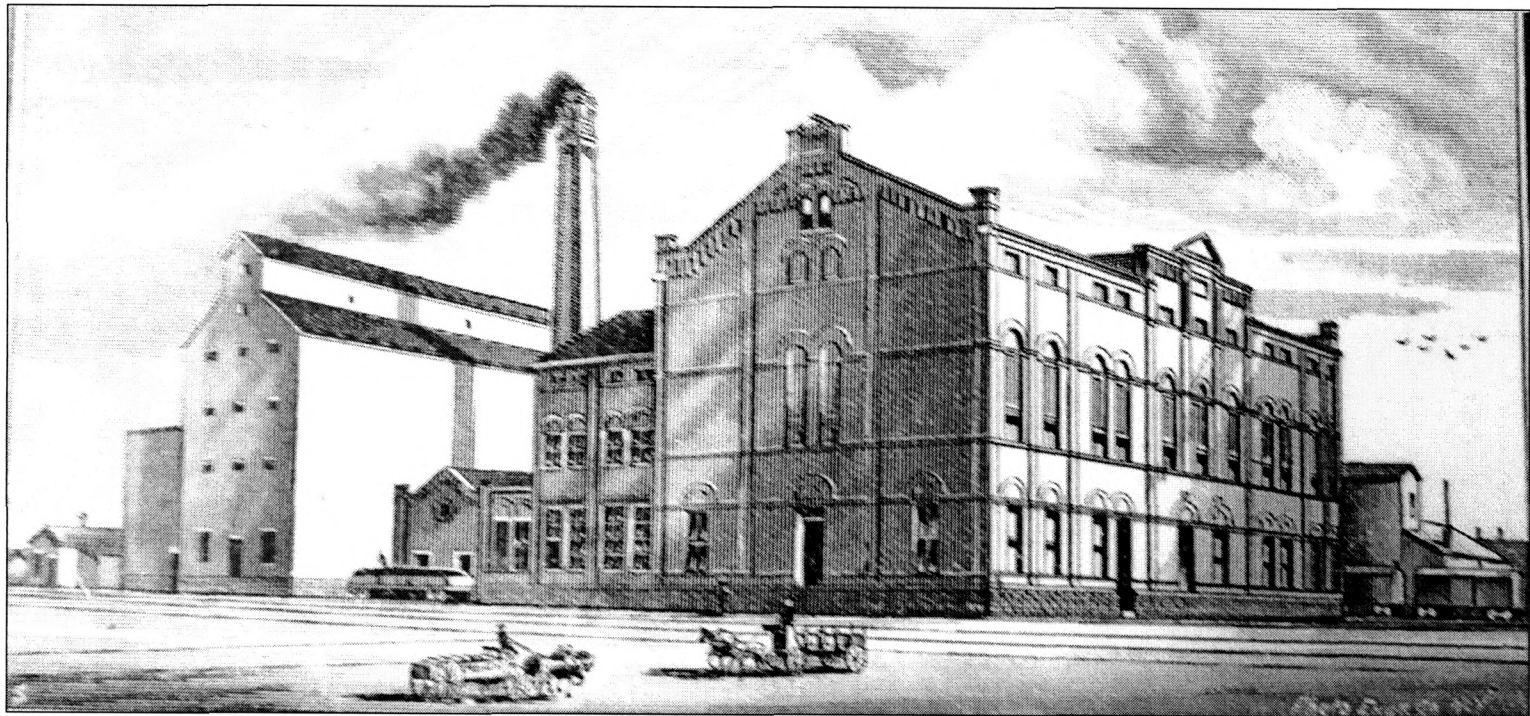


Figure 39: Sioux City Linseed Oil Works, view southeast, c.1890  
(*Sioux City Illustrated*, c.1890)

By 1890 the north half of the block had been cleared of buildings to allow for rail yard expansion. The area was slowly gaining other factories but the linseed oil plant was increasingly isolated by expanding railroad tracks on the north and south sides. The east end factory appendages were increasingly connected with low-level frame buildings. The original purpose for the separations of the wings was presumably for fire-risk reduction. An open courtyard separated the rear two wings. Cottages still occupied the east end of the company's half block and there were two large storage tanks at the east end of the property.

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impressive 800,000 bushels, "which is about one-third more than the capacity of the old plant." Fifty workers were employed and Captain Gere remained as manager. The same source continued:

Considering all features, the plant is now the most complete and comprehensive in the country. The amount which will be paid out for flax seed of the crop of 1891 will, approximate close to \$850,000. This amount will be distributed within a radius of 100 miles of Sioux City, and by far the greater part within much less distance. The price paid for flax is not nearly as high as that paid in 1890, but the yield is so much larger that the returns to the farmers will show rather an increase than a falling off (*Journal*, January 1, 1892).

The falling market price for flaxseed presumably reflected greater quantities of seed brought to market but might have reflected the coming national economic downturn. This account appears to overstate the role of locally raised flaxseed to the oil mill, in light of earlier accounts that emphasized sources located much further west.

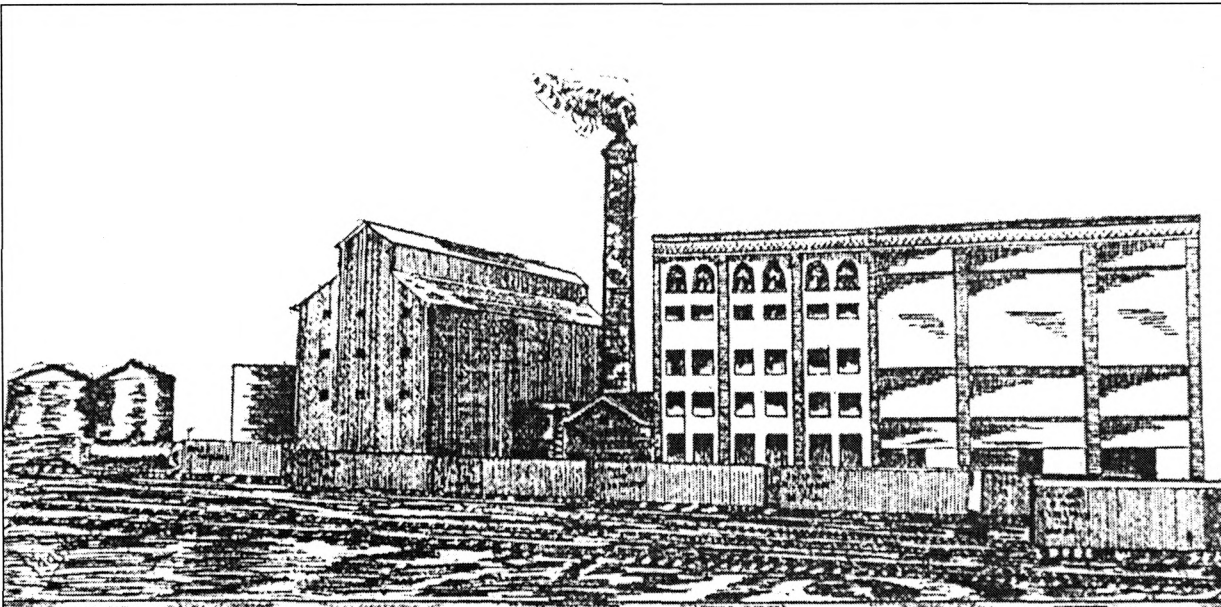


Figure 41: The new linseed oil mill, view southeast, 1892  
(*Tribune*, December 31, 1892)

Figure 41 illustrates how the main building and the pressroom annex were both raised up to a full five-story height. Note how the main building end wall fenestration was restricted to shipping doors on the north alleyway side. The north half of the block is covered with railroad track. The *Tribune* noted "The mill has created an active market for flax in this city and is a continual benefit to the agricultural districts of the northwest. It gives employment to fifty men and has an output annually of 4500,000 to \$700,000 of product (*Tribune*, December 31, 1892).

The post-rebuilding listings in local city directories (1892-1899) continue to list the firm as the Sioux City Linseed Oil Works, with Captain Gere as manager, James E. Adams, as cashier and Ira Hubbard as superintendent. The National Linseed Oil Company is listed at the same offices (northeast corner, Third and Court, rather than at the plant address) but its officers all resided in Chicago where corporate offices were located.

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Woodbury County, Iowa

**SIOUX CITY LINSEED OIL WORKS.**  
REBUILT 1891.  
**PRESENT CAPACITY, 800,000 BUSHELS FLAX SEED PER YEAR.**  
WE ARE NOW MANUFACTURING DAILY  
**SIX THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED GALLONS FILTERED LINSEED OIL.**

---

Note that every barrel of our oil is **GUARANTEED TO BE WITHOUT ANY ADULTERATION WHATEVER.**  
Keep this in mind when you have painting to do, and do not buy some inferior substitute that will cause your paint to scale and fall off in one season. We are now manufacturing daily

**ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND POUNDS LINSEED CAKE.**

Observe the industrial fact that our sales of **GROUND LINSEED CAKE** for domestic use last year amounted to over sixteen million pounds. This is not a medicine, but a feed, one pound of which is equal to three pounds of any other feed, and it is adapted alike to cattle, sheep and hogs. The American farmer is beginning to take the profit from this article which has heretofore largely gone to Europe. Write to us for prices.

**SIOUX CITY LINSEED OIL WORKS.**

Figure 42: Sioux City Linseed Oil Works advertisement, end of 1891 (*Journal*, January 1, 1892)

This post-reconstruction local advertisement (Figure 42) provides informative production figures and shows that the oil mill continued to educate local stock raisers as to the feed value of its oil cake by-product. It is of interest that the advertisement stressed product purity as the key to producing a better class paint. Here the wholesaler of the raw product (oil) is selling the public on a finished product (paint) that it didn't produce (*Journal*, January 1, 1892).

An 1894 end-of-year report by the *Tribune* offered an update to a business that had successfully survived the difficult economic times of the early part of the decade as well as the local implosion of the Sioux City boom years:

**National Linseed Oil Company**

The National Linseed Oil company's plant, at the corner of Third and Court streets, is one of the largest manufacturing establishments in the city. The mill has been in operation here for a long time past, but has been so much enlarged and improved from time to time that it can hardly be recognized as the same institution as the one originally established in the city something like ten or twelve years ago.

The concern employs from fifty to seventy-five men. During the busy season it is run night and day and has a capacity at such times of 3,000 bushels of flax seed every twenty-four hours.

The seed when first received is carried to the top floor of the factory, and screened. It is next run into bins from which it is finally taken to be ground. The next course is that of steaming and when it reaches the presses by which the oil is extracted it is in the form of a fine meal. After the process of pressing, the oil is run

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into tanks from which it is only taken to be shipped to Chicago, St. Louis, Minneapolis and other cities where it is sold to the various dealers. The meal left after the oil has been extracted is pressed into cakes and sold to the farmers with whom it is becoming popular for fattening stock and horses. Captain T. P. Gere is the local manager of the company. The other officers are all non-residents (*Tribune*, December 31, 1894).

<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">NORTHWESTERN IOWA * *</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">NORTHERN NEBRASKA * *</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">SOUTH DAKOTA * * * *</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA</td></tr> </table>	NORTHWESTERN IOWA * *	NORTHERN NEBRASKA * *	SOUTH DAKOTA * * * *	SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA	<h2 style="margin: 0;">THE MATCHLESS NORTHWEST</h2> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">WITH</p> <h3 style="margin: 0;">SIOUX CITY IN ITS CENTER.</h3>
NORTHWESTERN IOWA * *					
NORTHERN NEBRASKA * *					
SOUTH DAKOTA * * * *					
SOUTHWESTERN MINNESOTA					
<b>FLAX SEED</b>	<small>No Shipper in this Region can afford to send his Flax Seed elsewhere. This is the Best Market.</small> <b>TRY US FOR A PRICE.</b>	<b>FLAX SEED</b>			
<small>See that Brands on Barrels Are like Those Shown on This sheet.</small>	<h2 style="margin: 0;">LINSEED OIL.</h2> <p style="margin: 5px 0;"><b>WE GUARANTEE ALL LINSEED OIL</b></p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;"><small>Manufactured by us to be PURE; that it is made from Flax-seed by steam heat and pressure; that our Boiled Oil contains only the very best driers known.</small></p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;"><small>Cheap Advertisements are offered by Unprincipled Dealers to the Trade, also so-called Boiled Oil composed of no Permanent Value.</small></p>	<small>EXAMINE THE BRANDS. We Protect Our Customers</small>			
<b>LINSEED MEAL</b>	<small>No matter what you are feeding your Stock, its value will be doubled by using LINSEED MEAL with it. This is for Cattle Feeders, Hog Raisers, Dairy men and Horsemen, if you wish to "Shine 'em up." Write for our Circular, whether you have one animal or a thousand.</small>	<b>LINSEED MEAL</b>			
<b>Address, SIOUX CITY LINSEED OIL WORKS.</b>					

Figure 43: Sioux City Linseed Oil Works advertisement, end of 1892 (*Journal*, January 1, 1893)

This rather sophisticated advertisement (Figure 43) copied the stencils used on its barrel heads. Two types of oil were being produced, raw and boiled linseed oils. The latter was used in paints and other industrial applications, while the former could be used for food products. The ongoing promotion of using oil cake as stock feed, by this time added horses and dairy cattle to the roster of animals that benefited from consuming it. Annual end-of-year oil mill advertisements such as this one ceased to appear after this final issuance. The national depression removed any opportunity to list annual new construction projects so there was no longer a "booster" edition in which to run these ads (*Journal*, January 1, 1893).

The company added a warehouse in late 1895. The building site was "the vacant property adjoining Iowa Street [which was the next street east of Court]. The building will extend on the east side to the street line." The 1898 southern view of the plant indicates that the old frame elevator building was now gone and its replacement, a two-story brick building with a flat roof, continued to enclose the original row of seven iron tanks (*Daily Tribune*, October 5, 1895).

By 1895 Captain Gere was also the president of the Floyd Valley Flax Company. It is last listed in 1899, the last year that city directories list Gere with the linseed oil works. While he managed the plant, he was also president of the Sioux City & Northern Railroad Company, vice president of the Sioux City Terminal & Warehouse Company and a director of the Corn Exchange National Bank. His final Sioux City project was the establishment of the Sioux City & Baltimore Railroad Company, beginning in 1892. Gere lost several thousands of dollars and the railroad was finally incorporated in 1898 as the St. Louis, Iowa & Dakota Railroad. His obituary noted "Railroad Combine Broke Him." As late as 1905, he was still struggling

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unsuccessfully to raise the capital to build the line. Failing to do so, he moved to Minneapolis in 1906 and soon after, to Chicago, where he died January 8, 1912. He failed in a effort to establish a cement factory in Minneapolis, and he worked as an accountant and did some railroad engineering work for James J. Hill of the Great Northern Railroad (*Tribune*, January 9, 1912).



Figure 44: Sioux City Linseed Oil Works of the National Linseed Oil Company, view northeast, c.1898  
(Sioux City And Its Environments, 1898)

Gere was succeeded in the oil mill management by Harry E. Ankeny, beginning in late 1899. Ankeny continued to be so listed through 1915, but as of 1910, his place of residence was given as Des Moines, Iowa. The other two officers remained. Gere was listed as a civil engineer in 1899-1900. Arch F. Adams was first listed as company bookkeeper in 1900. The American Linseed Oil Company, successor to the National Linseed Oil Company, was now listed along with the Sioux City company. George F. Weid was listed as plant manager in 1915. Charles E. Bornkamp was manager as of 1918. R. B. Van Wormer was manager a year later.

Figure 47 shows the oil mill isolated by innumerable lines of track. The grain warehouse at the west end (bottom) had a 125,000 bushel grain storage capacity. The reported 1895 warehouse improvement is not apparent on the east end of the complex. The new cake storage warehouse and oil tank storage building, co-joined as a two-story brick building, stand east of the alley. Tanks and a frame office building occupy the east end of the half-block.

John H. Leonard (1853-1925) was affiliated with the linseed oil industry since 1880. He affiliated with the American Linseed Oil Company when it was organized and was manager of several of its mills. He supervised the construction of new mills on Staten Island, in Philadelphia and in St. Paul. He came to Sioux City in 1918 and worked with the distribution end of the company's business. He was listed as the manager of the local oil mill in 1924. With his death on January 27, 1925, he was



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Figure 46: The former (?) oil mill as home for Chapman Transfer and Storage, 1923, note how the linseed oil company signage has been covered over, note also the metal chimney extension  
(Three Quarters of a Century of Progress)

The Sanborn Map Company depicted a still-active oil mill as of 1924 (Figure 47). The only physical changes since 1902 involved a frame in-fill of the west half of the courtyard area between the two east wings and a raised water tower to the south of the large tanks on the east end of the half-block. The American Linseed Oil Company, successor to the National Linseed Oil Company, sold the property to Bekins Van and Storage Company on December 19, 1928 but Bekins is not listed as a building tenant in city directories until 1930. Kay-Dee Feed Company, with Charles G. Dawson as manager, was the 1929 tenant firm.

Bekins was issued a building permit on November 20, 1928 to enclose the north/south alley that had separated the two sections of the oil plant, and to roof over the central court area. The general contractor was Riesche & Sanborn and the cost of the work was set at \$24,000. Curiously it wasn't until February 1929 that the City Council considered the formal vacating of the alleyway. Finally on March 2, 1929 the City Council ordered the vacation of the alley that had long divided the two parts of the oil mill facility and transferred that land to the new owners (Council Proceedings, 1928-1930, pp. 6096-97; Building Permits).

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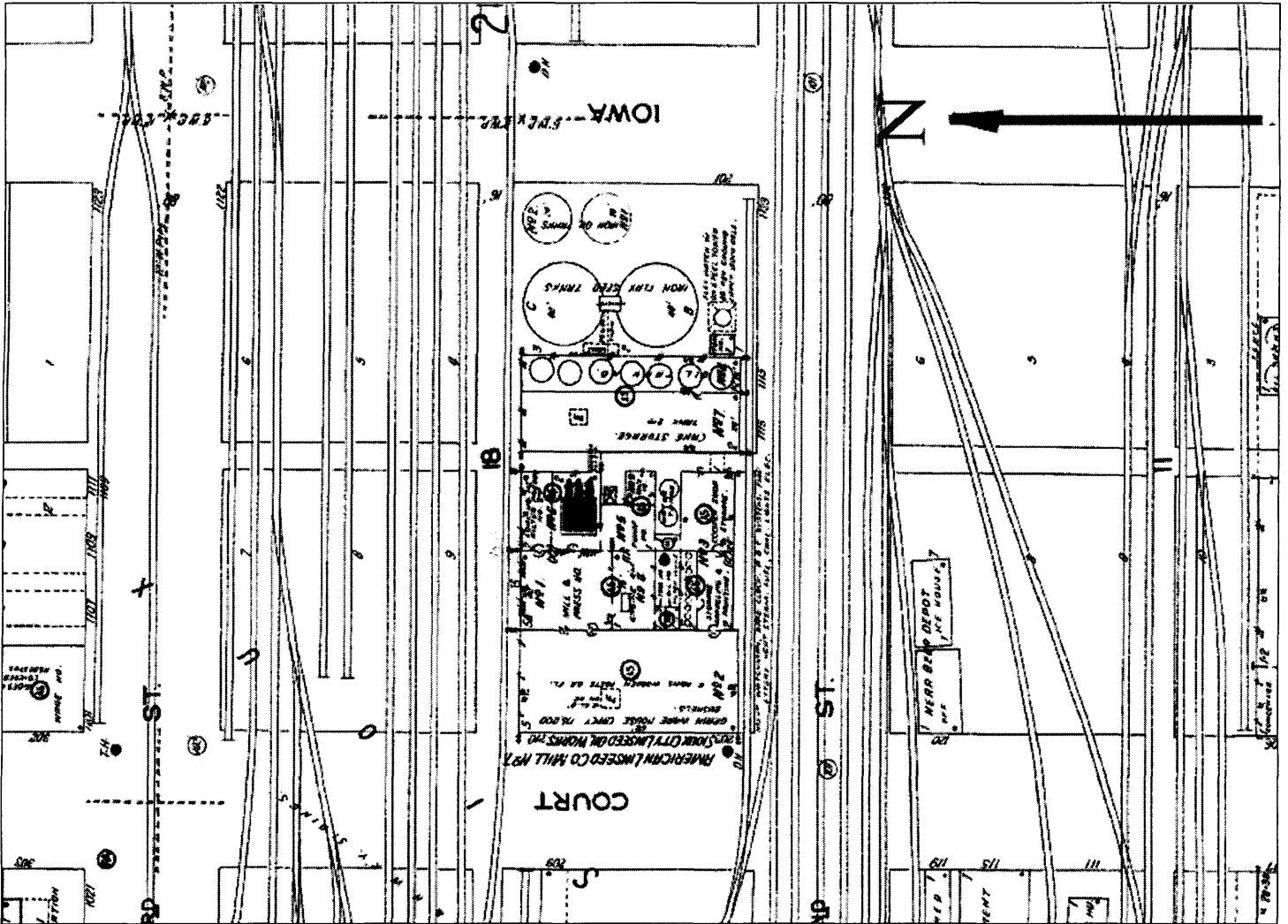


Figure 47: Detail, 1924 Sanborn Map, Sioux City Linseed Oil Works

The Bekins family came to America from Holland in 1853 and over time the surname was Americanized to Bekins. The family visited the Sioux City Corn Palace in 1891 and that started its connection with that city. Bekins Transfer and Storage was founded as a drayage company and an Omaha branch might even predate the Sioux City one. The first Sioux City warehouse building, still in use, was built in 1914. The former linseed oil plant was acquired in 1928 and used until 1972. The first branch was established in Omaha and the core of the family relocated to Los Angeles in 1895. Bekins Northwest was established in Seattle in 1903. The company evolved into a full-fledged transfer and storage firm with a national/international market that included Canada and Mexico. The company played an important role in the shipping of military equipment during World War II ([www.bekinsnorthwest.com](http://www.bekinsnorthwest.com); *Journal*, November 10, 1948).



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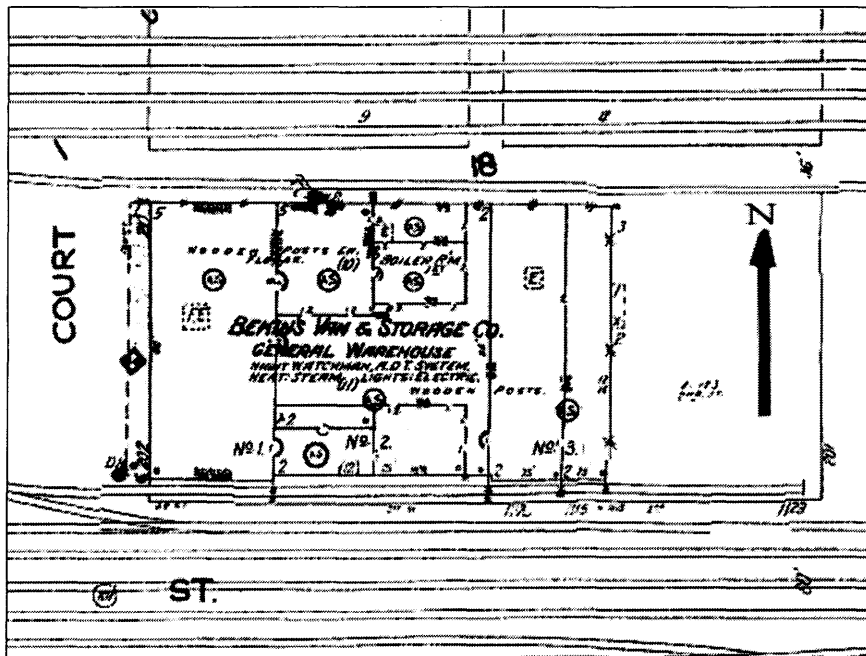


Figure 48: 1949 Sanborn Map detail, note the loading dock, canopy on the west front, and the enclosing Of the whole complex into a single building, the trackage and open area to the north have been built up

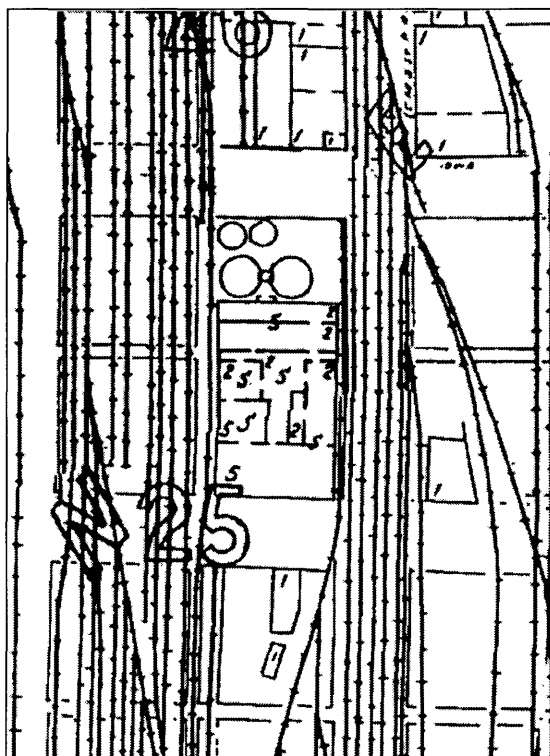


Figure 49: A summary 1924/1949 overview map showing the complex completely hemmed in by railroad lines, the lack of updates post-1924 indicate that this map dated to the new 1924 map template

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While Bekins was the principal building owner/tenant, beginning in 1930, a series of other tenant firms occupied offices or warehouse addresses in the main building along Court Street. Some of these were long-term occupants, and increasingly, chemical companies tended to be housed there. A list of the firms follows:

<b>Firm</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Years Listed</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Kay-Dee Feed Company	204	1929	
Standard Biscuit Company	202	1930-1931	bakery
Bekins Van & Storage	200,	1930	
Bekins Van & Storage	208, 200-210	1933-1972	
Freeport Sales Company	208	1931-1933	brokerage
John D. Knutson	208	1933-42	brokerage
Manchester Biscuit Company	204	1932-1941	bakery
Nebraska Seed Company	208	1936-1942	Seed company
Iowa State Highway Safety Patrol	210	1936	(first year of operation, likely district office)
Cereal By-products Company	208	1938	feeds
Sioux City Supply Company	208	1940-1942	janitorial supplies
Acme Fast Freight, Inc.	200-08	1941	
Omar, Inc.	200-08	1941	
Loose-Wiles Biscuit Company	208	1941-1943	bakery
Northwestern Steel & Wire Company	200-08	1942	
Sioux City Distributing Company	200-08	1943-1947	Beer distributor
Canteen Company	200-08	1944-1948	Vending machines
W. A. Malm	200-08	1945-1957	Brokerage, farm implements
W. R. Anderson/Sioux City Janitorial Supply Company	200-08	1947-1953	janitorial supplies
Builders Wholesale Supply Company	200-08	1948-1953	
Macmillon Oil Company	200-08	1948	
Alva Baber Feeds/Vis-Vita Sales, Inc.	200-08	1952-1965+	feeds
Re-Nuz-It Floor Cleaning Company	208	1954-1956	
Frank W. Winne & Son.	208	1954-1965+	Twines, wholesale
D. E. Link & Company	208	1954-1961	insecticides
Trans-American Freight Lines	202	1955+	
Vacant	202	1956	
W. R. Anderson, Agricultural Chemicals	208	1957-1965+	
Compact Coffee Service	208-10	1965+	Vending service
I. Miller Chemical Company	200, 206	1965-1995+	Chemical manufacturers
Fort Smith Furniture Display	208-10	1965+	
Huseth Sales Warehouse	208-10	1965+	
McKesson & Robbins Chemical Division	208-10	1965+	
Grant Tire Warehouse	208	1975-1980+	
Tire Association Wholesale Tire Mnfrs.	208	1990+	
Vacant	208	1995	

The Bekins Company occupied and owned this property until December 1, 1972 when it was sold to Grant Tire, Inc., which occupied the building for three years. Subsequent owners were Harold B. Jones Sr., the Assemblies of God Foundation,

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and BRE Inc. which took ownership in late 1995. State Steel is the new owner and is redeveloping the building for warehouse use (Transfer Books, City of Sioux City; Three Quarters of A Century of Progress, p. 121).



Figure 50: The former oil mill as Bekin's Merchandise Warehouse, c.1955  
(Bekins Merchandise Storage Company Brochure, n.d)

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9. Major Bibliographic References:

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- Report of the Board of Directors of the Iowa State Agricultural Society For The Year 1884. Des Moines: George E. Roberts, State Printer, 1885
- Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Sioux City, Iowa:
- 1884, 1886, 1890, 1902, 1924, 1924/1949
- Sioux City City Council Proceedings, April 1928-March 1930 (n.p., n.d.)
- Sioux City City Directories (all published by R. L. Polk & Co.):
- 1886-87, 1888-89, 1889-90, 1892-93, 1895-96, 1896-97, 1897-98, 1899-1900, 1900-01, 1908, 1910, 1912, 1915, 1918, 1919, 1924, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1936, 1937, 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945, 1947, 1948, 1950, 1952, 1953, 1954, 1955, 1956, 1957, 1961, 1965, 1975, 1989, 1985, 1990, 1995

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Sioux City Newspapers (as cited in the text):

Daily Journal  
Weekly Journal  
Daily Times  
Weekly Tribune  
Tribune

Report of the Board of Directors of the Iowa State Agricultural Society For The Year 1884. Des Moines; George E. Roberts, State Printer, 1885

Sioux City Building Permits (Sioux City Public Museum)

“The Boom in Sioux City.” *The Palimpsest* (1940), pp. 54-64

Three-Quarters of A Century of Progress: 1848-1923; A Brief Pictorial and Commercial History of Sioux City, Iowa. Sioux City: Verstegen Printing Company, 1923

Woodbury County Courthouse, County Recorder’s Office, Property Transfer and Deed Index books

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[www.Bekinsnorthwest.com](http://www.Bekinsnorthwest.com) (accessed May 22, 2007)

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10. Geographical Data:

Legal Description:

The south half of Block 18, Middle Sioux City Addition including a north/south-running alley that separates Lots 10-12 to the west, from Lots 1-3 to the east.

Boundary Justification:

The Sioux City Linseed Oil Works was historically associated with these six lots and the vacated alleyway. The easternmost portion of the parcel is vacant but the company storage tanks stood in this area.

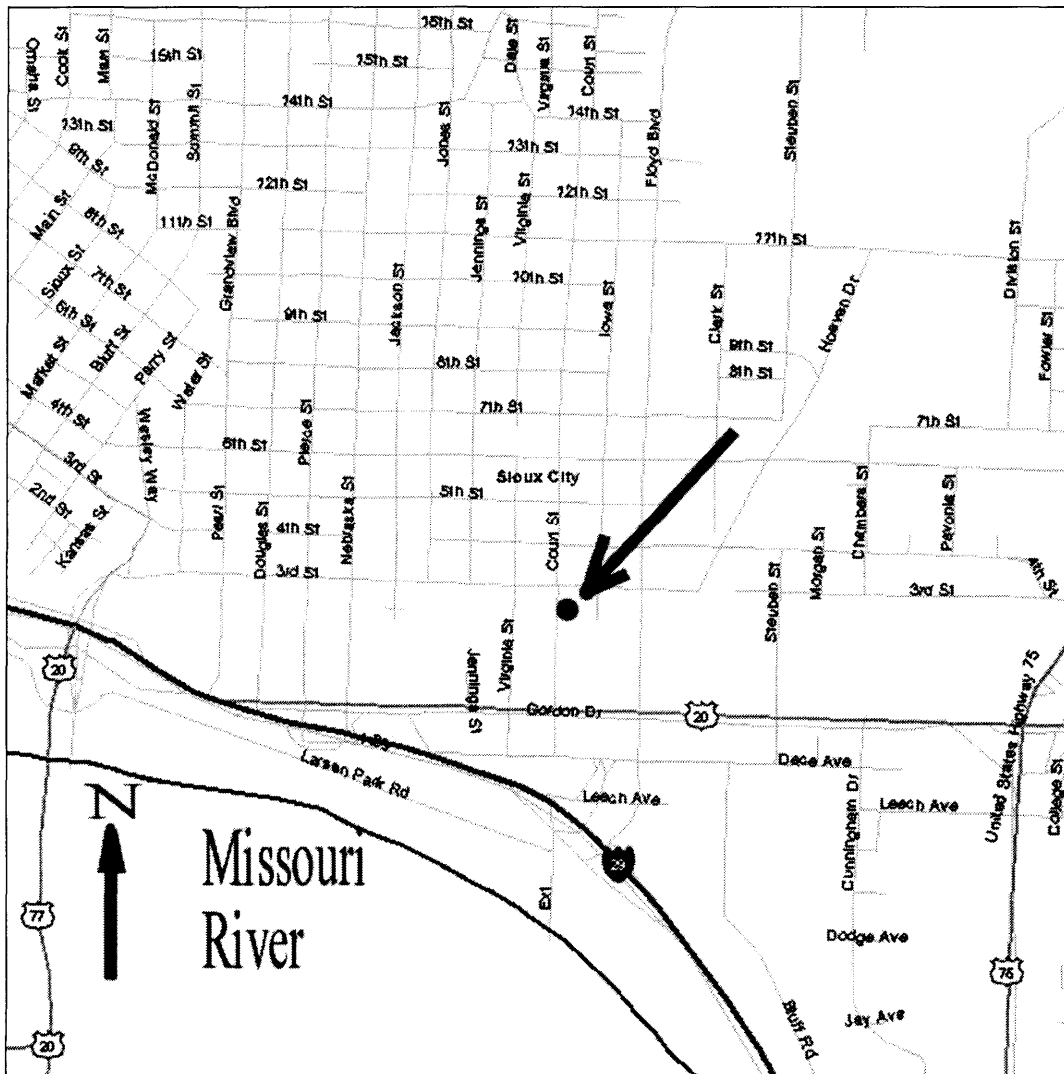


Figure 51: Locational Map

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Photographs:

Photographer: James E. Jacobsen  
Date of Photographs: April 23, 2007  
Film Type: Ilford, ASA 50  
Negatives: Retained by property owner/architect

<u>Frame:</u>	<u>View:</u>	<u>Description:</u>
1	northeast	façade, Court Street
2	northeast	façade, south side of main building, foundation, Court Street
3	northeast	south side of main building, foundation, south frontage of building
4	northwest	south side of main building, foundation, south frontage of building, back wall of main building, chimney
5	northwest	south frontage of building and rear/east wall and dock with canopy
6	southwest	alleyway and north frontage of building, chimney
7	southwest	alleyway and north frontage of building, chimney, five-story press room annex exterior