

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 any 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 Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse

other names/site number Dymond-Simmons Warehouse, Battery Building

2. Location

street & number 323 Water Street not for publication
city or town Sioux City vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Woodbury code 193 zip code 51103

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, 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.)

Rowell J. Sorko, Deputy SAPO, March 7, 2008
Signature of certifying official 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 commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this 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): _____

Edson H. Beall Signature of Keeper Date of Action 4.25.08

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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

Contributing Noncontributing

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| <u>1</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | buildings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | sites |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | structures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | objects |
| <u>1</u> | <input type="checkbox"/> | 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)

COMMERCE/TRADE/warehouse
INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/
EXTRACTION/manufacturing facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

WORK IN PROGRESS

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN/Romanesque

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation CONCRETE

roof ASPHALT

walls BRICK

STONE

other _____

Narrative Description

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

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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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1905-1932

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 a 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.

Significant Dates

1905, 1906

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Gordon, Tracy & Swartwout
Gilberth, Frank B.

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 # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

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

Other

Name of repository:

Pearl St. Research Center/Sioux City, Iowa

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone Easting	Zone Northing		Zone Easting	Zone Northing
1	14	712883	4707575	3	_____
2	_____	_____		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 Jan Olive Nash

organization Tallgrass Historians L.C. date November 2007

street & number 2460 S. Riverside Drive telephone 319.354.6722

city or town Iowa City state IA zip code 52246

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed 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 the SHPO or FPO.)

name Clocktower Development, LLC

street & number 210 N. 162nd Street telephone 402-502-5388

city or town Omaha state NE zip code 68118

=====
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 the 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 Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Narrative Description

Summary Paragraph

The Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse sits in south central Sioux City, Iowa, below a steep bluff known as Prospect Hill and along the old winding course of Perry Creek near its confluence with the Missouri River. Located in the northwestern corner of the state, this small city was founded along the Missouri just below the mouth of the much smaller Big Sioux River. Since both rivers form the state's western border—the Big Sioux north of town, the Missouri to the south—Sioux City residents have the unusual perspective of viewing both South Dakota and Nebraska when they scan their western horizon. Perry Creek is one of several troublesome, flood-prone watercourses that travel through the city on their way to empty into the Missouri. Now straightened and channeled underground through a concrete tunnel, the earlier, untamed Perry Creek influenced the unusual shape of the Simmons warehouse building, as did a nearby railroad line that predated the building by several decades. The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway (through its precursor) laid tracks through the Perry Creek valley on a diagonal northwest course toward the Dakota territory in the 1870s.¹ By the time the Simmons warehouse was constructed in 1905-1906, the railroad's main line and multiple sidings existed throughout the flood-prone warehouse district, complicating pedestrian and wagon travel alike, as well as prompting oddly angled building shapes. Today, though Prospect Hill survives as the city's prominent northwestern bluff, the creek and main tracks have been replaced by the sinuous Wesley Parkway, a modern elevated city street (Fig. 1). The Simmons warehouse, itself, retains a high degree of historic integrity. The public east facade and prominent northeast corner clock tower, which face Sioux City's downtown, are of brown or buff-colored fancy brick, while a common reddish brick was used on the other sides. The massive warehouse has four stories, but its clock tower rises to six, and an original curved office/showroom appendage wing on the north side of the building has but one floor. Windows are stacked vertically in recessed bays that terminate at the top with round arches. Together, the crenellated tower, round-arched window bays, arched doorways, and a masonry water table located above the ground floor to suggest an architectural base, all give the building its Romanesque styling. Glass in a few windows has been replaced, and many of the arched windows on the one-story wing are filled in, but the overall massive scale of the building works to reduce the impact of these individual window alterations. Doorways with arched openings make a strong architectural statement throughout the edifice. The main entrance is housed behind one such arch with a keystone at the base of the tower; another on the south side marks a former entrance-turned-loading bay, while a huge arched portal farther to the west along this same south elevation enabled railroad cars to be moved inside the building on two, parallel sidings, for unloading. Constructed and primarily used as a warehouse throughout its history, most of the interior spaces are wide open, encumbered only by the grid of massive, squared timber posts that form the interior floor structure. The historic stairway between floors is found in the corner tower.

¹ Scott Sorensen and B. Paul Chicoine, *Sioux City: A Pictorial History* (Virginia Beach, VA: The Donning Company/Publishers, 1982; 1997 reprint used), 138.

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Figure 1 Plainly visible in this view taken from the top of Prospect Hill, the Simmons Hardware company clock tower in the foreground echoes the tall clock tower of City Hall (1893-1897, formerly U.S. Post Office and Federal Building) in the upper left. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.

Exterior—Generally

In plan, the enormous 131,000 square-foot Simmons building is an irregular pentagon divided by a wide interior tunnel or hall that houses the railroad siding (Fig. 2).² This tunnel is located slightly west of the north-south centerline of the building. The part of the structure that lies east of the tunnel has a rectangular shape, while the structural part to the west of the tunnel remains an irregular pentagon. Over 700 rail carloads of construction materials were used in building the warehouse, with 250 of the cars bringing in an estimated 2 million bricks needed for the job.³ Two main kinds of bricks were used, a smooth fancy brick of a buff or brownish color used on the façade and in the tower, and a mottled red, common brick used for the three other main sides. The bonding pattern with both types of bricks appears to be a variation on the Flemish bond, with every seventh or eighth course a rowlock of alternating stretchers and headers. Mortar is brown between the brown bricks, and white between the red bricks. A third finish brick, brownish-pink in

² Square footage figures are from the Woodbury County [IA] Assessor's records. Usable square footage excluding the basement is 125,191 and gross square footage including the basement is 156,235 according to William J. Stott, AIA, of The Architectural Office, Omaha, Nebraska (email correspondence to author, November 21, 2007). The railroad tunnel does not have a north exit. The building plans called for bumpers to be installed just inside the north wall to hold the rail cars short of the wall; as built, a masonry interior wall was installed on the first and second floors to shorten the tunnel a bit and provide access between the two sections of the main building, a very practical alteration to the architect's original concept.

³ *Sioux City Journal*, September 16, 1906.

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color, with dark brown-red mortar, was used on the one-story appendage structure. Rock-face limestone trims the tower crenels and merlons, is used for window sills and a large keystone over the main entrance, and is visible at grade level along Water Street.

Architectural plans called for the building's below-grade foundation to be made of concrete. Because of the soft ground in the Perry Creek basin, the building's foundation rests on 1,900 20-foot-long hardened concrete pilings that were driven down to bedrock.⁴ On the outside, the foundation material is either covered by earth or faced with brick or stone. Walls above this foundation are load-bearing masonry on all sides and, though each side shares similar characteristics, there are enough differences to be described separately. Windows have metal-mesh safety glass and are held by industrial steel sashes that have been imbedded or mortared into the brick openings. On the fourth floor, windows have four lights—three vertical lights under a half-round light—and on the lower floors they are one-over-one sashes with twist locks where the sashes meet in the center. Here and there, a few windows appear to have been replaced by single-light sashes or plywood.

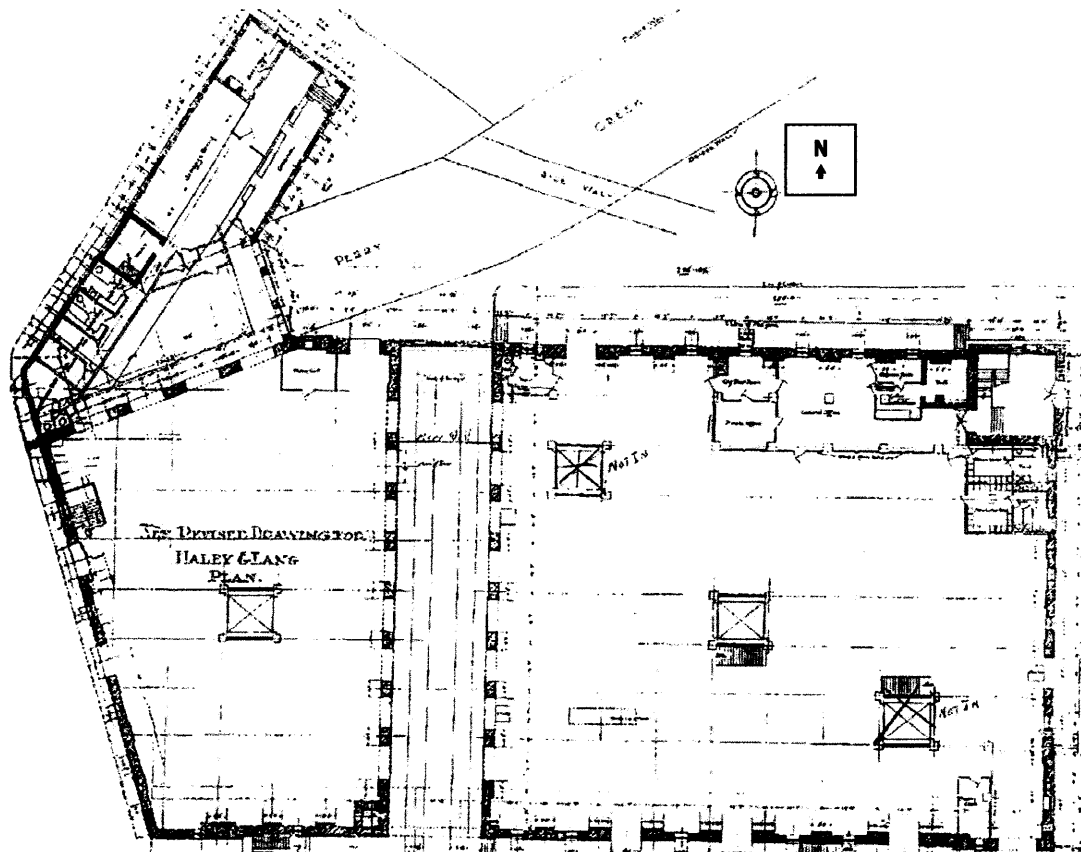


Figure 2 First floor plan drawn in 1905 by the New York City firm Gordon, Tracy & Swartwout. Collection of the owner.

⁴ Ibid; Jim Hamlin to author, telephone conversation, November 7, 2007.

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Main Building—Tower

The six-story brown-brick tower forms the northeast corner of the warehouse, at the intersection of 4th and Water streets (Figs. 3-4). Housing the main entrance and a gateleg staircase that ascends to the upper floors, the tower's sixth floor was added as an afterthought to hold a water tank according to contemporary news accounts.⁵ Whether or not it ever housed such a tank is unclear and there is no tank in this location now. Historic photographs reveal that a free-standing metal tank, typical of the big holding tanks still seen on rooftops of large urban buildings, was installed by 1909 on the rooftop near the southern side and positioned over the railroad portal (no doubt to take advantage of the load-bearing brick walls at this location). The tall metal legs of the tank base are extant on the rooftop today, though the tank itself was gone by the 1930s, perhaps a result of tying into the city's water system.⁶

The battered tower base is separated from the upper stories by a masonry beltcourse and, in profile, resembles the ground floor of the landmark Monadnock Building (1889-91) on West Jackson Boulevard in Chicago, Illinois. Said to be the "last great building in the ancient tradition of masonry architecture," the Monadnock's distinctive ground-floor walls were inspired by the "heavy sloping lines of an Egyptian pyramid" as well as the structural need to support the great weight of 16 floors above.⁷ The sloping walls of the Simmons warehouse tower, likewise, are both an aesthetic and engineering response to the client's needs. The square tower sits on its own four robust walls, capable of standing alone even if the warehouse around it was removed. Historic photographs of the building, in fact, show a completed, 5-story crenellated tower (taken late in December, 1905, before the decision to add a sixth floor) surrounded by the first two stories of the warehouse walls under construction (Fig. 5).⁸

As the most decorated component of the entire building, the tower is highly pleasing aesthetically. The main entrance is housed inside a round, brick arch on the east side that is decorated with a massive rock-face limestone keystone. Second and third story windows are simple rectangles with stone sills, but the fourth floor window has a round arch similar to the rest of the fourth floor windows around the entire building. The fifth story is blind, or windowless, except for large (5 feet in diameter) round clock faces centered on the east and north sides. The other two sides have similar (but 9 feet in diameter) round openings in the brickwork, but the clock faces have been removed and the openings are now filled with blanks. The current clock faces date to 1964 and have a white field with black features that advertises "Siouxland Wholesale," a past building occupant. The original tin clock faces were black with white features. Instead of numbers, the letters T-R-O-Q-R-L-A-T-P-I-F were used and stood for the Simmons' company motto "The recollection of quality remains long after the price is forgotten." The extant clock works are powered by a pendulum that must be wound every eight days if they are to work.⁹

⁵ *Sioux City Journal*, April 17, 1905. At least one other Simmons warehouse in another state also enclosed a water tank within an architectural tower. The rooftop tower of the Morton-Simmons warehouse building in Wichita, Kansas (constructed in 1905) held a 20,000-gallon water tank. This building is located within the Warehouse and Jobbers National Register Historic District.

⁶ See the historic photographs of the building available on the local city museum's website, www.siouxcityhistory.org.

⁷ Carl W. Condit, *The Rise of the Skyscraper* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1952), 101-102.

⁸ *Sioux City Journal*, Special Edition, January 1, 1906.

⁹ "Tower Clock Repair Recalls Dial 'Mystery,'" newspaper article dated March 14, 1964. No publisher is noted on this clipping from the Sioux City Public Library's clipping file marked "Buildings-Battery Bldg," but it is likely from the *Sioux City Journal*.

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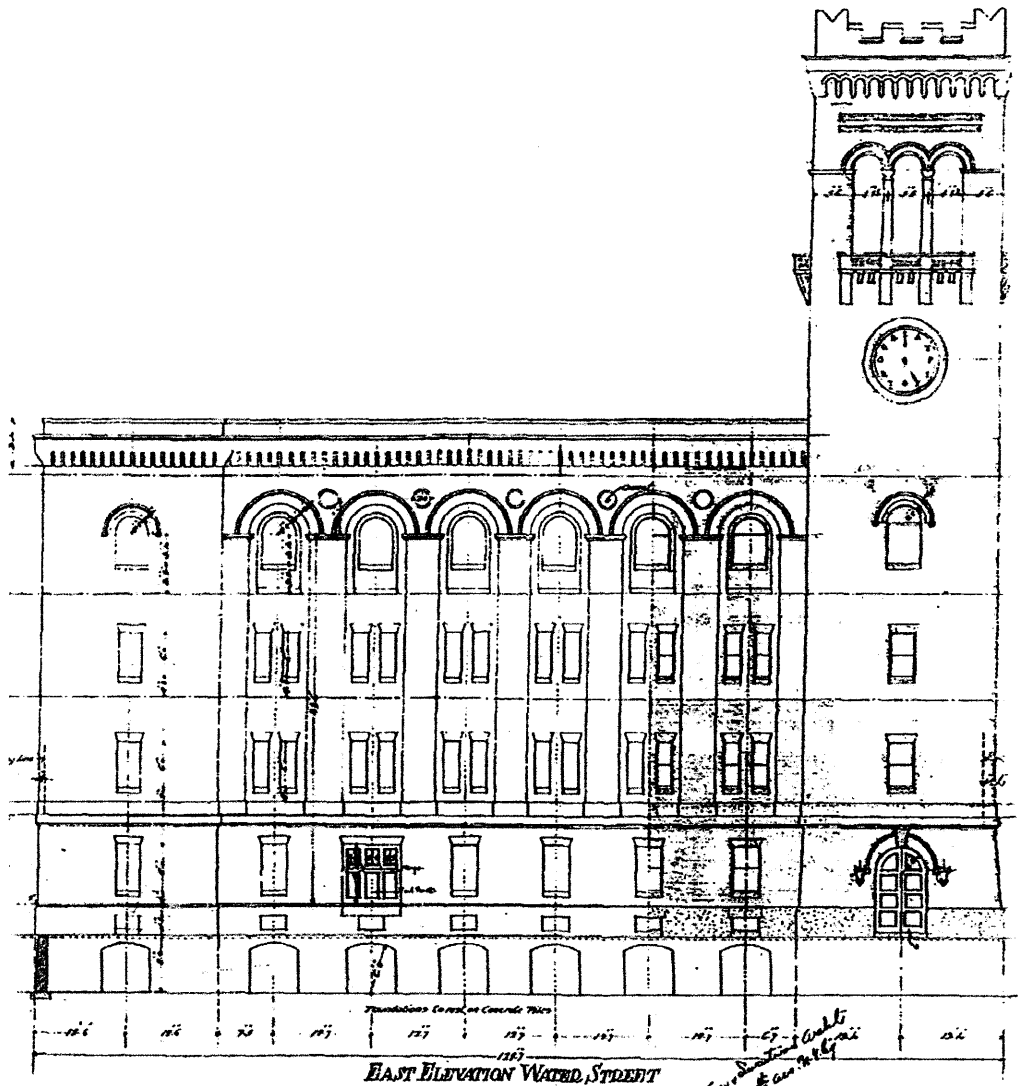


Figure 3 The architect's plan sheet for the east façade of the Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse shows the importance of the tower to the building. As built, modifications include the omission of the corbel table at the roof line for the curving or flared roofline, and the omission of the oculus windows or roundels between the arches of the fourth-story windows. Collection of the owner.

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Figure 4 A number of notable building features are seen in this view, including the tower's battered base, the roofline's outward slope (best seen in the upper left corner), and the recessed, round-arched window bays. The masterful work of the building's brick masons is showcased at the top of the tower, above the clock faces, with corbels, blind arcades, and the crenellations. Author's photograph, April 2005.

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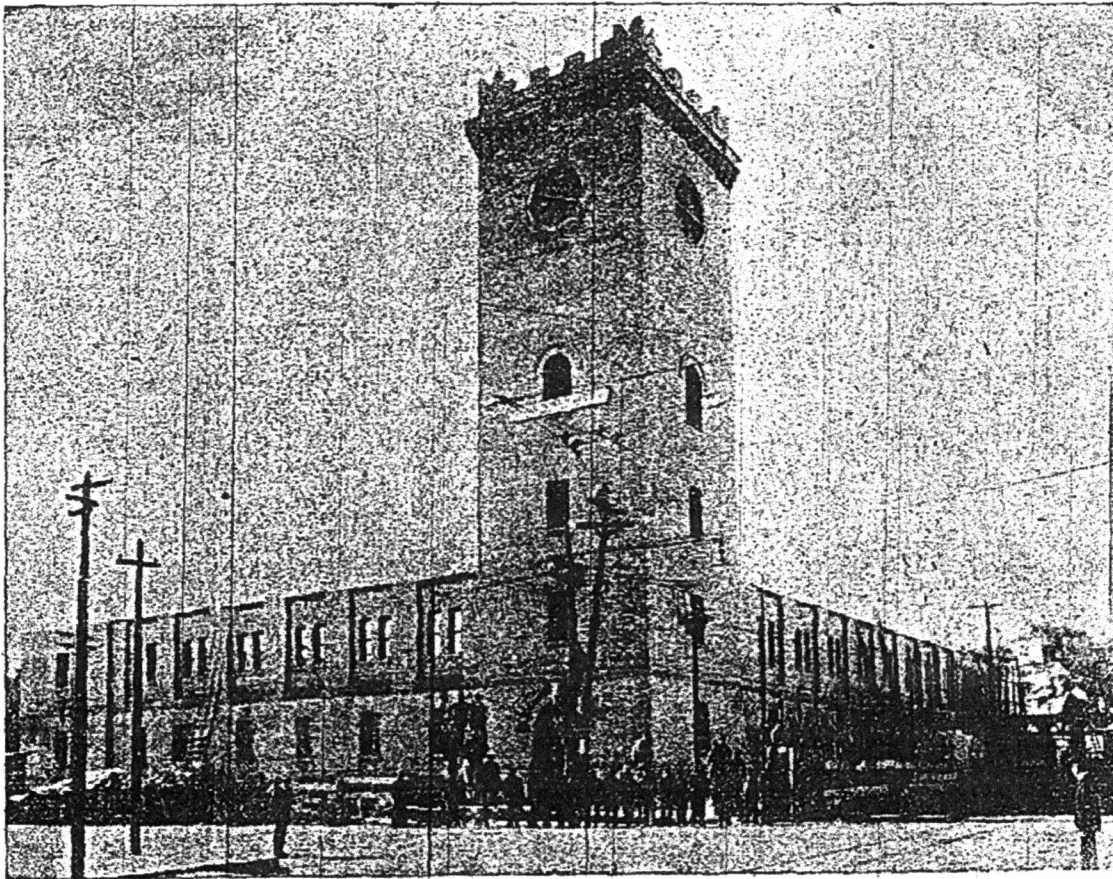
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WAREHOUSE TO BE AN ORNAMENT



SIMMONS HARDWARE COMPANY BUILDING.

Figure 5 The first two floors of the warehouse are under construction in this newspaper view from January 1, 1906. Before the building was finished, a sixth floor was added to the tower. *Sioux City Journal*.

The crowing glory of the tower is the sixth floor, which was added, but perhaps not actually used, to hide the water tank needed for fire suppression (Fig. 6). Constructed as a decorative battlement, the top rim is crenellated and slightly projected from the tower surface by brick corbels. Below these corbels on all sides is a three-arch blind arcade resting on a shared stone sill. This much, added after the first crenellated rim was removed, all rests on a second corbelled shelf, which demarcates the sixth from the fifth floors.

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Main Building—East Façade on Water Street

South of the tower, the east wall is of the same brown brick as the tower and divided into six recessed windows bays positioned between the tower and, at the opposite corner, an end bay that is not recessed (Fig. 7). The brown brick wraps around this southeast corner of the warehouse and covers the first bay of the south side before the wall changes to red brick. Above the ground floor, each of the six recessed bays follows an arrangement, from street to roof, as follows: brick beltcourse, coupled rectangular windows on separate rock-face sills on the second and third floors, round-arch fourth floor window, with the arch springing from the piers between the recessed panels, outwardly curving masonry rooftop rim. This last feature, which is common to all sides, also pays homage to the Monadnock Building. Bearing a similar curved rooftop line, the Monadnock was described by its architect, John Wellborn Root, as “something of a capital I—a perfectly plain building curving outward at the base and cornice.”¹⁰ The seventh window bay, at



Figure 6 Rising behind the fourth floor windows of the south elevation, the six-story crenellated tower was intended to serve multiple purposes for the Simmons Hardware Company: hide a water tank, demarcate the main entrance to the massive building, provide the public and workers with the time of day, and perhaps, most importantly, create a landmark and suggest the importance of the Simmons Hardware Company, much like the landmark clock tower of the U.S. Post Office (later City Hall) suggested the importance of the federal government. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.

¹⁰ Condit, *Rise of the Skyscraper*, 102. Curiously, the original plans for the Simmons Hardware Company warehouse exterior elevations did not include this curved rooftop, but instead had a line of corbelling. Another unexecuted plan detail is an interstitial oculus between each round-arched window bay over the fourth floor.

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the south edge of this east wall is not recessed and contains single tall rectangular windows on all floors but the fourth, which has the round arched window. A fire escape zigzags its way from the fourth floor to the street level in front of these seventh-bay windows.



Figure 7 The warehouse's east, Water Street façade (right) and long south side (left) are seen in this current photograph. This image in particular also suggests some historic accommodations that reflect the ever present danger of fire, namely, a tower intended to hold a water tank, the rooftop legs and platform that mark a former water tank location (at left), and, in the center of the image, the zig-zag metal fire escape. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.

Main Building—South Side on Mill Street

The long red-brick south side of the warehouse building is 14 bays wide, the central 12 of which are recessed similar to the east façade (Fig. 8). Window arrangements in both the recessed panels and the two corner bays are also similar to those on the east façade, but several of the ground floor openings are used as semi-trailer loading bays and contain overhead doors. The bay closest to Water Street (best seen in Figure 7) has a large round-arched loading door, filled by an older wood-paneled overhead door. The plan sheet shows the original door was a three-panel door, perhaps the employee entrance. Slightly west of the center of this side is a large railroad siding portal, above which are two recessed panels that have slightly smaller round arches than their neighbors and windows only on the third and fourth floors. A modern overhead door and an arch filled with pale pinkish strips of an unknown material, laid in a running-stretcher arrangement, currently fill the portal. Originally, the arch over the portal was filled with a glass window. On the rooftop,

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above this portal, the extant base and legs of the nonextant water tank remain. Also visible from this side is a rooftop chimney that is near but not at the roof's edge. Smaller brick buildings and railroad tracks once existed in the yard to the south of the building, where a parking lot and grassy area now exist.¹¹



Figure 8 The rail siding portal is a prominent feature of the Simmons warehouse's south elevation seen here, along with the shaded west side. The grassy yard in the foreground once was bisected by the main tracks of the Milwaukee rail line through town. Compare this view to the historic image in Figure 17. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.

Main Building—West Side facing Wesley Parkway and Prospect Hill

What was probably once thought of as the rear of the building is now a very public side that faces the elevated arterial street, Wesley Parkway, and is clearly visible from nearby Interstate 29 and the Missouri River bridge (Fig. 9; also refer back to Fig. 1).¹² This west side of the Simmons building presents the narrowest wall. It has the same number of bays as

¹¹ Sanborn Company fire insurance maps indicate that the much older City Mill Company (by 1884) once occupied the land south of Mill Street, which ran immediately adjacent to the south side of the Simmons building. Though the mill faced Water Street, it clearly was the source of Mill Street's name. Mill Street no longer appears on city maps and may be vacated. At least some brick street pavers remain in place, however, along the building here. Also, by 1924, Consumers Ice Company (c. 1900), located between the railroad tracks and Perry Creek, just south of Mill Street, had given way to a new tile and concrete building housing Warnock & Company, manufacturers of galvanized iron stock tanks. All but the Simmons building are nonextant.

¹² Wesley Parkway follows the course of a well-trodden transportation corridor at the foot of Prospect Hill. Originally, just an unplatted dirt road, the path took the traveler to an informal neighborhood of small houses that constituted the city's "red light" district, conveniently located near the docks and wharves on the nearby Missouri River. Over time, this neighborhood was cleaned up and the path became Elm Street and eventually Bridge Way (denoting the replacement of the river's wharves by a bridge), and finally, Wesley Way or Parkway, which, together with the former Park Street, today constitutes the approach to the bridge interchange on Interstate 29. See Jan Olive Nash, "Sioux City I-29 Corridor Study" (unpubl. report prepared by Tallgrass Historians L.C. for Howard R. Green Company, 2005), especially section *B. Neighborhoods*, 9-17. Available at the State Historical Society of

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the opposing, east side, but its total length is 105 feet, as opposed to 128 feet on the east façade. Red bricks were used on this side also and its window arrangement is similar to that of the south and east elevations on the third and fourth floors. Windows on three of the second floor window bays, on the other hand, are singles rather than coupled, and two of these appear to be filled with something other than glass. The ground floor openings are doors, loading bays, or windows, most of which appear altered. The first bay of the single-story appendage is visible at the northwest corner of the west side (see Fig. 9). A grassy yard now fills the space adjacent to this west warehouse side, where the main tracks of the Milwaukee rail line once ran. Between the grassy yard and the elevated Wesley Parkway is a modern concrete bike/walking path.



Figure 9 The west end of the one-story wing or appendage is clearly visible at left side of the main building. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.

Main Building and Appendage—North Side on 4th Street

The north side of the Simmons warehouse is a second long expanse of wall that parallels the long south side, but is visually and in plan complicated by the presence of an angled appendage off the west corner. This appendage is original to the building and was used for office and sales purposes by the Simmons Hardware Company.¹³ Its location and angled site placement is the result of Perry Creek, which ran past the northwest corner of the main building at the time of construction. The creek was channeled under the appendage, through a brick barrel-vault tunnel.¹⁴

Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa.

¹³ *Sioux City Journal*, September 9, 1906.

¹⁴ Jim Hamlin to author, email correspondence, November 7, 2007. Sanborn fire insurance maps indicate Perry Creek was re-channeled away from the building sometime between 1924 and 1949.

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The main warehouse wall is angled slightly in order to meet the appendage, resulting in the pentagon-shaped warehouse footprint, rather than the more common rectangle or even trapezoidal shape. This juxtaposition of angles also created some very interesting structural solutions inside, which are described later.

The appendage is marked on both its long sides by a series of very large blind arches, some, but not all, of which were originally windows or loading doors. These play off the pattern of round arches found near the top of the main building. Along the northwest side, several arches are filled with a red brick and are the likely original window arches above original stone sills. Other arches closer to the main building appear to have been blind arches from the start and are filled with the same brick as was used in the walls. The presence of Perry Creek under the appendage and the original interior usage—a vault room, for example—partially explain which arches were filled with windows and which were filled with brick.

The entrance to the appendage is located at the far northwest end, where the endwall has a step gable at the roofline, over a door and two windows arches that have been filled in with concrete block. Plans indicate the doorway opened into a corridor with doors on the right leading into the sales or display rooms, a directors' room with a fireplace in the very outside, northwest corner, and a line of offices, the vault, and restrooms filling the rest of that side of the appendage. Currently, it appears an interior wall has been at least partially removed to join the corridor and showroom space. Three loading bays positioned over the Perry Creek tunnel are blocked in on the exterior but retain their original overhead doors on the interior.

The rest of the warehouse's main north wall, between the appendage and Water Street, employs the same architectural program of the west, south, and east walls. Four round-arched, recessed window bays rise above the appendage on the short northwest wall, while the north wall, proper, has 11 bays, plus the tower at the east end. The fourth-floor arches above the railroad bay are reduced in scale, just as they are on the south wall. Refer to Figures 10 and 11 for images of these walls and features.

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Figure 10 The long north side of the Simmons Hardware Company warehouse is seen here, with the single-story appendage wing at the far right. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.



Figure 11 The single-story appendage to the main building was intended to serve as office and showroom space. The building plans mark the interior space behind the far left arch (formerly a window) as the “Directors” room and include a fireplace (nonextant). The third arch from the right was a blind arch from the start and concealed a room-size vault inside. The two arches to its right likely had window glass only in the top arch spaces, as men’s and women’s restrooms were located inside. This view looks southeast at the appendage and, behind it, the north side and northwest sides of the warehouse building. Note the slight angle change of the wall four bays from the left corner. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.

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Interior

The interior structure is largely a wooden system of posts and beams, placed in a regular grid pattern except where a unique location required a different arrangement (Fig. 12). Flooring throughout is narrow wood planking laid on wood joists. The appendage interior structure, on the other hand, has round cast iron posts rather than squared wood timbers. The squared timber posts on the warehouse's first floor are massive, with timber posts slightly reducing in size on each successive floor above. The joinery of vertical timber post to horizontal timber beam changes as the floors ascend also. On the first floor, a metal saddle is positioned between the vertical and horizontal timbers, and nails or spikes are used to fix the arrangement. The space immediately atop the upright timber, where the notched beams are about to meet, is instead filled by a third piece of wood shaped something like a keystone. This large wood keystone is closely hemmed in at the bottom by the two timber beams and at the top by two floor joists on either side. Together, this arrangement looks very stable. In some areas of the first floor, closer to the original office area in the northeast corner, the heavy structural timbers are covered with beadboard painted white above green to give the space a more finished appearance. Other spatial bays on the first floor are simply whitewashed with paint on the walls, ceilings, and heavy timbers.

The second floor timber posts appear slightly smaller than the first, but are still very robust. Joinery is the same as on the first floor and this floor's timbers, walls, and ceiling are whitewashed also. Third and fourth floors are not whitewashed, making the saw marks on the timbers and the brickwork of the walls easier to see. Third floor timbers are smaller but still massive. The joinery on the third floor changes to a heavy beam resting on a wooden shoulder (or short horizontal piece), which itself is supported by the upright timber. On the fourth and final floor, the timbers are about the size of barn timbers in use at the turn of the twentieth century and are joined similar to the third floor arrangement, but braced with an additional piece of lumber. Floor planks are wider also on this top floor, and the ceiling slopes slightly toward a higher center ridge.

Staircases between the floors are wooden and open, and an elevator is centrally located.

The railroad tunnel interior is two stories tall and is stopped short of the north exterior wall by a thin masonry wall added to permit access between the two sides of the warehouse (a clear revision to the original plan). Four first-floor loading doorways with segmental arched headers open into the tunnel from both east and west sides of the building (Fig. 13). Above the first two floors, the tunnel space is spanned by steel I-beams to achieve the clear space needed above the railroad sidings and to hold the floors above. Floor space above the tunnel was dedicated to warehouse use or passageways.

The single-story appendage, while original, was constructed with sizable metal posts as upright structural members and steel I-beams instead of the heavy-timber system of the main warehouse. The juncture of these two systems, as well as the angle at which they meet, led to what an awkward looking architectural solution—a beam extends into the air, supported by a small timber, but not joined to another beam. Preserved inside the three loading doors on the east side are the original metal bi-fold doors with round window glass. Though one or two rooms from the original floor plan are intact, much of the space has been opened up by wall removal.

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Figure 12 The heavy timbers of the interior structure are encased in beadboard siding and painted on the first floor. Here the view was taken from the northeast corner of the building. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.

Conclusions on Historic Integrity

Generally speaking, the interior of the warehouse building exhibits unusually good historic integrity, with a few modifications in the appendage. The exterior likewise has maintained its historic integrity, especially the aspects of design, materials, and workmanship. Changes to the exterior of the building, where there are any, are mostly confined to ground level where some windows were changed out for loading bays, blocked, or otherwise filled in over time. Overhead modern doors have replaced a number of the original doors, which were metal bi-fold doors or smaller doors. On the other hand, sometimes the metal bi-fold doors remain on the inside of blocked-in openings. The corners of the top of the tower were slightly reduced at some point.

The neighborhood has changed considerably since the Simmons Hardware Company warehouse was constructed in 1905-1906. Gone are its industrial neighbors, the meandering and troublesome Perry Creek, and the railroad tracks that divided and subdivided the landscape around and between buildings. Because of these changes, no historic warehouse district or industrial district exists. Still, some of the essential landscape features that affected the development of this area, such as the Missouri River to the south and Prospect Hill to the west, remain. And the Simmons warehouse now stands as a reminder of the gritty history of this part of the city. Noted as a landmark from its construction because of the tall clock tower, the building becomes ever more distinguished as the years pass and the city changes.

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Figure 13 The south railroad portal, now covered by a modern door, is visible in the center of this photograph, with numbered loading bays in the masonry walls on either side of two sets of tracks. The loading doors are elevated to the same height as a rail car. Doors to the left lead into the larger section of the building, toward Water Street and the clock tower. Doors to the right lead to the smaller west part of the building. Not visible but behind the camera is a masonry wall that was a handwritten revision added to the plans. Without it, access between the two sides of the building would have necessitated crossing through this railroad loading bay. Mike Whye photograph, 2007.

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8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

The Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse, built during 1905 and 1906, is significant under both Criteria A and C at the local level. Criterion A significance stems from its status as an excellent reminder of the days when Sioux City served as a wholesale jobbing center for northwest Iowa, the Dakotas, and beyond. Historical significance also results from the building's associations with the St. Louis-based Simmons Hardware Company, a prime example of the nineteenth-century trend toward large interstate corporations as the business model for American commerce. The building, long appreciated as a local landmark because of its prominent clock tower and Romanesque styling, also has significance under Criterion C as an intact and well-preserved example of the warehouse style influenced by the Marshall Field Wholesale Store in Chicago, Illinois (1885-1887, H. H. Richardson, architect). The Simmons warehouse reflects the closing era of low-rise, horizontally spreading, masonry industrial buildings, as that property type gave way to the structural steel and reinforced concrete commercial buildings in the early twentieth century.

The Business of Sioux City – Wholesale Entrepôt to a Western Hinterland

When the railroads arrived in the 1860s, the focus of Sioux City's commercial activity began to inexorably shift away from the Missouri River. Early plans for a railroad failed to materialize before the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861, and the town was forced to shelve its hopes for rail transportation. With the close of the war in 1865, "promoters again turned their attention toward securing a railroad; their goal was to make Sioux City a major outfitting location for post-war Dakota- and Montana-bound travel." In the fall of 1866, representatives of railroad magnate John I. Blair arrived to announce Blair's intention to construct a railroad line to town, that is, so long as the community would support it with free land for the right-of-way and depot grounds on the waterfront. A little over a year later, in March, 1868, the town's first scheduled rail service arrived.¹⁵

Initially, the railroad meant frontier-bound goods could be shipped to Sioux City, rather than St. Louis, for transfer to steamboats heading up the Missouri River. This first rail line ushered in a golden period for the steamboat companies operating from Sioux City's docks, and precipitated a population boom for the community. The golden era, however, lasted only the few years it took Blair's company and other railways to determinedly push on into the Dakota Territory, bent on eliminating more miles of costly, seasonal, and sometimes dangerous river travel. By 1873, the town was well behind the westward-moving line of railroad construction, and it was time to recreate itself as something other than the West's "steamboat capital."¹⁶ "Sioux City businessmen, never ones to mourn long over their losses, turned their attention in the mid 1870s toward developing their city into a transportation and marketing center for the newly emerging agricultural Eden of Siouxland. By 1874 Sioux Cityans could proudly boast three railroads, four grain elevators...a woodworking mill, a lumberyard, and five farm implement dealers, all catering primarily to the burgeoning wholesale and agricultural trade."¹⁷ From that point to the mid-1880s, the city saw expansion of many of the industries for which it became known, including meat packing and wholesaling or jobbing for a wide territory northwest of Iowa. The town's rail network continued to expand throughout the 1890s, and by the end of the nineteenth century there were

¹⁵ Sorensen and Chicoine, *Sioux City*, 25.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* The two other lines were the Iowa Falls and Sioux City Railroad, an Illinois Central subsidiary, and the Sioux City and St. Paul RR, operated by the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha. *History & Business Directory of Sioux City, 1849-1936* (n. pub., 1938), 18. Located at the Sioux City Public Library.

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“eight trunk lines and five branch lines providing invaluable access to outside markets.”¹⁸ These connections secured Sioux City’s fortunes as the hub of a regional wholesale and jobbing territory (Fig. 14). Industrial growth followed the

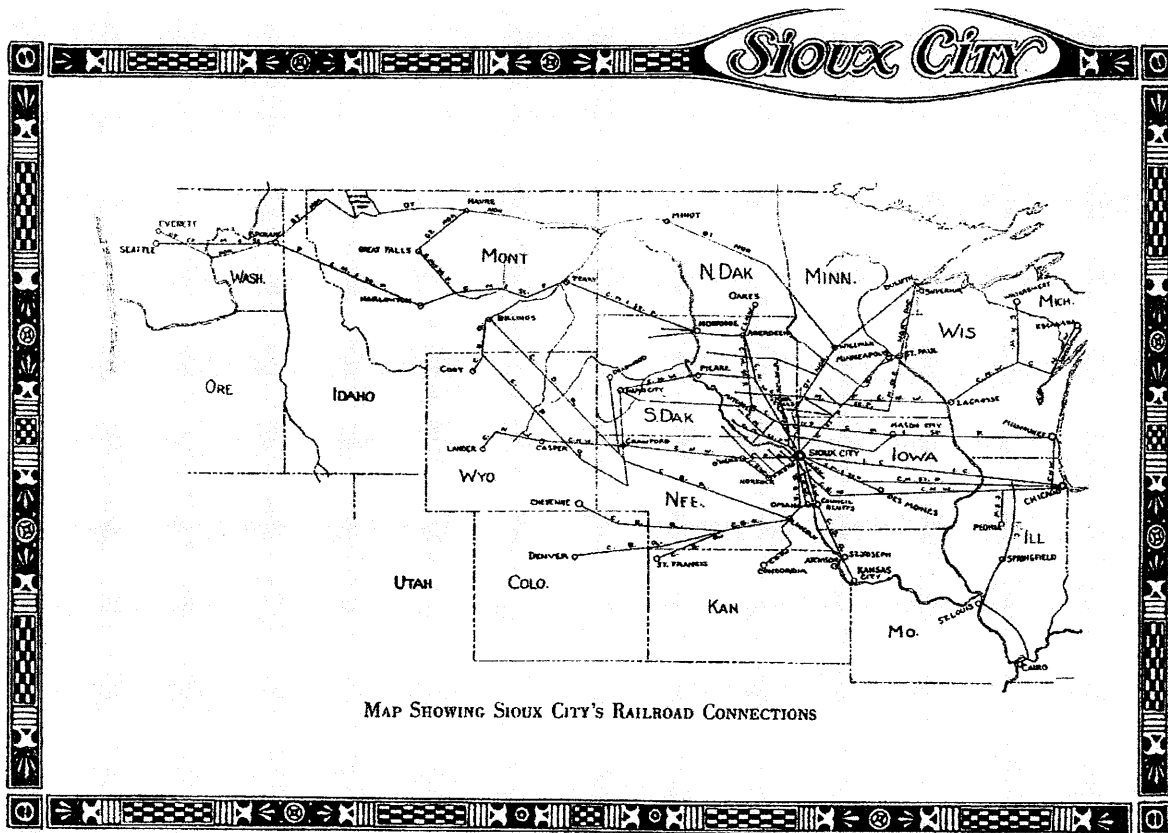


Figure 14 Sioux City’s extensive rail connections are shown in this booster publication from 1923. Adams, *Three-Quarters of a Century of Progress*.

development of the region’s rail system, and by the end of the first decade in the twentieth century, the city boasted 42 wholesale companies headquartered or operating from the city. Included in this number were “six wholesale grocery houses; two wholesale dry goods houses; two in the jewelry and notion trade; *three in hardware*; one in millinery; three in drugs; one in furniture; two in farm machinery; one in plumbing supplies; five in lumber; one in shoes; two in wall paper; seven in liquors; six in cigars, and numerous other lines of trade, make up the jobbing business of the city [emphasis added].”¹⁹ One of these wholesalers was the local branch of the Simmons Hardware Company of St. Louis, Missouri (Fig. 15).

¹⁸ Barbara Beving Long, “Sioux City: Planning for Preservation Project” (unpubl. report prepared for the City of Sioux City), 5.

¹⁹ John J. Biddison, *One Hundred Peeps at Sioux City* (n. pub., 1911) no page numbers, but under the heading “The City a Wholesaling Center.” Many of the warehouses associated with these jobbers are nonextant according the copy of Biddison’s *One Hundred Peeps* held in the Sioux City planning department, in which “demolished” is noted under many photographs.

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Figure 15 Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse shortly after construction was completed in 1906. Prospect Hill appears in the background. Collection of the Pearl Street Research Center, Sioux City Public Museum.

E. C. Simmons' Hardware Business – The Innovative Company

Simmons Hardware Company was an evolutionary descendant of the Wilson Levering and Waters Company of St. Louis, where Edward Campbell “E.C.” Simmons (1839-1920) was first employed as a 20-year-old clerk in 1859. Simmons was a native of Maryland who relocated to St. Louis as a boy in 1846.²⁰ He took early (some say *first*) advantage of the new incorporation laws in the country and was a pioneer in the development of the catalog as a sales tool in the wholesale hardware industry. Simmons also understood the value of name-brand recognition for generating customer loyalty and extensively used the technique. Simmons created the “Keen Kutter” brand of tools in 1870, and formally incorporated the Simmons Hardware Company late in 1873.²¹ Until the end of the century, Simmons’ traveling

²⁰ “Simmons Hardware Company Records,” available within the guide to the Archival Collections of the Missouri Historical Society, obtained online at www.mohistory.org on October 8, 2007.

²¹ The former Simmons salesman and sales manager, and eventual competitor, Saunders Norvell, believed the Simmons Hardware Company was among the first “business houses” in the country to incorporate, at a time when “partnerships were the rule and banks loaned money on ‘names’...without collateral.” According to Norvell, incorporation “was an unusual step at the time, and

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salesmen worked the towns along the Missouri and Mississippi rivers, in addition to traveling the growing railroad network. One such traveling salesman during the 1880s went on to lead one of Simmons' main competitors, the Shapleigh Hardware Company. This "commercial traveler," Saunders Norvell, recalled distributing Simmons hardware catalogs and taking orders along the Mississippi River from Missouri's boot heel country, to Arkansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The catalogs Norvell carried did not list sales prices for the items. Instead the Simmons "house" supplied him with a product cost and it was up to the salesman to negotiate his own commission. Norvell's goal was 20 percent over the house cost.²² In 1888, after a few years selling in Kansas, the company sent Norvell to live in the boom town of Denver, Colorado, where he developed a mail order operation using Simmons catalogs before leaving the company forever in 1901. The growing Simmons wholesale company eventually carried "every conceivable type of tool and hardware item needed by carpenters, mechanics, gardeners, handymen, and farmers" as well as household items like kraut cutters, food grinders, lard presses, china, apple peelers, silverware, ice cream freezers, stoves, kitchen ranges, sewing machines, and ice boxes.²³ All of Simmons' brands carried the Keen Kutter trade name or some variation of the KK letter theme (Fig. 16).



Figure 16 In addition to the use of the double-K theme for product names, this wedge-and-bar or axe shape became a well known Simmons Hardware Company logo. Taken from The Hardware Companies Collectors Klub website, obtained at www.thcck.org on November 13, 2007.

was looked upon with considerable suspicion." A.E. Dunn, *History of the Simmons Hardware Company, 1874-1921* (1921). An abridged version of this business history is available online through the University of Missouri – St. Louis at www.umsl.edu/~whmc/exhibits/matthews/simmonshardware, accessed on October 16, 2007.

²² Dunn, *History of the Simmons Hardware Company*, n.p.

²³ Obtained at www.thcck.org/simmons-hdwe.html on December 10, 2004.

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E.C. Simmons retired from active management in 1898, but remained president of the company for a number of years. He oversaw a major physical expansion of Simmons Hardware during the early years of the twentieth century when, like many other growing corporations, the company constructed branch facilities in other states.²⁴ While keeping its headquarters in St. Louis, Simmons Hardware built or leased distribution warehouses in Sioux City and a number of other cities across the country. These permanent bases continued the trend toward replacement of the semi-autonomous drummers like Norvell who had set their own prices and schedules, with marketing departments, cadres of well-organized salesmen heavily armed with advertising, and a supremely efficient handling and shipping system for speeding goods to customers. One technique for increasing efficiency—an interior railroad siding that was built into the St. Louis headquarters—worked so well, the company repeated the feature in the Sioux City warehouse, and perhaps other branch warehouses as well (Fig. 17). E. C. Simmons claimed the efficiency of his company's physical facilities, which resulted in reducing the number of times that goods were handled from four or five to "only once from the stock room to the freight car," reflected the benefits of *corporate* management rather than older, or more traditional, business forms.²⁵

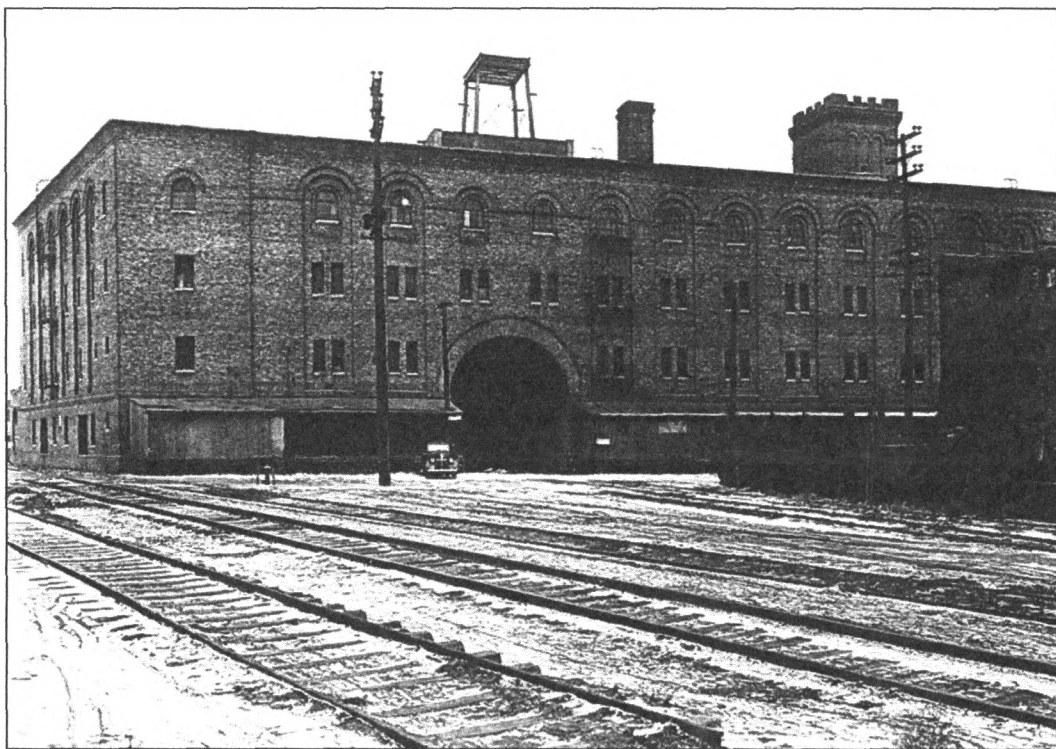


Figure 17 This view of the south side of the Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse, circa 1930, reveals the extent of the rail sidings that once served the building. Note the open portal for rail car loading inside the building. Refer to Figure 8 for a similar current view. Collection of the Pearl Street Research Center, Sioux City Public Museum.

²⁴ Oliver Zunz, in *Making America Corporate, 1870-1920* (1990) argued that "although selling has always been a ubiquitous activity, it was changed radically by the rise of corporations... With the development of marketing divisions, salesmanship and advertising became the two main components of a new 'science of service'...[and] the degree of penetration we have seen corporate salesmen achieving in the countryside is an indication of the growing strength of corporate organizations" (176).

²⁵ E.C. Simmons, "The Problem of the Trusts, ...Ninth in a Series of Articles by Eminent Men of Affairs," *New York Times*, November 13, 1911.

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Simmons Hardware Company's expansion program was reflected in its 1904 catalog, which contained line drawings of new branch warehouses in Wichita, Kansas; Odgen, Utah; Toledo, Ohio; New York City; and Minneapolis.²⁶ Since construction did not begin on the Sioux City warehouse until late in 1905, the catalog reveals that some of these warehouses were still in the planning stage when the catalog went to print. Several images, including that of the Sioux City building, bear other names in addition to Simmons. The catalog image for the Sioux City warehouse has roof-top signage reading "Dymond-Simmons Hardware Co.," though there is nothing to suggest the actual building ever carried this name. T.C. Dymond was listed in local city directories between 1907 and 1922 as the vice president and manager of the Simmons company. Since E. C. Simmons favored stock ownership by his employees as a form of incentive—another benefit of incorporation, he argued—the combined name used in Sioux City was likely public recognition of the stockholdings of the local warehouse manager.²⁷ All of the 1904 catalog building images are reproduced below (Figs. 18 to 23) and known information about these buildings is printed as Table 1.



Figure 18 This image of the planned Sioux City warehouse already had a sixth story on the tower, suggesting that the addition of a sixth floor to hold a water tank may not have been a design revision as the local paper suggested. Also, the image shows many more window bays than were actually built and the tower lacks its clock faces. Barely discernible where the clock faces should be is the axe shaped Simmons logo. The 1904 catalog claimed the building would include "150,485 square feet, or 3 1/3 acres" of storage space. Unless otherwise noted, this and the following images are from the Hardware Companies Collectors Klub website (www.thcck.org on December 7, 2004).

²⁶ Hardware Companies Collectors Klub website (available at www.thcck.org on December 7, 2004).

²⁷ Ibid.

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Figure 19 The catalog image of the Wichita warehouse is essentially correct, but the building as constructed has fewer side bays on the left side. After being mothballed and sitting vacant for a number of years, this building was converted to a hotel.



Figure 20 This monitor-roof warehouse in Utah is unusual for its departure from the standard Simmons building appearance. Note the logo on the front of the tall, middle bay. Nothing is known about the building today.

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Figure 21 The Standart-Simmons building in Toledo is actually triangular in shape. William H. Standart was a Simmons vice president when the building was constructed in 1906 according to the 1975 National Register nomination.



Figure 22 Nothing is known about the Simmons Hardware Company's New York City warehouse, but its architecture falls within the Romanesque styling favored by the company.

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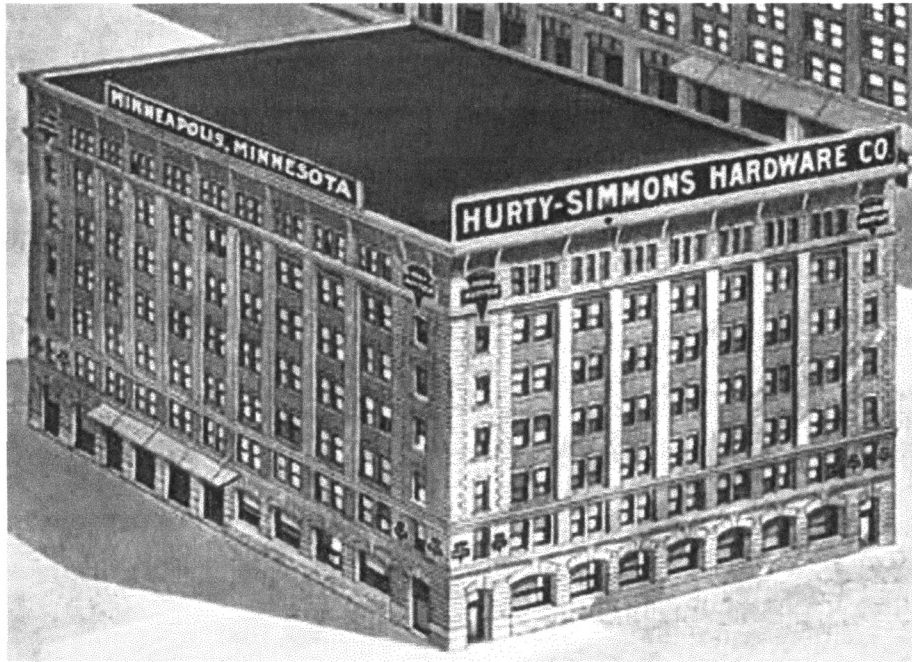


Figure 23 The Hurty-Simmons warehouse in Minneapolis (above and below) no longer exists. Its site is now occupied by ramps leading to and from Interstate 394.



Figure 24 The Keen Kutter logo was displayed prominently on the Simmons Company Minneapolis warehouse when this photograph from about 1910 was taken. Courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society (Photograph Collection, NH5.9 MP3.1S p 2, negative number 101921. Accessed at <http://collections.mnhs.org> on October 8, 2007).

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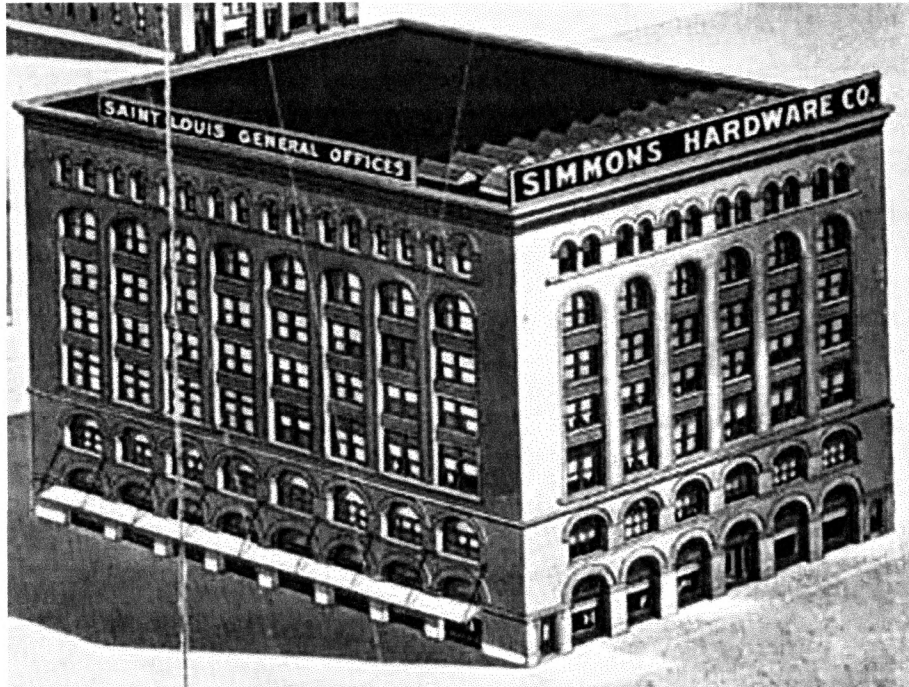


Figure 25 According to the *Cupples Warehouse District* National Register nomination (1976), this 1895 building served as the inspiration for three other Cupples district warehouses built in 1897, 1900, and 1907. Its strong Romanesque theme also clearly inspired the architects who designed the Sioux City Simmons Hardware Company warehouse.

When it was completed, the Sioux City branch warehouse was described in glowing terms by the local press, which understood the positive effects its presence could have on the town. Under the banner headline, “Introduction of a Great Hardware Jobbing House...Sioux City House is a Part of Largest Hardware Jobbing Company in the World,” the newspaper wrote:

The building recently erected by the Simmons Hardware company—one of the architectural beauties of Sioux City—is situated on the corner of Fourth and Water streets, where it has all the advantages due to a central location, combined with ample railroad switching facilities, thus materially reducing the expense of handling goods and at the same time assisting in prompt dispatch of inbound and outgoing freight. This building was erected this year, covers a complete block, is square in form, with a tower 123 feet high. A one-story addition is attractively fitted up as a sample room.²⁸

The new building, crowed the *Sioux City Journal*, was “remarkable” from both an architectural and engineering standpoint, and was practically fireproof, always an important consideration in an industrial building.

²⁸ *Sioux City Journal*, September 16, 1906.

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Table 1. Simmons Hardware Co. Buildings – various locations				
Location	Bldg. Name	Architect	Year Constructed	Current Condition
Minnesota Minneapolis 2 nd Ave. N & 4 th St.	Hurty-Simmons Warehouse	Unknown at this time	By 1904	Nonextant
Kansas Wichita 830 E. 1 st	Morton/Simmons Hardware Bldg.	Mauran, Russell & Garden (St. Louis MO)	1905-06	Rehabbed into upscale hotel; <i>Warehouse & Jobbers Historic District</i> , NRHP
Iowa Sioux City 323 Water St.	Dymond- Simmons Warehouse	Gordon, Tracy & Swartwout (New York City)	1905-06	Rehab in progress; NRHP listing in progress
Ohio Toledo 36 S. Erie St.	Standart- Simmons Warehouse	<i>Tentatively identified as George Stratford Mills (Toledo) for the Berdan Company</i>	<i>tent.</i> 1901-02	Listed, NRHP, 1975; also within <i>Huron- Superior Sts. Warehouse/Produce Historic District</i> , NRHP
Missouri St. Louis 900 Spruce St.	Simmons General Offices & Headquarters	William E. Eames & Thomas C. Young	1895	Within the <i>Cupples Station Historic District</i> , NRHP
New York New York City	Simmons Warehouse	Not researched		
Utah Ogden	Ogden-Simmons Warehouse	No information located		
<p>SOURCES: <i>The list of Simmons buildings comes from: www.thckk.org/warehouse-page.html. Information about these buildings' current status has been supplied or confirmed by staff at the various State Historic Preservation offices.</i></p>				

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Despite its decades of success navigating an evolving national business culture, Simmons Hardware did not fare well in the twentieth century. Upon his retirement from the company's active management in 1898 and his succession by his son, Wallace, E. C. Simmons maintained an interest in the business world well into his 70s. Having achieved the national stature of elder statesman in the field of "commercial corporations," Simmons even took a very public potshot at Congress in 1911 on the pages of the *New York Times*, when he criticized the 1890 Sherman Anti-Trust Act as "the worst and most dangerous business legislation that has ever been put into the United States statutes."²⁹ After Simmons' death in 1920, his company apparently began to slide. In 1922, Winchester Repeating Arms Company merged with the Simmons Hardware Company and the new company was called the Winchester-Simmons Company. The merger, however, was "a financial disaster for both companies," and by March of 1929, the two companies separated and reverted to their old names.³⁰ Sioux City city directories reveal that in 1933, the Simmons Company warehouse was vacant for the first time since it was built. Almost certainly a casualty of the Great Depression, the Simmons Hardware Company was dissolved on April 10, 1936.³¹ Over the years, the Simmons building was occupied by other companies and acquired several other common names. It stood vacant until 1939 when Kollman-Warner Company, which dealt in wholesale seeds, occupied the structure for three years. From 1944 to 1956, the Sioux City Battery Company produced Ray-O-Vac batteries in the basement and first two floors of the leased warehouse building, which became locally known as the "Battery Building."³² The Bomgaars Company was its most recent owner and occupant.

Simmons Hardware Company was a leader in the transition of the hardware industry's marketing methods, from autonomous traveling men who called on small-town retailers and sent back orders to small regional manufacturers, to the employment by corporate jobbers of sales representatives well-armed with company materials, recognizable brand names, and, usually, lower costs and faster delivery. Former drummer-turned-sales manager-turned industry leader Saunders Norvell credited E.C. Simmons with an optimistic and progressive foresight that shaped the success of the company through the end of the century. Because of Simmons' skills, Norvell claimed the hardware company held a number of business "firsts," including: "incorporating, profit-sharing with salesmen, having salesmen live in their territories, having warehouses next to railroads, developing a mail order business direct from customers, having heads of house departments visit the trade with salesmen, the use of special salesmen on Cutlery, Sporting Goods, etc., [and] the

²⁹ Simmons, "The Problem of the Trusts." In his long article in the *New York Times*, E. C. Simmons argued that while monopolistic trusts needed to be eliminated as impediments to free commerce, the existing Sherman Act was too ambiguous and had a chilling effect on honest business. He claimed "commercial corporations have come to stay." Among their other benefits, Simmons argued that corporations allowed a diversity of management and ownership that ensured continuation of the firm after its founder had died, something that frequently did not happen with older forms of business organizations, like partnerships. Simmons reasoned that the press had overly inflamed the public with anti-incorporation sentiment, who then pressured their politicians into passage of the ill-fitting anti-trust legislation. Further, Simmons argued, Congress was made up of mostly lawyers (he thought about 70%), who lacked "commercial minds" and "commercial education." Calling for a "great convention of businessmen," to be held in a central location (perhaps St. Louis?), Simmons offered it as a means of influencing public sentiment and changing public policy. "I quite believe," he wrote, "that if we had a man of business training in the White House—say Marshall Field—confidence would return immediately, business enterprises would go forth with leaps and bounds; every idle man who wants work would find it, at good wages, [and] the wheels of commerce would turn faster than ever before in our history."

³⁰ Obtained at www.thckk.org/winchester-hist.html on December 10, 2004.

³¹ Simmons Hardware Co. Collection, SC114, box 1, located at the Pearl Street Research Center. Extreme drought conditions during the 1930s in the Great Plains states, a major market region for Simmons, would have played a role in weakening the company as well. In 1940, the Shapleigh Hardware Company, also of St. Louis and a leading competitor at one time headed by former Simmons employee Saunders Norvell, purchased the assets of Simmons Hardware (including the Sioux City warehouse) and added variations of its brand name—Diamond Edge—to the Simmons products. *Sioux City Journal*, May 12, 1943.

³² *Sioux City Journal*, May 12, 1943; Sorensen and Chicoine, 128.

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sending out of helpers to regular salesmen in busy seasons.”³³ Even if these claims cannot be substantiated, Norvell’s first-hand experiences with the Simmons Hardware Company, as both an employee and a prominent direct competitor, suggest the company was, indeed, an innovator in the hardware industry. Within the broader national context of the “incorporation of America,” the Simmons Company’s actions in expanding management and sales forces to operate permanent branch operations around the country, from New York City to the Rocky Mountains, aptly reflects the new model of the modern corporation of the twentieth century.³⁴

The Architecture of the Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse

New York City professionals were selected to serve as both the architects and the building contractor for the new Simmons warehouse in Sioux City, suggesting just how national the scope of the company had become by the end of the nineteenth century. Architects for the company’s St. Louis headquarters, built a decade earlier in the Cupples warehouse district (refer back to Fig. 25), were William E. Eames (1859-1915) and Thomas C. Young (1858-1934). Influenced by H. H. Richardson’s Marshall Field warehouse in Chicago, Eames and Young had already designed a number of warehouses in the Romanesque mode for the Cupples district when the Simmons headquarters were erected in 1895.³⁵ It is not clear why Simmons Hardware failed to engage Eames and Young for its upcoming out-of-state commissions, and the company’s pattern of architect selection leaves few clues. Simmons hired the local St. Louis firm of Mauran, Russell and Garden for its new Wichita, Kansas, warehouse in 1904 or 1905, while about the same time it hired the New York City firm of Gordon, Tracy and Swartwout for its Sioux City warehouse. Additionally, the New York City contractor Frank B. Gilbreth (1868-1924) was hired to supervise construction of the Simmons’ Iowa project.³⁶ Gilbreth had started his career as a bricklayer and over the years developed many innovations that improved both the efficiency and quality of the process, improvements for which he was well known. These techniques undoubtedly were put to good use on the massive expanses of brick walls found in the Sioux City warehouse, and certainly contributed to the fine quality of its masonry. The hardware company looked closer to the job site to find its subcontractors, however, awarding several contracts to Sioux City firms, including George May Electrical Construction and Orr & Graves Co., plumbers and steam/gas fitters.³⁷

James Riely Gordon (1863-1937), senior member in the architectural firm of Gordon, Tracy³⁸ and Swartwout,³⁹ was

³³ Dunn, *History of the Simmons Hardware Company*, n.p.

³⁴ This phrase is taken from Alan Trachtenberg’s 1982 study in which he argued that nineteenth century railroad companies prompted large-scale industrialization in this country as well as a take-over of the “garden of the West” by corporate adventurers (*The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age*). William Cronon extended this line of analysis in *Nature’s Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (1991). Sioux City’s twin roles as both distributor of manufactured goods to the West and converter of Western natural resources (livestock) into products destined for the East is a perfect example of Trachtenberg’s and Cronon’s theses.

³⁵ *Cupples Warehouse District National Register of Historic Places nomination form* (1976), 2.

³⁶ Marilyn Laufer, *Sioux City, Iowa, An Architectural View* (Sioux City Art Center Publication, 1983) note 39. Following his retirement from the construction industry in 1912, Frank Bunker Gilbreth was a consultant and advocate for efficient factory design and a pioneer in the field of motion study. His family life, which included 12 children, served as the inspiration for the book *Cheaper by the Dozen*, which itself served as the inspiration for two movies by the same name, in 1950 and 2003. *The Gilbreth Network*, <http://gilbrethnetwork.tripod.com/bio.html>, accessed on October 9, 2007.

³⁷ *Sioux City Journal* advertisements, April 29, 1906.

³⁸ Everts Tracy (1868-1929) was a graduate of Yale and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and may be best remembered for his 1913-1914 design, along with sculptor Augustus Lukeman, of a New York City memorial to Isidor and Ida Straus, philanthropists who died in the Titanic disaster. Isidor Straus and his two brothers bought the H. R. Macy Co. in 1896, and developed it into the well known department store. During World War I, Tracy was “in charge of the camouflage for the American

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almost certainly responsible for the design of the Sioux City Simmons warehouse.⁴⁰ Of the three partners, his long career and design emphasis were weighted heavily toward Romanesque architecture, and he had a prominence in the Midwest the others lacked because of his regional work on many county courthouses. Born in Virginia, Gordon was raised in Texas. After apprenticing in the San Antonio, Texas, office of W. K. Dobson, Gordon worked for the federal government's Office of Supervising Architect overseeing the construction of the U.S. Post Office and Courthouse in San Antonio (1888-1889). This rock-face stone edifice was a thoroughly Richardsonian Romanesque design of round Roman arches and arcaded windows, and included a tall corner clock tower with a crenellated top and wide base (Fig. 26).⁴¹ As

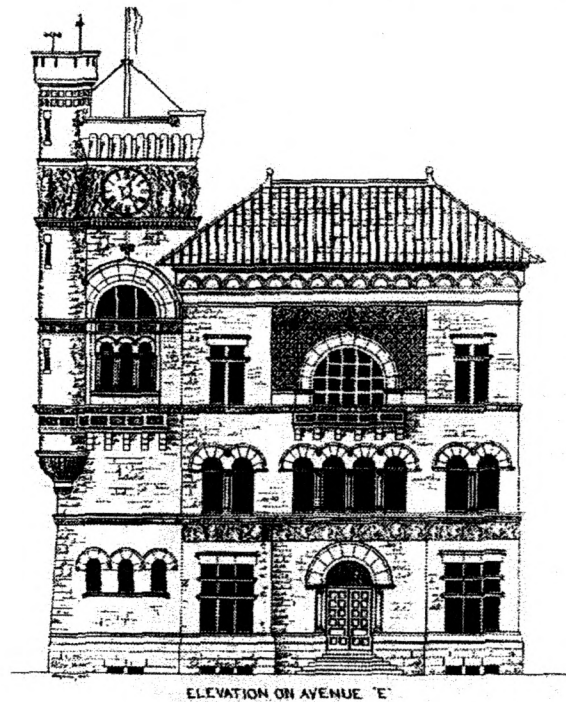


Figure 26 The U.S. Courthouse and Post Office, San Antonio, Texas, 1887-1890, was built during the tenure of Supervising Architect Mifflin E. Bell, known for delegating design responsibilities. James Riely Gordon supervised its construction. Lee, *Architects to the Nation*, 137-138.

forces in France" and stayed in the service after the war. He died of heart problems in 1927 or 1929 (sources conflict) in France, where he was a part of the reconstruction effort. "Col. Evarts Tracy Dying," *New York Times*, January 31, 1922; Straus Memorial entry, *Art Inventories Catalog, Smithsonian Institution Research Information System*, accessed at <http://siris-artinventories.si.edu> on November 14, 2007.

³⁹ Egerton Swartwout (1870-1943), was born in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Upon graduation from Yale, Swartwout worked for McKim, Mead & White starting in 1892. There he met Everts Tracy, with whom he formed a partnership in 1900. James Gordon's partnership with Swartwout and Tracy was brief (c.1904-1908), and after Tracy "retired in 1915," Swartwout "maintained a small office doing limited work..." Egerton Swartwout entry, *The Concise Grove Dictionary of Art* (Oxford University, 2002), accessed at www.answers.com/topic/egerton-swartwout-2 on October 9, 2007.

⁴⁰ The Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse, however, does not appear in the inventory to Gordon's papers, which includes 6,500 drawings and 1,600 photographs representing more than 300 buildings, held in the Alexander Architecture Archive of the University of Texas at Austin. See <http://catalog.lib.utexas.edu/>.

⁴¹ A line drawing of this public building is found on page 138 of Antoinette J. Lee, *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's Office* (2000).

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a sole practitioner in the 1890s, Gordon designed dozens of courthouses throughout the country—at least 16 of them in Texas alone—and most of them in the Romanesque style. Nearly all the Texas buildings had tall clock or bell towers, most of which were centrally located in the middle of the roof. Early in 1903, Gordon, who is remembered as J. Riely Gordon in Texas and perhaps beyond, relocated his practice to New York City.⁴² By 1904, the *New York Times* had printed articles about high-rise hotels and apartment buildings designed by Gordon, Tracy and Swartwout, confirming their partnership by that year.⁴³ After leaving the firm in 1907 or 1908, Gordon remained on the East Coast, where he continued to design courthouses, apartment buildings (such as the Gramercy Park Apartments, 1909), fraternal club buildings, and residences in both New York and New Jersey. Gordon also excelled professionally, serving 13 terms as the president of the New York Society of Architects (1916-1929).⁴⁴ Among his many designs was at least one other Iowa commission, also in Sioux City, the 1905 First National Bank (nonextant). Construction of Gordon's plan for the bank took place about the same time the Simmons warehouse walls were rising. Which commission came first is unknown, but Gordon modified his design aesthetic for the bank to a Greek temple form, a style much more traditional for a financial institution.⁴⁵

The coupling of round-arched Romanesque styling with massive, load-bearing brick walls to achieve a functional warehouse such as the Sioux City building was a familiar, if fading, industrial approach employed across the nation by 1905. It owed its origins primarily to Chicago's Marshall Field Wholesale Store (1885-1887, by H. H. Richardson).⁴⁶ Occupying an entire city block, the seven-story, stone Marshall Field warehouse has been identified as "the finest and most influential of Richardson's buildings" (Fig. 27).⁴⁷ While brick was more utilitarian than stone for most warehouse buildings, and used more extensively, the Marshall Field building clearly influenced architects such as Eames and Young in the Cupples warehouse district of St. Louis and business owners like E. C. Simmons who continued to support the industrial form by paying for it.⁴⁸ Richardson's special interpretation of the already fashionable Romanesque

⁴² Glenn N. Patton, "Gordon, James Riely," *Handbook of Texas Online*, s.v. (available at <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/GG/fgo30.html>, accessed on November 14, 2007).

⁴³ Plans for a 12-story hotel near Times Square, drawn by the three-man firm and filed with the city's building department, were announced by the *New York Times* on December 16, 1904; plans for 4- and 5-story apartment houses and the 9-story "Home Club Coop," (by Swartwout in the "Florentine-style," demolished in 2000) were announced by the *Times* on April 7, 1905, and August 27, 1905, respectively. An October 16, 1907 note in the *Times* regarding the death from appendicitis of one of the firm's young employees, Jesse Cook, reveals the three-man firm still existed at that time.

⁴⁴ *James Riely Gordon: An Inventory of his Drawings and Papers, ca. 1890-1937* (Alexander Architectural Archive, University of Texas at Austin, available at <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utaaa/00037/00037-P.html>, accessed on October 9, 2007).

⁴⁵ Undated plans for the bank are in the James Riely Gordon collection at the University of Texas at Austin. When this bank was torn down, a "grouping of five Ionic columns and an accompanying architrave...were rescued from [the] 1905 bank building and erected as a landscape folly" near the new bank and parking structure. David Gebhard and Gerald Mansheim, *Buildings of Iowa* (1993), 499-500.

⁴⁶ One industrial historian has argued that the "American round-arch style" arrived in the early nineteenth century from Germany where it was known as the *Rundbogenstil*. However, she concedes, "the practical reasons for using segmentally arched openings meant that round-arched openings did not predominate, even in this style of building." Whether Richardson was influenced by the *Rundbogenstil* aesthetic remains to be studied. Betsy Hunter Bradley, *The Works: The Industrial Architecture of the United States* (1999), 237.

⁴⁷ Carl W. Condit, *The Rise of the Skyscraper* (1952), plate 13 at page 34.

⁴⁸ The initial Cupples warehouse design by Eames and Young was completed in 1889, just two years after the Marshall Field building, and it "established a model for warehouse design" in the district and beyond. This first warehouse was "indebted in conception to Richardson's Marshall Field wholesale warehouse..." (*Cupples Warehouse District* NRHP nomination, 2). Richardson had been working on an important commission in St. Louis in 1886, the year he died, suggesting an opportunity by Eames and Young for first-hand knowledge of Richardson and his Marshall Field building. In any event, the widespread influence of the Marshall Field Wholesale Store has been long recognized by noted architectural historians, including Carl W. Condit in the

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Revival produced a massive, horizontal form devoid of decoration, with vertical banks of round-arched windows. By grouping several floors of windows under a series of single massive arches between engaged piers, Richardson achieved a gigantic arcade pattern in keeping with the scale of the overall building.



Figure 27 The Marshall Field Wholesale Store in downtown Chicago is nonexistent. “Formerly on the block bounded by Adams, Wells, Quincy, and Franklin streets, this finest and most influential of Richardson’s buildings was demolished in 1930 to make way for a parking lot...for no intelligible reason, economic or structural...[I]t would have lasted a century.” Condit, *The Rise of the Skyscraper*, 34, 81.

The Marshall Field-inspired warehouse, as a property type, was actually nearing the end of its popularity when the Sioux City warehouse was begun in 1905, but it was a tried and trusted combination for the Simmons Hardware Company, and a very familiar style for Sioux City. In short, it was a safe, if conservative, choice of building style and construction type. Sioux City by this time already had a fine body of stone Richardsonian Romanesque civic, commercial, and residential buildings. The city’s first post office and federal building (1893-1897), for example, was a Romanesque limestone edifice constructed with a tall tower, and the commercial district in the “lower” Fourth Street area had two circa 1890 stone versions of the style (Bay State Block and Plymouth Block [*aka* Call Terminal Building]). Additionally, a pair of

1950s (in *The Rise of the Skyscraper*) and, a generation later, Marcus Whiffen (in *American Architecture Since 1780* [1969]).

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remarkable pink Sioux Quartzite stone homes were built in town between 1888 and 1893, both featuring at least short towers and crenellated trimwork.⁴⁹ In light of this, it seems fitting that an industry leader with a history of operating as the model modern corporation should choose a successful industrial style championed by H. H. Richardson, an architect who “all his life...had wanted to design a great commercial structure which would reflect the power and organization and boldness of modern commerce.”⁵⁰

Viewed within the overall context of how non-residential architecture was changing in the early twentieth century, however, this comfortable choice of a low-rise masonry warehouse actually may have been a harbinger of things to come for the company and a suggestion that new corporate management lacked E. C. Simmons’ innovative spirit. New construction techniques in cast iron (and then steel) skeleton framing, developed in the late nineteenth century, enabled the taller buildings associated with the Chicago Style, and broke the yoke of commerce’s reliance on masonry load-bearing walls. Even more important for industrial architecture, the development of reinforced concrete skeletal framing, made possible following the introduction of Portland cement in the 1880s and 1890s, offered a stronger, more fireproof alternative to traditional masonry walls and heavy-timber (or mill construction) interiors. “Like steel, reinforced concrete offered great tensile and compressive strength; it had three times the working strength of the best brickwork and seven times that of common brick. The material permitted the use of panel enclosure walls and large windows for maximum daylighting and good ventilation...Moreover, reinforced concrete was fireproof.” Following several decades of experimentation, Ernest L. Ransome introduced modern reinforced-concrete skeleton construction early in the twentieth century with his patented grid-like system of walls and the construction of a large addition in 1903-1904 to the Pacific Coast Borax Refinery in New Jersey.⁵¹ Local evidence in Sioux City also suggests that even as the Simmons warehouse walls were rising, the city’s chapter of load-bearing brick industrial construction was closing. By 1920, the city’s industrial districts revealed a firm commitment to the use of reinforced concrete, with its packing houses and stockyards district making extensive use of the construction method and material.⁵²

Future Plans for the Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse

At the end of 2007, plans were underway to adapt the Simmons warehouse to residential condominiums, office space, and a restaurant, all under the name Clock Tower on Water Street.⁵³

⁴⁹ Gebhard and Mansheim, *Buildings of Iowa* (1993), 496-509.

⁵⁰ Condit, *The Rise of the Skyscraper*, 82; see also *Walking Tour of Historic Fourth Street* (Sioux City Public Museum, www.siouxcitymuseum.org, accessed on October 9, 2007), 3.

⁵¹ Bradley, *The Works*, 157.

⁵² Included in the local examples of reinforced concrete industrial buildings were the Bekins Van & Storage Building (1907) on Perry Street, a five-story warehouse; Armour & Co. Wholesale Market (1915); the double-deck Sioux City Stock Yards “Hog Hotel” (1916); and the Midland Packing Company/Swift and Company processing plant (1919). All have been evaluated for Section 106 purposes within the last 10 years and are either fully or partially demolished now.

⁵³ Initial project plans received newspaper coverage in the *Sioux City Journal* on April 1, 2007. That article is available at www.siouxcityjournal.com.

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10. Geographical Data

Verbal Boundary Description

The building occupies the following parcel contained in the Sioux City East Subdivision: Sioux City East Auditor Plat Blocks 31-85-86, Sioux City East & Blocks 46-47, & Parts of Lots 13-14 Block 42 Sioux City Tax Lot A.

Boundary Justification

The boundary is the legal description used for local tax purposes and is the parcel historically associated with the building. The building footprint occupies essentially the entire parcel.

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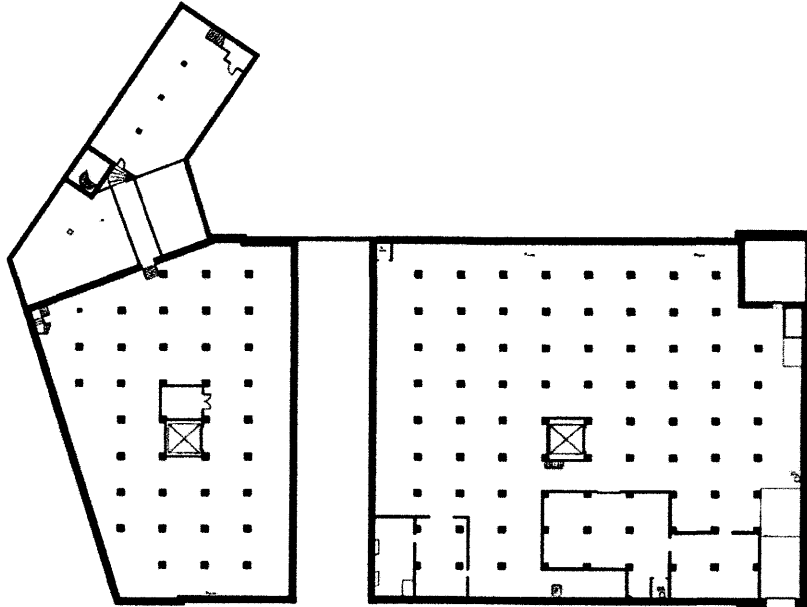
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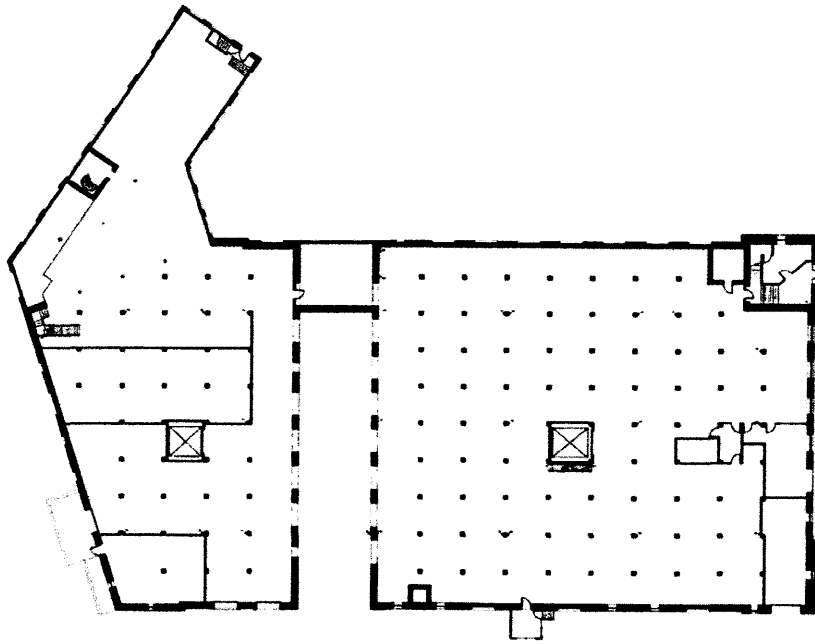
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Floor Plans – 2007

(Source: The Architectural Offices, Omaha, Nebraska)
www.thearchitecturaloffices.com



Basement Plan



First Floor Plan

_____ = 150 feet

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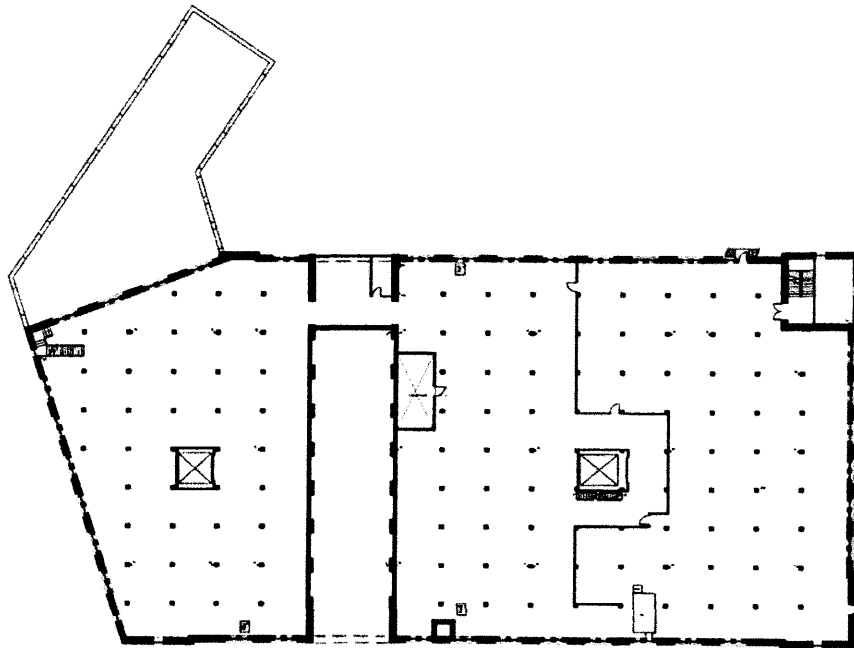
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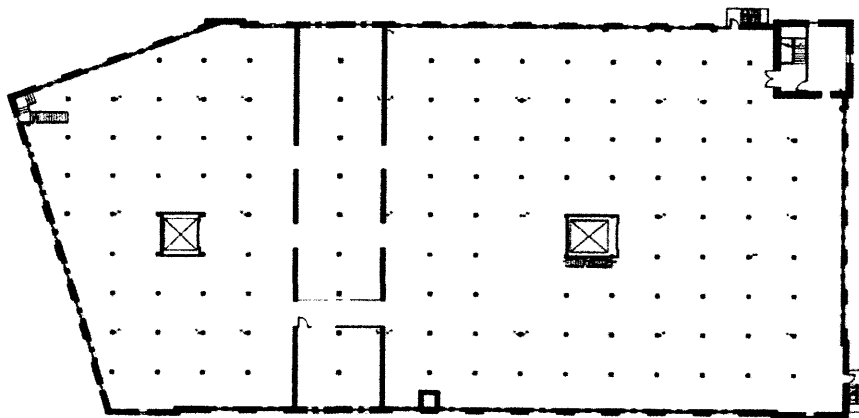
Floor Plans – 2007



(Source: The Architectural Offices, Omaha, Nebraska)
www.thearchitecturaloffices.com



Second Floor Plan



Third Floor Plan

—————
= 150 feet

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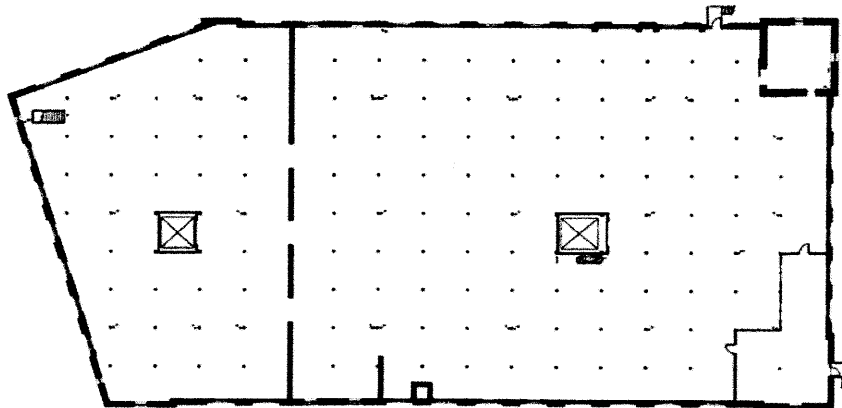
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Floor Plans – 2007

(Source: The Architectural Offices, Omaha, Nebraska)
www.thearchitecturaloffices.com

N ↑



Fourth Floor Plan

— = 150 feet

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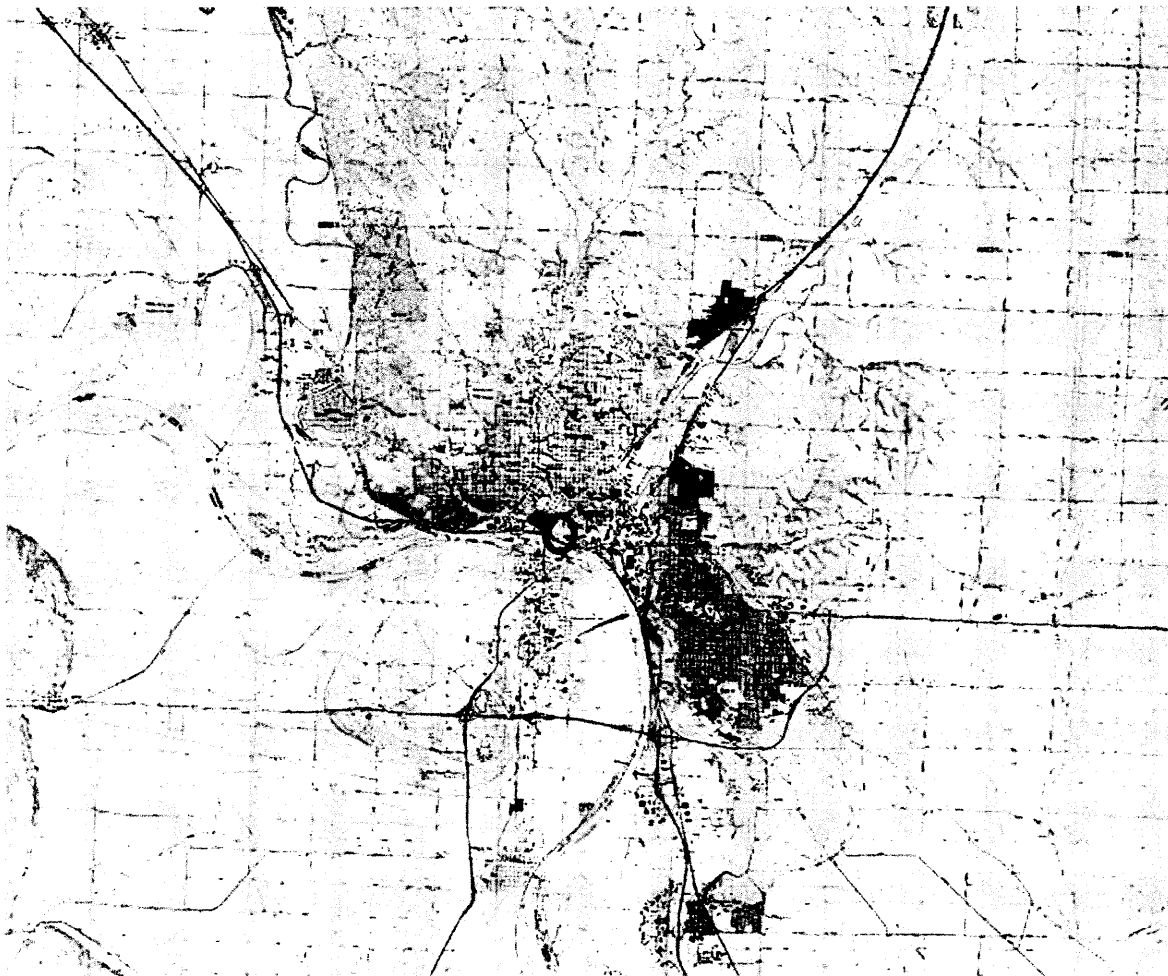
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City of Sioux City, Woodbury County, Iowa, with the general location of the property noted.
(Source: Map obtained from <http://cairo.gis.iastate.edu> on November 1, 2007)

N ↑



— = 5 miles

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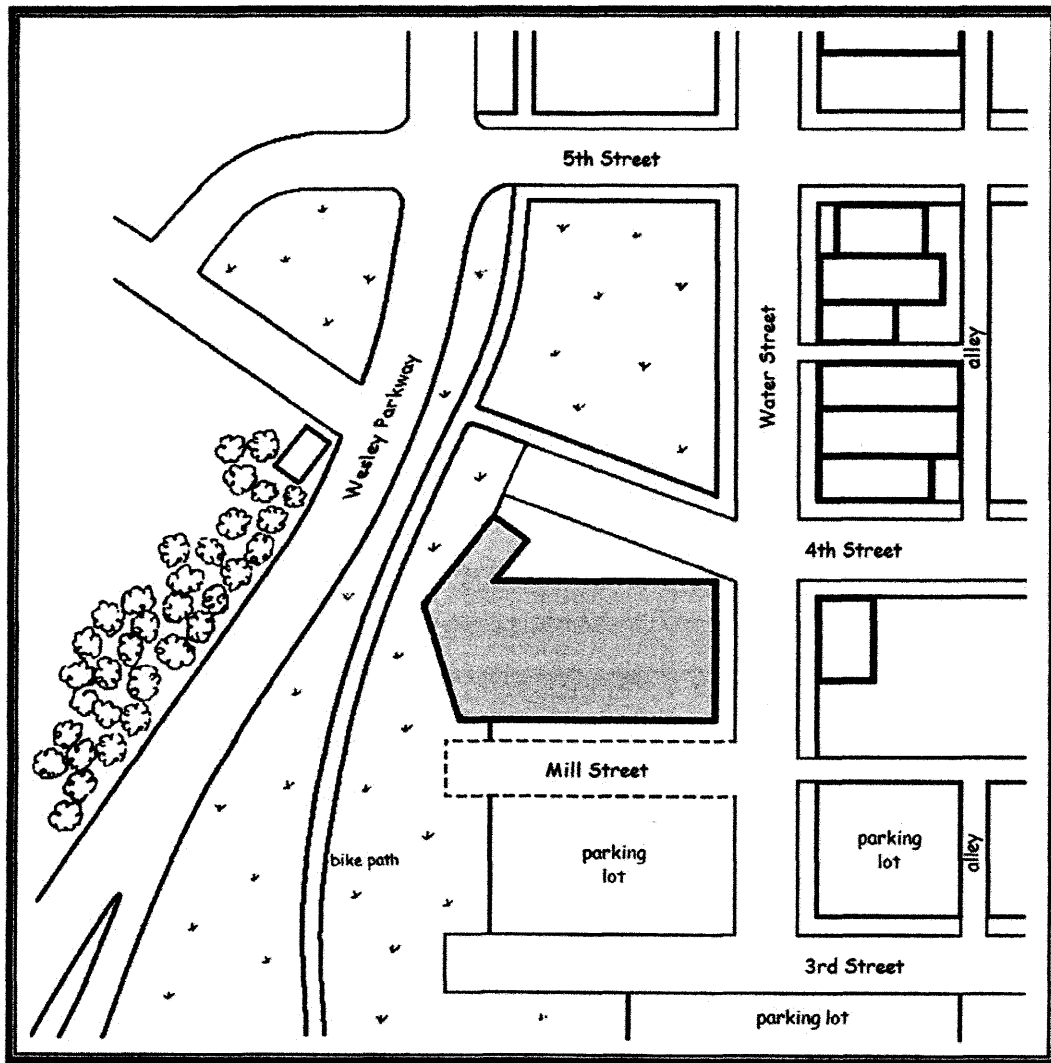
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Site Plan – 2007
(The nominated property is shaded.)



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

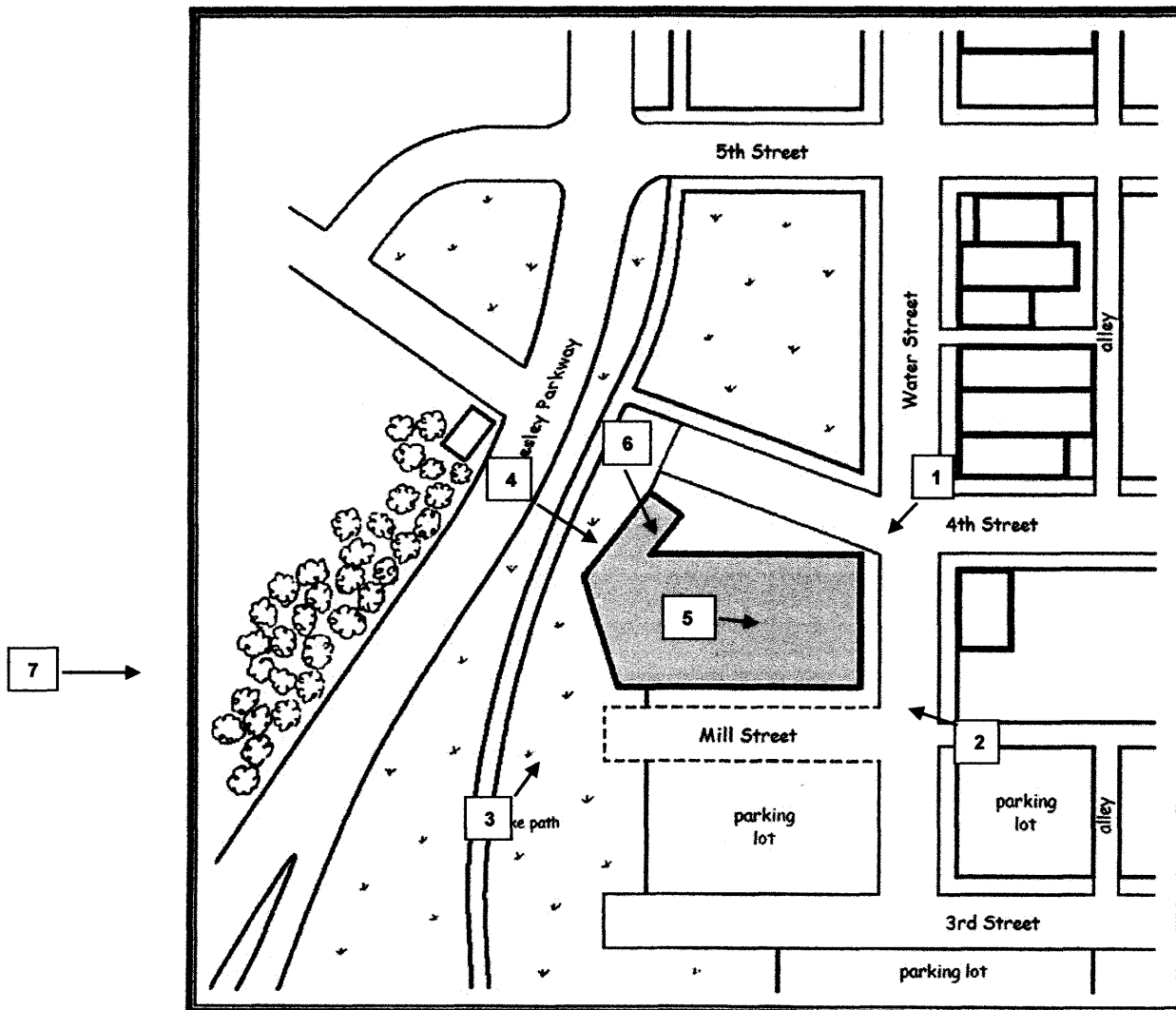
Simmons Hardware Company Warehouse
name of property

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Woodbury Iowa
county and state

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PHOTOGRAPH LOCATIONS



PHOTOGRAPH LABEL INFORMATION (#3, 4, 5 share common information)

- 3. Mike Whye, Council Bluffs, IA
- 4. October 27, 2007
- 5. Tallgrass Historians L.C., Iowa City, IA
- 6. Photograph #1: East façade, North side, facing SW
- Photograph #2: East façade, South side, facing NW
- Photograph #3: South side, West side, facing NE
- Photograph #4: Northwest side of wing, facing SE
- Photograph #5: Interior, 3rd floor, facing E
- Photograph #6: Interior, wing, facing SE
- Photograph #7: Landscape view, facing E