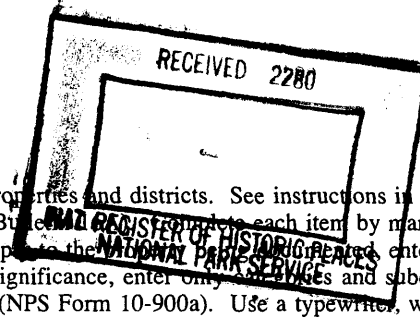


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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 33). Mark each item by marking "x" on the appropriate line or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the functions, architectural classifications, materials, and areas of significance 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 SYNDICATE BLOCK
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number 206, 208, 210, 212, and 216 Main Street N/A not for publication
city or town La Porte City N/A vicinity
state Iowa code IA county Black Hawk code 013 zip code 50651

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.)

Rowell G. Locke, Deputy SHPO November 2, 2005
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

- I 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)

Edson Beall 12.21.05
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

Syndicate Block
Name of Property

Black Hawk County, Iowa
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many lines as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one line)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
5		buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
5	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)

COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
SOCIAL/meeting hall

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/specialty store
DOMESTIC/multiple dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation Stone
walls Brick
roof Asphalt
other Wood

Narrative Description

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

Syndicate Block
Name of Property

Black Hawk County, Iowa
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" on one or more lines 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" on all the lines 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.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

ARCHITECTURE

COMMERCE

Period of Significance

1891 – circa 1919

1894

Significant Dates

1891

1894

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Day, Albert L.

Narrative Statement of Significance - (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets)

9. Major Bibliography 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):

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

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository

Syndicate Block
Name of Property

Black Hawk County, Iowa
County and State

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1		<u>15</u>		<u>566</u>	<u>750</u>		<u>46</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>860</u>	

Verbal Boundary Description
(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing

2		---		-----	-----		-----	-----	-----	

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

Zone Easting Northing

3		---		-----	-----		-----	-----	-----	

Zone Easting Northing

4		---		-----	-----		-----	-----	-----	

11. Form Prepared By

name/title William C. Page, Public Historian; Geraldine Wester, Chairperson
organization La Porte City Historic Preservation Commission date February 20, 2005
street & number 300 Walnut Street (Wester) telephone 319-342-2043
city or town La Porte City state Iowa zip code 50651

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 SHPO or FPO.)

name See Continuation Sheet
street & number _____ telephone ____
city or town _____ state _____ zip code _____

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

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

The Syndicate Block is located in the heart of the central business district of La Porte City, Iowa. This district stretches about four blocks along Main Street to the southeast, with an additional portion of the district spilling over into Commercial Street to the north and south of its intersection with Main Street. The topography in this area is generally level.

Downtown La Porte City currently possesses two buildings listed on the National Register. The La Porte City Station of the Waterloo, Cedar Falls, and Northern Railroad at 202 Main Street (now serving as City Hall) is situated to the west of the Syndicate Block. The Dr. Jesse Wasson Building at 201 Main Street is located across the street.

Main Street serves as the principal business corridor in La Porte City. It is surfaced with brick pavers. This paving ties the central business district together by forming an architectural link between the commercial buildings, most of which are constructed of brick. Wolf Creek (originally known as Big Creek) is situated one-half block to the northwest.

Main Street formerly served as a portion of the Red Ball route from St. Paul, Minnesota to St. Louis, Missouri, established in 1926. This later became Iowa 218. Some years ago, this highway was rerouted in La Porte City, and Main Street no longer serves that purpose. Today, Commercial Street serves as the business route of U.S. Highway 218 through La Porte City.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Syndicate Block is the largest commercial edifice ever to be erected in La Porte City and stands on Main Street, the city's principal business corridor. The Syndicate Block is a 2-story, brick edifice consisting of five units. The units located at 206, 208, 210, and 212 Main Street were constructed in 1891. The unit at 216, known as the Hileman Building, was built in 1894. It is unclear why "216" was used instead of "214" in the numeric sequence of house numbers. All of these units are attached to one another and feature a unified Late Victorian design. Although some of the storefronts have been altered, the upper floors of the block retain their integrity and are in fine condition.

Over the years, house numbers have changed in La Porte. Fire insurance maps—dated 1895, 1906, 1913, and 1927—locate the Syndicate block at 107-123 Main Street. La Porte's current numbering system locates the block at the addresses described in the first paragraph above.

EXTERIOR

Individual Units

The unit at 206 Main is at the western end of the block. Cover-up materials presently clad its upper storefront, and its original bulkhead has been replaced with flagstone. The upper floor of this unit features three bays filled with 1/1 double-hung sash. The first floor of this unit is presently used for

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

storage. An apartment is located on the second floor, accessed from the street by the entrance between units 210 and 212.

The unit at 208 Main is similar to the unit at 206. Its first floor is used as a bar and grill. An apartment is located on the second floor, accessed from the street by the entrance between units 210 and 212.

The unit at 210 is similar to those at 206 and 208, except that an inset-entry door is located at its eastern edge. The transom above this entrance is covered-up. Units 210 and 212 were constructed within the tradition of the Victorian commercial block. A common entrance to the second floor of these units is situated between them, surmounted with a name plaque, which reads "Syndicate/Block/1891," worked in natural-colored cast stone. The 212 unit features three bays on the second floor, filled with 1/1 double-hung windows, and one bay above the common entrance, also filled with a 1/1 double-hung sash window. The first floor of unit 210 is presently used as a bar and grill. An apartment is located on the second floor, accessed from the street by the common entrance with 212 described above.

The unit at 212 is similar to the unit at 210, except that the pilasters, which flank the storefront window, and a pressed metal cornice above the storefront window remain visible. The first floor of this unit is presently not in use. An apartment is located on the second floor, accessed from the street by the common entrance with 210 described above.

The unit at 216, the Hileman Building, is at the eastern end of the block. (See Continuation Sheet 7-12.) Cover-up materials presently clad portions of its upper storefront windows, but the original bulkhead appears to remain extant. An inset-entrance to the building is situated at its eastern edge. Brick pilasters flank the storefront, and two cast iron columns are equally placed within the space of the storefront to define the three bays. The upper floor of this unit features four bays, filled with 1/1 double-hung sash, and surmounted with a brickworked pediment. Originally, this pediment featured signage, which read "J.M. Hileman/ 1894," subsequently removed, likely by the I.O.O.F., when they occupied the building.

Common Design

All of these units feature a common architectural design. This design includes uniform heights of the first and second floors; brick pilasters to separate each of the individual units from each other; pinnacles surmounting these pilasters; arched windows; 1/1-double hung sash in the upper floor windows; and a brickworked parapet and cornice inset with panels and embellished with denticulation. Half-circular sunburst motifs, worked in wood, are situated above all the windows on the upper floor. Although cover-up paneling clads some of the storefront windows, their removal might reveal the presence of original materials.

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

INTERIOR

The Syndicate Block interior is presently used for several different purposes, as noted above. The first floor of all of these units has been altered in various ways, some with cover-up materials. The first floor of the 206 unit is in poor condition.

The floorplan of the second floor is unusual. (See Continuation Sheet 7-10.) The common entrance to the second floor, situated between the 210 and 212 units, provides access to this floor. At the top of the staircase, a door to the west leads into a hallway, which access three apartments. One apartment is located above unit 210, one apartment is located above unit 208, and one apartment is located above unit 206. Another door at the top of the staircase to the east leads into an apartment above unit 212. This floorplan calls attention to the contemporaneous construction and common design of these units. A bed and breakfast is located in the front portion of unit 212 and its owners/operators have an apartment at its rear. The second floor of unit 216 is self-contained with its own staircase to the first floor.

INTEGRITY

The integrity of the Syndicate Block is excellent. The upper story is particularly well preserved, including its double-hung windows, wooden sunburst motifs in the arches above the windows, cornice, and parapets. Although the storefronts of some units have been covered-up, original materials might remain underneath this later cladding. The storefront of the Hileman Building at 216 Main Street remains largely unaltered.

On the interior, the upper story retains much of its original character, especially the main staircase, stairwell, and public corridor. The interior of the first floor is less pristine, having been modernized over the years for commercial purposes, and the 206 unit is badly in need of repair.

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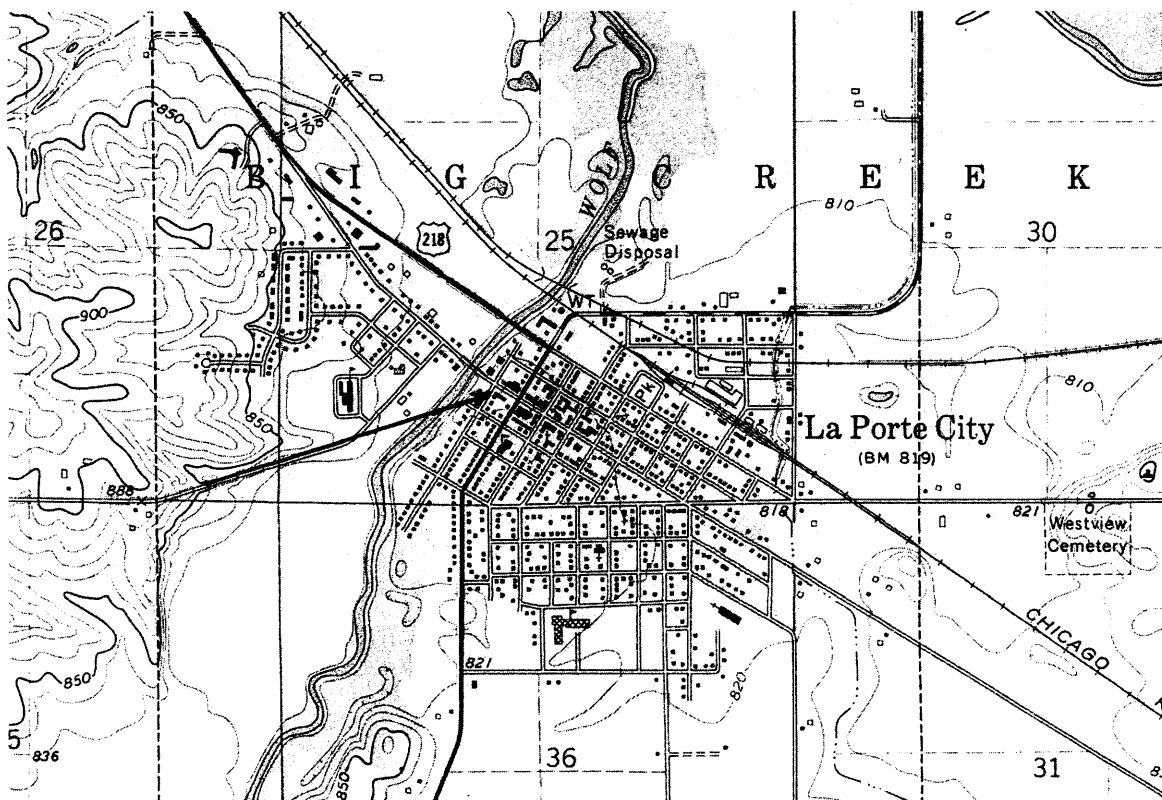
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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

SITE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



Source: U.S.G.S. Map (7.5 Minute Series), La Porte City Quadrangle, 1956, Photorevised 1976.

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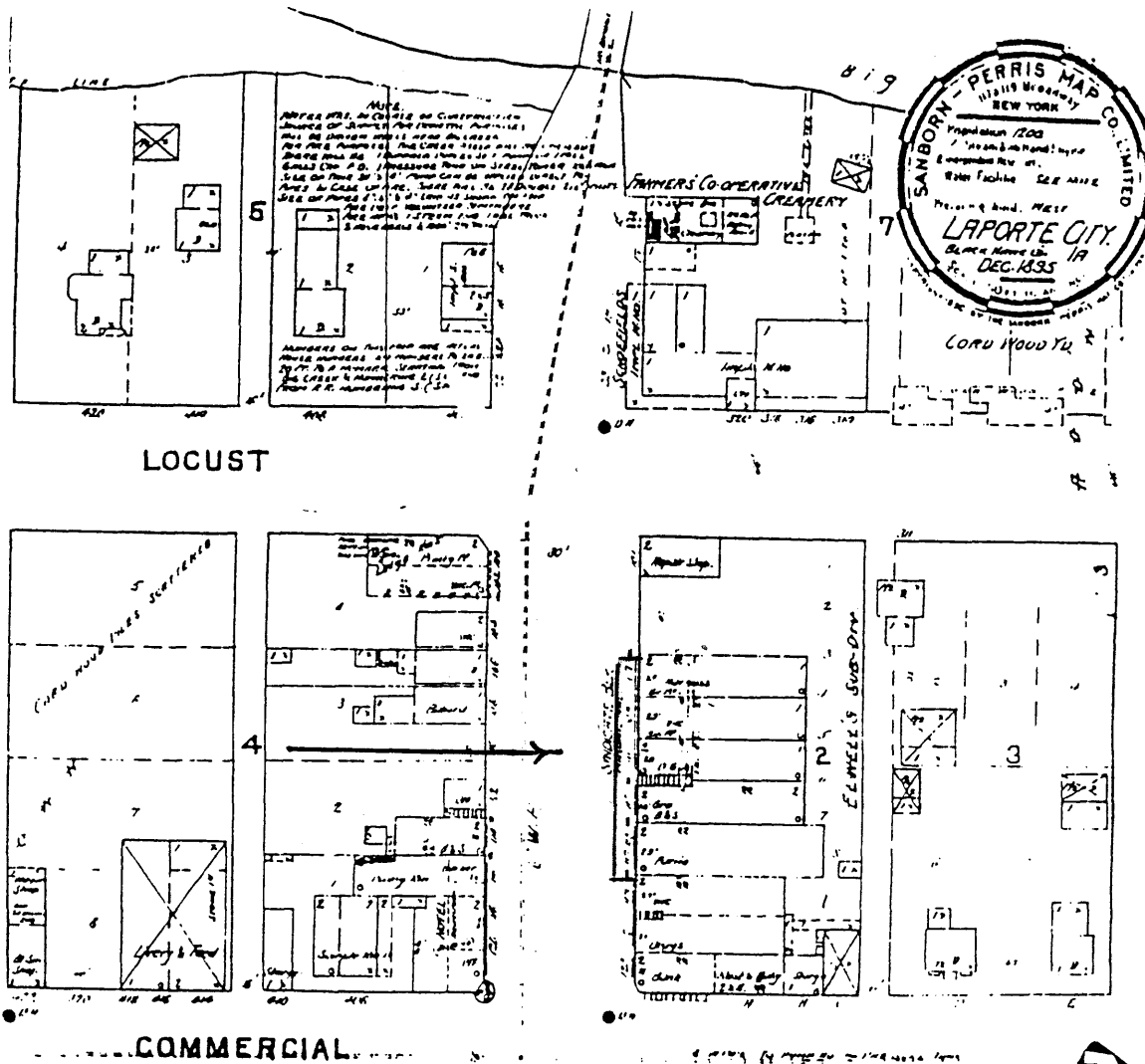
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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

1895 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



The Syndicate Block (206-212 Main Street units) is one of the few commercial structures designated by name.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, La Porte City, December 1895, p. 1.

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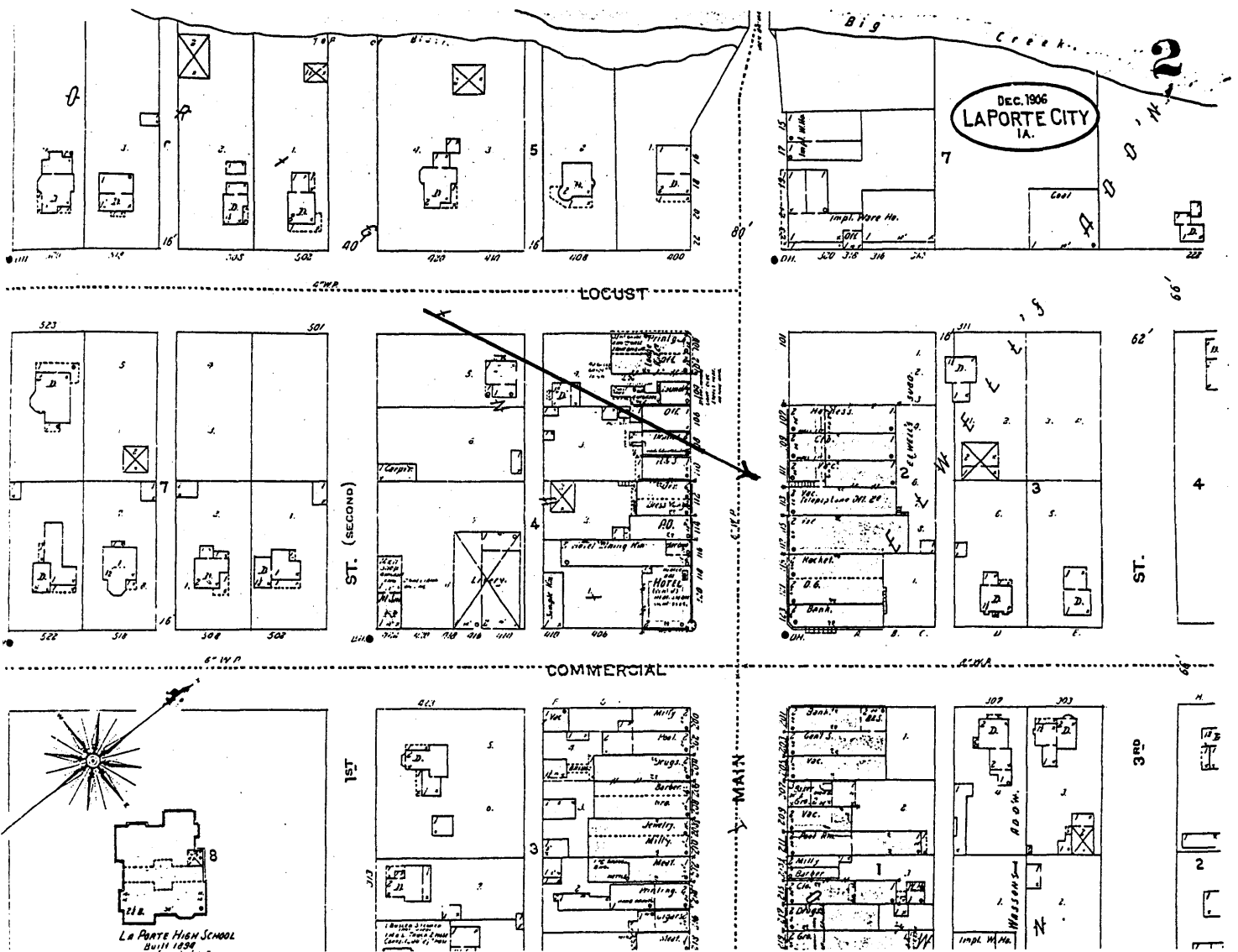
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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

1906 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



The Syndicate Block (206-216 Main Street) is now complete in its full complement of units.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, La Porte City, 1906, p. 2.



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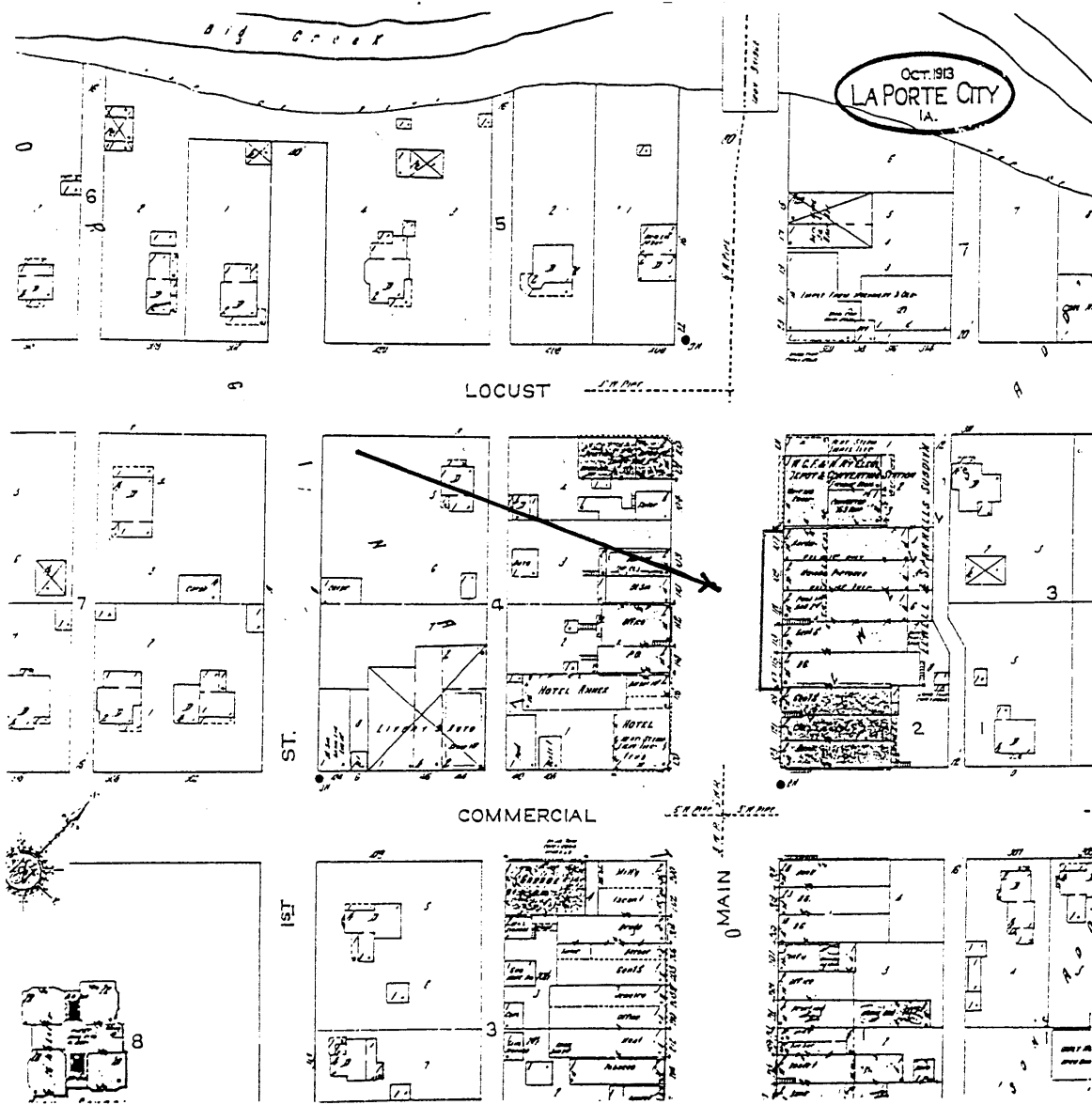
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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

1913 FIRE INSURANCE MAP



Construction of the Waterloo, Cedar Falls, & Northern Railway Depot northwest of the Syndicate Block has filled out the 200 block of Main Street. A moving picture theater occupies the first floor of the 208 Main Street unit.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, La Porte City, 1913, p. 3.

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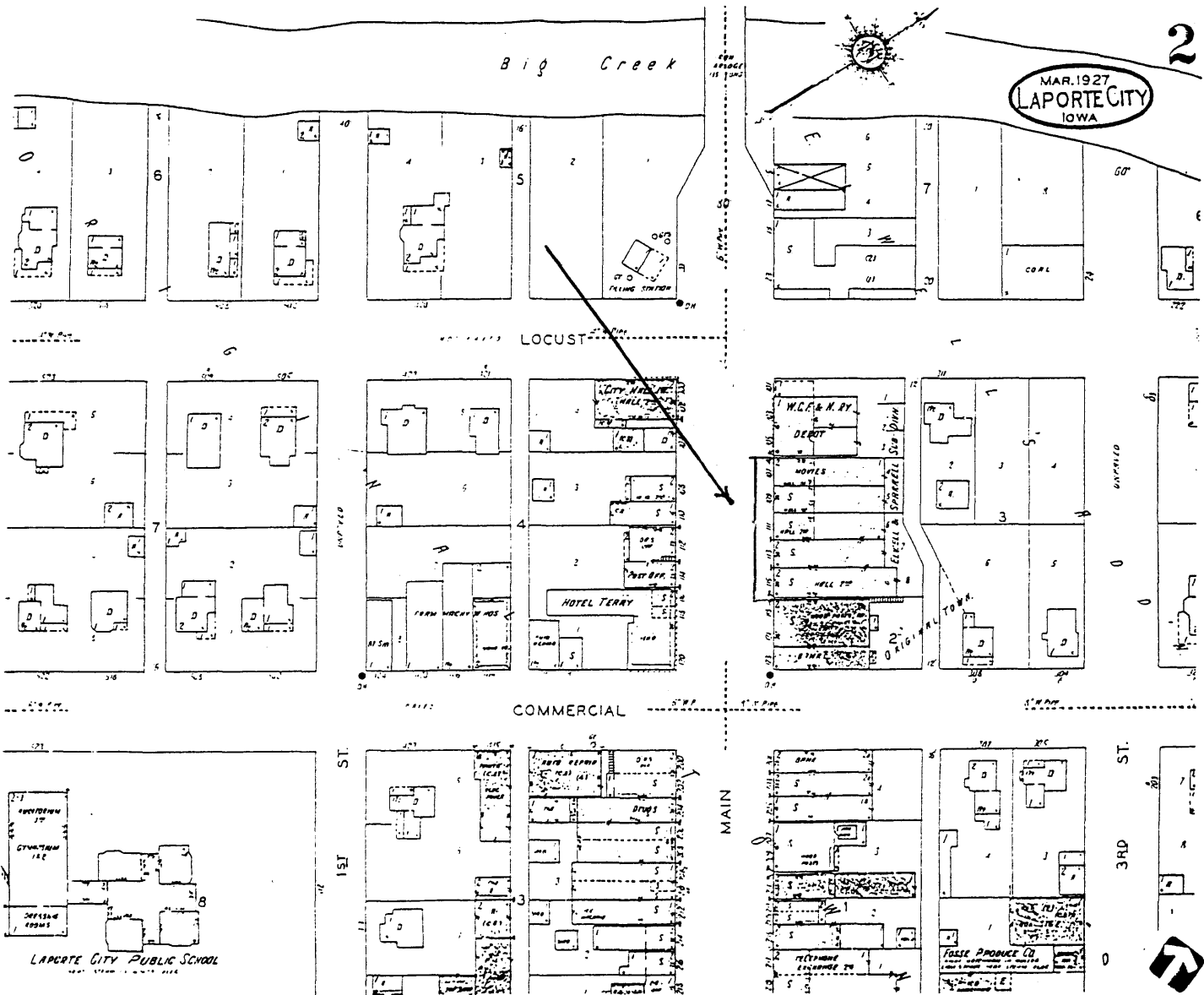
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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

1927 FIRE INSURANCE MAP

ARROW LOCATES PROPERTY



Businesses on the first floor of the Syndicate Block tended to change. A moving picture theater, located at 208 Main Street in 1913, now occupies the 206 Main Street unit.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, La Porte City, 1927, p. 2.

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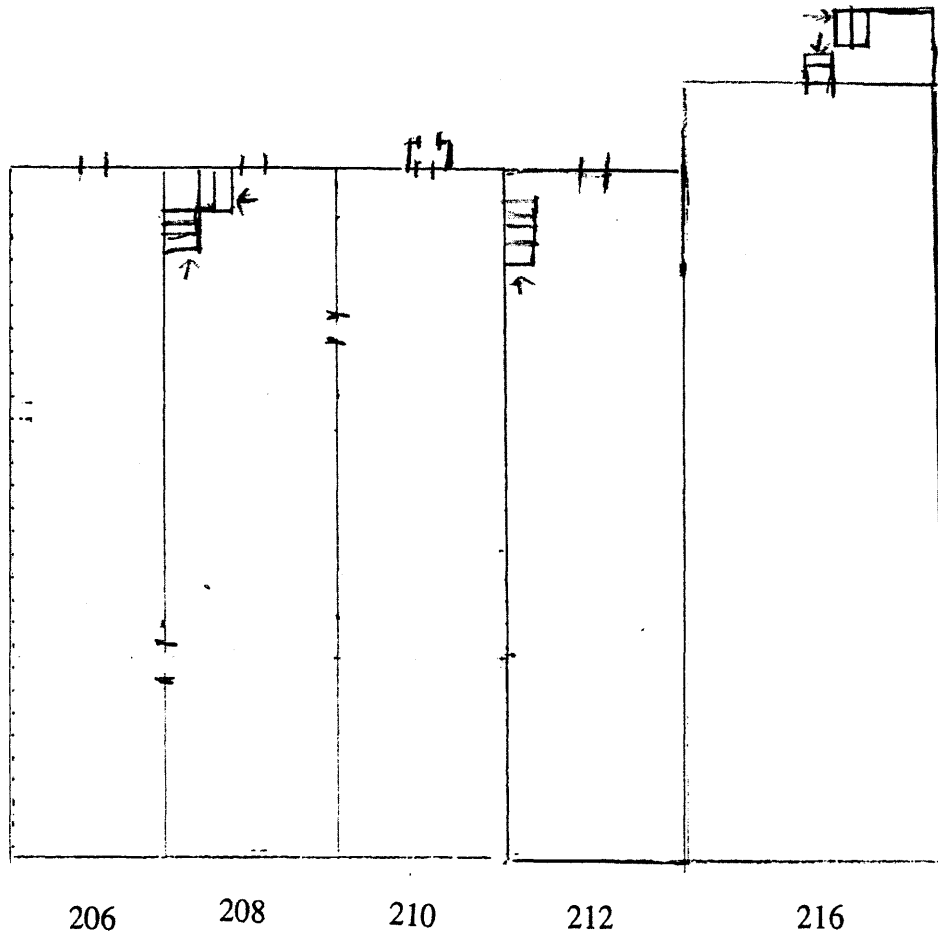
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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

FLOOR PLAN SKETCH: FIRST FLOOR



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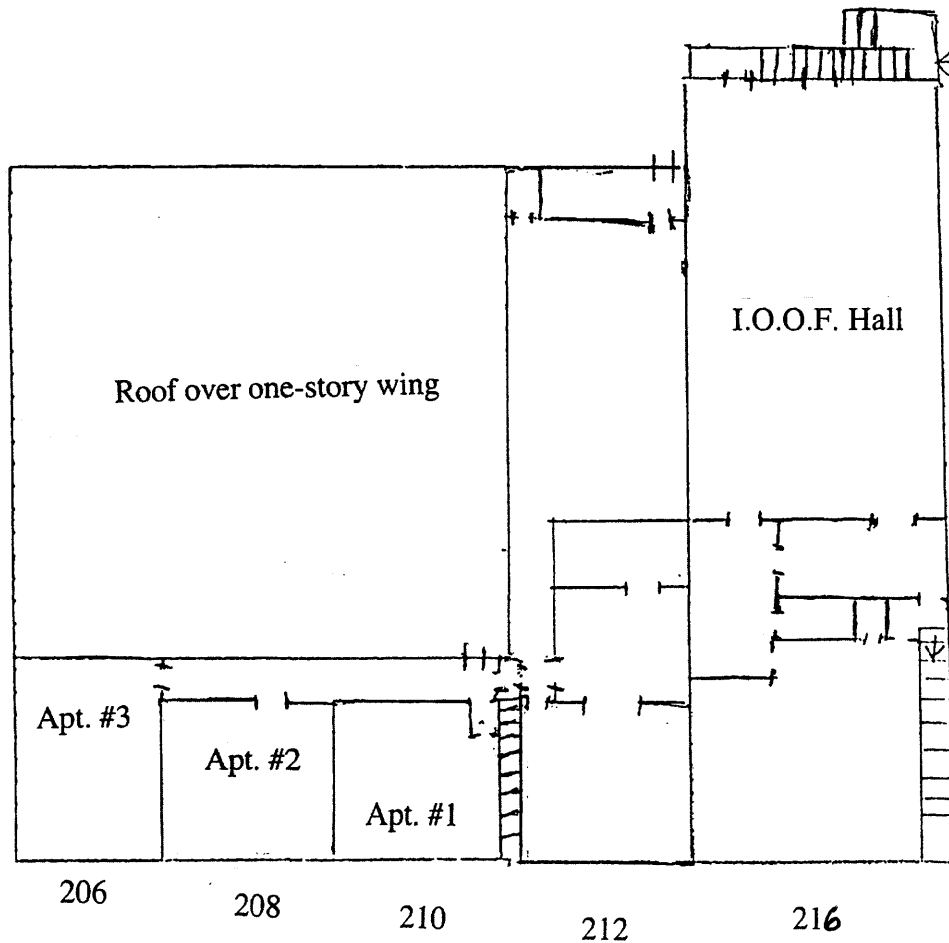
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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

FLOOR PLAN SKETCH: SECOND FLOOR



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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

HISTORIC PHOTOGRAPH CIRCA 1894



From left to right, this image pictures the units at 206, 208, 210, and 212 Main Street. The latter two units have the appearance of a commercial block, along their upper floors adjoin that of units 206 and 208 as well.

Source: Centennial Publication, n.p.

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

HILEMAN BUILDING



FURNITURE HOUSE OF J. M. HILEMAN.

The Hileman Building is the easterly most unit of the Syndicate Block and located at 216 Main Street. This circa 1895 photograph pictures it shortly after completion. Note how Hileman displays chairs for his furniture store in the second floor windows. The local International Order of Odd Fellows purchased the property in 1913.

Source: *Illustrated Souvenir*, 1895.

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE

Built in two phases in 1891 and 1894, the Syndicate Block in La Porte City is significant, locally under National Register Criterion A, for its associations with commerce. The block calls attention to the boosterism of the La Porte Improvement Company during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This group of local real estate investors amassed the necessary capital to erect this leviathan block and served as its property managers for nearly 30 years. The Syndicate Block is the largest commercial edifice ever erected in La Porte City.

The Syndicate Block is locally significant, under National Register Criterion C. The block consists of five, 2-story, brick commercial rooms, unified in their architectural design by common elements and detailing showing the influence of Late Victorian styling. The rooms at 206, 208, 210, and 212 Main Street were completed in 1891. The room at 216 was completed in 1894 by Albert L. Day, a local builder and plasterer. All of the front façades of these rooms feature arches above the second floor windows and set a visual rhythm into play along virtually an entire city block.

The period of significance, under Criterion C, is 1891 and 1894, the time when the building was constructed. The period of significance, under Criterion A, is 1891 to circa 1919, the time when the La Porte Improvement Company owned and managed the property.

The Syndicate Block contains five resources for this nomination—the commercial rooms at 206, 208, 210, 212, and 216 Main Street. Each of these properties is counted as a contributing resource and classified as a building.

LA PORTE IMPROVEMENT COMPANY

The La Porte Improvement Company was a group of local real estate investors, who joined together to build, lease, and manage the Syndicate Block for profit. Many construction projects like this emerged in the Upper Midwest during the late Victorian era, and the name “Syndicate Block” or “Syndicate Building” was often given to them. The Syndicate Block in La Porte City is an outstanding example of such a building project in a small, market town in Iowa. The population of the community at the time of the building’s construction numbered 1,052. (Goudy)

Company History

The La Porte Improvement Company (abbreviated “LPIC” in this nomination) was incorporated in 1891 as a real estate investment syndicate. This event was significant enough for the county seat newspaper to report:

LaPorte Improvement Co., the object of whose organization is to build a brick block consisting of seven store rooms on Main St., hold meetings occasionally and consult

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

together as to the best means to accomplish the result. (*Waterloo Courier*, January 21, 1891)

Throughout its corporate life, the improvement company complied with legal requirements to report its status with the Iowa Secretary of State's office, and these records provide a thumbnail sketch of the corporation's history.

The LPIC was legally incorporated, by filing with the Iowa Secretary of State, on April 15, 1891, some months after the *Waterloo Courier* announced its formation. The company's intentions, as stated in its Articles of Incorporation, were broader than those stated in the newspaper. Article IV stipulated:

The nature of the business to be transacted by said Corporation is the purchase of real estate within the corporate limits of said town of La Porte City, to improve the same by the erection of buildings thereon or in any other manner to lease and control the use of said real estate for the profit of said Corporation, or to sell and dispose of the same before or after improvement. (*Iowa Secretary of State Record Book F2*, p. 174)

Written in clear and beautiful longhand, the firm's articles of incorporation stipulated a board of twelve directors; capital stock of \$100,000, divided into shares of \$100.00 each; a provision to increase, by board approval, this capital stock but not to exceed \$25,000; and a maximum of 20 shares of stock owned by any one member. These stipulations provided for the manner in which directors would be elected, annual meetings held, liability limited, and other corporate procedures enacted. (*Ibid.*)

The Articles of Incorporation listed the following officers and members:

LA PORTE IMPROVEMENT COMPANY IN 1891

OFFICERS

W. A. Walker	President
J. C. Adams	Vice President
P. L. Hayzlett	Secretary
B. S. Stanton	Treasurer

DIRECTORS

J. C. Adams	A[lonzo] L. Walker	J. L. Heath
C E. Ashley	H. Shubert	A. Van Valkenburg
W. A. Walker	C. W. Ravlin	P. Bowman
W. W. Hamilton	John Husman	A. U. Evarts

Source: (*Iowa Secretary of State Record Book F-2*, p. 174)

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

Secretary P. L. Hayzlett and Treasurer B. S. Stanton were included as officers of the corporation but not among its 12 members of the Board of Directors. John Dowding was among the names of those who appeared before the notary public to acknowledge the execution of these articles of incorporation, although his name did not appear as an officer or board member. P. L. Hayzlett, the corporation's secretary, notarized the subscription of these articles.

At their 1893 annual meeting, the board approved an amendment to the incorporation papers. Filed in the public record on February 4, 1893, this amendment decreased the membership of the board from 12 to six. (*Iowa Secretary of State Record Book M-2*, p. 346) Henceforth, members would serve a one-year term instead of three-year terms as previously. Members of the board at the time included the following:

LA PORTE IMPROVEMENT COMPANY IN 1893

DIRECTORS

C. E. Ashley	P. Bowman	H. Shubert
W. A. Walker	W. W. Hamilton	Henry Weise

OFFICERS

W. A. Walker	President
A. Van Valkenburg	Secretary

Source: (*Iowa Secretary of State Record Book F-2*, p. 174)

During this era, corporations in Iowa automatically expired 20 years after incorporation unless renewed. To prevent this eventuality, the LPIC renewed its incorporation status on March 8, 1911, about one month before its expiration date. The corporation submitted substituted and amended articles of incorporation at this time. With a few exceptions—any one member could not own more than 35 shares of stock and the corporation's liability could not exceed \$3,000—the articles remained substantially unchanged. The members of the board were listed as follows:

LA PORTE IMPROVEMENT COMPANY IN 1911

DIRECTORS

W. W. Hamilton	S. J. Tedford	W. P. Mayes
H. G. Adams	C. E. Ashley	C. C. McCoy

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

LA PORTE IMPROVEMENT COMPANY IN 1911

OFFICERS

W. W. Hamilton	President
W. P. Mayes	Vice President
C. C. McCoy	Secretary/Treasurer

Source: (*Iowa Secretary of State Record Book A-5*, p. 211.)

The corporation's annual meeting in 1915 reduced once again the size of its board—from six to four. The vote to amend corporation articles and allow this change lacked unanimity. At the time of the meeting, the total number of stock outstanding amounted to 97 shares; the total number of shares of stock represented at the meeting equaled 92 shares; and the total number of shares of stock voting in favor of the amendment amounted to 77 shares. The reason or reasons for the dissenting votes remains unknown.

LA PORTE IMPROVEMENT COMPANY IN 1913

OFFICERS

W. P. Mayes	President
C. C. McCoy	Secretary

DIRECTORS--NOT NAMED

Source: (*Iowa Secretary of State Record Book Q-5*, p. 320.)

By 1919, Amos Van Valkenburg had become the company's president and J. W. Kober the company's secretary. The company subsequently decided to liquidate some of its real estate holdings. On May 15, 1919, it transferred the titles to the units at 206, 208, and 210 to E. O. Viola and C. C. McCoy. Then, on March 1, 1920, the LPIC notified the Secretary of State with proof of publication that a notice of dissolution had been published. Although this action officially terminated the corporation's existence, on April 28, 1925, the company transferred the title to the unit at 212 to Wayne Snyder. (Abstracts of Title) The 1925 transfer effectively eliminated the company's ownership of the Syndicate Block.

Community Leadership

The members of the LPIC included some of the most influential residents of La Porte. They included two of the town's mayors, a banker, attorney, newspaper editor, land agent, postmaster, members of the local school board, and merchants, among others. The following thumbnail sketches provide a glimpse

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

of these men and the influence they must have exerted in La Porte City. This information came from various local histories, newspaper accounts, and grave markers in Westview Cemetery at La Porte City.

J. L. MOORE. Moore was the first president of the LPIC.

W. A. WALKER. William A. Walker came to La Porte City in 1878. He opened a grocery store and subsequently bought out the grocery stock of Walker and Ashley in 1889, likely ending his partnership with Ashley. Following La Porte City's incorporation in 1871, Walker was elected a trustee of Black Hawk County, Iowa. Walker served as mayor of La Porte City in 1878.

W. W. HAMILTON. William Wallace Hamilton (d. 1923) came to Iowa as a child with his parents in 1855. He became a political leader in La Porte City and Black Hawk County and served as a sometime president of the LPIC. Hamilton served two terms as mayor of La Porte City between 1888-1889. He also served as a trustee for La Porte City, as a city councilman for 12 years, and as a member of the local board of education. His leadership expanded to Black Hawk County, where he was elected to the board of supervisors. Hamilton also served as a justice of the peace. (*LPC Progress-Review* Obituary, December 27, 1923)

A. VAN VALKENBURG. Amos Van Valkenburg was a La Porte City attorney, officer of the Union Bank in the city, and notary public. During the 1890s, Valkenburg served as secretary of the LPIC. By 1919, he had succeeded as president of the organization and evidently remained in that post until the corporation's demise.

C. W. RAVLIN. Clark W. Ravlin was postmaster in La Porte City, a real estate broker, local agent for the land department of the M&O Railroad Company, and partner with Dr. Albert Evarts in the *La Porte City Progress* newspaper.

B. S. STANTON. Benjamin S. Stanton operated a hardware store in La Porte City. Stanton was a landowner and served as a trustee for the town.

J. W. KOBER. J. W. Kober served as secretary of the LPIC in 1919.

P. L. HAYZLETT. P. L. Hayzlett was appointed La Porte City postmaster by President Lincoln in 1862 and by President Grant in 1873. Hayzlett operated an implement business and was involved in the Union Park in La Porte. An advertisement in a local newspaper, dated September 7, 1887, lists Hayzlett as a member of the Ancient Order of United Workmen of Iowa. Hayzlett was also a charter member of the local Knights of Pythias.

J. M. HILEMAN. J. M. Hileman was a La Porte City furniture storeowner and undertaker. As his furniture business grew progressively more successful, Hileman relocated his store from one site to another. For the third move, Hileman purchased Lot 8 in the Elwell & Sparrell Sub-Division (the lot next to 212 Main Street) from the La Porte Improvement Co. on September 26, 1894. Hileman proceeded to erect the commercial building, which presently stands at 216 Main Street. An historic

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

photograph of this building shows Hileman's creativity in advertising. Each of the four upper-story windows in his building displays a chair. The pediment of Hileman's building included his name (see Continuation Sheet 7-12), but this was removed at some subsequent time. In 1913, Hileman relocated his business from La Porte City to nearby Waterloo. The La Porte chapter of the International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) purchased the Hileman building, converted the rear room on its upper floor into a hall for the use of their lodge, and leased out the first floor for retail operations.

JOHN DOWDING. Although John Dowding's name does not appear in lists of officers and members of the LPIC, he was present when the original Articles of Incorporation were notarized in 1891 and likely had a hand in the construction of the Syndicate Block. Dowding was an artisan plasterer and worked in state capitol buildings and St. Raphael's Catholic Cathedral in Dubuque, Iowa.

Property Development

The construction of the Syndicate Block required the LPIC to assemble several tracts of land for its development, and the construction of the block occurred in two phases.

In the early years, Dr. Jesse Wasson had owned the entire site. Then Timothy H. Elwell acquired, platted, and called it "Elwell Addition." In 1870, Lots 4 and 5, the sites of 206 and 208 Main Street, were sold to Jesse Oren. In 1878, John Husman acquired the title to Lots 6 and 7, the sites of 210 and 212 Main Street. In 1883, Nancy Terry acquired the title to Lot 8, the site of 216 Main Street.

By the late 1880s, the site where the Syndicate Block stands had come under three separate owners. The LPIC proceeded to assemble the parcels of land required for the block's construction. On February 18, 1891, the company acquired Lot 4 and Lot 5. On March 28, 1891, the company acquired Lot 6 and Lot 7. On April 2, 1891, the company acquired Lot 8, the last parcel needed for their new block.

The construction of 206, 208, 210, and 212 Main Street occurred in 1891. Lot 8—the site of 216 Main Street—remained unimproved until 1894. On September 26th of that year, the La Porte Improvement Co. transferred the title to that property to J. M. Hileman and Percy Hummel. The construction of the Hileman Building in 1894, subsequently renamed the I.O.O.F. Hall, completed the construction of the Syndicate Block.

Syndication

During the second half of the 19th century, the word "syndicate" became widely used to describe the pooling of large amounts of capital to accomplish a commercial undertaking.

The formation of syndicates to construct new buildings was common in the Upper Midwest during this period of time. The new structures often carried the name "Syndicate Block." The thumbnail sketches on the following page provide a sampling:

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

SYNDICATE BLOCK, DES MOINES, IOWA. The Syndicate Block at 501 East Locust Street in Des Moines (NRHP) is an excellent example of Renaissance Revival styling, as applied to a commercial building. The block serves as a prominent reminder of the 1880s period of physical development of the east side of downtown Des Moines. William Christy and T. H. Cady were its builders.

SYNDICATE BLOCK, WEBSTER CITY, IOWA. J. D. Hunter, a local newspaper publisher, built this block, located on Second Street. (<http://showcase.netins.net/web/marjned/freeman.html>)

SYNDICATE BLOCK, FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA. Downtown Fargo suffered a great fire in 1893. A group of investors quickly formed a syndicate to erect this edifice, one of the first in the downtown's reconstruction. Named the Syndicate Block, this 2-story, brick structure included retail stores and a hotel. The building remains extant. (www.lileks.com/fargo/misclbldgs/synd.html)

SYNDICATE BLOCK, MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA. Built in 1883, the Syndicate Block in Minneapolis was a huge five- and six-story brick edifice. Designed by Frederick Kees, it contained 250,000 square feet of retail and office space. This block consisted of six units, each slightly different from the others in architectural detail, but all sharing building materials and fenestration rhythm in common. This block was razed in 1989. (www.lilcks.com/mpls/syndcate)

SYNDICATE BLOCK, PIPESTONE, MINNESOTA. Constructed in 1884, this 2-story structure is constructed of Sioux quartzite. Three separate owners syndicated to build this block, and it originally featured three separate commercial rooms. (www.cr.nps.gov/nr/travel/pipestone/syn.htm)

Syndicates were formed for other purposes, as well. National news organizations teamed with local publications to disseminate syndicated news simultaneously. By the early 20th century, in the popular mind, syndication had become associated with big money, power, and corruption. "The Syndicate" was used to denote organized crime as frequently as "Tammany Hall" was used to denote corrupt government.

Actually, a syndicate, in Iowa law, had no special legal standing to distinguish it from other corporate entities. The use of the word lent prestige, rather than legal status, to its members. Today, the word "group" is often used for a similar purpose.

BOOSTERISM

The Syndicate Block stands out as the most ambitious example of boosterism in La Porte City during the late Nineteenth Century. The physical magnitude of this edifice manifestly illustrates the power, cooperation, and progressive spirit of La Porte's commercial and civic notables, as embodied in "the Syndicate," a group of local investors who teamed together. The syndicate's ability to pool sufficient capital for the construction of this leviathan block and the syndicate's faith in the future of the local economy illustrate the strength of boosterism in La Porte City, despite possessing a population of only 1,052 in 1890. (Goudy: Table 1)

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

When reflecting on the history of boosterism in La Porte City, one looks to the forceful personality of Dr. Jesse Wasson as a source. Many communities in Iowa enjoyed progressive commercial clubs and other business organizations during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Yet few could match the success of the La Porte City boosters in erecting a commercial block of such magnitude in a town so small.

As the founder of La Porte City and its long-time booster, Wasson bolstered the prospects of the fledging community and pushed its growth forward. When, for example, U.S. Government surveyors entered Black Hawk County to lay out what subsequently became the Red Ball route from St. Paul to St. Louis and then the present-day Iowa Highway 218, Wasson induced the route to be drawn through La Porte City, reputedly by bribing the surveying party with whiskey. Wasson and two partners purchased in 1871 the *La Porte City-Progress*, a neat seven-column paper, which he enlarged to eight columns in 1872. Wasson continued to serve as both publisher and editor of the newspaper until his death in 1889. During this period of time, Wasson used his considerable personal influence and power as a journalist to support commercial expansion in La Porte City.

ARCHITECTURE

The Syndicate Block is architecturally significant as a fine, local example of a commercial edifice influenced by Late Victorian styling.

The Syndicate Block is architecturally significant locally because it illustrates how Late Victorian styling could influence the design of a brick commercial block. This influence is most prominent in the dark red-colored face brick chosen for the front façade; the pinnacles surmounting the parapet and defining the various component parts of the edifice; the denticulated cornice and the decorative hood molds above the upper floor windows, which unite all these components together; and other decorative name plaque worked in contrasting color to the face brick. The repeated cornice and fenestration motifs set a pronounced visual rhythm into motion along the façade of this building, a rhythm whose monotony is relieved by the punctuation of the pinnacles set at key points along the parapet. The name of the block's architect has not been identified to date.

The date of construction for the Syndicate Block—the year 1891—is documented by date plaques on the outside of the building. The Hileman Building originally featured a name plaque at the top of the parapet reading “1894,” the date of its construction, but this plaque has been removed.

The following thumbnail sketch appeared in 1895 in a local publication and identified Albert L. Day as the contractor-builder responsible for the erection of the Hileman Building at 216 Main Street.

Among the several contractors and builders in La Porte City none are more deserving of special mention in these columns than Albert L. Day. Mr. Day has lived in La Porte City nearly all of his life, and for fully fifteen years has been engaged in the building industry. For several years he worked under other parties but about ten years ago he embarked in the business, since which time he has attained an enviable prominence as a

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

contractor and builder and is today considered one of the most successful in the county. He has the happy faculty of combining all the better points of a thoroughly capable and artistic builder and his work is always satisfactory. All contracts taken by him are executed under his personal supervision, and everything is finished in a first class manner. Many of the better buildings shown in this edition were erected by him and stand as high testimonials to his skill as a workman. The residence of E. Duke Naven and that of Ward Cooper, appearing on this page, were built by him. Also the Hileman block shown elsewhere. The new Evangelical church just completed was also erected by Mr. Day. (*La Porte City Progress Review*, Souvenir Edition, 1895)

It is clear from this information that Day was a competent contractor-builder, capable of building a variety of structures. Within this context, the Hileman Building was one of his more prominent works.

REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS

The Syndicate Block was surveyed in 1992 as part of the Preservation Partnership project in Black Hawk and Bremer Counties, Iowa. At that time, the block was evaluated as eligible for nomination to the National Register, as well as a contributing resource to a potential Main Street Historic District in La Porte City. Other contributing resources included the Dr. Jesse Wasson Building (built in 1878) and the brick-paved Main Street, which forms that district's corridor. The Waterloo, Cedar Falls, and Northern Railroad: La Porte City Station--built in 1914, listed on the National Register in 1979, and located west of the Syndicate Block--was identified as another contributing resource. Further evaluation of this historic district concluded that, because of redevelopment, this historic district lacked sufficient integrity for National Register listing as an historic district.

PRESENT STATUS OF PROPERTY

The Syndicate Block currently houses several businesses. The Homestead Pub and Grill is located in units 206-208-210 with apartments on the second floor. Auntie M's Restaurant is located on the first floor of unit 212-216, with a bed and breakfast and apartment located on the second floor of 212. A lodge hall is situated on the upper floor of unit 216.

The current titleholders of the Syndicate Block wish to preserve as much of the original integrity of the building as possible. Sponsored by the La Porte City Historic Preservation Commission, the purpose of this nomination is to call the community's attention to the historical importance of the block, instill pride in the community's rich architectural heritage, and stimulate interest in historic preservation, particularly as it is reflected in this building.

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Although the site's potential for archaeological research is, as yet, unevaluated, it is unlikely that subsurface deposits remain from earlier habitations on the site. Whatever traces might have remained were most likely obliterated by the construction of the present block.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This nomination is a collaborative effort. Geraldine Wester, Chairperson of the La Porte City Historic Preservation Commission (LPCHPC), researched the history of the Syndicate Block and provided photographic documentation of it. Mark Jenkins printed the photos on acid free paper. William C. Page, Public Historian of Des Moines, Iowa, had previously prepared an Iowa Site Inventory Form for this building, which was included in a report--*Reconnaissance Historical and Architectural Survey of Black Hawk and Bremer Counties, Iowa*--prepared in 1992 for the State Historical Society of Iowa. Wester and Page subsequently collaborated to prepare the final nomination under the auspices of the LPCHPC.

Documenting the history of the Syndicate Block stems from physical evidence, archival data, and oral history. Local histories and newspapers were researched for information about the construction of the block and the lives of the syndicate members. These sources are cited in the bibliography, which appears in Section 9 of this nomination.

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

Lileks, James

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National Park Service

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Division of Lots Number Two in Elwell & Sparrell Sub-Division in the City of La Porte City, Iowa.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

Contains all land associated originally with the resource.

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Syndicate Bock
206-216 Main Street
La Porte City, IA 50651
Looking north
Geraldine Wester, Photographer
2004
2. Syndicate Bock
206-216 Main Street
La Porte City, IA 50651
Looking west
Geraldine Wester, Photographer
2004
3. Syndicate Bock
206-216 Main Street
La Porte City, IA 50651
Looking southwest
Geraldine Wester, Photographer
2004
4. Syndicate Bock
206-216 Main Street
La Porte City, IA 50651
Interior of first floor 210 Main Street looking to rear
Geraldine Wester, Photographer
2004
5. Syndicate Bock
206-216 Main Street
La Porte City, IA 50651
Interior of second floor unit 212 looking to rear
Geraldine Wester, Photographer
2004
6. Syndicate Bock
206-216 Main Street
La Porte City, IA 50651
Interior of second floor unit 212 looking to front
Geraldine Wester, Photographer
2004

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Syndicate Block, Black Hawk County, Iowa.

PROPERTY OWNER

<u>Address</u>	<u>Title Holder</u>	<u>Address</u>
206, 208, 210 Main St.	Larry D. Billings and Wayne Billings	106 Westridge Court La Porte City, IA 50651 1530 Bertch St. Waterloo, IA 50702
212, 216 Main St.	Donald & Marion Collins	212-1/2 Main St, La Porte City, IA 50651