

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

For NPS use only

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

received JAN 5 1987

date entered

FEB 5 1987

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

1. Name

historic Hotel Iowa

and/or common Pierce Building

2. Location

street & number 401 Main Street ___ not for publication

city, town Keokuk ___ vicinity of

state Iowa code 019 county Lee code 111

3. Classification

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

4. Owner of Property

name Pierce Building Incorporated

street & number 401 Main Street

city, town Keokuk ___ vicinity of state IA 52632

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. County Recorder's Office

street & number Lee County Courthouse

city, town Keokuk state IA 52632

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title N/A has this property been determined eligible? ___ yes ___ no

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

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

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Hotel Iowa, is the best example of Chicago Commercial style architecture standing in Keokuk. Constructed 1912-13, this seven-story brick edifice features the zoned regimentation of ground story, intermediate floors, and attic on roof that is the hallmark of that style, as well as deep projecting bracketed eaves, vertical bands of windows, and Sullivanesque influenced terra cotta trim.

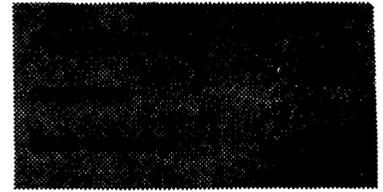
The Mississippi River Power Company assembled the requisite parcels of land on which to construct what was to be a combination hotel and corporate office block. The uppermost floor was to house the company offices but if this was actually accomplished, that level was converted to additional hotel space as early as 1916. Architect Guy C. Mariner of St. Louis designed the building. It is said that the hotel was constructed by the power company itself utilizing engineers and builders previously associated with the construction of Lock and Dam #19 and the hydro-electrical plant in Keokuk but this is not substantiated. In fact the host of contractors and sub-contractors who are identified with the building effort make this assertion dubious. The Company began construction of the dam, powerhouse, lock and drydock in 1905, and turned these over to the Federal Government in 1913 with the exception of the powerhouse and dam.

The construction of a new hotel in Keokuk was the subject of on-going discussion and planing in 1912. A new local spirit of boosterism pervaded the city following the positive impact of the lock and dam complex. A new Elk's Hall reflected this new attitude. An Eastern financier L. C. Frey renewed the dialog in mid-July when he secured an option to purchase the eventual Hotel Iowa site from the Masonic Temple. Frey failed to solidify his plans within the fifteen days allotted him by the Masons but the Mississippi Power Company was ready within a few weeks to secure their own option for the same purpose. Options on two properties secured a property having a Main Street frontage of 82' and a Fourth Street frontage of 140'. The initial plan involved a six story first class hotel of 150 rooms costing an estimated \$225,000. The Company brought "...experienced hotel men from Chicago and Milwaukee..[who were]...looking over the situation."

Local capital would play a central role in the project. The involvement of the power company in the project was "...taken as a positive assurance that the city will, at last, be possessed of one of the finest hotel buildings in the state and that the company is still pinning its faith to the coming prosperity and growth of the city..." A proper hotel it was believed would bring with it an influx of investment capital.

By August 20, 1912 the Company contribution was fixed at \$50,000 cash, the local Booster Club would raise \$75,000 of preferred stock. The power company offered construction expertise. "The same practical ideas which has made the speed of the water-power construction the wonder of the engineering and contracting world are being used in the new hotel building-get everything ready first and then push the work like an express train."

The involved parties gathered together im mid-September. The team included the architect, Hugh L. Cooper, the local promoter, Frank J. Matchette, a Milwaukee hotel man who was to be the first manager, and the contractors. By late October the plans were being examined and

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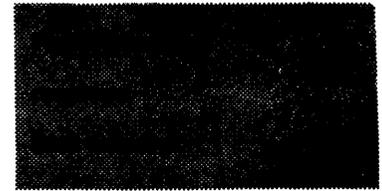
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story intermediate zone, and an attic story. A broadly projected bracketted metal cornice caps the whole. The building is richly ornamented in a Sullivanesque manner on the ground level. A decorative belt course encircles the building below the seventh floor. An ornate flagpole base on the north corner pierces the cornice and projects above the building. Decorative white terra cotta frames each column with brick infill panels. Matching horizontal brick panels are framed by terra cotta bands above the storefront level. The Main Street entrance, while narrower in design than that on Fourth Street, has an exuberant terra cotta relief panel above it.

Fenestration is symmetrical on the two public facades. The Main Street facade fenestration consists of a centered row of single windows with two rows of paired windows to either side. The Fourth Street facade alternates single, paired (no structural separation), single, paired and finally single rows from north to south. A light brown brick is used in the veneer, laid in stretcher bond. Stacked and soldier bricks frame each window or window set. Sills are apparently of concrete.

Original descriptions of the interior reveal the presence of elaborate decoration and appointments. The lobby was wainscoted three fourths of the way to the ceiling in walnut. Dining room pillars (four) were also sheathed in walnut with a ceiling frieze and walls being covered with a lighter walnut. Floors were uniformly of marble. A fireplace was centered on the south end of the lobby. A Peruvian marble fireplace was located in the "ladies' reception room" just north of the lobby. The writing room was for ladies as well. The basement housed the barber shop and billard room for public use, kitchen, engine room and laundry for the hotel. The hotel originally had 115 guest rooms. Mahogany trim was used for all upper floors. Telephones and running water were to be had in every room. Eight three room suites and six two room suites were available. Each floor boasted "...a large sample room for the use of traveling men." these were also available for use as private dining rooms. If the seventh floor was ever used for office areas, a 1916 plan called for its conversion into thirty-two more rooms. A large metal suspended sign, apparently the thousand light electrical sign described at the grand opening, proclaimed "HOTEL IOWA" and was mounted above the main entrance at the sixth floor level. Two metal marquees, with decorative cresting were suspended above the main entrances.

Alterations have apparently been fairly minimal since the building's construction. The marquees appear to be original, the historic signage naturally is gone. Painted signage, for a cafe, is found on the upper part of the east sidewall. Remarkably the storefronts have retained their multipaned transom windows, their original entrances, display window configurations, etc. beneath the recent exterior panels. Two art glass windows, with the one with the word "Drugs", and one with the words "Ice Cream Soda" were recently discovered intact on the southside. The side panels for the corner storefront are completely sealed by removable coverings. The original storefronts had centered recessed entrances. These were lost through remodelings. By 1941 the storefronts remained separate, awnings on both sides hint that the Fourth Street ground floor rooms were converted for this use. By 1966 remodeling plans indicate that the four store areas had been consolidated into two, that the Chamber of Commerce had occupied the "Buffet" room, and that Western Union was in the Ladies writing room along Fourth Street. A two story brick garage was in place behind the building off of the alley. The south end of the second floor had seen some consolidation

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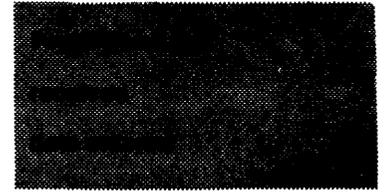
of hotel rooms into two large meeting rooms. Kitchens had been added to several rooms on the third floor for efficiency apartments. This remodeling was carried out by Krebill Engineering Company (Plans January 1966). Surviving original interior materials and features include the original marble lobby, plaster, oak paneling, oak and birch woodwork, ornamental iron/steel and oak stairways and decorative plaster coping.

The building is located in the central downtown, Main Street being the historic direct link with the riverfront and railroad. Hotels tended to be dispersed within this downtown core, but Keokuk never had many major hotels and those which existed tended to reside in aging 19th century buildings. Main and Johnson Streets contained the St. Claire House, the Keokuk House and the Hardin House in 1888. By 1900 these were joined by the Estes House at Main and South 5th. In 1910 there were four hotels, the Commercial (Johnson and South First), Windsor (closed, formerly the Hardin), the Keokuk (South Third and Johnson) and the Clyde (Main and North Water). By 1913 when the Iowa opened its doors, it competed only with the Keokuk and the Hawkeye (the Commercial formerly). By 1919 only the Hawkeye was in competition.

In terms of its local context vis a vis structure and scale, the Hotel Iowa is outstanding. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps (1910, 1919, and 1931) clearly indicate that reinforced concrete construction was a late comer to Keokuk, the Iowa being the first in 1912-13. The collapse of a prosperous state economy following the First World War and the general economic downturn which typified Iowa's river cities during those years perhaps accounts for the lack of additional examples of this method of construction. By 1931 the only "fireproof" fully concrete (or even concrete and steel truss combinations) examples in the city beside the Iowa were several single story auto garages, the stage housing for the Grand Theater at 26-30 North 6th, and two hospital wings. Two local schools appear to have employed reinforced concrete construction.

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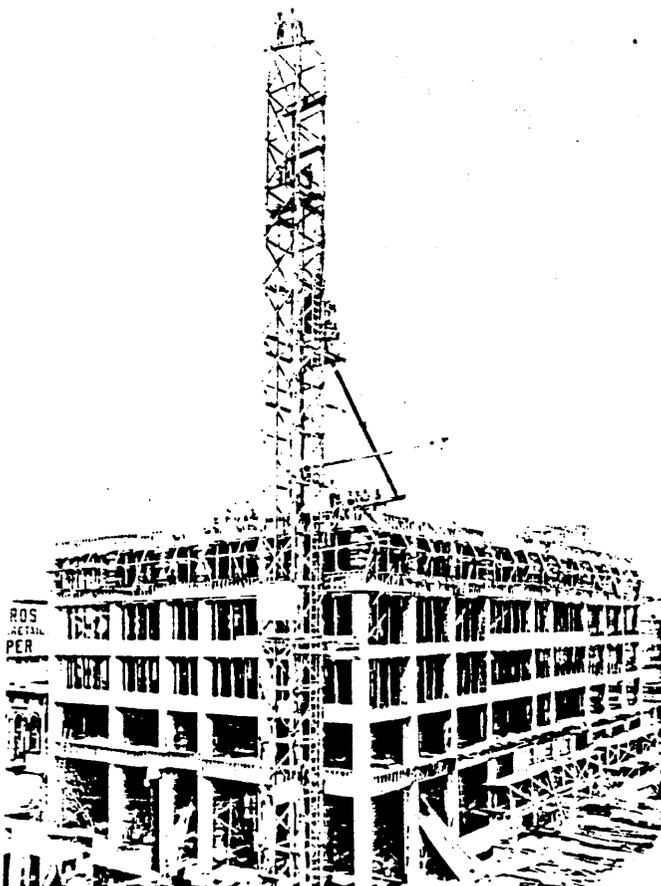
Historical Images Hotel Iowa



Site excavation, 1912.



Photo, c. 1916-17.



Construction photo, 1913.

8. Significance

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
Criterion C: Architecture		Contributing Resource Count: 1		
Specific dates	1912-13	Builder/Architect	Hugh L. Cooper, Architect	

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Hotel Iowa best exemplifies the Chicago Commercial style in Keokuk. The Iowa is also the largest hotel building, the only "modern" hotel constructed using using fireproof and new structural building techniques, and the only major reinforced concrete commercial building in Keokuk.

This seven story building is rectangular on plan (81' x 140'). An interior courtyard from the fifth floor up results in a "U" shaped plan on the upper levels. Penthouses on an eighth floor level house the machinery for elevators and also reflect the locations of stair towers within the plan. The roof is flat with a raised parapet around its perimeter. Stacks project from two points along the courtyard wall.

The original interior plan, largely still intact, provided four rectangular storefronts and a central entrance on the Main Street frontage. These are with the exception of the southernmost, thirty feet in depth, the two outer storefronts being twenty feet in width. The north corner store had a recessed corner entrance. The main floor for the front ninety-six feet was at ground level with a fourteen foot ceiling. This area housed the storefronts, a central vestibule-hall, a lobby area with skylights, and flanking "writing" and buffet rooms on either side of the wider Fourth Street entrance. The rearmost forty-five feet of the ground plan housed service areas and a massive dining room (36' x 52'). Single elevator shafts rose from the lobby and service areas (the latter a freight elevator).

Fifty-seven full height reinforced concrete columns support the whole, including concrete floors, roof and brick and tile curtain walls. These columns are arranged in six longitudinal rows of eight to ten each (the courtyard, lobby and other open first floor spaces require fewer or different longitudinal arrangements). Ranks, the consistant part of the arrangement, are generally 12'-13' apart with the exception of the fourth and six ranks from the front, which are 18' and 20' apart respectively. This broader spacing within the plan allowed clearspan ceilings for the buffet and lobby areas. Similarly, column row spacing was varied due in part to the split level arrangement of the first floor plan. A central pair of rows flank the Main Street entrance and hall. The remaining interior rows define the storefront walls. In the rear of the plan, two pairs of columns are used, one of which crosses the center of the dining room, the other straddles the rear stairs and rear entrance.

The upper room arrangements allowed for a "U" shaped hallway flanked by rows of rooms. The broader row spacing of support columns allowed for a row of larger rooms along the Fourth Street facade. The room arrangement on each floor was basically the same.

Spread pad footings (probably concrete) support the reinforced concrete skeleton. These are placed at various depths for an unknown reason. Basement ceiling heights correspondingly vary from eleven to fifteen feet. Basement cribbing on the northeast, northwest and southwest faces provides additional storage areas beneath sidewalks and alley. Main floor elevations have been addressed, upper level ceiling heights are uniformly ten feet.

The facades are divided into three horizontal zones, a ground story with clerestory, a five

9. Major Bibliographical References

Refer to Continuation Sheet 9-2+

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property less than one acre

Quadrangle name Keokuk, Iowa-Mo.-Ill.

Quadrangle scale 1/24,000

UTM References

A

1	5	6	3	7	3	2	0	4	4	7	2	6	7	0
Zone			Easting				Northing							

B

Zone			Easting				Northing							

C

Zone			Easting				Northing							

D

Zone			Easting				Northing							

E

Zone			Easting				Northing							

F

Zone			Easting				Northing							

G

Zone			Easting				Northing							

H

Zone			Easting				Northing							

Verbal boundary description and justification Lots 11 & 12, excluding the front 73' of the the westerly 18 and 1/3 feet, Block 37, Original City of Keokuk, Lee County, Iowa. Includes hotel building only.

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

state N/A. code county code

state code county code

11. Form Prepared By

name/title James E. Jacobsen, National Register Coordinator

organization State Historical Society of Iowa, Bureau of Community Programs, Office of Historic Preservation. date November 19, 1986

street & number E. 12th & Grand Ave. telephone 515-281-4137

city or town Des Moines state Iowa 50319

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national state local

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

State Historic Preservation Officer signature David [Signature]

title County State Historic Preservation Officer date 12/10/86

For NPS use only

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

National Register

[Signature] date 2/5/87
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: _____ date _____

Chief of Registration

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freakish nor commonplace." Within two weeks the "Hotel Iowa Company" was incorporated with Hugh L. Cooper president, J. P. Allen vice-president. Capitalization totaled \$175,000. The team was already changing before work had even begun, Mr. Fred Gazely of Chicago, builder of the then-noted LaSalle Hotel, had signed on as the new manager-to-be. Gazely's late involvement was substantiated by his acceptance of \$50,000 worth of stock in the venture. Gazely was in fact the first general manager, aided by resident manager W. V. Holmes.

The general contractor was the Guaranty Construction Company, a subsidiary of Sency, Rogers & Co. of Chicago, underwriters for the bonds. Stone and Webster was the primary local sub-contractor. The plans envisioned a six story edifice with a primary entrance on Main and a Ladies entrance on Fourth. "[A]...fine building of very beautiful lines and finish. It will be of the most modern construction throughout, and strictly a first class hotel in the metropolitan sense." A minute description of the plans were printed on 12 November in the Daily Globe City.

H. P. Wells, vice president of Guaranty Construction, descended on Keokuk on 19 November, arranged contracts for site clearance and foundation and footings work to begin the next morning, promised to use local sub-contractors and labor as much as possible, and was gone. He also announced "we're going to go after the Chicago record for time in putting up a building...I know that's going some, but you Keokuk people ought to have grown accustomed to swift work by this time, as much as you've seen in the river here."

The construction site included four buildings, the recently burned three story Masonic Hall, and adjoining single story commercial storefronts to the north and rear alley side. Construction plans called for completing the building structural shell by January 1913, allowing for enclosing which would allow continual work through the remainder of the winter.

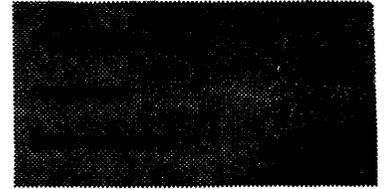
Two construction phase photos exist. One shows the excavated basement with shored embankments prior to the construction of the cribbing and the laying of foundation and footings. A second shows the fifth floor falsework in place. A one hundred and twenty foot crane tower stands at the Main Street north corner. A sign indicates that the Hamilton Clay Manufacturing Company of Hamilton Illinois was involved in the project, perhaps providing the tile for the curtain walls or even the decorative terra cotta which was in the process of being applied on the Fourth Street facade.

No information is available concerning the race for the hotel building record. The grand opening was November 15, 1913, just a year after work had begun. The building was the tallest in Keokuk and was made more noticeable by the thousand light electric sign which stood on the Main Street facade. Eighty-five employees worked at the hotel. The final cost was indeed \$300,000, just as was projected.

The Hotel Iowa corporation maintained ownership of the building until 1926. The next long-term owner/operators were Mr. and Mrs. Ward B. Brown who purchased it the next year. The Browns operated the hotel for twenty-five years, leasing the operation to the Mitchell-Foster Hotel Company of Ottumwa in 1953. Major interior remodeling work was carried out in

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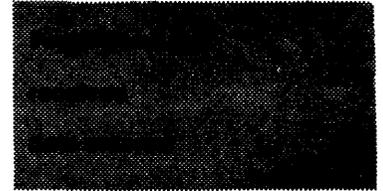
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1966 based on plans prepared by Krebill Engineering Company of Keokuk. In 1941 Ward Brown advertised the Hotel Iowa as offering 160 rooms, a dining room and tap room. Little is known concerning the storefront occupants in the hotel. The original plans envisioned "...a pharmacy and the other mercantile establishments now always a part of a modern hotel." In 1919, the storefronts housed (from east to west along Main Street) a barber, a millinery shop, a beauty parlor and a drugstore. A drug store remained on the corner in 1931. In recent years the building has been called the Pierce Building.

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"Serving Keokuk In Many Ways!", (advertisement) The Daily Gate City and Constitution-Democrat, 29 August 1941.

"Browns Lease Hotel Iowa to Ottumwa Firm", The Daily Gate City and Constitution-Democrat, 2 Sept. 1953.

"Ask Masons For Option On Lot", Daily Gate City, 17 July 1912.

"Frey Secures An Option On Lot", Daily Gate City, 19 July 1912.

"\$225,000 Hotel For This City", Daily Gate City, 8 Aug. 1912.

"Water Power Company Gives \$50,000 In Cash", Daily Gate City, 20 Aug. 1912.

"Modern \$300,000 Hotel To Be Built In Keokuk", Daily Gate City, 10 Sept. 1912.

"No Delay In The New Hotel", Daily Gate City, 15 Sept. 1912.

"New Hotel Plans Being Examined", Daily Gate City, 20 Oct. "New Hotel Plans Being Examined", Daily Gate City, 20 Oct. 1912.

"Final Contracts Expected Soon", Daily Gate City, 4 Nov. 1912.

"Work On Hotel Iowa Is Actually Begun Today", Daily Gate City, 19 Nov. 1912.

"Work To Begin First of Next Week On New Hotel", Daily Gate City, 12 Nov. 1912.

"New Hotel Iowa Opens Doors For First Time", Daily Gate City, 16 Nov. 1913.

"Same Officers During Building", Daily Constitution Democrat, 14 Jan. 1913.

Plans:

Hotel Iowa, N.W. Cor. 4th - Main Sts. Keokuk, IA., Guy C. Mariner Archt, Chemical Bldg, ST. Louis, dated November 29, 1912.

Seventh Floor Plan Hotel Iowa, Hotel Iowa Company, Keokuk-Iowa, unidentified, April 22, 1916.

"Hotel Iowa-Keokuk, Iowa, Basement-Third Floor Plans, Krebill Engineering Company, Keokuk, Iowa, January 14, 1966.

Other:

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, Keokuk, Iowa, 1888, 1900, 1910, 1919, 1931.