

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

**SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD**

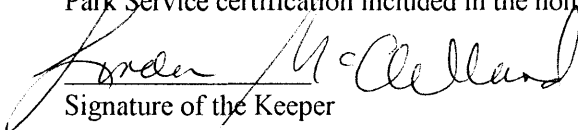
NRIS Reference Number: 02001027

Property Name: Central City Commercial Historic District

County: Linn State: Iowa

Multiple Name  
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This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
Signature of the Keeper

March 18, 2003  
Date of Action

Amended Items in Nomination:

Section 7: Description

On page 7.9, the entry for 413 E. Main St. is hereby marked (NC) to correspond with the text. On the sketch map on page 7.14, the classification of #36 and 31 is hereby changed to noncontributing to correspond with the text.

Section 10, Geographical Data

To more accurately describe the boundaries on page 10.55, the following is hereby inserted in the Verbal Boundary Description to follow "East Main St. 300-400 Block" and precede "North 4th Street:" "extending eastward from the western property line of #337 on the south side and #341 on the north side and terminating at North Fifth Street; the east side of..."

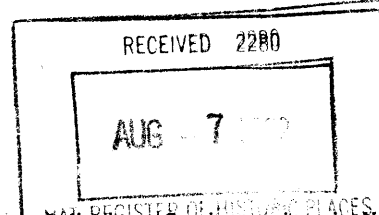
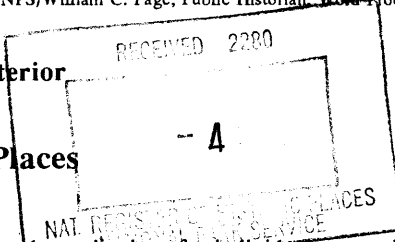
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The Iowa State Historic Preservation Office was notified of this amendment.

**DISTRIBUTION:**

- National Register property file
- Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form



1027

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" on the appropriate line or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name CENTRAL CITY COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number East Main Street 300-400 block; North 4th Street to Commercial N/A not for publication

city or town Central City N/A vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Linn code 113 zip code 52214

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.)

Signature David J. Siro  
STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

Date July 18, 2002

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)

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

Janet McCullum

3/18/03

Central City Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

Linn County, Iowa  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many lines as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one line)

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

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

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
18	8	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
19	8	Total

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

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

The Architectural and Historic Resources of Central City, Iowa

0

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/TRADE

COMMERCE/TRADE

GOVERNMENT/ post office, fire station

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/ storage

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

DOMESTIC/ single dwelling

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/ storage

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

foundation Stone, brick

LATE 19TH & 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS

walls Brick

LATE 19TH & EARLY 20TH CENTURY AMERICAN MOVEMENTS

Concrete

roof Asphalt

other Glass

Metal

**Narrative Description**

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

Central City Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

Linn 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)

COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT  
TRANSPORTATION  
ARCHITECTURE

**Period of Significance**

Circa 1869-1941

**Significant Dates**

1889

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

**Architect/Builder**

Sigmund, Paul

**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

Central City Commercial Historic District  
Name of Property

Linn County, Iowa  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreeage of Property 4 acres +/-

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	15	62 1 8 2 . 0 .	4 6 7 3 2 5 0	
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Zone Easting Northing

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

Zone Easting Northing

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

Zone Easting Northing

4				
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**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 William C. Page, Public Historian; Leah D. Rogers, Joanne R. Page

organization Central City Historic Preservation Commission date January 21, 2002

street & number 520 East Sheridan Avenue (Page) telephone 515-243-5740; FAX 515-243-7285

city or town Des Moines state Iowa zip code 50313-5017

**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 Sheets

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 estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES CONTINUATION SHEET

Section number 7 Page 1

CFN-259-1116

Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

Central City is bisected by the Wapsipinicon River, which flows from the northwest to the southeast through the community. The Central City Historic Commercial District is located on the east side of the river. Most resources in this district were originally commercial in purpose, although some of them have now been converted to residential purposes. The district's resources line East Main Street between 3rd Street and 5th Street. They also line a one block stretch of North 4th Street from its intersection of East Main Street and a one block stretch of South 4th Street from its intersection with East Main Street.

Central City is situated in Linn County, Iowa, located in the eastern part of the state. This is an agriculturally rich region of the nation. Cedar Rapids and Marion--the county seat and a city adjacent to it--are the largest cities in Linn County. Central City has become a popular bedroom community for them. In 1990, Central City's population numbered 1,063. Ten years later, its population increased to 1,157. Although not large, this increase of approximately 9% is rather unusual in Iowa because the state's population has remained stagnant for some time, and many small towns have lost population.

The topography within the historic district is level. As one moves westward along East Main Street, the land slopes toward the Wapsipinicon River, beginning at about 3rd Street. The Main Street bridge spans the river. On the west side of the bridge, West Main Street climbs steeply up Park Hill to Marion Road. North 4th Street is level. South 4th Street slopes gently to the south from East Main Street to the river. East Main Street and North 4th Street historically served as a route through Central City for an overland road between Marion in Linn County, Manchester in Delaware County, and points north to Dubuque.

The Central City Commercial Historic District contains a very limited variety of land-use, property types, and functions. Commercial buildings used for retail purposes predominate among these functions. Two resources, Site #6 and Site #12, were originally constructed and remain used today as service stations. Two other resources, Site #1 and Site #2, were originally constructed for commercial purposes but have since been converted into a single-family dwelling. The Xavier and Permelia Sawyer House at 337 East Main Street was originally constructed as a single-family residence. It is used as a museum today. Most historic resources are of masonry construction--either brick or concrete block. Several buildings, however, are constructed of wood frame.

Resources generally date from the 1880s through the middle decades of the Twentieth Century. The Standard Service Station, built before 1927 and moved to its present site circa 1934, is a highly visible resource in the district because of its distinctive architectural design and key location at the intersection of East Main and 4th Streets.

Most buildings employ vernacular commercial forms and architectural detailing popular in the Midwest during the period. Most resources are two stories in height, although those along South and North 4th Street are as likely to be one-story in height. Most buildings feature storefront designs on the first floor and 1/1 double-hung sash fenestration on the second floor.

Intrusions in the district include several modern commercial buildings, constructed after the 50-year National Register cut-off date. They are evaluated as noncontributing to this nomination. Several historic buildings are evaluated as noncontributing because they lack sufficient integrity.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

**RESOURCE CLASSIFICATION AND COUNT**

The Central City Historic Commercial District possesses 26 buildings and one object for a total of 27 resources. This section discusses the resources within the Central City Historic Commercial District according to National Register criteria and provides an inventory of them.

**BUILDINGS**

The Central City Historic Commercial District possesses 26 buildings. Of them 18 are counted as contributing and 8 are counted as noncontributing. These properties are listed and individually described below.

**OBJECT**

The Central City Historic Commercial District possesses one object. Counted as one contributing resource, this object is a metal flagpole, approximately fifty feet in height, located on the northwest corner of the intersection of East Main Street and 4th Street.

This flagpole provides an amenity to the streetscape. It functions somewhat as does a town square in other communities, publicly demarcating its center.

The following inventory lists the resources within the Central City Historic Commercial District as contributing or noncontributing according to National Register criteria.

**LIST OF CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES**

Under "Eligibility" and listed criteria below, "C" indicates a contributing resource and "N" indicates a noncontributing resource.

Site #	Street Address	Resource Name	Eligibility	
			Criterion A	Criterion C
1	341-a* E. Main St.	Commercial Building	N	N
2	341-b* E. Main St.	Commercial Building	C	C
3	340 E. Main St.	Phoenix Block-Masonic Lodge	C	C
4	342 E. Main St.	Phoenix Block-E. F. Moore Building (Eagle Hotel)	C	C
5	348 E. Main St.	Phoenix Block-Commercial Building	C	C
6	356 E. Main St.	Standard Service Station	C	C

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Site #	Street Address	Resource Name	Eligibility	
			Criterion A	Criterion C
N/A	Northeast cor. E. Main & 4th Sts.	Municipal Flagpole	C	C
7	400 E. Main St.	A. M. Wheeler Building	N	N
8	402 E. Main St.	Commercial Building	C	C
9	422 E. Main St.	Commercial Building	C	C
10	400-a* E. Main St.	Town Theatre	N	N
11	400-b* E. Main St.	Commercial Building	N	N
12	448 E. Main St.	Service Station	C	C
13	445-449 E. Main St.	Union Block	C	C
15	439 E. Main St.	Union Block-P. G. Henderson Building	C	C
16	429-433 E. Main St.	Commercial Building	N	N
18	417 E. Main St.	State Bank of Central City	C	C
19	413 E. Main St.	Commercial Building	N	N
20	401 E. Main St.	Central City Savings Bank	C	C
21	345-347 E. Main St.	S. B. Starks Block	C	C
140	337 E. Main St.	Xavier & Permelia Sawyer House	C	C
31	62 N. 4th St.	GTE Building	N	N
32	52 N. 4th St.	J. C. Clegg Library	C	C
33	42 N. 4th St.	Commercial Building	C	C
34	36-38 N. 4th St.	Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge	C	C
35	26 N. 4th St.	Commercial Building	C	C
36	24 N. 4th St.	Egg Station	N	N

\* Letters given to distinguish buildings using the same house number.



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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

**THUMBNAIL SKETCHES OF RESOURCES**

The following thumbnail sketches provide descriptive information about each of the resources in the Central City Historic Commercial District:

Commercial Building (n)

341-a East Main Street

This is a 1-story, frame, commercial building, now used for residential purposes. It features a gable front roof. Many alterations have taken place to this building, including cover-up siding and replacements of door and fenestration.

Commercial Building (c)

341-b East Main Street

This is a 1-story, commercial building built of concrete block and now used for residential purposes. Although the storefront portion of the facade has been infilled with later concrete block and windows, the upper portion of the building remains intact. The building was erected circa 1905. It is significant because it calls attention to the employment of concrete block as a commercial building material in Central City.

Phoenix Block-Masonic Lodge (c)

340 East Main Street

This is a 2-story, brick, commercial building, now parged with stucco.

Phoenix Block-E. F. Moore Building (c)

342 East Main Street

This is a 2-story, brick, commercial building, now parged with stucco. Constructed in 1889 by Paul Sigmund, contractor-builder of Central City, this building was built for E. F. Moore. Sigmund built this edifice to compliment the Masonic hall, Site #2 at 342 East Main Street. This building, along with its adjacent neighbors Site #3 and Site #5, is known as the Phoenix Block because it rose from the ashes of the previous building on this site destroyed by fire in 1889.

This building features a storefront and a two bay configuration on the second floor.

The E. F. Moore Building is architecturally significant because it calls attention to Paul Sigmund and because it is one of the largest of his commercial buildings. Although the building is presently parged with stucco, such alterations to buildings were frequently done during the early Twentieth Century; and, in this case, Sigmund might have done the work himself.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Phoenix Block-Commercial Building (c)  
348 East Main Street

This is a 2-story, brick, commercial building, now parged with stucco. Built circa 1889, this building features a storefront and a two bay configuration on the second floor. It is now parged with stucco. The storefront and the upstairs windows have been covered over. In its architectural design, it compliments its neighbors to the west, Site #3 and Site #4. Together they are known as the Phoenix Block and form a visual anchor to the Central City Commercial Historic District.

This building is evaluated as a contributing resource to the Central City Commercial Historic District. Its two story, brick design provides an important additional massing element to the Phoenix Block and the E. F. Moore Building. Although the storefront and upper windows at Site #5 have been covered over, original building materials may remain extant underneath the cover-up material.

Standard Service Station (c)  
356 East Main Street

This is a 1-story, frame, commercial building, clad with brick. Constructed sometime prior to 1927 (it appears on a fire insurance map of that year), it was relocated from its former site (on the northwest corner of Main and South 3rd Streets) to its present site circa 1934. This service station features a drive-through canopy and sales room, covered with a hipped roof. In 1952, remodeling of the building took place and included a wing constructed to the west connecting the sales room to the adjacent commercial building, the former Eagle Hotel (Site #5). Other modifications of this building include removal of the original and later replacement gas pumps, and replacement columns supporting the canopy (which occurred circa 1934).

The Standard Service Station stands as a rare survivor of a once common commercial building type in Linn County. The diagonal siting of this building and its drive-through canopy are diagnostic elements of these resources. As such, this property is evaluated, under National Register Criterion C, as a contributing resource within the Central City Commercial Historic District for nomination to the National Register within the historic context "The Architectural Resources of Central City."

Municipal Flagpole (c)  
Northwest corner, intersection of East Main and North 4th Streets

Erected circa 1920, the Municipal Flagpole replaced a former wood-frame bandstand, which stood in the middle of this intersection. Originally, this flagpole was sited in the middle of the East Main and 4th Streets intersection. In 1931, this flagpole was relocated to its present site. The City of Central City regularly flies the Stars and Stripes from this fifty foot flagpole. As such, it serves as a landmark to indicate Central City's town center.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Commercial Building (c)

402 East Main Street

This is a 2-story, brick, commercial building, now parged with stucco. According to Mary Somers, "The corner building on west side of Site #8 was first a two story frame building of A. M. Wheeler. See picture page 15 (*A History of Central City*). After the Wheeler building was threatened by the fire to the west in 1889 and the one to the north in 1890, Mr. Wheeler had his building faced with brick in 1892. Item No. 3 on Paul Sigmund list is probably the 2-story part of Site #7."

Further research is necessary to identify Paul Sigmund's associations with Site #8. If Sigmund constructed this building, it could be a key structure within the Central City Commercial Historic District. If these associations cannot be proved, the building would make a contributing resource to that district. Its massing and architectural embellishments call attention to the influence of Victorian commercial design in Central City.

Commercial Building (c)

422 East Main Street

This is a 1-story, brick, commercial building. Constructed circa 1895, it features a storefront supported by cast iron pillars supporting a parapet with brick denticulation. Although the upper portion of the parapet has been removed (an historic photograph pictures it capped with a pressed metal cornice and pediment), the preservation of the building's storefront is a rare survival. (Central City Historical Society Calendar, 1995)

This building--in its employment of cast iron elements and brick denticulation--illustrates the influence of Victorian commercial styling on its design. This building needs considerable maintenance. Its brick cornice has been tuck-pointed recently and some other repairs begun.

Town Theatre

400-a East Main Street (n)

This is a 2-story, commercial building, constructed of concrete block brought from Cedar Rapids (Doris Mote personal communication). Constructed originally as the Town Theatre in 1946-1947, this building features its original inset facade. A pair of original front doors have been relocated from this area to the west side of the building. The "Town" marquee and ticket booth are nonextant and the windows on the second floor have been infilled with glass block. The building is pictured in *A History of Central City* on page 104, as it appeared in 1955.

The inset ticket booth area, horizontal feeling of the building, and nonextant marquee all showed the influence of Art Moderne styling.

Although the original design of this building was quite appealing, its alterations pose serious questions of integrity. For this reason, the building is evaluated as noncontributing to the historic district.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Commercial Building (n)

400-b East Main Street

This is a 1-story, commercial building, constructed of concrete block on the east side and portions of the facade. The building might have frame structural members because the cover-up siding on the boomtown front are otherwise peculiar.

It appears that this building has evolved over the years. Because it lacks architectural distinction, it is evaluated as not eligible for nomination to the National Register under Criterion C.

Lincoln Oil Company Service Station (c)

448 East Main Street

This is a 1-story, hollow tile, commercial building. Completed in 1939, it features metal, commercial type windows, horizontal detailing, such as the decorative band surrounding the building under the parapet, and coping, which surrounds the building and forms a decorative portion of the parapet, which stands above and calls attention to the office area.

This emphasis on horizontality shows the influence of Art Moderne styling on this building. Although the building has been painted at some time, this paint has mostly fallen off and the original polychrome texture of the hollow tile block can be seen.

As a fine example of the Art Moderne architectural influence in Central City, this building is evaluated as eligible for nomination to the National Register.

Union Block (east unit) (c)

449 East Main Street

This is a 2-story, brick, commercial property constructed in 1890 as a portion of the Union Block.

*A History of Central City reports that:*

...in 1890 plans were announced to build another brick block of stores to be known as the Union Block. This was built on the southwest corner of Main and 5th Streets where Mills Hardware has been for many years. It was a two story building with four store rooms on the first floor and offices and a town hall on the second floor. The Land Improvement Co. planned to put up a portion of it, P. G. Henderson another part and probably E. K. Hatch and A. L. Hatch the other part. Estimated cost was \$8,000. Great emphasis was put on making it as fire proof as possible, and extra precautions brought the total cost to \$10,000. The building was built by Paul Sigmund. Another section was added to this building later. (pp. 14-15)

The Union Block is designed within the format of the Victorian commercial block. It features a glass storefront supported by cast iron columns, second floor with windows featuring hood molds, brick denticulation and a cornice.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

As a fine example of this architectural form in Central City, this property provides a contributing resource to the historic district. Each of this edifice's three storefronts--439 East Main Street, 445 East Main Street, and 449 East Main Street are treated as separate resources because, although they are architectural compatible, they were constructed by different owners. This portion of the Union Block is also architecturally significant because it was constructed by Paul Sigmund.

Union Block (middle unit) (c)  
445 East Main Street

This is a 2-story, brick, commercial property constructed in 1890 as a portion of the Union Block. The best way to distinguish this unit from the east and west units is by saying that the middle unit stands immediately west of the arched front entrance on the north facade and possesses three windows on the second floor.

*A History of Central City* reports that:

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The Union Block is designed within the format of the Victorian commercial block. It features a glass storefront supported by cast iron columns, second floor with windows featuring hood molds, brick denticulation and a cornice.

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Union Block-P. G. Henderson Building (west unit) (c)  
439 East Main Street

This is a 2-story, brick, commercial building, constructed a little after 1890. Its architectural design is compatible with the Union Block, located directly to the east.

The Henderson Building features a glass storefront supported by cast iron columns, a second floor with windows featuring hood molds, brick denticulation and a cornice. The building is now parged with stucco on the north facade, an alteration popular in Central City during the second decade of the

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Twentieth Century, 340 East Main Street, 342 East Main Street, and 402 East Main Street providing other examples.

As a good example in Central City of Late Victorian architecture, this building is a contributing resource to the historic district. The design of the Henderson Building shows a careful regard for continuing the massing and architectural detailing of the Union Block, particularly noticeable in its cornice and hood molds, which survive the alterations intact. This continuity makes the entire composition of the Union Block and the Henderson Building a unified whole of impressive scale and visual impact.

Commercial Building (n)

429-433 East Main Street

This is a 1-story, brick commercial building. Constructed circa 1958, it possesses two units, one at 429 East Main Street and one at 433. This building features a long, horizontal profile, emphasized by the series of horizontal windows on the facade.

The horizontal feeling of this building calls attention to a watered-down, Art Moderne influence popular in Iowa following World War II. Because its construction places it outside the National Register's time requirement, the building is evaluated as a noncontributing resource within the historic district.

State Bank of Central City (c)

417 East Main Street

This is a 1-story, brick, commercial building. It features a 3-bay facade. A five-part window occupies the central bay and is flanked with a door on the west and another window on the east. The central bay is inset slightly into the facade, giving the flanking bays somewhat the appearance of wide pilasters. A cornice surmounts the building. It features stylized brackets worked in brick. Also worked in brick is the word "Bank" within the central bay. A course of cast concrete is situated beneath the cornice, with additional brackets located in the central bay beneath this course.

This building retains a high degree of integrity, including a metal alarm box located on the east side of the facade. The main door to the building, which is a replacement, is the only alteration of note.

This building was constructed by Paul Sigmund, contractor-builder of Central City, in 1908 at a cost of \$4,000.

Commercial Building (e) <sup>nc</sup>

413 East Main Street

This is a 1-story, brick commercial building. The date of its construction is difficult to assess visually because of radical changes to the storefront. Because of these alterations, the building is evaluated as noncontributing to the historic district.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Central City Savings Bank (c)  
401 East Main Street

This is a 1-story, brick commercial building. Constructed about 1914 as the Central City Savings Bank, this structure was built by Paul Sigmund, contractor-builder of Central City. It features a canted corner entrance surmounted with brackets, a side entrance on East Main Street, brick denticulation, and a parapet embellished with a band and coping. A band also surrounds the building in line with the window lintels. Windows have been filled in with glass block. The building rests on a stone foundation. Although the windows have been replaced, the overall integrity of the building remains good. An old (and perhaps original) air circulation ventilator remains extant on the roof. More information concerning the interior of this building might augment the building's architectural significance.

Concerning this building, Mary Somers reports, "Central City Savings Bank (item 13 on Sigmund list of brick business buildings). Bank moved into this new building in 1914."

This building stands as a fine example of Sigmund's mature work, employs quality building materials, and conveys the feeling of a safe and secure depository.

S. B. Starks Block (c)  
345-347 East Main Street

This is a 2-story, stone and brick building, now parged with stucco on the east elevation. It was originally constructed in 1869 by Xavier Sawyer as a commercial building and this portion of the present day building is that 1-story section on the corner with the stone facade. Following the disastrous 1889 fire in Central City, S. B. Starks enlarged this building. As Mary Somers reports,

See item No. 2 of Paul Sigmund list of brick business buildings--2 rooms--2 stories. First called the S. B. Starks building, it was built over and around the Sawyer limestone store built on the corner in 1869. Starks building was erected circa 1892.

The S. B. Starks Block is, thus, architecturally significant for several reasons. It stands as the oldest extant commercial building in Central City today and illustrates the early employment of stone as a building material for such edifices. The building is additionally significant, within the historic context "The Resources of Paul Sigmund," because it shows how that local contractor-builder integrated this older element into a new building. The building possesses a canted entrance on the north and east facades. This entrance faces the intersection of East Main and 4th Streets and calls attention to the importance of that crossing point as the hub of Central City's business district.

Xavier and Permelia Sawyer House (c)  
337 East Main Street

Completed in 1879 by Xavier and Permelia Sawyer as their family home, this 2-story wood-frame building survives as the most elaborate and well-preserved house in Central City, whose architectural designed was influenced by Italianate styling. The presence of this building and the Sawyer

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

commercial building one door to the east anchored East Main Street in its evolution as a business street in Central City.

Central City Telephone Company Building (n)  
62 North 4th Street

This is a 1-story, brick, commercial building, now used by General Telephone and Electronics (GTE). Because of this building's construction in 1960, it is evaluated as noncontributing to the Central City Commercial Historic District.

J. C. Clegg Library (c)  
52 North 4th Street

This is a 1-story, brick, public-purpose building. Constructed in 1915 by Paul Sigmund, contractor-builder of Central City, this building housed the community's public library. Today the building has been converted into a local museum.

The building features a front porch supported by battered wood columns, a horizontal band on several elevations, a high foundation, and brick-worked dentils under the eaves. The horizontal band show the influence of Prairie styling on this design. The low-pitched hip roof is a later addition.

The J. C. Clegg Library is architecturally significant within the historic context "The Resources of Paul Sigmund" because it calls attention to that local contractor-builder. The J. C. Clegg Library is one of Sigmund's few public-purpose buildings. Designed somewhat to resemble a single-family dwelling, the intention was for the building to blend into the nearby residential sections of Central City. The building is additionally significant because it shows how Sigmund could employ Prairie style influences in construction.

Commercial Building (c)  
42 North 4th Street

This is a 2-story, frame commercial building. Constructed circa 1900, it features a boomtown facade capped with a cornice supported by brackets, and a symmetrically conceived configuration of bays on the facade. Although cover-up siding now clads the building and infills the storefront fenestration, original siding is thought to remain extant beneath it. This thought is supported by the presence of a pair of well-preserved front doors and surrounds on the facade. Original windows may also remain beneath the cover-up siding.

This building is a good contributing resource to the Central City Commercial Historic District because it shows how wood as a building material could be employed for commercial purposes in Central City. It also possesses the most developed, extant boomtown front in the community.



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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge (c)  
36-38 North 4th Street

This is a 2-story, brick commercial block. It has experienced a complex evolution. Soon after the 1890 fire in Central City's commercial district, a 1-story commercial room was constructed on this site for N. C. Gillian and O. B. Wilson, hardware merchants. Another 1-story commercial room, attached and standing directly south, was also constructed at this time by James Slife and A. Blodgett and Company. Mary Somers writes that "Paul Sigmund built the Odd Fellows Hall over the two rooms in 1910 as listed as No. 11 of his brick business buildings" (Personal communication).

This substantially enlarged building became, in effect, a commercial block. It housed the local International Order of Odd Fellows on the second floor. A cast stone plaque reading "I.O.O.F." above the paired second floor windows announces this fact. The various configurations of this building can be seen in historic photographs reproduced on page 19 of *A History of Central City*.

The Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge is architecturally significant because it calls attention to Paul Sigmund and because it is one of the largest of his commercial buildings. The building shows how Sigmund could successfully blend new construction in compatible design with architectural elements already in place. It is clear in comparing historic photographs, for example, that Sigmund salvaged the pressed metal cornices and pediments from the 1-story commercial rooms and recycled them by placing them above the new second floor (compare photographs cited above). As such, this resource serves as a contributing resource to the Central City Commercial Historic District.

The house number "36-38" is given in this nomination to indicate the original configuration of this property as two commercial rooms. The single number "38" is used locally to mark it.

Commercial Building (c)  
26 North 4th Street

This is a 1-story, brick commercial building. Constructed circa 1891, it features an asymmetrical configured facade, two plate glass windows and a main entryway in the storefront surmounted by a brick and pressed metal cornice, with brackets and capped with a pressed metal pediment.

A photograph showing this building circa 1908 is reproduced on page 19 of *A History of Central City*.

This building provides a good example of Late Victorian commercial architecture in Central City. It possesses the finest pressed metal cornice and pediment among the 1-story brick commercial buildings in Central City. The integrity of its storefront is also high. As such, it serves as a contributing resource to the Central City Commercial Historic District.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Egg Station

24 North 4th Street (n)

This is a 2-story, commercial building constructed of concrete block. Erected circa 1955, this building features a square shape, symmetrically inspired facade, inset entrance, and 3-panel picture-window type window on the second floor of the facade. These elements illustrate the watered down influence of Art Moderne taste on this building's design.

Because this building was constructed outside the time requirements of the National Register, it is evaluated as noncontributing to the Central City Commercial Historic District.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

### COMMERCIAL STREET

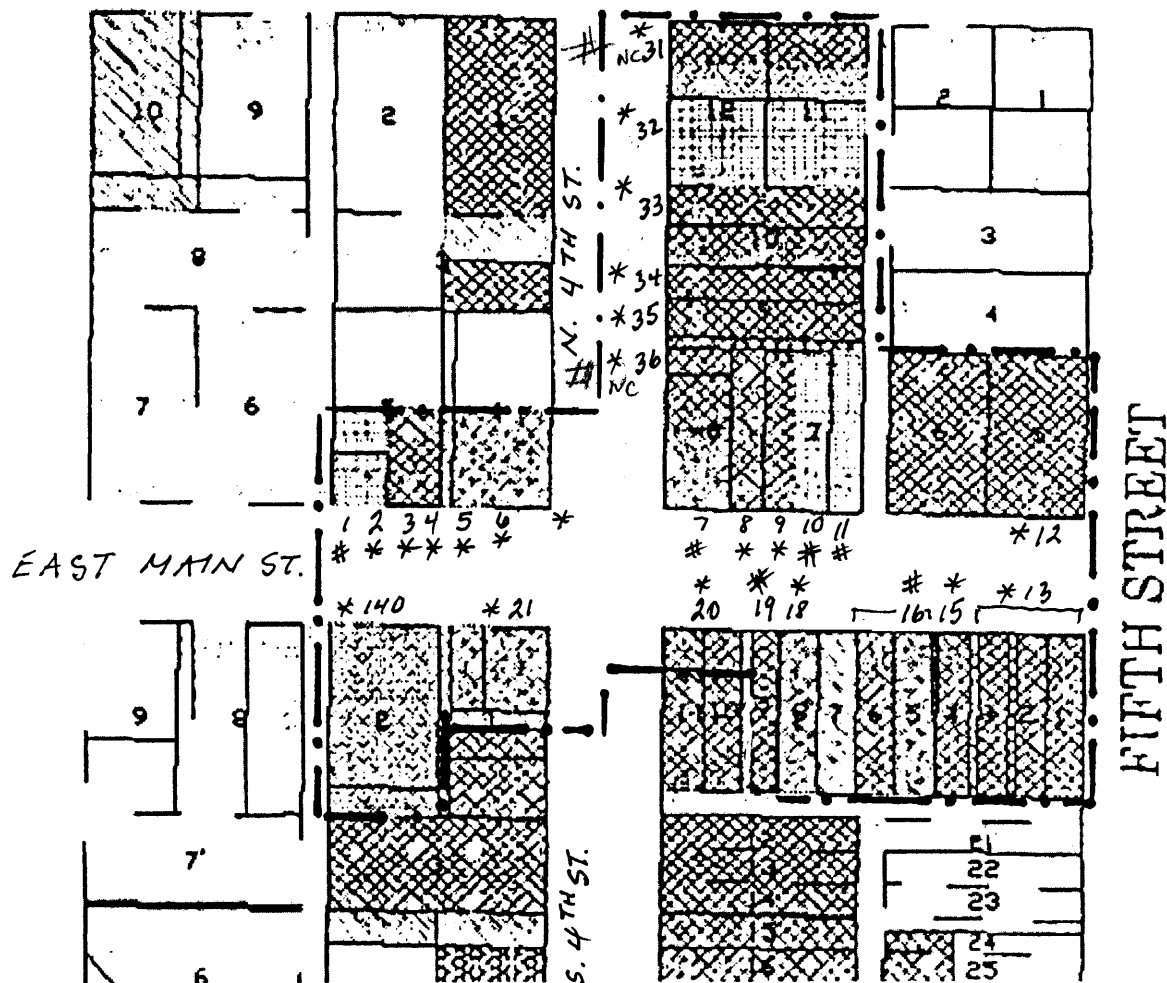


Figure 7-1

An asterisk (\*) indicates a contributing resource. A pound sign (#) indicates a noncontributing resource. Scale: 1" = 250'.

Source: Gibbs Engineering & Surveying, Manchester, Iowa, 2000.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

2001

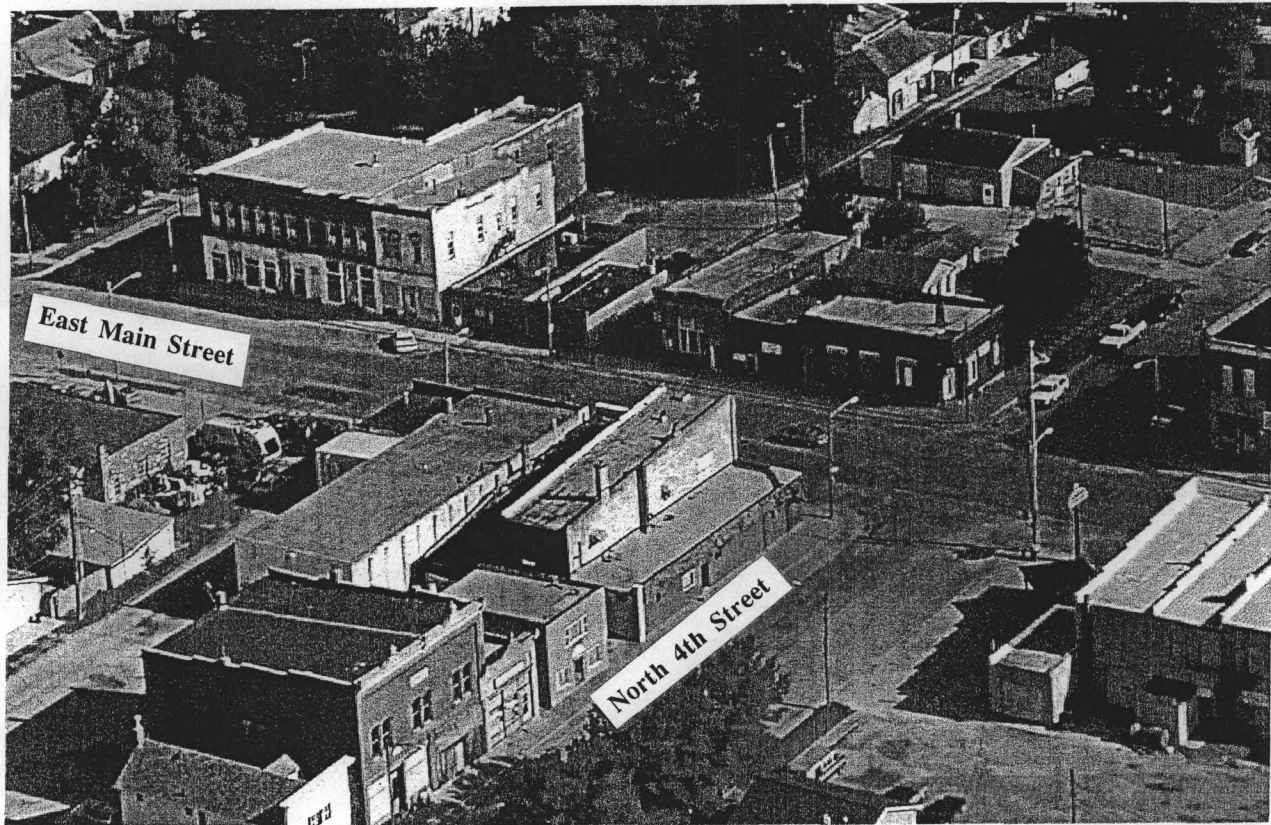


Figure 7-2

This view looks to the southeast. East Main Street runs from right to left across the photo.  
Its intersection with 4th Street is at right center.

Source: Courtesy Central City Historical Society.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH

2001



Figure 7-3

This view looks to the northwest. East Main Street runs from right to left across the center of the photo. Its intersection with 4th Street is in the middle.

Source: Courtesy Central City Historical Society.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## CENTRAL CITY'S ORIGINAL TOWN PLAT

1857

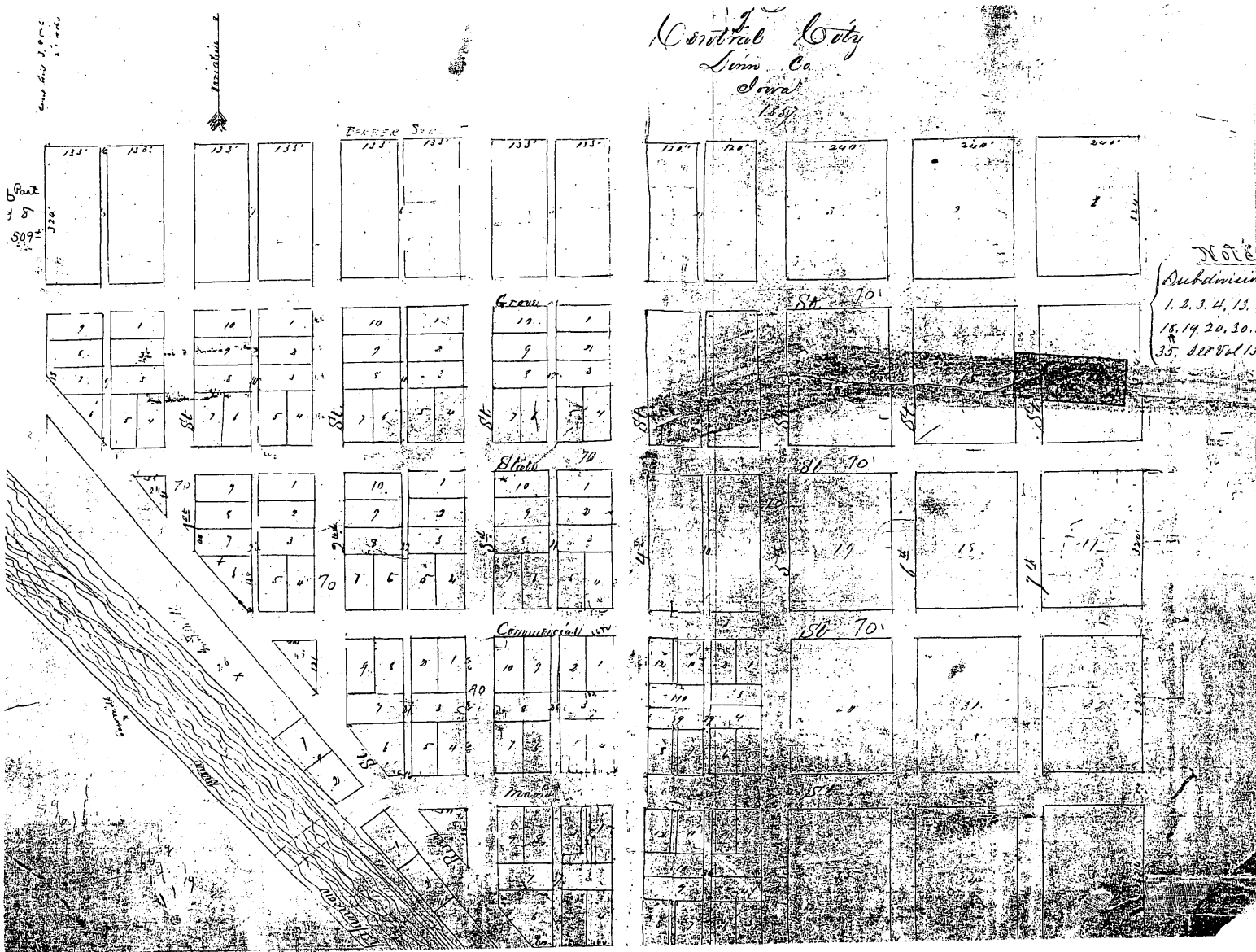


Figure 7-4

Source: Book 3, p. 270, Linn County Recorder's Office.



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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## OVERLAND TRANSPORTATION

CIRCA 1900

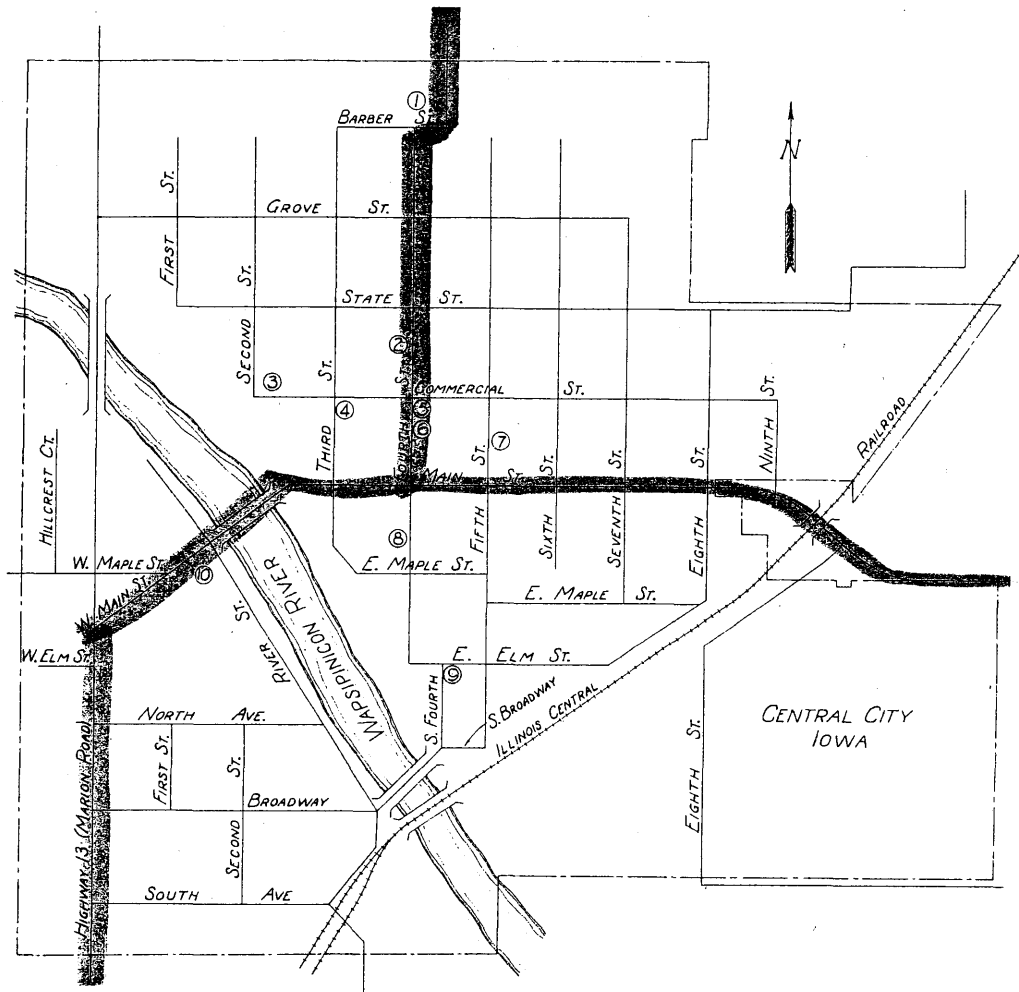


Figure 7-5

The heavy line on this map indicates the overland transportation routes through Central City circa 1900.

Source of Map: Central City Engineering Service, 1962.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## PLAT OF CENTRAL CITY BUSINESS DISTRICT

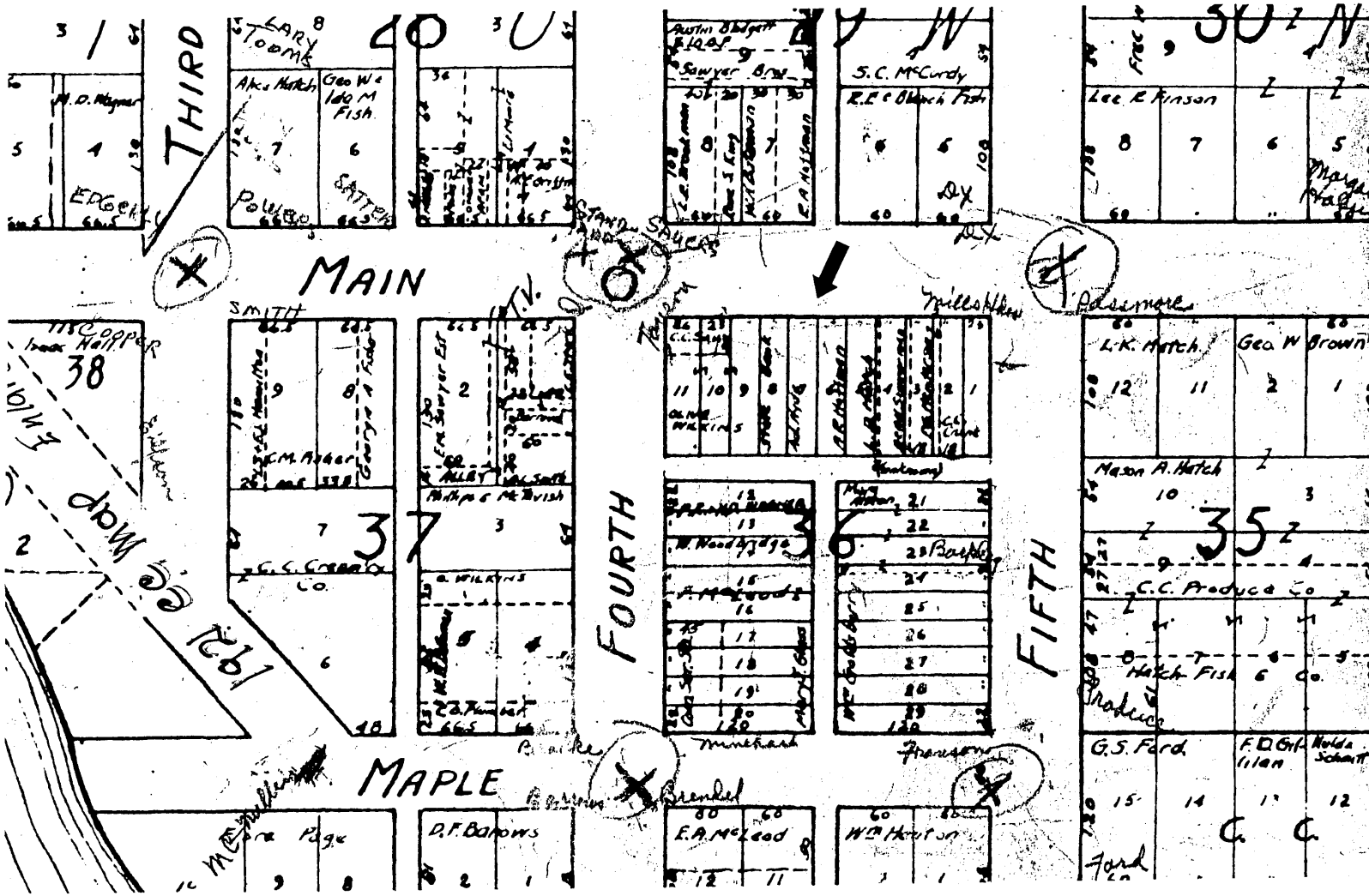


Figure 7-6

This map shows the replat of Block 36 (arrow) and its small-sized commercial lots.

Source: Atlas of Linn County, Iowa, 1927.





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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

FIRE INSURANCE MAP

1899

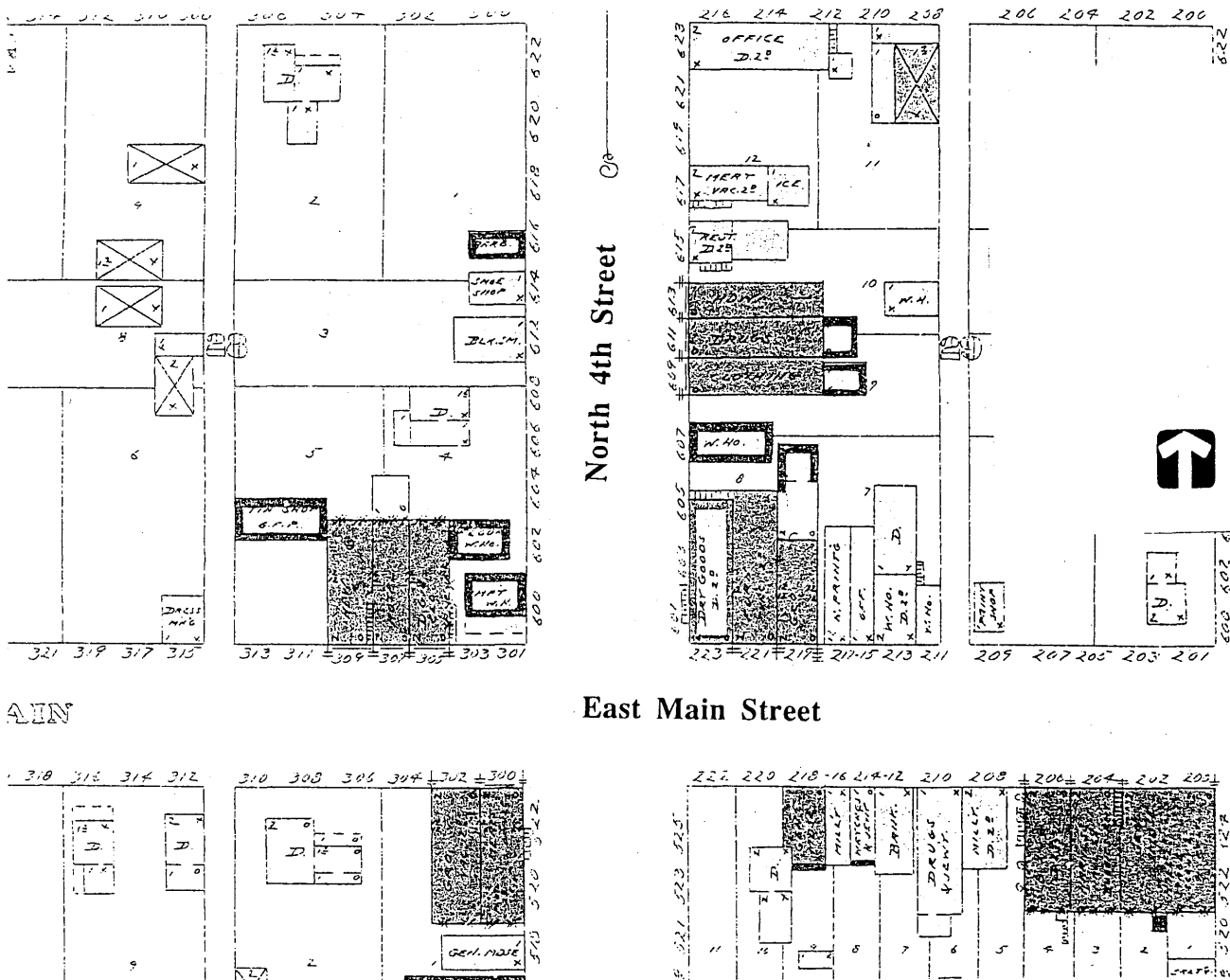


Figure 7-7

This map shows many businesses facing East Main Street (the Union Block is the dark rectangle at the right). North 4th Street also hosts a range of retail and service businesses. Many lots in the Central City Land & Improvement Company's replat of Block 36 remain unimproved. (They are located south and southeast of the Union Block.)

Source: H. Bennett, 1899.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## BUSINESS DISTRICT

1907



Figure 7-8

This map shows the replat of Block 36 (arrow) and the strategic location of the Main Street Bridge (double arrows) for overland transportation corridors through Central City.

Source: Atlas of Linn County, Iowa, 1907.



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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

FIRE INSURANCE MAP

1913

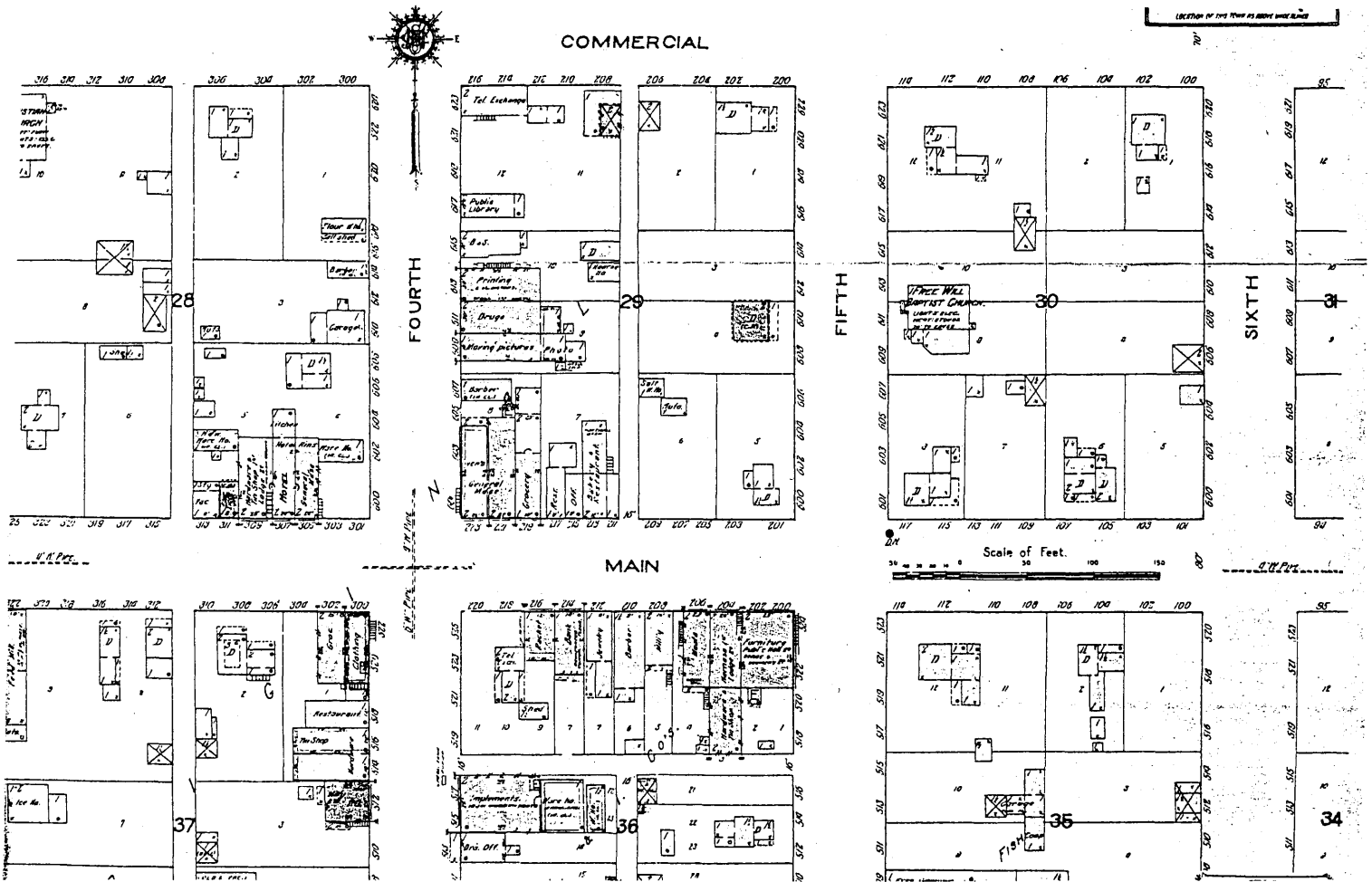


Figure 7-9



Commercial activity along North 4th Street has expanded since 1899. Hardly any commercial activity faces Commercial Street.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1913, p. 1.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

FIRE INSURANCE MAP

1927

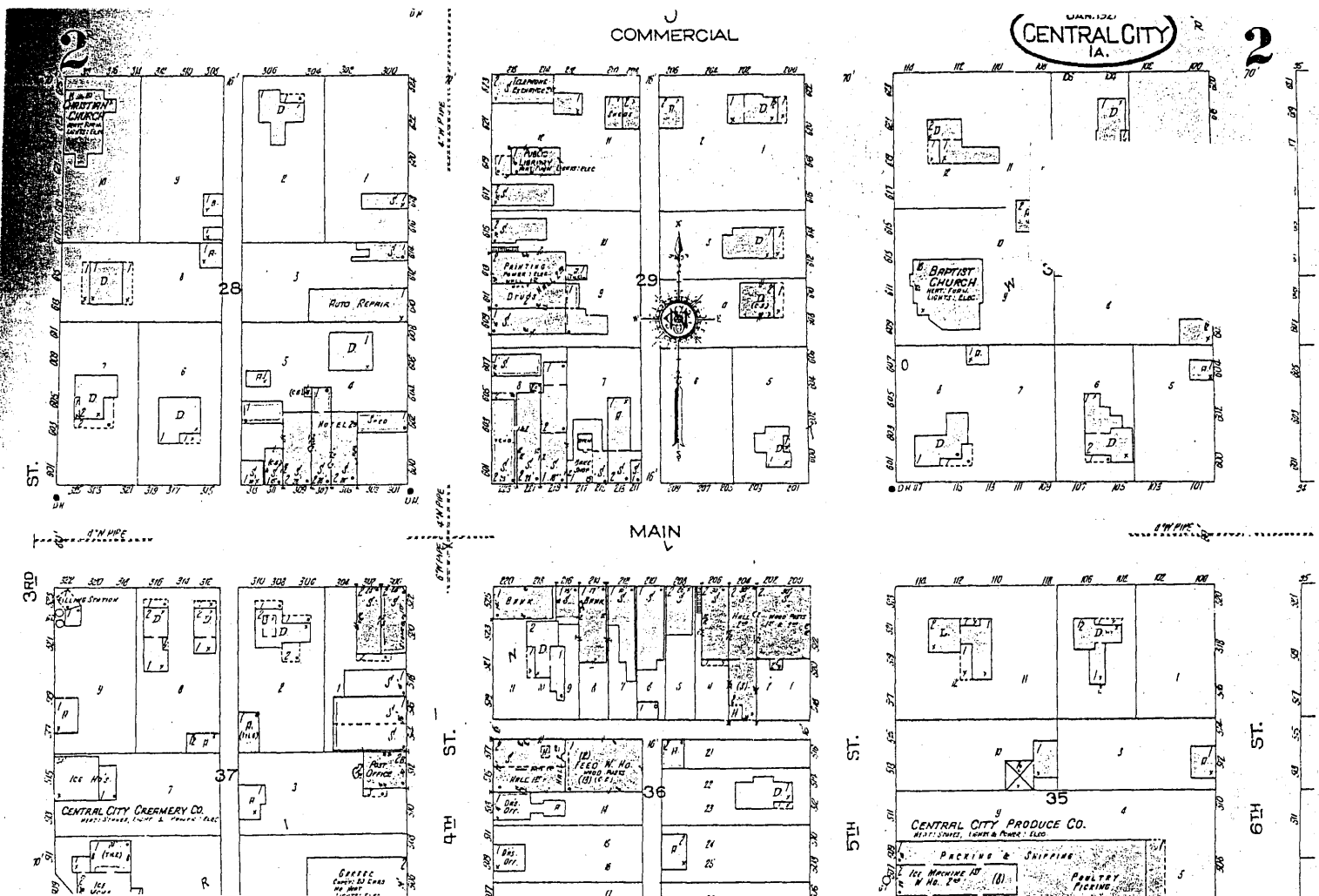


Figure 7-10

Relative few changes appear on this map, as compared with the 1913 one above. The size of the Central City business district had reached its mature geographical extent. While new forms of architecture would later appear in the district--service stations, for example, they would be as redevelopments within this area.

Source: Sanborn Map Company, 1927, p. 1.



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## FIRE OF 1889

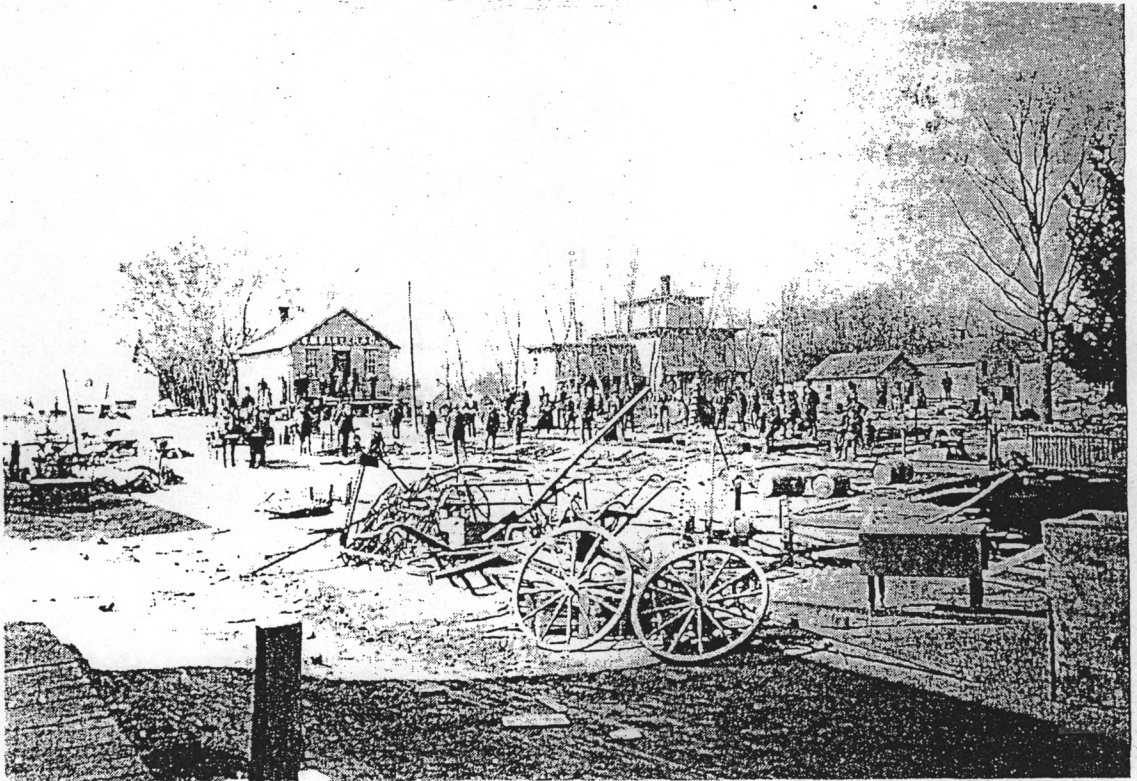


Figure 7-11

Looking southwest from North 4th Street to East Main Street, this 1889 photograph pictures the devastation caused by the Fire of 1889. The Xavier and Permelia Sawyer House at 339 East Main Street is in the middle of the picture. The building to the left is Sawyers' store.

Source: Central City Historical Society.

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## UNION BLOCK

CIRCA 1900

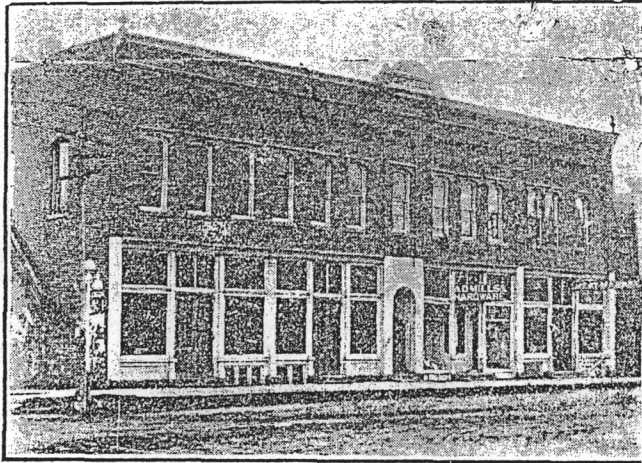


Figure 7-12

Source: Central City Historical Society.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

**S. B. STARKS COMMERCIAL BLOCK**

CIRCA 1895



Figure 7-13

The light-colored unit by the exterior stairs is the 1-story, stone store constructed by Xavier Sawyer in 1869.  
In 1890, Paul Sigmund converted this unit into a 2-story commercial block.

Source: Central City Historical Society.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS ON NORTH 4TH STREET

CIRCA 1895

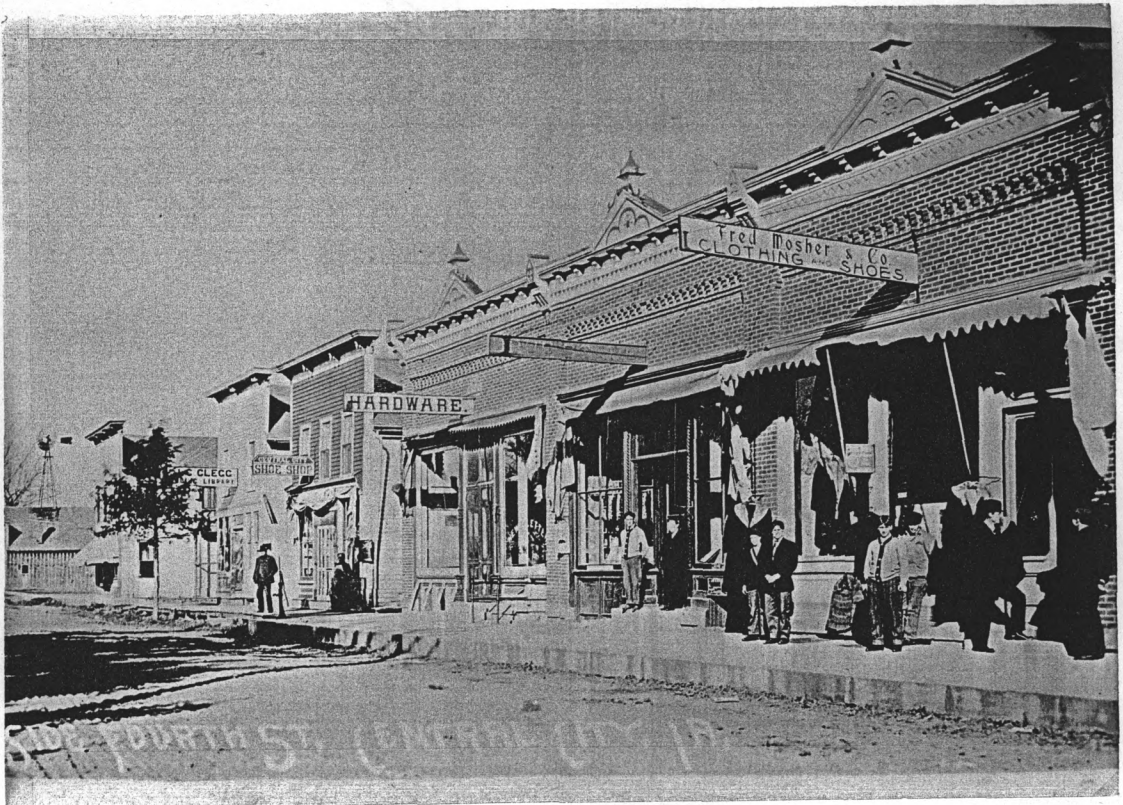


Figure 7-14

From the right edge of the photo to the left: 26 North 4th, 36 North 4th, and 38 North 4th Streets.  
In 1910 Paul Sigmund converted the units at 36 and 38 into a 2-story commercial block. (See next page.)

Source: Central City Historical Society.



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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## REDEVELOPMENT ON 4TH STREET

CIRCA 1910



Figure 7-15

From the right edge of the photo to the left: 26 North 4th, 36 North 4th, and 38 North 4th Street.  
In 1910 Paul Sigmund converted the units at 36 and 38 (see previous page) into this 2-story commercial block.  
Note the salvage and reinstallation of the pressed metal cornices and pediments.

Source: Central City Historical Society.

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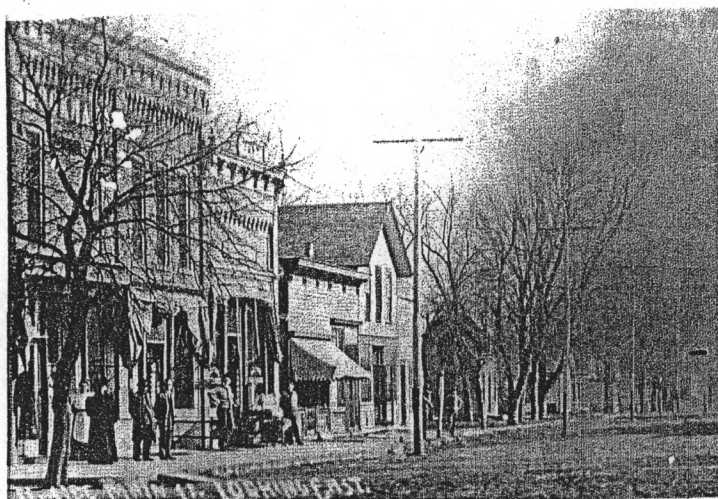
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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

EAST MAIN STREET

CIRCA 1910



N SIDE MAIN LOOKING EAST 1910

Figure 7-16

North side of 400 block of East Main Street circa 1910. The Union Block is situated across the street from the house at center right. Even the importance of this edifice could not pull commercial development eastward from its site at the corner of 5th Street. That area on East Main Street remained residential, as this photograph indicates.

Source: Central City Historical Society.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

**J. G. CLEGG PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**CIRCA 1916**

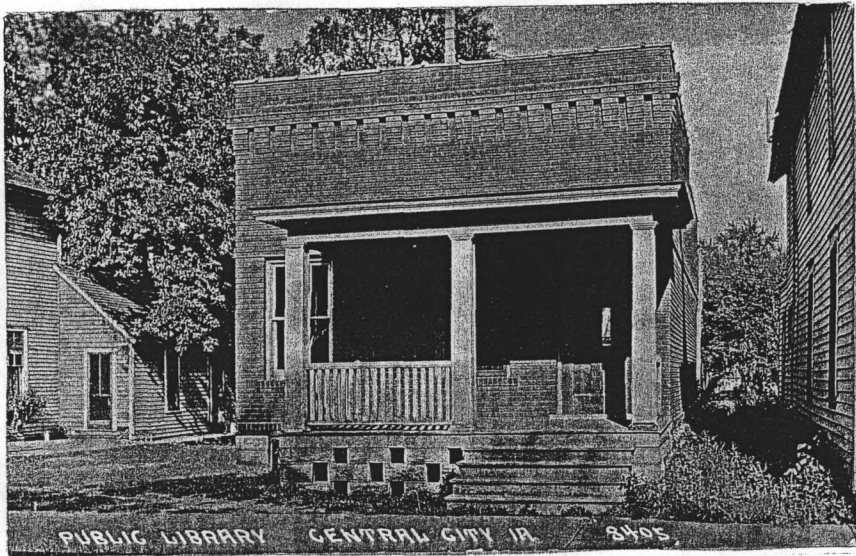


Figure 7-17

Erected in 1915 by Paul Sigmund, this building calls attention to his Classical Revival styling.

Source: Central City Historical Society.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

## STANDARD SERVICE STATION

CIRCA 1956



Figure 7-18

Service stations were one of the few new forms of architecture that appeared in Central City in the 1920s and 1930s. This building, constructed a little before 1927, was moved to this site at 356 East Main Street circa 1934.

Source: Central City Historical Society.

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## LINCOLN OIL COMPANY SERVICE STATION

CIRCA 1954

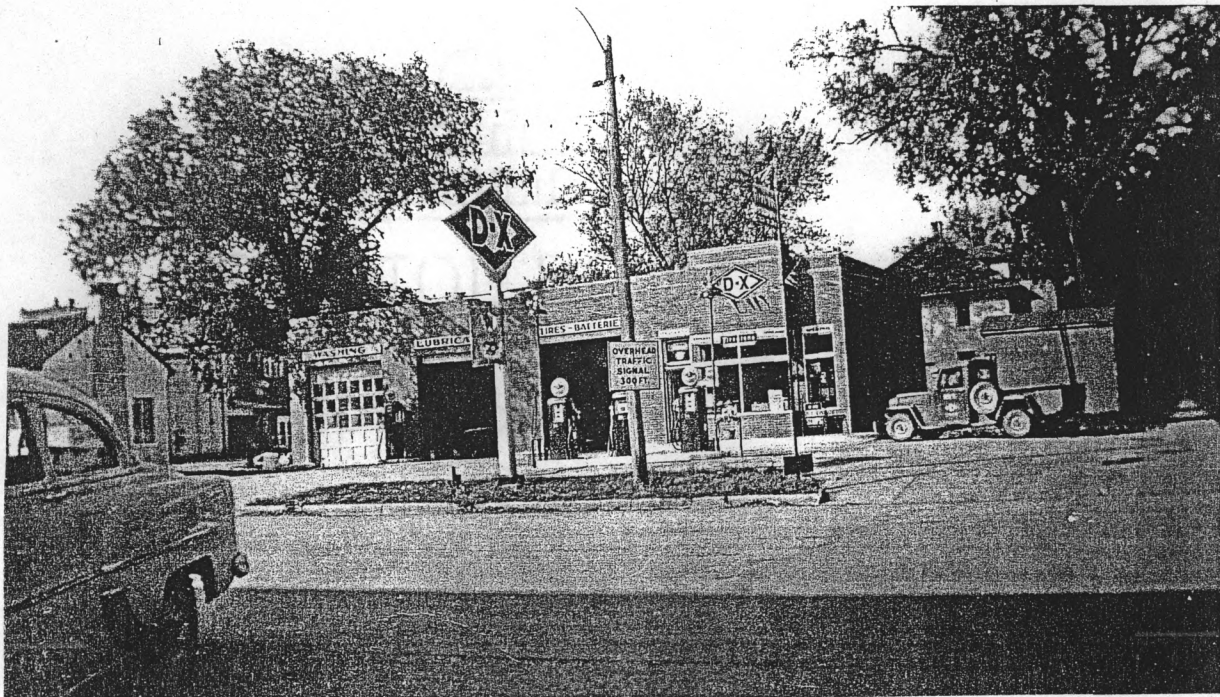


Figure 7-19

Built in 1939, this service station at 448 East Main Street introduced Art Deco styling to commercial architecture in Central City.

Source: Central City Historical Society.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

**SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The Central City Commercial Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criterion A. The district calls attention to the effects transportation had on the emergence of the community's central business district during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. East Main Street and North 4th Street served historically as overland roads to points north and east, an important transportation corridor in Eastern Iowa, linking the cities of Marion, Manchester, and Dubuque. As Central City grew in size, its business district expanded, and this highway route encouraged the emergence of North 4th Street as an axis of the community's central business district.

The Central City Commercial Historic District is locally significant under Criterion A because it calls attention to significant town building patterns in the community during the Expansion Era. A devastating fire destroyed much of Central City's commercial district in 1889. Local entrepreneurs--witnessing a faith in the community's future--quickly redeveloped this area through rebuilding and replatting efforts. Numerous local entrepreneurs launched a series of unusual joint construction projects in downtown Central City. The reputation and reliability of local building contractor Paul Sigmund facilitated these cooperative efforts. A replatting scheme to expand Central City's business district south of East Main Street followed the fire but achieved only limited success, calling attention to the significance and magnetic force of transportation corridors for commerce in the community.

The Central City Commercial Historic District is locally significant under National Register Criterion C because it calls attention to Paul Sigmund, a noted local contractor-builder. Sigmund's sense of design, versatility, economy, and longevity--provides a rare glimpse into the local building trade in Linn County during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries. The Central City Commercial Historic District possess a cluster of Sigmund's buildings dating from 1889 to 1916, which vary in architectural style, size, and form. The historic district calls attention to the influence of several styles of architecture on its design. They include Late Victorian, Prairie School, Commercial style, and Art Deco.

The period of significance for the Central City Commercial Historic District extends from 1869 through 1941, the period in which most of the buildings were erected. The year 1869 marks the date when the stone unit of the S. B. Starks Block at 347 East Main Street was constructed. The year 1941 marks the time when most improvements in the district were in place and construction ceased during World War II. The year 1889 is significant because of a major fire.

For a detailed discussion of the historic contexts "Town Building," "Transportation," and "Architectural Resources" and their significance for Central City, please see Section E of the Multiple Property Documentation Form "The Architectural and Historical Resources of Central City, Iowa." Because a major purpose of a Multiple Property Submission is to avoid needless repetition of information and keep the registration forms for related significant properties briefer than for individually nominated properties, only a summary of those areas of significance is presented here.

The Central City Historic Commercial District fulfills the registration requirements for this property, as contained in the MPDF referenced above. The historic district calls attention, under Criterion A, to

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

town building patterns and transportation in Central City, and, under Criterion C, to commercial architectural resources, whose vernacular design, stylistic influences, use of building materials, and associations with Paul Sigmund are locally significant.

### COMMERCE IN CENTRAL CITY

The commercial history of Central City falls into a series of historical eras. A discussion of these eras provides a backdrop to the historical development of the Central City Historic Commercial District.

#### Establishment

Early commercial life in Central City spanned the years from the establishment of the town in 1857 to the late 1880s. This era witnessed the first growth of commercial activity in the community and the establishment of its entrepreneurial leadership.

At the same time, entrepreneurial leadership in Central City had taken shape. Prominent local businessmen included P. G. Henderson, Fred McLeod, and E. K. Hatch. When the Illinois Central Railroad intended to build a road through the Central City area in the 1880s, these businessmen coaxed local land owners to donate land for the railroad's right-of-way. They also raised subscriptions of money to entice the Illinois Central Railroad to build tracks through Central City. Subscribers pledged amounts ranging from \$5 to \$1,000. Henderson, McLeod, and Hatch each pledged \$1,000. A total of 85 subscribers raised \$7,245 in this campaign. (Central City, Iowa 1962:22) These efforts and their success demonstrate the ability of local business leaders to cooperate with one another and promote economic development. The railroad arrived in Central City in 1887.

#### Late Victorian Expansion

The arrival of the railroad in 1887, a devastating fire in 1889 in the central business district, and immediate rebuilding efforts wrought substantial changes on commerce in Central City and ushered in a new age of economic development and introduced new land-use patterns in the community.

The arrival of the Illinois Central Railroad at Central City in 1887 offered an economic boom for the surrounding countryside. Daily farmers in particular profited by the expanded markets available through this new form of transportation, and the number of local dairy herds and creamery operations increased. Pork producers also benefited by improved market connections. As the farm sector of the local economy improved, farm families sought more consumer goods and services in Central City.

A flowering of entrepreneurial investment and commercial expansion occurred in Central City during the final decade of the Nineteenth Century and the early years of the Twentieth. This was due in large part to this economic expansion wrought by the railroad. The city's population grew as well.

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

Between 1880 and 1890, the population of Central City almost doubled in size, much of that probably occurring late in the decade after the railroad's arrival. During the next decade, the city's population increased again by one-third.

The establishment of the first banking institution in Central City in 1895 signaled the passing of personal financial dealings and the advent of institutionalized banking practices. The bank's principals included E. K. Hatch, Fred McLeod as cashier, and P. G. Henderson as an interested party. Although this was a private bank, it facilitated the movement of capital among local residents, many of whom were farmers, and promoted economic development. When McLeod died, the bank was incorporated in 1907 as the State Bank of Central City, at which time it possessed deposits of \$72,802,29. (Central City, Iowa 1962:30-31)

This growth continued throughout the 1890s and into the early 1900s. This era witnessed much of the upbuilding of the Central City business district as it appears today.

By 1895, one report inventoried Central City's commercial life and found the following types of businesses: bank, blacksmith, drayman, general store, notary public, real estate developers, barber, contractor, lumber and wood, millinery, lawyer, groceries, hotel, well driller, shoemaker, brick and tile manufacturer, creamery, grain and live stock dealers, horseman, dressmaker, painter, restaurant, hardware, jeweler, feed, livery and sale stable, notions, meat market, boots and shoed, harness shop, music teacher, wind mills, stone mason, tinner, photographer, druggist, dentist, physician, and furniture. A number of these businesses existed in multiples.

By the end of this period--say 1917--Central City possessed a market for virtually all staple goods and services required by its residents and the surrounding countryside and many of the locally requisite luxuries.

Indeed, one local historian in 1931 noted that the number of commercial establishments in Central City had declined since this period. (Phyllis Baxter) This comment is altogether understandable given the rise of the automobile and the increased number of Central City residents, who shopped for goods and services in the nearby cities. This trend escalated following World War II.

### Interwar Years

The conclusion of World War I and the intervening years before World War II saw few changes on a day-to-day basis in Central City. Between 1920 and 1940, for example, the town's population grew a little. In 1920, it numbered 688, in 1930 it numbered 780, and in 1940, it numbered 810. Actually, these statistics were misleading because many young adults left Central City to find work elsewhere, and farmers who retired to town from the surrounding countryside accounted for some of this modest increase.

The physical appearance of Central City's business district remained largely unchanged and continued to look much as it did in the previous generation, and local retailers and service providers continued to



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supply many of the immediate needs of the community from the same buildings. The rise of gas and service stations accounted for one change in the scene. The Standard Service Station at 356 East Main Street was relocated to that strategic location circa 1935. In 1939, the Lincoln Oil Company completed its new service station at 448 East Main Street. Other service stations were established at other locations in Central City. All of these businesses called attention to the rising number of automobiles on the road.

### Post-World War II

Following World War II and continuing to the present day, Central City has grown as a bedroom community for residents commuting to work in Cedar Rapids and Marion. Between 1950 and 1960, Central City's population increased by 13%, the largest decennial rise since 1900. Since that time, the population has stabilized around 1,100. In 2000 Central City's population stood at 1,157.

Considerable new residential construction has occurred in Central City. Most of this is centered to the north and to the east of town center. Some commercial expansion has also occurred. Most of this is centered adjacent to the new Highway 13 bypass on the western edge of the community. The new commercial architecture there is similar in design to contemporary roadside businesses across the Midwest.

The character of Central City's town center began to change. In the late 1940s, the Town Theatre was built at 400 East Main Street. This Art Moderne inspired building brought a new sense of architectural excitement to the district. Then the effects of working in Cedar Rapids and Marion spilled over to shopping patterns. The rise of urban shopping malls and greater retail selections there attracted more and more Central City residents, and local retail shops suffered. Some stores closed. Others experienced declining sales. The vitality of downtown Central City began to flag.

### Today

Then, in the 1980s and 1990s, new construction appeared in Central City's business district. In 1967, the City State Bank constructed a new building at 59 North 4th Street and enlarged the building with an addition to the south in 1999. In 2000, a new insurance office was erected at 57 North 4th Street. Although these buildings are intrusions in the Central City Commercial Historic District, they conform with the facade lines of other commercial buildings. Their construction illustrates a revitalization underway in the community today.

The renovation of the Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge at 38 North Main Street in November 1991 resulted in growing local pride in the community's history and historic architecture in the business district. In 2000, Central City became a Main Street Iowa community. Today, local business are pursuing that program's four points to revitalize downtown Central City. This nomination project is a part of those efforts.

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**TRANSPORTATION**

The Central City Historic Commercial District illustrates the magnetic attraction overland transportation routes exerted over entrepreneurial activity in Central City. North 4th Street emerged as an important commercial corridor in Central City because it served as the local corridor for the overland route to Manchester, Dubuque, and points north.

A description of the overland routes through Central City clarifies the role North 4th Street played in this transportation network. In the Nineteenth Century, vehicular traffic coming into Central City from the south traveled north along the Marion Road and entered Central City on the west side of the Wapsipinicon River. Turning into West Main Street, traffic moved eastward, crossed the Main Street wagon bridge, and entered East Main Street into Central City's business district. (See Figure 7-5 Continuation Sheet.)

Traffic headed for Prairieburg and points east continued along East Main Street. This route is called Sawyer Road today. Traffic headed for points north turned after crossing the wagon bridge. At an early time, this traffic turned north immediately having crossed the bridge and traveled along a street paralleling the river. This street (vacated already by 1895) turned into a public road in the northwest section of Central City and continued north. This route had changed by 1895. By then, overland traffic turned north at North 4th Street and continued north out of town. This road is called Red School Road today. (See Figure 7-5 Continuation Sheet.)

The magnetic attraction of these transportation corridors exerted a powerful pull on business interests. Merchants wanted their businesses located on streets with high traffic volume. As Central City grew in population and local business expanded, North 4th Street emerged as another corridor of commercial prominence in the community.

By 1899, commercial enterprise along North 4th Street provided an important compliment to those along East Main Street. Those on North 4th included stores for drugs, hardware, clothing, and meat. Services included a blacksmith, shoe shop, barber, restaurant, and a (doctor's) office. At the same time, the 300 and 400 blocks of East Main Street housed stores for dry goods, furniture, groceries, general merchandise, millinery, watches and jewelry, drugs, another millinery shop, harness and buggies, general merchandise, groceries, meats, hardware, dry goods and clothing. Services in these two blocks along East Main included painting, printing, offices, a bank, a photographer, a public hall, and an hotel. (H. Bennett 1899)

This glimpse of commercial activity in Central City in 1899 bears comparison with another in 1913. By that time, commercial activity along North 4th Street had become more specialized. While one retail establishment--a drug store--remained--services and entertainment had expanded. They included a barber, photographer, printer and newspaper, the public library, the telephone exchange, moving pictures, another barber, a flour warehouse, and a lodge hall.

Real estate development schemes that failed to take these locational preferences into account encountered resistance in Central City. The experience of the Central City Land & Improvement

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Company is a notable example. In 1887, the company subdivided Block 36 in the original town plat. This subdivision increased the number of lots in that block by reducing them from residential-sized parcels to commercial-sized parcels. (See Figure 7-6 Continuation Sheet.) The firm intended for these parcels to provide for commercial expansion in Central City in the wake of the Fire of 1889. The company filed this subdivision in the public record in less than thirty days after that disaster.

The results of this scheme were disappointing. A quick look at a map shows that only a few these commercial-sized parcels abutted the overland transportation routes. Lots 12 through 20 faced South 4th Street. Lots 21 through 29 faced South 5th Street. The subsequent history of development on these lots shows a lack of interest. A fire insurance map from 1899, for example, indicates no improvements face South 5th Street. (See Figure 7-7 on Continuation Sheet.) An agricultural implement dealer was housed on South 4th Street, along with an office and a print shop. Otherwise, the lots were vacant.

The subsequent history of lots 1 through 11 was more encouraging. These lots faced East Main Street and were the choicest commercial locations in Block 36. The Central City Land & Improvement Company selected the eastern most lot to construct the Union Block, completed in 1890-1891. Following the Fire of 1889, the Central City Land & Improvement Company erected this block at 439-449 East Main Street. This magnificent improvement was intended to pull commercial development along East Main Street. The increased commercial attraction of lots in this city block would raise the value of the land. Yet even this, the largest commercial edifice ever erected in Central City's business district, failed to pull new businesses to the eastern reaches of East Main Street. Indeed, the most choice parcel in the replat--Lot 11 at the intersection of East Main and 4th Streets--failed to attract a developer. More than two decades passed before this site was improved. (In 1914, the Central City Savings Bank constructed a building there circa 1914.) As to the other surroundings, as late as 1927, one lot on East Main Street that faced the Union Block remained unimproved, and a single-family dwelling stood next door to it. Virtually no commercial development occurred east of the Union Block. Merchants preferred locations more centrally located to town center, and North 4th Street was an ideal choice.

In a passing note, it is interesting that the Illinois Central Railroad depot played a small role in land-use development in Central City. This flies in the face of other town building experiences in Iowa. The location of a railroad depot strongly affected surrounding land-use in many of the state's communities. The explanation of the Central City anomaly can be found in the site selected for the Illinois Central Railroad depot. Tucked away on the west side of the Wapsipinicon River and in the southeastern reaches of the community, this location remained isolated from much of the community. As such, this depot lacked the ability to influence land-use changes upon its surroundings.

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### TOWN BUILDING IN CENTRAL CITY

The Central City Commercial Historic District calls attention to significant patterns of town building in the community. The hub of Central City's business district--inchoate in the town's original plat--emerged at its present location over a period of time. A devastating fire destroyed much of Central City's commercial district in 1889. Local entrepreneurs quickly redeveloped this area through rebuilding and replatting efforts. A number of joint construction projects emerged in downtown Central City as the result of cooperation among local entrepreneurs and the facilitation of local building contractor Paul Sigmund. The Central City Land & Improvement Company sought to expand Central City's commercial center by replatting a city block on the south edge of East Main Street. This scheme met with only limited success and underscored the magnetic pull overland transportation routes exerted over commercial development in Central City.

#### Emergence of the Business District

The hub of Central City's business district--inchoate in the town's original plat--emerged at its present location over a period of time. This hub stands today at the intersection of East Main and 4th Streets. As indicated in the town's original plat of 1857, Commercial Street was designated to fulfill a commercial function. As commercial activity in Central City evolved over the ensuing several decades, the present-day location emerged as town center. Commercial Street became residential.

During Central City's early years, numerous commercial establishments were erected along Commercial Street. In the mid-1860s, for example, Dr. Mitchell opened a drug store at 436 Commercial Street. Although Mitchell may have lived upstairs, this frame, 2-story building with a facade gable roof looked more like a commercial enterprise than a residence. (Central City Historical Society 1989:102). The second general store in Central City was built in 1865 by C. H. and James Clark. It was located at 4th and Commercial Streets. In 1868 Samuel Heaton built the "first real hotel in Central City." Called the Empire House, it stood on the northeast corner of Commercial and 5th Streets. In 1868 or 1869, Richard Barber built the City Hotel on the northwest corner of Commercial and 4th Streets (*ibid.*:120).

At the same time, some commercial establishments were erected along East Main Street. The first general store in Central City, for example, was located on the north side of East Main between 3rd and 4th Streets. It was established in 1857 by Cornelius Parsons. In 1869, the Sawyer family opened a general store in their building on the south side of East Main between 3rd and 4th Streets. (Central City Historical Society 1989:113-114)

The next several decades saw the eclipse of Commercial Street and the emergence of East Main Street as "the business street of town" (Central City, Iowa 1962:25) What caused this eclipse?

The wagon bridge over the Wapsipinicon River at the west end of East Main Street channeled vehicular traffic along East Main Street and encouraged its commercial development. Local merchants availed themselves of this advantage. In 1869, Xavier Sawyer erected a 1-story, stone store at 347 East Main

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Street. (This building remains extant today, as part of the larger building.) Additional Sawyer family improvements along East Main Street solidified the commercial importance of that corridor. In 1877, X. B. Sawyer & Sons expanded this commercial operation by constructing a creamery at the rear of the building. This was the first such business in Central City. E. M. Sawyer, Xavier's son, continued business at this site until at least 1890. (Central City, Iowa 1962:12) The longevity of this business was notable in the early commercial history of Central City. General stores frequently changed ownership, and there were many of them. (Central City Historical Society 1989:113) Within this context, the stability of the Sawyer business lent weight to East Main Street as a business section of the community. The presence of the Xavier and Permelia Sawyer House next door at 337 East Main Street reinforced this sense. Built in 1879, the house itself was the most architecturally sophisticated residence in Central City.

By the 1880s, East Main Street had become the principle business street in Central City. The district's hub stood at 4th Street, the intersection for overland transportation headed north and south through Central City. Around the turn of the Twentieth Century, the city erected a wood-frame band stand in the middle of this intersection, calling further attention to this point as Central City's town center. The intersection became known locally as "The Square," indicating its status among Central City residents. A tall flagpole later replaced this bandstand and was later moved to the northwest corner of the intersection. As to Commercial Street, its earlier commercial significance had evaporated. The Empire Hotel at the northeast corner of North 5th and Commercial Streets was later converted into an apartment building. The rest of the street hosted residences and a few churches.

### Phoenix from a Fire

A devastating fire in 1889 leveled much of Central City's business district. (See cover document.) Rebuilding efforts began almost immediately, and local entrepreneurs quickly redeveloped the effected area. This rapid response by local entrepreneurs evinced a confidence in the town's future. These improvements--located along East Main Street--reaffirmed the emerging shift of commercial activity away from Commercial Street and further solidified East Main's role as Central City's "business street."

In a retrospective piece, the *Central City News Letter* proclaimed on April 24, 1890 that "Like the Phoenix we will have risen from the ashes." Several new commercial buildings call attention to this remarkable recovery.

Indeed, one of the most prominent was named the "Phoenix Block" to commemorate it. Before the fire had ceased burning, its construction had begun. The block was erected by Porter and Clark, E. F. Moore, McLeod and Crane, and the Masonic fraternity in Central City. Porter and Clark (hardware) eventually occupied the west end of the block at 340 East Main Street. E. F. Moore's middle unit at 342 East Main Street became a restaurant and the Eagle Hotel. Minehart and Barber (groceries and dry goods) occupied the east room at 348 East Main Street. The Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias occupied the second floor room over the Minehart and Barber store. The Central City Masons occupied the room over Porter and Clark. (*Central City News Letter*, September 4, 1890)

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This enthusiasm for new commercial construction spilled over into other sections of the business district that remained uneffected by the fire. S. B. Starks converted a 1-story commercial room at 347 East Main Street into a fine commercial block that bore the street address 345-347. The Central City Land & Improvement Company erected the Union Block at 439-449 East Main Street, the largest commercial edifice ever erected in the community. (See below.) Other business interests built 1-story, brick commercial rooms at 26, 36, and 38 North 4th Streets.

The 1889 disaster burned into the consciousness of local merchants the need to erect buildings of fire-proof or fire-retarding materials. Much, if not indeed most, of the district's new construction was built in brick. At least one "iron building" was constructed in the wake of the fire. This property, the farm implement house for dealers Porter, Clark & Company, was located at the northwest corner of Main and 4th Streets. (Central City Historical Society 1898:109)

In conclusion, it should be noted that--while the 1889 fire was a causal factor for this remarkable record of new construction--the confidence in the future, as it evinced among Central City's entrepreneurs, was greatly augmented by the economic vitality the arrival of the Illinois Central Railroad injected into the community only two years previously.

Joint Construction Projects

A notable pattern in Central City town building is the cooperative effort among local entrepreneurs to erect edifices of unified architectural design whose component parts remained separately owned. Paul Sigmund's reputation in the community (see below) facilitated these joint construction projects.

The Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge at 36-38 North 4th Street is an outstanding example of this pattern. In 1910, the local Odd Fellows erected a lodge hall on the top of property owned by another party. Prior to this construction, three commercial rooms stood at 26, 36, and 38 North 4th Street. (See Figure 7-14 Continuation Sheet.) The Odd Fellows secured an agreement with the owners of the units at 36 and 38 and proceeded to erect a second story above these two units for their lodge hall. (For many years, the title to the first floor and to the second floor of these units remained in separate hands.) This joint construction project effectively converted two 1-story commercial rooms into one 2-story commercial block. (See Figure 7-15 Continuation Sheet.) Paul Sigmund was responsible for the construction of the second floor.

The Phoenix Block is another example of a joint construction project. Following the Fire of 1889, E. F. Moore contracted with Paul Sigmund to build a commercial room at 343 East Main Street. At the same time, the local Masonic Lodge contracted with Sigmund to build a meeting hall for them at 340 East Main Street. Sigmund fulfilled these contracts through the format of the commercial block. Both properties remained held under separate title, but the completed work presented a unified architectural design.

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The Union Block provides another example. Following the completion of the Union Block units at 445 and 449 East Main Street, P. G. Henderson employed Paul Sigmund to erect a commercial room at 439 East Main Street. Attached to the western end of the Union Block, this commercial room was designed as an architecturally compatible unit to that block.

Central City Land & Improvement Company

The Central City Land & Improvement Company was a partnership of local Victorian capitalists who advanced the interests of Central City and their own portfolios through real estate development. These "makers and shakers" incorporated the company in 1887. Over the next twenty-odd years, they promoted various real estate and economic development schemes, which expanded residential land-use in Central City and helped transform its business district into its present shape. Those efforts are discussed in the cover document for this nomination and in the "Transportation" section above.

**PAUL SIGMUND**

The Central City Commercial Historic District calls attention to local contractor-builder Paul Sigmund (1861-1953). Sigmund's business acumen, versatility, sense of design, and economy of construction enabled him to become Central City's premier building contractor during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries, and downtown Central City was transformed as a result of his work.

Business Acumen

Paul Sigmund possessed a fine business sense that, coupled with a strong work ethic, won him the custom of many property owners in northeastern Linn County. The extensive list of his building contracts demonstrates the truth of this assertion. (See cover document.) The same can be said for commercial properties he built in Central City. The following list identifies them. Those located in the Central City Commercial Historic District are indicated with an asterisk (\*):

CENTRAL CITY COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS  
CONSTRUCTED BY PAUL SIGMUND

<u>Name of Resource</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>\$ Cost</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
* Bank of Central City		1,500	
* E. K. Hatch Building		1,500	Millenary Store
* P. G. Henderson Building	439 E. Main St.	1,200	Millenary Store
A. L. Smith Building		800	

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<u>Name of Resource</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>\$ Cost</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
W. Woodbridge Building		1,000	
Hatch & Brookman Building		200	
Central City Produce	Central City	3,000	Hatch & Fish, Props.
Frank Hamilton Garage Building		3,000	Rebuild
Hatch & Fish Garage Building	Central City	2,500	
Hatch & Fish Garage Building	Central City	1,500	Rebuild
Hatch & Fish Cold Storage Building	Central City	1,220	Construct addition
Hatch & Fish Garage Building	Central City	700	Construct addition
* Union Block	445-449 E. Main St.	10,000	4 rooms, 2 stories
* S. B. Starks Commercial Building	345-347 E. Main St.	5,000	2 rooms, 2 stories
* A. M. Wheeler Commercial Building	400 E. Main St.	5,000	2 rooms, 2 stories
* E. F. Moore Commercial Building	342 E. Main St.	1,800	1 room, 2 stories
* P. G. Henderson Bldg.	439 E. Main St.	2,000	Add'n for P. G. Henderson
F. J. Wratlslaw	4th St. bet. Main & Maple east side of street	4,500	2 room, 2 story, brick built in 1905
* State Bank of Central City	417 E. Main St.	4,000	East bank
* I.O.O.F. Lodge	38 N. 4th St.	2,500	
* Central City Savings Bank	401 E. Main St.	1,000	Bank room on corner
* State Bank of Central City	413 E. Main St.	1,000	Construct addition, east bank
* J. G. Clegg Library	54 N. 4th St.	2,500	

Source: List compiled by Phyllis Baxter, Central City Historical Society.  
(The building names given here are as listed by this source.)

Versatility

Sigmund's versatility was another reason for his success. Sigmund worked equally well with wood-frame buildings and with masonry buildings; with one-story buildings, commercial rooms, and commercial blocks; with additions above and adjacent to existing buildings; with barns and other farm



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outbuildings; with churches; with public and semi-public institutions; and with residential houses both large and small. Many of these architectural types involved special needs.

The Central City Commercial Historic District calls attention to this versatility within the context of Sigmund's commercial opus. The following list identifies those buildings and some of their special needs.

TYPES OF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS  
CONSTRUCTED BY PAUL SIGMUND IN CENTRAL CITY COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

<u>Name of Resource</u>	<u>Building Type</u>	<u>Special Needs</u>
J. G. Clegg Library	Public library	Blend with surrounding residential & commercial architecture
State Bank of Central City	Bank	Convey integrity, trust, & security
Central City Savings Bank	Bank	Convey integrity, trust, & security
I.O.O.F. Lodge	Semi-public hall	Convert 1-story bldg. to 2-story
S. B. Sparks Block	Commercial block	Convert 1-story bldg. to 2-story, build adjoining 2-story bldg., & achieve a unified composition
Phoenix Block-E. F. Moore Building (Eagle Hotel)	Commercial bldg.	Design a commercial bldg. as if a commercial block, each unit having separate owners
Phoenix Block-Masonic Lodge	Commercial bldg.	Design a commercial bldg. as if a commercial block, each unit having separate owners
Union Block	Commercial block	Build a complex of 4-units at different times and unify the composition by a consistent architectural design

Design

As a student of architectural design, Sigmund followed its evolving styles during the years of his productive work from circa 1880 to circa 1925. The Central City Commercial Historic District calls attention to his ability to adapt to these shifting tastes in American architecture.

Sigmund's early commercial buildings show the influence of Late Victorian styling. The Union Block at 439-449 East Main Street is the largest example of such a building. During his "middle period"--say from 1895 to 1910--Sigmund's commercial buildings became simpler in their architectural detailing.

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This shift signals the movement towards Classical Revival styling. The Central City Savings Bank at 401 East Main Street illustrates this simpler conception. Towards the end of Sigmund's building career, some of his work reflected the influence of the Prairie School. The State Bank of Central City at 413 East Main Street is a fine example of this influence on a commercial design. (Each of these buildings is discussed in more detail below.)

Sigmund's ability to adapt to this changing architectural milieu is another aspect of his versatility. Entrepreneurs wish to convey an up-to-date image to their customers, and Sigmund obliged his clients by fulfilling those needs through architecture.

The sources for Sigmund's design inspirations remains unknown. Perhaps he obtained architectural design publications from local lumber yards or from those in Cedar Rapids. Further research might provided information about this subject.

#### Economy of Construction

Economy was a cardinal tenet in Sigmund's work ethic. He seized the opportunity to recycle building materials and this cost effectiveness gratified his thrift-conscious customers.

The Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge at 36-38 North 4th Street provides a good example of Sigmund's propensity to husband building materials. Sigmund salvaged the pressed metal cornice and pediment from the commercial rooms at 36 and 38 North 4th Street and reinstalled them at the top of the lodge hall.

Sigmund remodeled old buildings for new uses, another aspect of his construction economy. For example, he reconfigured the 1-story stone building at 347 East Main Street into the 2-story S. B. Stark Commercial Block at 345-347 East Main Street. On North 4th Street, Sigmund added a second floor to the commercial rooms at 36 and 38. (Building contractors will bear out the fact that adding floors to buildings requires more than ordinary skill.) In these remodeling efforts, Sigmund's ability as an architectural designer provided an additional benefit for his customers. His design for the new structure at 36-38, for example, was rendered in the traditional format of the commercial block and presents a unified and pleasing architectural composition. Few looking at the edifice today would detect its transmutation.

Economies like these recommended Sigmund to his neighbors and provided a key to his success as a builder. Iowans prided themselves--particularly during the Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries--on their frugality. Within this context, farmers were particularly thrifty and insisted on value for money. The list of Sigmund's many farm-related building projects (see cover document) shows that he enjoyed the patronage of this demanding clientele. The same could be said for local entrepreneurs, as Sigmund's equally prolific list of contracts in the Central City Commercial Historic District witnesses.

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Sigmund's Retirement

The building trades in Central City became more complex following World War I. In the early 1920s, for example, the Central City school board selected architect R. R. Mayberry to design the community's new brick high school. Built by contractors Currie-Simpson, the building opened in 1922.

By this time, Paul Sigmund had neared the end of his career as a building contractor. His last documented work was construction of Jordan's Grove Church in 1925. His retirement helps mark this changing era in the local building trades.

Following his retirement, Sigmund continued to work with wood and made furniture for himself and others. In 1948 he moved to Cedar Rapids, where he continued to live until his death as a penultimate centenarian in 1953.

**ARCHITECTURAL STYLE**

Stylistically, Central City possesses commercial examples of architecture in the most popular styles between the 1880s and the mid-Twentieth Century. Late Victorian predominates, as befitting a community whose zenith of commercial upbuilding occurred around the turn of the Twentieth Century. Classical Revival, the Prairie School, and later, Art Deco are also in evidence.

Late Victorian

Late Victorian styling predominates in the Central City Commercial Historic District. This befits a district, whose chief period of upbuilding occurred during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

The Late Victorian influence in Central City is the result of local and of outside forces. Many of the architectural elements and decorative features of these buildings were imported into the community by the railroad. They include pressed metal cornices and pediments, cast iron columns to support storefronts, cast stone sills and lintels, and plate glass. Still, a substantial amount of locally manufactured building material contributed to these efforts. They included, primarily, the bright, cherry-colored brick manufactured by the Gus Hatch brickworks and the deep red-colored brick manufactured by his successor, the Central City Brick and Tile Company. Paul Sigmund was largely responsible for the fashioning of these materials into buildings.

Late Victorian styling in Central City treats the storefront areas of commercial buildings in a light and airy fashion. Cast iron columns typically divided the storefront into several areas, including the store windows and the entrances. Plate glass windows cover most of the storefront. Often with horizontal muntin divides the main window from a transom window. The Union Block at 439-449 East Main Street and the commercial building at 26 North 4th Streets are good examples.

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The upper areas of these buildings are often more elaborate in their architectural decoration. Pressed metal cornices typically crown these buildings, and often they feature pressed metal pediments centered above them. The S. B. Starks Block at 345-347 East Main Street and the Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge at 36-38 North 4th Street are good examples of these features. Sometimes a pressed metal cornice is situated between the storefront and the upper story. The Union Block possesses such a feature, but it is the only such example in Central City.

Completed in 1890, the Union Block stands as the most fully developed example of Late Victorian commercial styling in Central City. In addition to its embellishments noted above, the block features pressed metal hood molds crowned with fan-shaped devices. The fan was a popular Aesthetic motif during the 1870s and early 1880s, when Aesthetic design reached its height of popularity. Its appearance on the Union Block is an interesting survival and illustrates the conservatism of some architectural styling.

The hood mold is a diagnostic characteristic of Late Victorian styling in Center City, and it appears on other commercial edifices as well as on the Union Block. They include the Phoenix Block, the S. B. Starks Block, and the Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge. In each of these instances, however, the hood molds are constructed of brick. While it is true that brickworked hood molds lacked the decorative detail pressed metal ones possessed, it was cheaper for Paul Sigmund to fabricate them in brick than to purchase manufactured products from beyond Central City. It should also be said that these brickworked hood molds convey a forthright simplicity of design.

### Classical Revival

Several buildings in the Central City Commercial Historic District show the influence of Classical Revival styling. The J. G. Clegg Library and the Central City Savings Bank are its best examples.

This architectural influence became evident in Central City only during the second decade of the Twentieth Century. This was relatively late for Iowa towns. At least one good reason accounts for this time-lag. By the early Twentieth Century, Central City's business district was largely in place and relatively little construction occurred during the period of Classical Revival's popularity.

Paul Sigmund designed and built the J. G. Clegg Public Library at 52 North 4th Street in 1915. His intent was to blend the architectural design of this building with its commercial surroundings yet convey a sense of institutional distinction to the library and set it apart. To this end, he provided the library with a deeper setback from the street than the standard commercial setback in Central City. This extra space allowed for the construction of a covered front porch on the building's west facade. The porch lent a residential air to the building and suggested a nurturing atmosphere within. The library gained additional distinction as an institution because the first floor of the building was raised above grade. This elevation conferred dignity to the building, befitting its educational function. The library is also distinguished from commercial buildings in the district because it is a detached building. In other respects, however, the library's architectural design was intended to relate it with its

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commercial neighbors. The library's main block was conceived in the spirit of the 1-story, commercial room. Constructed of local brick of a deep red color, the building blended in with other commercial buildings in Central City's business district. Other architectural features, such as its denticulated cornice, provided further references to the architectural heritage of the district.

About the same time, Sigmund built the Central City Savings Bank at 401 East Main Street. The design of this building and the library are quite similar. Local, dark red brick is used for both buildings set in a dark-colored mortar. The dark color of brick and mortar lends a massive quality to the building's appearance, and its exterior walls become monolithic planes. This visual impression lends considerable weight to the building and conveys a sense of security to the viewer, exactly the impression a financial institution wishes to convey. Sigmund tempered this severity with several architectural details. The building's cornice provides a Classical Revival motif of brickworked dentils. To accent this and other architectural features on the building, Sigmund employed lighter-colored brick as detailing. This one course of this brick is situated above the denticulation, and the same brick is used in two courses as a belt course around the east and north facades above the building's windows. The building's parapet is capped with a cast concrete coping. A pair of cast concrete brackets, in a classical volute design, provide additional decorative features. They are situated above the building's canted entryway.

### Prairie School

The presence of one Prairie School-influenced building in the historic district calls attention to that style and the role Paul Sigmund played in introducing new architectural ideas to the community.

Sigmund completed the State Bank of Central City at 417 East Main Street in 1908. Its construction must have caused considerable discussion at the time. Conceived within the tradition of the 1-room commercial building (see below), it possessed a remarkable series of new architectural ideas for commercial architectural in Central City. They included the building's yellow-colored brick, its remarkable cornice, and its Chicago-style storefront window. Each of these elements and features calls attention to the Prairie School influence on its design.

Yellow-colored brick had not been used in Central City up to this time, nor had the Chicago-style window which provides a focal point for the building. This window gains added prominence because it is flanked by outwardly projecting planes. One of these features the main entrance to the building and the other which features a 1/1 double-hung window. These cavities are held in visual check by a heavy, brickworked cornice, which caps the facade. This cornice, which features the word "Bank" and a series of dentils, dramatically flares outward as it rises. A band of cast concrete provides the base for the cornice, and a series of six brickworked dentils serve as visual supports for it. The keystone-shaped lintels over this building's front entrance and side window are unusually tall. Their design provides a rhythmic counterpart to the building's upward-flaring cornice.

Sigmund's meticulous design sense is evident in his treatment of the east bay on the north facade. This bay features an inset 1/1-double hung sash window. The area below this window is also inset

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down to grade. This subtle touch preserves the facade's symmetry, the building's westerly bay being occupied by its main entrance, which also extends to grade.

It remains unclear whether Sigmund copied this design whole-cloth from an architectural catalog or whether he selected certain elements from such a document and worked them together through his own imagination.

Art Deco and Art Moderne

The presence of several Art Deco and Art Moderne buildings in the historic district shows that property owners continued to keep abreast of current architectural fashion in the 1930s and 1940s. These new buildings enlivened the Central City streetscape, when they appeared on the scene.

The Lincoln Oil Company Service Station at 448 East Main Street was completed in 1939. (See Figure 7-19 Continuation Sheet.) As originally built, this building featured an in-stepped parapet, redolent, if only subtle, of the stepped skyscrapers of the 1920s and 1930s. Unfortunately, this feature has since been removed. Still, the outwardly project bay window of the cashier's office on the south facade remains intact and calls attention to the block-like geometrical shapes so prominent in Art Deco styling. The Lincoln Oil Company Service Station was likely architect-designed, although the name of such an individual or firm has not yet been discovered.

The Town Theatre was completed in 1946-1947. It featured an Art Moderne-inspired marquee of streamlined design with the letters "Town" prominently displayed and an outside ticket booth inset from the facade. These architectural features are nonexistant, and the building is evaluated as noncontributing to this nomination. As with the Lincoln Oil Company, the Town Theater was likely architect-designed, although the name of such an individual or firm has not yet been discovered.

The Xavier and Permelia Sawyer House at 339 East Main Street is included in this nomination because of its associations with transportation and town building. Although it is excluded from this section's focus on commercial architecture, it is appropriate to note its exuberant, Italianate-inspired styling. Hallmarks of the style include its paired brackets embellishing its cornices, its cupola, its horizontal roof-lines, and its massing. Built in 1879, the Sawyer House was and remains the most fully developed example of Italianate styling in Central City

Form

The Central City Historic Commercial District possesses a variety of commercial building types. They include the 1-room commercial building, the 2-room commercial block, and the compound commercial block. The presence of these architectural forms provides variety to the streetscape. The manner in which the blocks were erected calls attention to cooperation among local entrepreneurs. (See "Joint Construction Projects" section above.)

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In terms of size, the biggest type is the compound commercial block. The Union Block at 439-449 East Main Street is a fine example of this architectural form. It is conceived as the amalgam of three commercial rooms, located at 445-449 East Main Street, with a fourth commercial room at 439 East Main Street added a little later. Each of these four commercial rooms features three windows on the edifice's upper floor, for a total of 12 windows. The outside entrance to the upper floor is situated at ground level in the middle of the block. It also features an upstairs window. This entrance is further accented by brick pilasters on the second floor, which flank it.

The historic district possesses three examples of the 2-room commercial block. They include the Phoenix Block at 340-342 East Main Street, the S. B. Starks Commercial Block at 345-347 East Main Street, and the Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge at 36-38 North 4th Street. It is interesting to note that the latter two of these commercial blocks are later conversions from 1-room commercial buildings. (See the "Paul Sigmund" section above.) The presence of three commercial block and one compound commercial block in Central City provides a testament to the city's commercial strength during the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

Although the smallest of these architectural forms, the 1-room commercial building could possess architectural distinction. The Commercial Building at 26 North 4th Street, for example, features a storefront supported by cast iron columns embellished with rope-twist and geometric designs, an inset denticulated panel above the storefront, and an elaborate cornice and pediment of pressed metal, which tops the building. The 1-room commercial building at 422 East Main Street virtually repeats this design. (Its cornice and pediment have been removed, however, and its main entrance is symmetrically placed rather than at one side as at 26 North 4th.) Paul Sigmund's State Bank of Central City, a 1-room commercial building 417 East Main Street, forcefully demonstrates that architectural distinction need not be limited to big buildings. (See above.)

#### Absence of Architect-Designs

Few buildings in the historic district are architect-designed. Paul Sigmund's ability as a contractor-builder overshadowed any attraction that these professionals might otherwise have offered property owners in Central City. Entrepreneurs wishing to construct new buildings employed him and saved money rather than engaging the services of a professional architect. This also promoted the local economy by keeping development money in the community.

Further research might identify architects associated with buildings that post-date Sigmund's career. The Town Theatre at 400 East Main Street and/or the Lincoln Oil Company Service Station at 448 East Main Street might be such buildings.

#### Other Notes

Some properties in the Central City Commercial Historic District are of architectural interest because of their building materials. (See cover document.)

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Brick was locally manufactured in Central City. Buildings constructed of that material call attention to these local industries. The Central City Savings Bank at 240 East Main Street and the J. G. Clegg Library at 52 North 4th Street are two notable examples of the deep red-colored brick, as fired at the Central City Brick and Tile Company. Previously, the firm--which went through several ownerships during its working life--had produced a "bright cherry" colored brick. Although readily available because of its local production, the quality of this brick sometimes posed later problems. The Phoenix Block at 340-348 East Main Street, for example, was built of local brick but later parged to protect its soft surface from deteriorating.

Concrete block became a popular building material in Central City because of its resistance to fire and low cost. The use of this material for commercial buildings was limited, however, to buildings constructed during the first decade of the Twentieth Century. The commercial building at 341 Main Street, built circa 1905, is the lone example. Concrete block enjoyed more popularity as a building material of choice for the foundation of houses and for their decoration.

During the 1910s, or thereabouts, the parging of exterior walls of commercial buildings became popular in many Iowa communities. It reflected a new-found interest in concrete as a building material and corresponded with the growing influence of Craftsman architectural styling. A building facade parged with stucco provided an inexpensive way for a merchant to update the look of his business. In Central City, such treatments had the further recommendation that they addressed the problem of deteriorating soft brick that bedeviled some local buildings.

Two brick buildings built immediately after the Fire of 1889 likely experienced this problem: the Phoenix Block at 340-348 East Main Street and the S. B. Starks Block at 345-347 East Main Street. Each was subsequently parged. The west unit of the Union Block at 439 East Main Street was also parged about this same time. While these alterations are distracting to the contemporary eye, they do call attention to an historic architectural trend within the historic district's period of significance. As such, they should be accepted as part of the historical record and evaluated as contributing to the historic district.

**REPRESENTATION IN OTHER CULTURAL RESOURCES SURVEYS**

Central City was surveyed during a reconnaissance and intensive survey project undertaken by the Linn County Historic Preservation Commission, Leah D. Rogers, and William C. Page in 1995. That survey identified the area as potentially eligible for nomination to the National Register. (Rogers & Page 1995:I 3-13 & 3-14 ) Every building in the district was photographed. An Iowa Site Inventory Form was completed for each building, including written physical descriptions and statements of significance. This was also undertaken by the local historic preservation commission and Page. This survey concluded that the Central City Historic Commercial District was eligible for nomination and recommended that the project move forward. A Certified Local Government grant-in-aid from the State Historical Society of Iowa in 2001, along with matches by the Linn County Historic Preservation Commission and local volunteers, underwrote this nomination.



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**POTENTIAL FOR HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY**

Although the site's potential for archaeological research is, as yet, unevaluated, the likelihood of discovering prehistoric data is slight, given the disturbance caused to the ground by construction. The possibility does exist for the discovery of historic data. Chief among them would seem to be the evidence of resources predating the Fire of 1889.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This nomination is a collaborative effort between the Central City Historic Preservation Commission, Main Street Central City, and the State Historical Society of Iowa. Local volunteers provided coordination, research, and oral history information to the project. They included Karen Dunlap, Nancy Goodlove, Julia Ladd, Margery Mysak, Julie Moes, Dona Nielsen, Mary Somers, and Janet White. Consultant Leah D. Rogers provided the photographs and coordinated the project with the state. The Linn County Historic Preservation Commission provided a cash match for the project's Certified Local Government grant-in-aid.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND REGISTRATION ACTIVITIES**

Good potential exists for research and registration activities for other resources associated with contractor-builder Paul Sigmund in Central City. Many National Register opportunities remain untapped within the residential resources of Central City.

The business history of the Central City Land & Improvement Company offers a rich field for further research. Oral histories are recommended on this topic, while living memory still offers the potential to record information.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

This project has been funded with the assistance of a matching grant-in-aid from the State Historical Society of Iowa, Community Programs Bureau, through the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, under provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966; the opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of the Interior.

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**GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

Verbal Boundary Description

East Main Street 300-400 Block; North 4th Street from East Main Street to Commercial Street; all within the corporate limits of Central City, Iowa, as shown by the dashed line on the map entitled "Historic District Boundaries," Figure 7-1, on Continuation Sheet 14.

Boundary Justification

Contains all historic resources that illustrate the historical and architectural evolution of the Central City Commercial Historic District as a locally significant transportation route and corridor of preference for commercial construction, except for the west side of North 4<sup>th</sup> Street between East Main and Commercial Streets because of its loss of historic resources and the construction of new buildings.

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### LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

1. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
400 block East Main Street, south side  
Looking southwest  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001
  
2. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
413 East Main Street (right) & 417 East Main Street  
Looking southeast  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001
  
3. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
Union Block (left) at 445-449 East Main Street  
& Henderson Building at 439 Main Street  
Looking southwest  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001
  
4. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
400 block East Main Street, north side  
Looking northwest  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001

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Central City Commercial Historic District, Linn County, Iowa.

5. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
400 block East Main Street, north side  
Looking northeast  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001
  
6. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
300 block East Main Street, south side  
Looking southwest  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001
  
7. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
Xavier & Permelia House, 337 East Main Street  
Looking southwest  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001
  
8. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
300 block East Main Street, north side  
Looking northwest  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001
  
9. Central City Commercial Historic District  
Central City, IA  
1 block of North 4th Street, east side  
Looking northeast  
Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
December 30, 2001

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10.      Central City Commercial Historic District  
          Central City, IA  
          Commercial Buildings-I.O.O.F. Lodge (left) at 38 North 4th Street  
          & Commercial Building at 26 North 4th Street  
          Looking northeast  
          Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
          December 30, 2001
  
11.      Central City Commercial Historic District  
          Central City, IA  
          1 block North 4th Street, east side  
          Looking southwest  
          Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
          December 30, 2001
  
12.      Central City Commercial Historic District  
          Central City, IA  
          1 block North 4th Street, west side  
          Looking southwest  
          Note municipal flagpole at far left  
          Leah D. Rogers, Photographer  
          December 30, 2001

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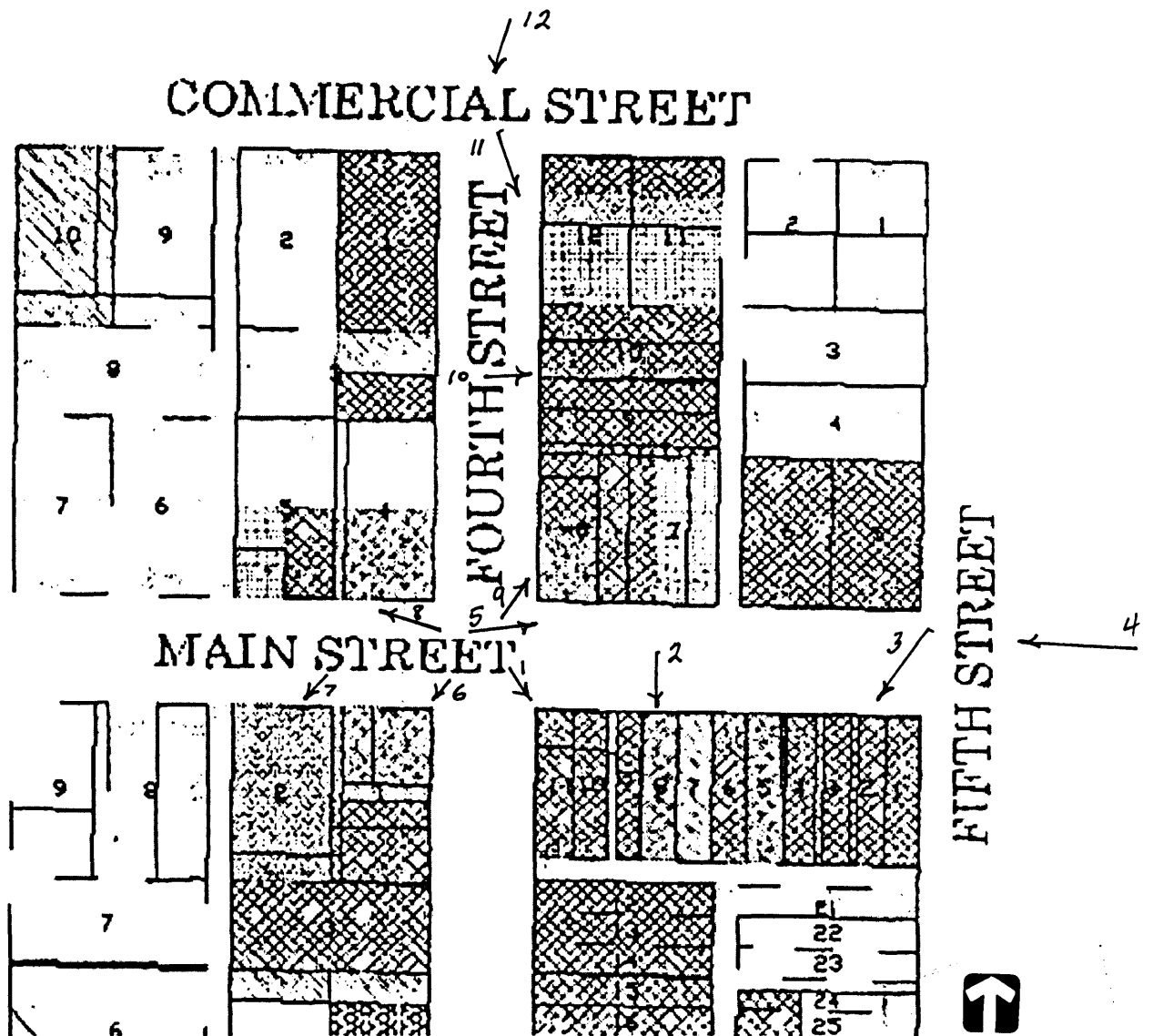
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NUMBERS INDICATE VANTAGE POINTS OF PHOTOGRAPHS





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**Property Owners**

E. Main Street - South Side

Central City Historical Society - Sawyer House Museum 337 E. Main Street

Amvets - 347 E. Main St.

Elizabeth Jones - 401 E. Main St.

Scott & Glenda Northland - 413 E. Main St.

Bonnie Dotson - 417 E. Main St.

Frank Pruss - 429, 433 E. Main St.

Jim Vanis - 439 Main St.

R. J. Smith - 449, 449 1/2 E. Main St.

North Side

Joe Hawthorne - 341 E. Main

Masonic Lodge - 342 1/2 E. Main

Wapsi Investments 342 E. Main St.

Dean Locke - 356 E. Main & Standard Station

John Breyfogle - 402 E. Main St

George Nielsen - 422 E. Main St., 400 E. Main St.

David Boyle - 400 E. Main St.

Bill Welter - 448 E. Main St.

Fourth St. , North

Iowa Telecom N. 4th St.

Central City Historical Society - Old Library Museum, 52 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

Mable Morey - 42 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

Vern McShane - 38 4<sup>th</sup> St.

Karen Dunlap - 26 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

Doug Meyer - 24 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St

City State Bank - 59 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

Neighbor Insurance Services Inc.- 45 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

Elizabeth Jones - 12 S. 4<sup>th</sup> St.

Amvets - 13, 15 1/2 S 4<sup>th</sup> St.

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