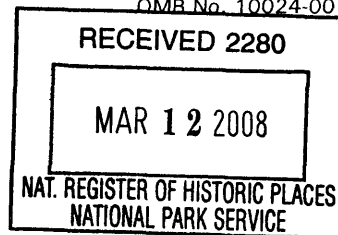


FEB 26 2008

OMB No. 10024-0018



330

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If 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 Grocers Wholesale Company Building

other names/site number Sears and Roebuck Farm Store

2. Location

street & number 22 West Ninth Street [N/A] not for publication

city or town Des Moines [N/A] vicinity

state Iowa code IA county Polk code 153 zip code

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this [X] 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 [X] meets [] does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant [] nationally [X] statewide [x] locally. [] see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Dorely Sorke, Deputy SAPO March 7, 2008
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

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

Edson H. Beall 4-25-08
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

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

Category of Property

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
		sites
		structures
		objects
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

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

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/Warehouse

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/Trade/Warehouse

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements

/Commercial style

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

roof asphalt
other

Narrative Description

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

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

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

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce

Period of Significance

1916-1931

Significant Dates

1916

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Sawyer, Ralph Edmund
Watrous, Charles Albert

Primary location of additional data:

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

Name of repository: #Property owner

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 7 Page 1**Grocers Wholesale Company Building****Polk County, Iowa****7. Narrative Description:**

The Grocers Wholesale Company Warehouse is located on the southwest corner of West Ninth and Cherry streets in the warehouse and factory district that borders the southwest portion of the downtown area. Figure 27 locates the building and the immediate neighborhood. Railroad tracks, reduced considerably in number, pass the building to the south. The Raccoon River flows eastwardly, a half mile to the south, and links with the Des Moines River just an equal distance to the east. Governmental buildings, including the Central Fire Station (across the street to the north), the Polk County Courthouse (five blocks due east), and the Polk County Jail Annex (immediately south) are in close proximity. The 9th Street Viaduct passes immediately east across the second floor of the building.

The building style is that of a simplified commercial style of the early Twentieth Century. Stylistic components include broad and prominent brick pilasters that rise from a raised water table and continue above the cornice line as Figure 1 indicates. Each pilaster cap is corbelled out and ornamented with a centered brick-framed square. An unusual angled "bracket" composed of vertically-coursed bricks is centered beneath each square, and interrupts the lines of corbelled brick. Plain stone coping caps the pilaster. Intervening bay cornices feature paired elongated rectangular recessed panels, above which the same corbelled brick lines (the lowermost laid with rowlock coursing) that are depicted in Figure 1 are used. Tile coping, also shown, caps these cornice elements. A reddish brown face brick is used on the primary façade (West Ninth Street, east front) and secondary façade (Cherry Street, north). Brickwork separates the paired window sets. Window arches consist of three courses of rowlock brick. Lintels are similarly composed of rowlock brick. The entrance, set into the northeast bay of the façade, consists of a single centered door with sidelights and transom above. The pilasters terminate at the lintel level (or the water table level) of the storefront windows, which is defined by a row of soldier bricks. The water table/storefront display window lintel line is composed of a course of soldier bricks, while the entrance is framed above by a rowlock (below) and a soldier brick course. The use of a broader east end section presented a more impressive and massive façade while also allowing for a hidden south side railroad spur line that was behind the broader frontage.



Figure 1: Cornice detail, view southeast showing parapet of south wing
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 26, 2006)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 **Page** 2
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

This four-story brick warehouse building has a full basement. The building footprint consists of a slightly broader east (front) component that measures 46 feet in depth and 66 feet in width. The west portion of the building is ten feet narrower, measuring 56 feet in width and 96 feet in depth. The difference in width is accomplished by the allowance for a south side rail siding. As a result, the building assumes an "L" shape (see Figure 4).

Two finished facades are presented to the east (West Ninth Street) and north (Cherry Street) (Figure 2). A reddish-brown face brick is utilized on these two fronts, and the same brick is carried around each of two corners (northwest corner and southwest corner of the south front wing) for several feet. Four equal-sized bays are defined by prominent brick pilasters on the main (east) façade, while eight narrower bays are defined along the north side secondary façade. Paired half-sized window sets, with flattened semi-circular arched openings, are cut into each level in each bay on both facades on the upper two floors. These are ten-light hopper windows that are hinged at the base. Full-sized paired window sets are placed within each bay of the second floor of the main façade. These are Craftsman style 4/1 lights. Three square-cut storefront windows completely fill the three southernmost ground level bays on the main façade. The entrance occupies the remaining northernmost bay.¹

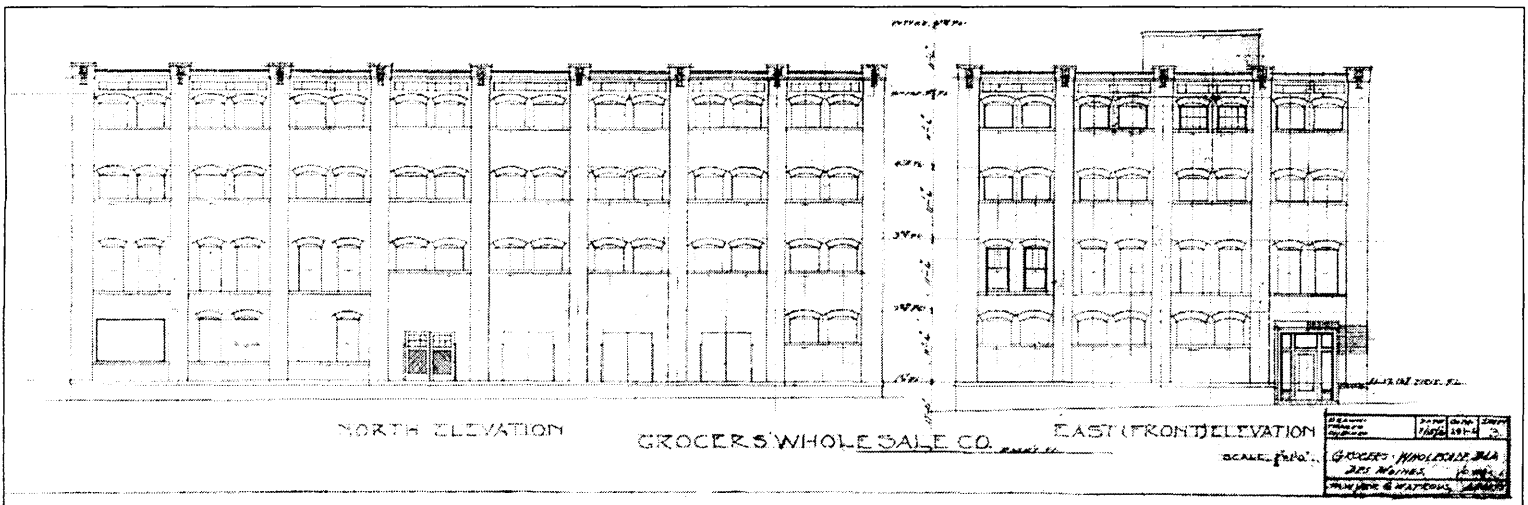


Figure 2: Original 1916 exterior elevations (Architects Sawyer & Watrous)

The southern and western (rear) walls are faced with a mottled brown common brick but the rowlock courses (seven stretcher courses set between rowlock courses) are highlighted by the use of darker hard-fired bricks. The window sets on these fronts have flat steel lintels on the west wall and the same half-sized segmental arches used on the other facades on the south sidewall. On the south sidewall (back of plan) the window arches are faux, with flat concrete lintels capping each opening.

The perimeter wall support system is that of load-bearing brick (2.5 bricks in thickness), combined with twin interior self-supporting brick elevator and elevator/stair shafts. These shafts are the same thickness as are the perimeter walls and each tower is integrated into the overall support system, working in tandem with the exterior walls.

¹ The architects also prepared elevations using elongated single industrial window sets, but the arched paired window design was selected for use.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 3
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

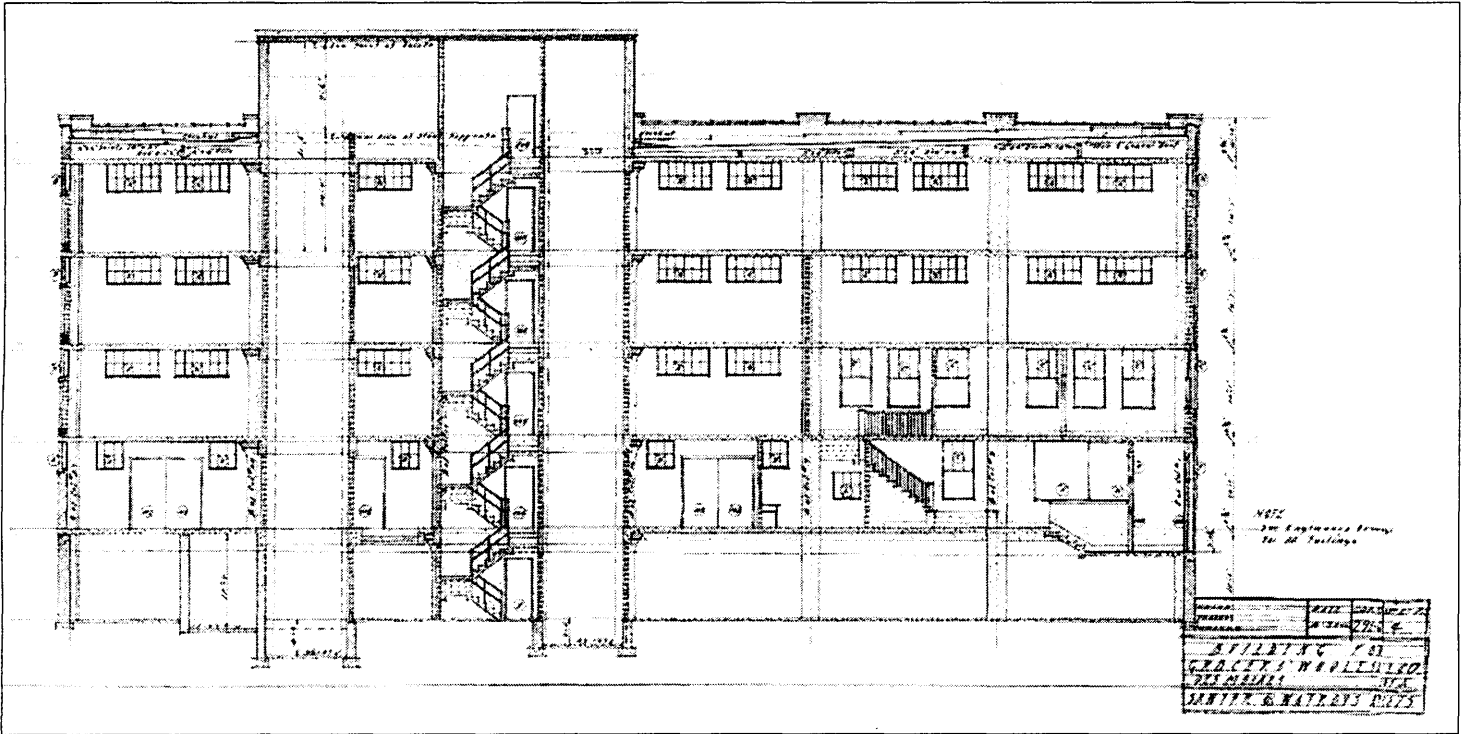


Figure 3: Interior elevation showing stairs and elevator shafts, view north (Sawyer & Watrous, 1916)

The internal support system employs mill construction, with heavy timber columns, primary beams that run north and south and secondary beams that run east and west. Figure 4 depicts the first floor layout, the overall building footprint, and the cadence of the support columns. There are three structural bays, which are defined running north to south, by the columns. The columns in the front three bays are slightly offset to the north to adjust bay width to the broader width of that part of the building. Two freight elevator shafts are centered in line within the west part of the building footprint and the masonry shells of these, and the attached stairwell, are integrated into the structural support system, replacing three columns (Figure 5). Column thickness diminishes floor by floor (Figures 9-10). The basement columns measure 15.5 inches square. Those on the ground and second floors are 13 by 13 inches in section, third floor columns are 11x11 inches in section while the fourth floor columns are 9 by 9 inches. Beams similarly step down in scale. The front section (46 by 66 feet) is more heavily framed, with triple 7 by 15 inch beams being grouped between the front three rows of columns. Secondary beams running east/west are 5 by 15 inches in section and these are placed 6'6" on center. The ends of these secondary beams are hung from steel hangers

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 4
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

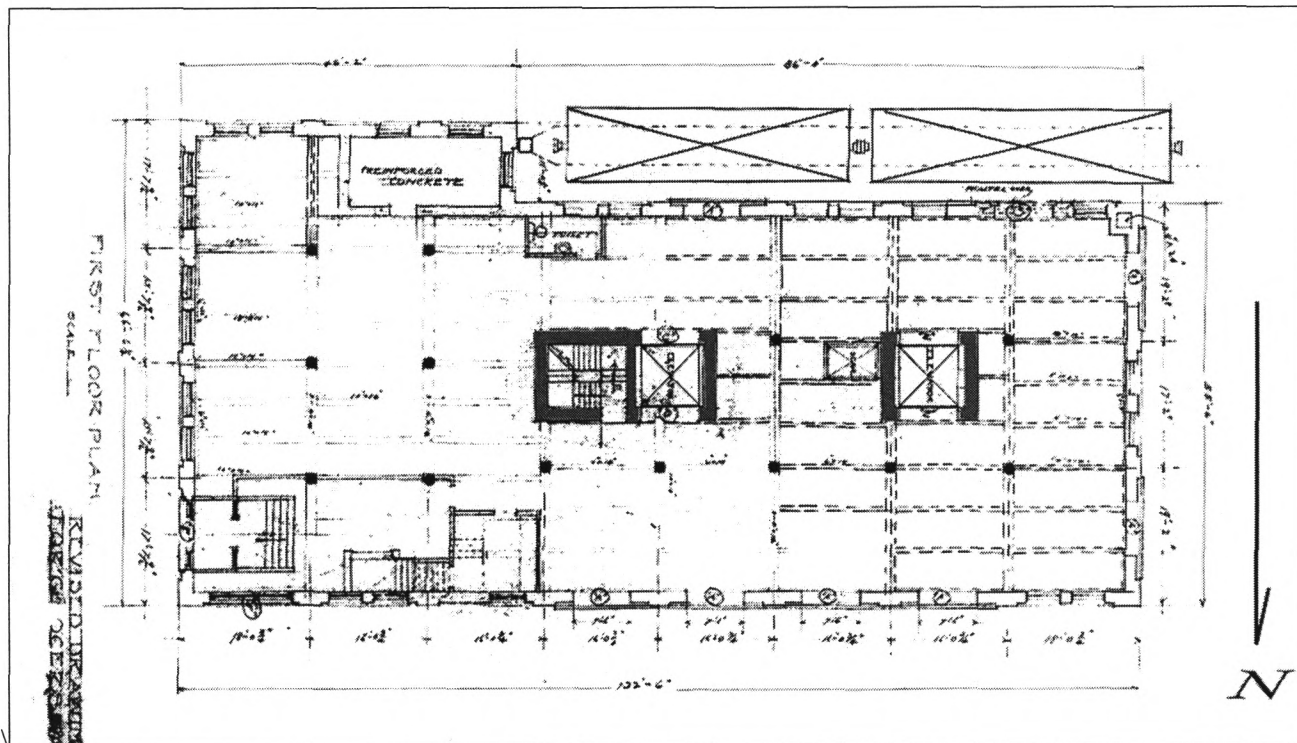


Figure 4: First floor plan, columns and stair/elevator shafts are enhanced (Sawyer & Watrous, 1916)

Figure 4 depicts the northeast corner entrance, front stairs, the centered stairs and elevators, the vault (southeast corner), and the recessed south wall (complete with railroad cars that show the cadence of the loading dock doors). The overall plan offers an interesting combination of perimeter load-bearing walls, interior load bearing supports, and a heavy timber structure and flooring system. It would be expected that reinforced concrete would have been used at such a late construction date (1916). It is notable that the interior stair system is of concrete construction.



Figure 5: Primary and secondary beams are tied into the elevator enclosure, view northwest, first floor (photo by J. Jacobsen, May 26, 2006)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 5
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

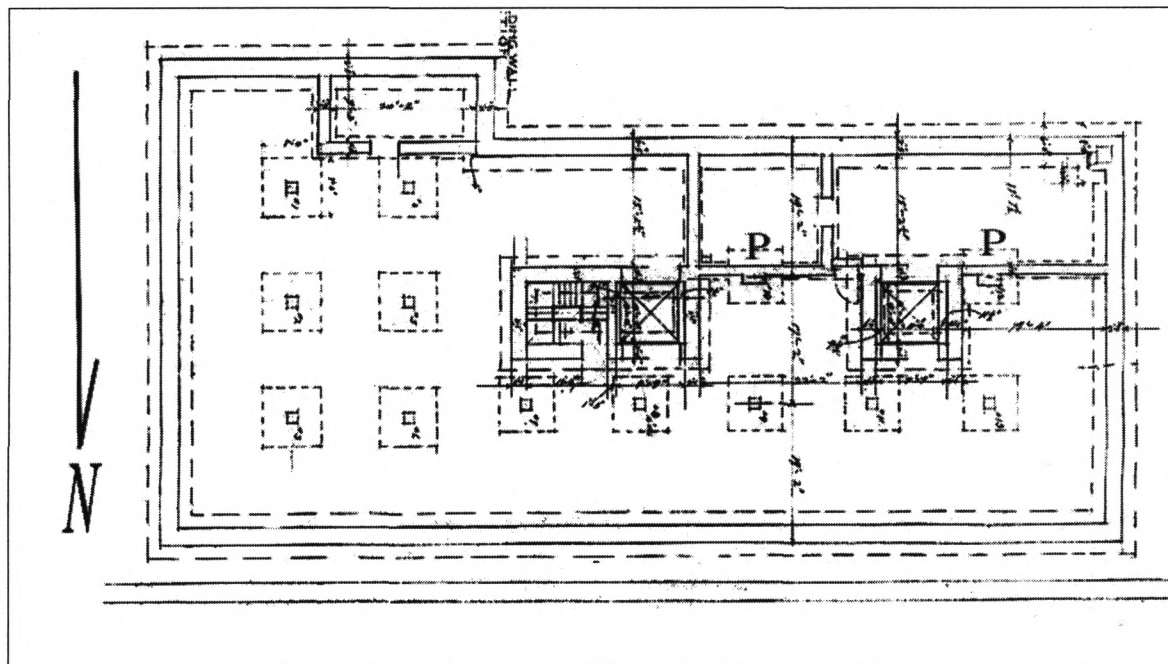


Figure 6: Original 1916 foundation/basement plan, note north side rail spur (“P’s” locate the two basement support pilasters) (Architects Sawyer & Watrous)

Figure 6 illustrates the concrete column footings and perimeter spread footings that support the building. Pilings might have been used beneath these footings but no original plans depict their use. The column footings are tied into steel bases that are visible in the concrete basement floor (Figure 7). Timber columns are employed above that level at the same points (Figure 4). These basement pilasters are tied into the brick partition wall that defines the boiler and coal rooms that run across the southernmost bay of the west part of the plan. Two in-wall pilasters (3 feet by 3 feet) are employed as basement supports and substitute for the expected timber columns.

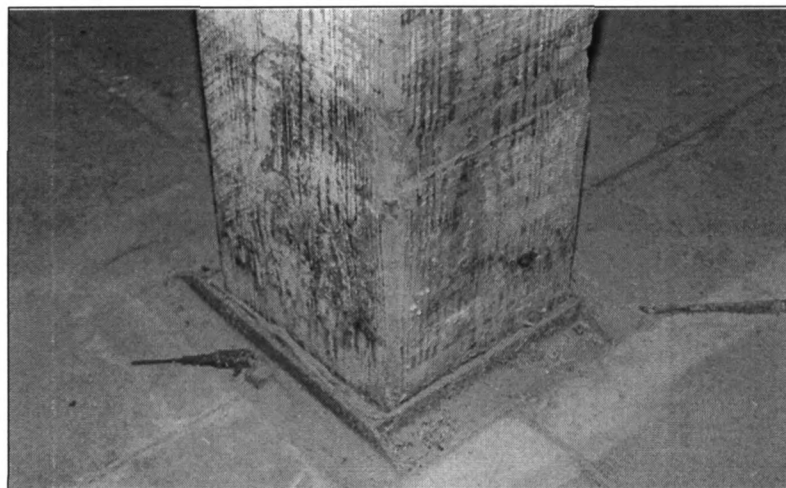


Figure 7: Steel base on basement columns
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 26, 2006)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 **Page** 6
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

Another structural feature is the provision of four stacked fireproof cooling vaults in the southwest corner of the south wing, on the lower three floors and basement (Figure 4). While the coal room has a wooden ceiling, these chambers (8'3"x9'7") have concrete ceilings. The second floor chamber only is fitted out as a true safe vault and it has a metal safe door manufactured by the Diebold Safe and Lock Company of Canton, Ohio. Inside the original wooden shelves designed by the architects for records storage remain in place and surviving labels locate where the 1932 "country" trade books were kept on one shelf. The third floor vault was clearly used as a refrigerated storage room and its entrance features a wooden "Stevenson Door" (Figure 8). The door is labeled "Fastens and Tightens Itself." It was produced at Chester, Pennsylvania, and the latest patent date is given as June 6, 1914. These rooms represent the comparatively small spatial requirement for refrigerated stock purpose at the time this building was designed and built. The basement plans also identify a larger cooling room although no evidence survives to indicate that it was actually built and used. The comparative small size of these rooms attests to the lesser role played by refrigeration, at least for the products that the cooperative distributed.²

Surviving plaster and trim work on the second and third floors (the easternmost 2.5 bays) indicate that these areas served as offices, the third floor usage for that purpose likely being of a later date. The front stairs (northeast corner) terminate at the second floor level and these served the original office level were finished with plaster and baseboard trim appears to place the original company offices on that level. Trim work on these levels and in the front part of the first floor consists of an 8-inch wide baseboard with an upper fluted cap and a quarter-round base.

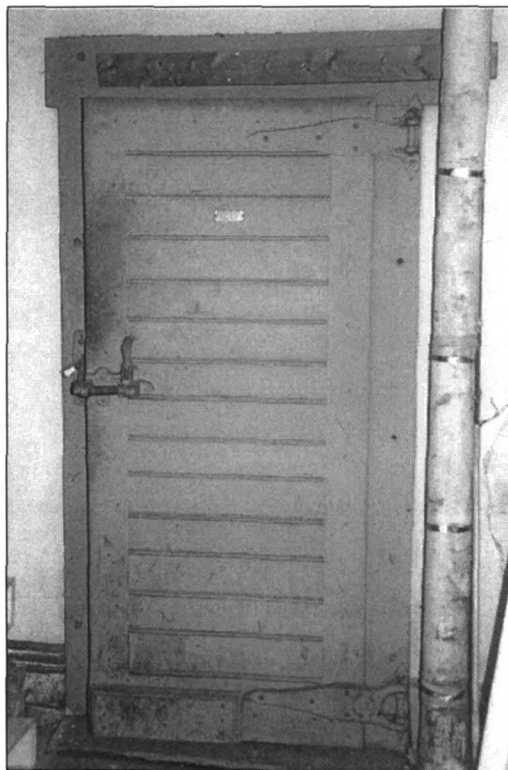


Figure 8: Stevenson "self-tightening" cold storage door, third floor, view south
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 26, 2006)

² While nothing more could be readily determined about the Stevenson Door Company, that firm was acquired by the Jamison Cold Storage Door Company in 1928 (www.jamison-door.com).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 **Page** 7

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

All windows have angled inside sills, those in the basement being aggressively so (Figure 9). This treatment is an apparent effort to increase the diffusion of natural light within the building. The building was constructed to be absolutely fireproof, so the only wood employed is in the framing ("slow burning" mill construction), and the floors and roof framing. None of these elements are fireproofed but the entire building was fully protected by a water sprinkler system from the original construction. There is no evidence that a "break-away" mill construction was used and beams are solidly cut into the perimeter walls. While the beam and column support system is clearly overbuilt, particularly within the front of the plan, the relatively thin floors (two inches thick, five-inch wide sub-flooring) and a diagonally laid finished floor (half-inch thick, three inch wide tongue and groove) argue for a considerably lighter live load. In fact, surviving Sears and Roebuck weight limit postings rate the first floor to 125 pounds per square foot on the ground floor, and just 72 pounds per square foot on the upper floors. The overall system appears to have combined economy of construction, the need for a lighter live load, and a reliance on a comprehensive sprinkler system to quell any fire.

The design employs an internal roof drainage system, with twin cast iron intake pipes (marked "Central Foundry Co AVG WY 4 lbs") flanking the east end of the central stairwell. The stairs are cast concrete with steel pipe handrails. Original metal fire doors survive in the stairwell openings and on the north openings of the west elevator and both fronts of the east elevator (these are marked "Underwriters Laboratory Fire Door" and "WAL-EL Door, St. Louis Fire Door Company" on the elevators).

The building construction hints strongly of a severe economy in its construction. Section 8 discusses the probability of delayed construction and a lack of funds. The use of a load-bearing brick shell, at a time when other larger local building efforts were using state-of-the art reinforced concrete or steel skeletons, is one indicator. The use of concrete lintels in lieu of steel above the door and window openings is another (Figures 11, 12). When steel was employed at all, as in the column collars, these appear to have been produced in custom fashion (irregular) (Figures 9-10). Presumably a solid steel plate was bent with two upper flanges, and a two-part base cap was riveted and welded on below. The resulting design has a very short "skirt" that stabilizes the column below and no effort was made to bolt the collar onto the column. The successive column, usually of smaller dimension, was centered atop the plate and column, and was flanked by the primary beams. The resulting system placed little if any of the beam on the column proper and only secured the beam at each end with a single cross-bolt. Secondary beams are supported by riveted side mounts or collars and there is no indication that the lesser beams are keyed into the main ones. Another indicator of economy is the rough treatment of the interior brickwork, particularly within the stairwell area. While economy in construction was emphasized, it is also true that the building, as designed, completely filled the width and length of the available lot, save for the south side spur line inset. There is no indication that this building was specifically designed to support the addition of more floor levels. The wall thickness was not reduced vertically but the column dimensions were. The original plans indicate that the building was designed to support two additional floors.

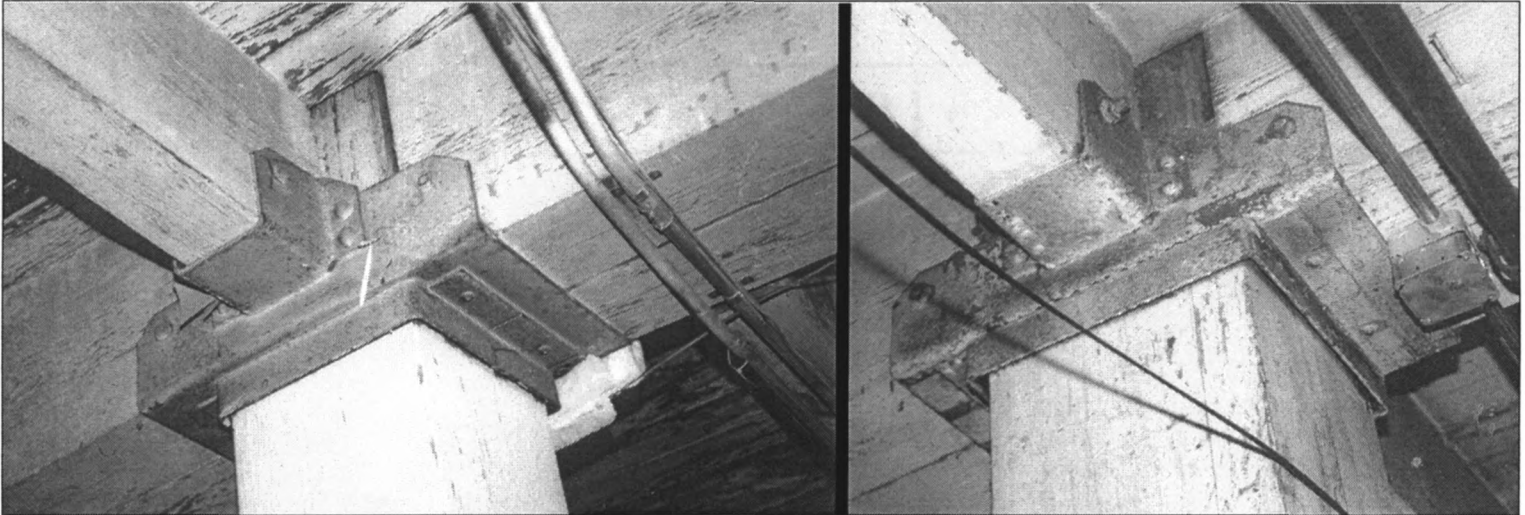
The building design is unusual given that twin elevators were provided along the centerline of the plan. It is more common to place these shafts along exterior walls, particularly at the back of a layout. In this instance, the brick shafts substituted for wood columns and were tied into the structural support system. Their placement also allowed for greater unloading capacity along either sidewall, with railroad access on the south side (two shipping doors, broadly spaced) and truck loading along the north (four loading doors) and rear/west (two loading doors) sidewalls.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 **Page** 8
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa



Figures 9-10: Steel column collars, first floor left, and basement, right
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 26, 2006)

Figures 9-10 depict two examples of metal column collars that locked together the series of superimposed vertical columns and the beam system. The images illustrate how the column size diminished from floor to floor.

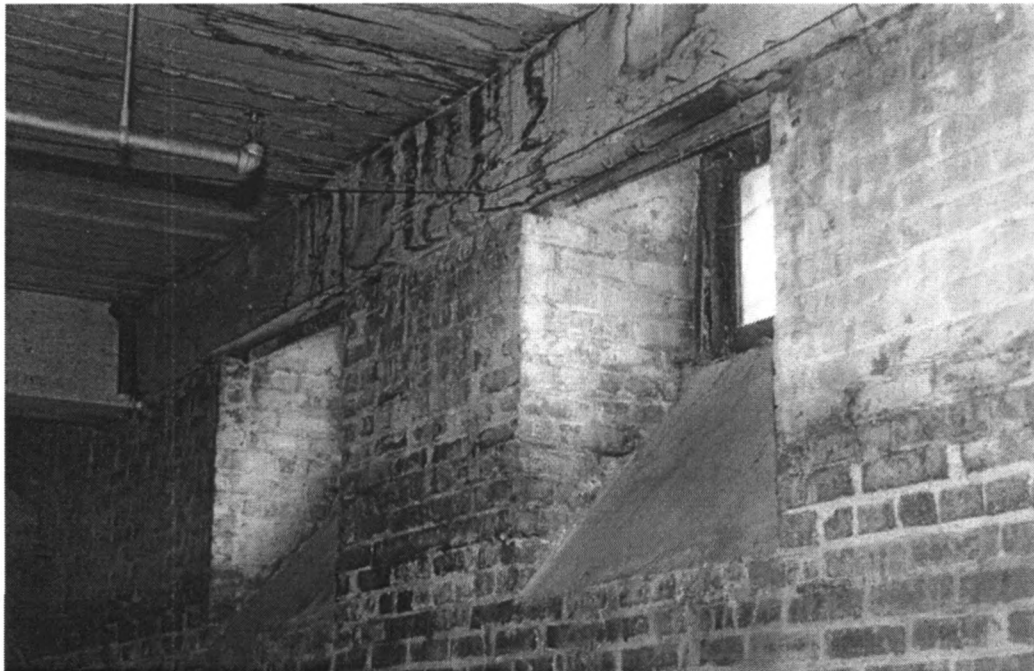


Figure 11: Angled basement sills, view northwest, basement north wall (sprinkler head visible at left)
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 26, 2006)

Figure 11 shows both the concrete lintels and the cast concrete infilled angled sills that were incorporated into the brickwork. The former were similarly angled downward so as to direct light down and into the basement, and the enlargement

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 Page 9
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

of the window opening served to diffuse the natural light inside the building. Both the north and south side windows on all levels have similar treatments, but the basement windows have the most pronounced angling of the sill surfaces.



Figure 12: concrete door lintel, view northwest, basement coal room
(photo by J. Jacobsen, May 26, 2006)

Alterations and Building Re-development:

The building is remarkably well preserved despite its varied and numerous later-day tenant firms. The principal change was the loss of the finished office areas on the second floor and the addition of additional office areas on the third floor above. Plastered wall remnants in those areas and partition marks in the flooring indicate that there were office walls on those levels. Figure 19 shows that the storefront windows were not original to the new building. These certainly dated to the Sears Roebuck and Company remodeling for use of the building for retail purposes c.1937.

The loss of rail service resulted in the elimination of trackage along both sides of the building but the shipping door voids survive unchanged. Some of the doors have been replaced or sealed off. The storefront windows were also partly sealed with smaller window insets. Upper level windows were covered. The 9th Street Viaduct was built in the early 1970s and impacted the principal façade's visibility to the extent that no Criterion C claim for architectural significance is being made. The west edge of the viaduct is about 20 feet in front of the building and there is no physical or direct contact with the viaduct.

The latest adaptation of the building for use as an architectural salvage salesroom, with other ground level retail functions, has resulted in a number of alterations. The beams and ceilings were sand-blasted. A new electrical service was installed. Replacement brown metal ground-level windows with matching sash type and pattern have been installed along the south side of the first floor. It is intended to replace all of the surviving original wood windows. The upper front windows remain sealed with plywood but they too will be reopened. Most of the shipping doors have been replaced with metal/glass overhead doors and the rear door in the northwest corner has been restored to a double wood frame. The original storefront windows have been restored to their full scale. Almost all of the interior non-brick/tile partition walls have been removed. New area heating and cooling units have been installed. A coffee shop has been established on the east part of the ground level.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 7 **Page** 10
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

Integrity Evaluation:

The exterior of the Grocers Wholesale Company Building maintains a high degree of six of seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The integrity of the immediate setting of the building, is illustrated by its commercial setting and streetscape, contributes to the building's ability to maintain integrity of feeling and association. However, the adjacent viaduct severely compromises the historically open streetscape that made the principal façade readily visible. The overall form of the building has remained unchanged once it assumed its intended scale in 1916. All the original architectural materials and detailing, including cornice, window openings, and ornament remain as built.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 **Page** 11

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

8. Significance Statement:

The Grocers Wholesale Company Warehouse is significant statewide as Iowa's only and most successful statewide cooperative grocery warehouse (Criterion A, Commerce). Available evidence also indicates that it was the first statewide organization of its kind in the country. As such, it enabled independent grocers in a trade area that, at its height, included parts of four states, to survive and compete against chain stores and wholesale grocers' surcharges. Pooling limited capital, independent grocers developed the Briardale grocery store imprimatur, along with a range of brand food names. During its 73 years of service the company built four successive warehouse buildings, each of which was substantially larger in scale and was state-of-the art in the grocery warehouse field. This warehouse was the first permanent facility that housed the company. This building, constructed four years after the firm's incorporation. The building represents its emergence as a significant membership owned collective player in the grocery wholesale trade. Re-titled Associated Grocers of Iowa in the late 1950s, the company survived as a cooperative until 1985

The Cooperative Wholesaling Historical Context and Grocery Warehouse Context:

The intellectual founder of the cooperative concept was Robert Owen (1771-1858). Dr. William King (1786-1865), founder of *The Cooperator* newspaper in 1828, is credited with making Owen's theories more practical. In England, the first successful cooperative model was the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers, established in 1844. The cooperative concept had its first American success in the fire insurance field in 1752. Various sellers' cooperatives and an irrigation cooperative were established prior to the Civil War. Postwar, the earliest state law governing cooperatives was passed in Michigan in 1865. Elevator coops appeared in the mid-1880s, and the National Grange, a comprehensive farmers' cooperative movement, was founded in 1867. Massachusetts passed the first legislation authorizing credit unions in 1909. The first national cooperative association, the Cooperative League of America, was formed in 1916.

When Grocers Wholesale Company was first formed, the primary impetus for the cooperative scheme was to "eliminate the individual wholesalers...this plan has been successfully developed in England and some of the larger eastern cities." There was no Midwestern precedent for the company and as the following list of grocers cooperatives and founding dates indicates, no known statewide cooperative pre-dates this one (*Capital*, March 20, 22, 1912).³

1912-Grocers Wholesale Company, Des Moines, Iowa

1915-United Grocers of Oregon (merged 1999 as Unified Western Grocers)

1917-Central Grocers Cooperative, Illinois

1921-United Retail Merchants, Seattle

1922-Certified Grocers of California (merged 1999 as Unified Western Grocers)

1922-Oleon Wholesale Grocery, New York

1924-Associated Grocers of Kansas City, renamed Associated Wholesale Grocers

1953, now second largest in country, claims to be oldest grocery co-op and second largest

1926-Independent Grocers of America, New York and Connecticut, 8,000 stores by

1930) (became IGA-currently the worlds' largest supermarket chain)

1927-Associated Grocers of the South, Birmingham (five states)

1930-Certco, grocers co-op buying group, Madison, WI

1931-Affiliated Foods Midwest (title since 1977, General Wholesale 1936-77),

Nebraska and Kansas (twelve state region)

1934-Pacific Mercantile Association, Oregon (became Western Family Foods)

³ Midwestern cooperatives are bolded for contextual comparison.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 **Page** 12
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

- 1934-Associated Grocers-Seattle (four states and Guam)
- 1940-Certified Grocers Midwest, Hodgins, Illinois, six Midwest states including Iowa**
- 1940-Associated Food Stores, Salt Lake City (eight states)
- 1945-Associated Grocers of Florida
- 1946-Associated Grocers of New England (this title dates from 1969) Manchester, New Hampshire (six states)
- 1946-Wakefern Foods, re-titled Shoprite 1951, Elizabeth, New Jersey (co-op supermarket chain)
- 1946-South Plains Associated Grocers, Lubbock, (merged 1968 to form Affiliated Foods)
- 1946-Panhandle Associated Grocers, Amarillo (merged 1968 to form Affiliated Foods)
- 1948-Affiliated Foods Southwest (five states)
- 1950-Associated Grocers of Louisiana, Baton Rouge (four states)
- 1953-Associated Grocers of Maine, Brunswick (four states)

Those cooperatives that organized after World War I did so more out of concern with chain store competition. A flurry of Midwestern organization took place between 1924 and 1931 and Iowa was in the center of a hot competition for retailer servicing from all of the adjoining grocers' cooperatives in Missouri (St. Louis), Nebraska (Omaha) and Illinois (http://72.14.203.104/search?1=cache:Mi6yhg9aXAQJ;www.growingyourfuture.com/programs.colorado_reader/general_pdf/cooperative_business/coops2001_tg.pdf+Grocers+cooperatives%2Bhistory&hl=en&gl-us&ct=clnk&cd=304).

Within the broader wholesale grocery trade, initial "cooperation" consisted of efforts to fix prices and to reduce operating costs. Wholesalers from the Central and Middle Western states gathered in Chicago in mid-April 1898 to re-establish baseline prices for sugar and coffee. Four years later, Central states wholesalers again gathered in the same city to form a joint combine or corporation (but not a cooperative). One purpose was to construct their own manufacturing plant, presumably to reduce operating costs. At the same time, Des Moines, wholesale grocers formed the Wholesale Grocers Association and acted to establish a unified buying office in Chicago. Non-participating lesser firms saw it as a move to wipe them out by means of cost cutting (Chicago *Tribune*, April 15, 1898; Des Moines *News*, August 26, 1899).

Des Moines emerged as a dominant wholesaling and jobbing center in Iowa during the 1880s. The advantages of central location, a lack of nearby major urban center competition, and an excellent railroad network, combined to make this commercial sector a leading one in the capitol city. The first regional grocery wholesaler, R. C. Webb, was established at this time (mid-1880s) and by 1920, a grocery wholesale node was well established along West Third Street, between Court Avenue and Vine Street. Other early major grocery wholesalers in the city were Charles Hewitt (established 1871), C. C. Taft (fresh produce only), Davidson Brothers (produce and the manufacturing of ice cream and candy), and Tone Brothers (spices and baking powder, established 1873). As Des Moines experienced major growth beginning in the mid-1890s, the leading commercial sectors were food, building supplies and apparel, followed by drugs and paper goods. There were two wholesale models of operation. The central mart system depended upon the buyers coming to the wholesaler, while the runner system, utilized "runners" or traveling salesmen, to produce orders from retailers. The number of runners working out of Des Moines increased from 416 in 1890 to 1,300 by 1920 (Long, p. 16).

Des Moines city directories document 48 grocery wholesale firms in operation between 1912 and 1956. Four of these were Italian or Greek specialty importing wholesalers. Just a handful of the larger group survived for any length of time. This list includes H. S. Chase and Company (pre-1912-1916); Charles Hewitt Sons Company (pre-1912 through 1946); H. B. Leiserowitz (1919-present); C. C. Prouty (1919-1931); Western Grocery and Mills (1927-1957+); Winston & Newell (1932-1953); and C. C. Taft (1935-1955). Suffice it to say that even the larger wholesale grocery firms enjoyed comparatively brief tenures.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 13

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

Grocers Wholesale Company is best contextually compared with other cooperative grocers wholesalers, of which there were several, none of which achieved the scale or longevity of Grocers Wholesale:

Des Moines Wholesale Grocery Company (1919-39): The officers from this company come from smaller towns across the state, as was the case with Grocers Wholesale. Their business address was 125-129 Second Street and 106-110 Third as of 1929. Their company leadership was very stable; the firm survived the Depression but disappeared after 1939.

Farmers Cooperative Union Association (1929-1936): This firm first appeared with local officers and shared the same address as the Williams-Murphy Wholesale Grocery Company, 300 Southwest 9th Street. Beginning with the 1934 directory listing, its officers were from other communities, implying a cooperative organization. Its address was then 200 East Court Avenue. The firm was last listed in 1936. Nothing more is known about the company's operations or its farmer linkage.

Independent Grocers Alliance (1932-1938): This apparent cooperative grocers' venture first appeared in 1932, and was located at 101-103 West Third Street. George Clinton Stirling was its manager and the business relocated to 112 Tenth Street by 1936. Last listed in 1938, Stirling was operating his own grocery store the following year.

Grocers Mutual Service (1932): This firm, offered "direct sales representatives of leading food manufacturers," had its office and warehouse at 101-103 West Third Street as of 1932, the only year that directories list it. There is no indication that it was a cooperative organization.

Postal Wholesale Grocery Company (1923): This firm was listed for just one year and disappeared. It might have been a cooperative venture but its officers were Des Moines residents.

Grocers Wholesale Company was the earliest of these Des Moines cooperative grocery wholesale firms and it outlasted all of them. Arguably, it was the most significant of these businesses and is the only such firm to have built its own facilities, which it did three times.

Grocers Wholesale Company/Associated Grocers of Iowa:

Grocers Wholesale Company was Iowa's first and only statewide grocers cooperative but very likely was the first statewide organization of its kind in the country. Opening for business in September 1912, a very substantial \$85,000 warehouse facility was funded and constructed within just four short years of operation. No other state cooperatives are known to have been able to build their own facility so early in their history. The others leased one or more buildings. By early 1916, when this building was being planned, the firm had experienced a substantial increase in its business. The volume of business conducted during the first half of February, comparing the 1915 and 1916 figures, increased from \$25,441 to \$38,037 or nearly \$1,000 a day. Who's Who In Des Moines, published in 1929, credited the company with being be "one of the largest co-operative wholesale grocery companies in the U.S." Company manager Elmer Peck proudly asserted at the 1931 annual meeting that the company was "the largest co-operative wholesale grocery concern in the United States." By 1933 the company was said to be "one of the pioneer retailer-owned merchandising concerns of the Midwest." It then enjoyed a four-state membership area (Iowa, southern Minnesota, northern Missouri and eastern Nebraska) and was owned by nearly 700 independent grocers. Between 1917 and 1933, the company had returned \$1,500,000 in profits or dividends to its owner members and paid a stock dividend in 1932 (*Register and Leader*, February 12, 20, 1916; *Register*, May 12, 1931; *Tribune*, February 4, 1933; Who's Who In Des Moines).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 **Page** 14

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

Another measure of its continued success was the ability of the cooperative to fund and build its replacement plant during the early years of the Great Depression, and to make the dividend payment at that time as well. In late 1929 the cooperative, faced with increased chain store competition, approved a \$200,000 capital expansion program. This effort culminated in the construction, beginning in mid-1930 of a \$325,000 replacement warehouse in Des Moines. That facility, then described as being "one of the largest commercial structures in the city," had a total 110,000 square feet of floor space, along with an enhanced rail and truck delivery capacity. In keeping with its time, its design emphasized horizontal material handling and storage. The notable Des Moines architectural firm of Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers and Thomas designed the new plant, located at Eighth and Tuttle streets, just a few blocks southeast of the subject building. This new facility was nearly three times larger than the 1916 warehouse. This impressive increase reflected the volumetric growth of the company as well as the changing storage needs of the grocery warehouse. The principal change was that of cooled storage (*Tribune*, May 15, 1929; May 14, 1930).

By 1953 the firm stocked over 3,250 grocery items, including both national and its own brands. It had its own fresh vegetable and fruit department, a frozen foods department and a coffee roasting plant. By 1959, the product count was over 4,000 items and it was supplying Briardale and AG food stores and brand names included Briardale, Shurfine, GWC and Tall Corn. By the mid-1960s the total product count was tenfold that of 1959, reflecting the expansion of the grocery store's product line into non-food items (1953, 1959 Des Moines city directories; interview, Bob Gorsuch).

A major period of membership growth occurred under the leadership of Raymond J. Barkmeier (1918-1996), of Hampton who served as board president. Membership increased to 300 retail stores and the wherewithal was developed to build new facilities. Additions to a pre-existing warehouse, located at 23rd and Fleur Drive, was designed by the successor architects, Brooks Borg Skiles, in 1961 and the company occupied it, as the Associated Grocers of Iowa through 1976. That year a fourth warehouse facility was built in Ankeny, Iowa. The cooperative finally went out of existence in 1985 with its purchase by Fairway Foods of Northfield, Minnesota. The former retail owners joined Affiliated Foods, a competing Nebraska warehouse cooperative (interviews, Jerry Barkmeier, Russ Hale, Bob Gorsuch).

Company and Building History:

Iowa retail grocers met at the Hotel Savery in Des Moines in mid-March 1912 to perfect a grocers association. Capitalized at \$300,000, the corporation would "buy goods for the [member] stores through the co-operative plan and eliminate the [added costs imposed by the] individual wholesalers." The office and warehouse would be centrally located in the state at Des Moines. There were 67 original charter members and business during the first year of operation totaled \$147,000 (*Capital*, March 20, 1912; February 13, 1921).

Articles of Incorporation were filed for record on March 21, 1912. There were 300 shares of stock, each valued at \$1,000. The capitalization was impressive enough for the times, but office space was also secured on the eleventh floor of the Equitable Building. A 15-member board included ten statewide representatives, while the other six members were recent Des Moines transplants, so this was clearly not a Des Moines-dominated concern. Warehouse space was secured on West Locust and operations began in September 1912 (*Register and Leader*, March 22, 1912; February 20, 1916).

The initial warehouse quarters for the new company were on West Locust Street, in a former residential area that was being engulfed by westward downtown commercial expansion. A three-story building at 1317-19 Locust was initially leased. This building had a 44-foot wide frontage on Locust. By 1916 the firm had expanded into the upper floor of the adjoining W. F. Mitchell Building, located immediately east. Additional warehouse space was leased in G. D. Ellyson's warehouse, at Ninth and Cherry streets. Ellyson's warehouse was replaced by the new four-story Luthe Hardware Warehouse and the loss of this facility might have forced the decision to build a single facility. The new building was diagonally across the street from Ellyson's building. Note that only the Ellyson building allowed for crucial rail access for shipping and receiving (*Register and Leader*, February 20, 1916).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 15

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

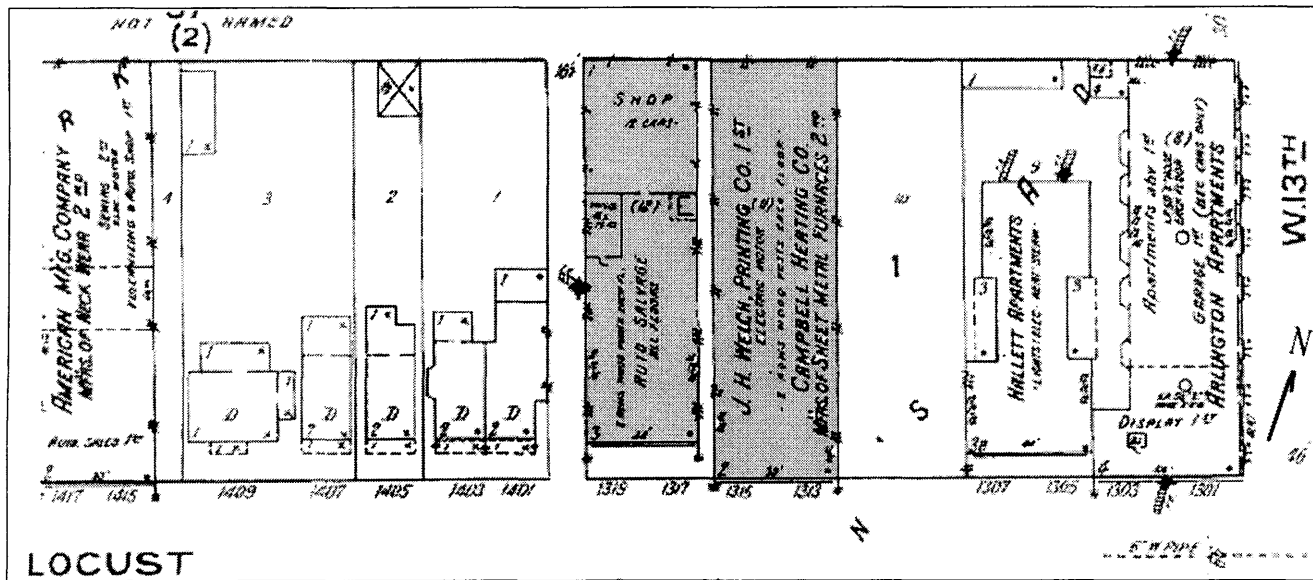


Figure 13: Original location, Grocers Wholesale Company, 1313-15 and 1317-19 West Locust Street (Detail, 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Sheet 22)

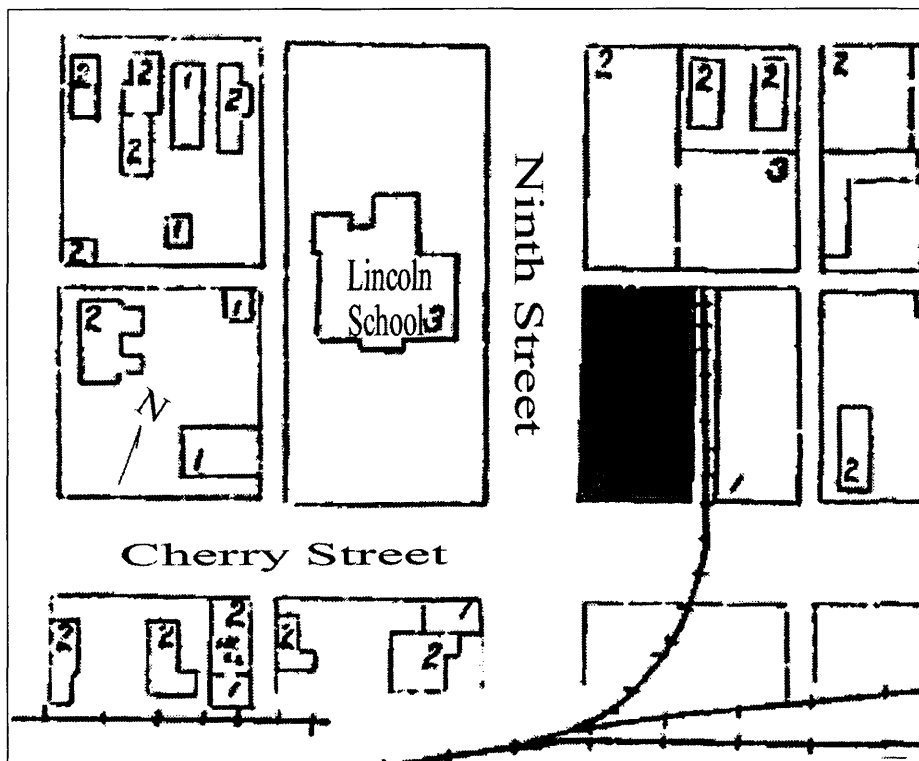


Figure 14: Leased quarters, Ellyson's Warehouse, 9th and Cherry streets (dark gray shading) (Detail, 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map)

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 16
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa



Figure 15: Grocers Wholesale Warehouse, c.1912-15
(courtesy of Bob Gorsuch)

Figure 15 is one of six surviving warehouse photographs that apparently were taken to document the need for this modern warehouse. The images documented intermixed items that were closely stacked, even to the ceiling, as this view depicts. The photographs were taken at the Locust Street warehouse.

Four years later, the company was ready to erect its own building on the southwest corner of West Ninth and Cherry streets. The newspapers announced that a long-term lease had been negotiated with the property owner H. H. Coggeshall for the lot that measured 66 on its eastern Ninth Street frontage, with a depth of 132 feet along Cherry Street. Just three days later, company manager Elmer Peck finalized the purchase of the lot (it took over a month for the deed to be filed for record curiously). The \$85,000 building would consist of three stories and a full basement, with a built-in allowance for the addition of three more stories as the space was needed (*Register and Leader*, February 12, 1916).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number 8 Page 17
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa



Figure 16: Architects' elevation sketch, looking southwest from northeast corner Ninth and Cherry streets
(*Register and Leader*, February 20, 1916)

Four days later a sketch of the proposed warehouse was published in the *Register and Leader*. The design was to be Neo-Classical, with a symmetrical five-bay frontage on West Ninth, and seven broad bays along Cherry Street. A paired set of freight elevators was centered near the west end of the plan and the heating plant and chimney were to occupy the northwest corner. Fenestration was full, with Chicago-style windows in the front ground floor office area. Five loading dock doors were placed in a row along Cherry Street. The requisite corporate flagpole occupied the northeast front corner where it faced towards downtown proper. It was announced that construction would begin. The three leased buildings combined provided for just 20,000 square feet of floor space, while this design provided twice that area. Construction was to begin within a month it was promised (*Register and Leader*, February 12, 20, 1916).

With three daily newspapers newspaper coverage of the construction of this imposing building should have been extensive. Instead, there is just a single construction photograph, published at the end of October 1916. The *Register* observed "Here are...five of the six largest improvements of the year, although not by any means all of the largest." The Grocers Wholesale Company Building was pictured along with four other major building projects, these being an addition to the Successful Farming Plant, the new Register-Tribune building, Valley National Bank, and the addition to the Des Moines Electric Company. The *Capital* ran a list of new buildings at year's end that excluded this building. Perhaps completion was delayed and the newspaper was saving it as a 1917 project. At any rate what was one of the major new buildings to the *Register* was ignored by the *Capital* (*Register*, October 29, 1916; *Capital*, December 30, 1916).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 18

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

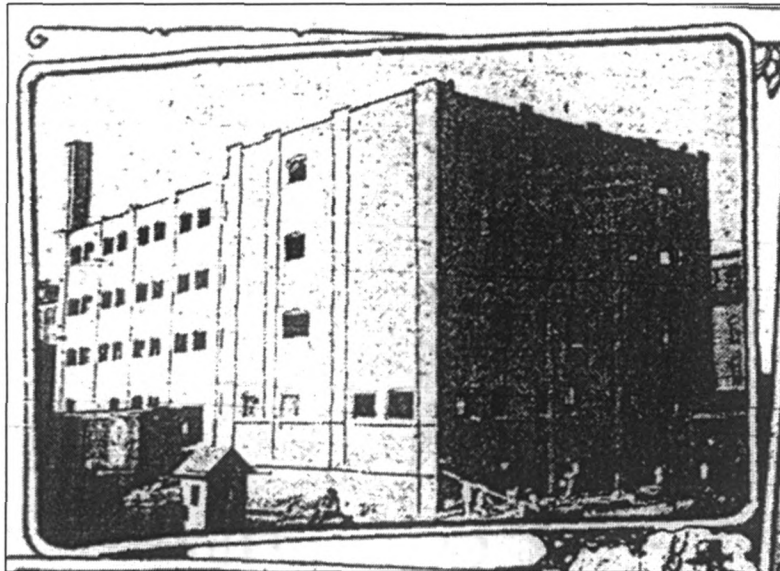


Figure 17: Construction photo, Grocers Wholesale Company Building
(*Register*, October 29, 1916)

The building depicted in Figure 17 is virtually finished, so occupancy likely took place within the next month. What is notable, of course, is that this isn't the building first envisioned by the company or its designers. It probably has the same L-shaped footprint and certainly the same scale as the first plan, but it is much plainer and an additional story taller. Structurally the as-built design was four bays in width and eight bays in depth. Stripped away was virtually every vestige of its Neo-Classical ornamentation. The grandiose façade was reduced to a functional side entrance. The assumption is offered that the company was unable to amass the necessary \$85,000 to build the intended building and that a simplified and cheaper, yet larger plan was developed and built. A 1921 *Capital* article reported the total building cost at \$150,000, and it is likely that a near-doubling of the expected costs played a key factor in forcing the redesign. The beginning of construction was at least briefly delayed. The first plans were not ready until late April and the construction likely started mid-year. Evidence for a delayed start is the omission of this building from a July 30, 1916 *Register and Leader* report on five large buildings that were then under construction, at a combined cost of \$785,000. Section 7 treats the economical feel of the completed building. The key indicators are the use of a load-bearing brick perimeter wall at a time when concrete frame and steel frame construction were state-of-the-art, the use of concrete lintels on doors and windows, the use of half-sized windows, and the use of crudely crafted window grills and column collars (*Register and Leader*, July 30, 1916; *Capital*, February 13, 1921).

A comparable design and building effort was the seven-story reinforced concrete Charles Hewitt and Son Company addition to its wholesale grocery warehouse at Fifth and Cherry streets. While structurally different, the fenestration was half-sized and represented the "Daylight Factory" concept. Similar to Grocers Wholesale, the building had its offices on an upper floor and was fully protected by a sprinkler system. Other features, possibly included in Grocers Wholesale, were a gravity conveyor, Otis spiral chute, "dictograph interconversing system," a pneumatic tube transmission system and an auto call bell system. Its cold storage facilities were in the basement. Proudfoot, Bird and Rawson were the architects (*Register and Leader*, December 3, 1916).

Architects Ralph Edmund Sawyer (1873-1947) and Charles Albert Watrous (1875-1940) presumably developed the revised design given their role in producing the original. It is possible that the first design never proceeded beyond the elevation sketch. Watrous had worked under local architect George Hallett previous to studying architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After graduating in 1899 he worked for Boston architect Sawyer. By 1909 the two had partnered and re-located to Des Moines. Sawyer was the designer and Watrous was the superintendent of construction but the local

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 19

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

prominence of his family in that city opened the doors to key clients. The firm was prominent both in its self-promotion and the quality and quantity of their commissions (Shank, pp. 146-147, 171-73; Weitz, pp. 8-9).

The new building centralized the entire company operations and provided enhanced rail and truck shipping facilities. The building design allowed for rail shipping from the south side of the warehouse and truck shipping from the north side.

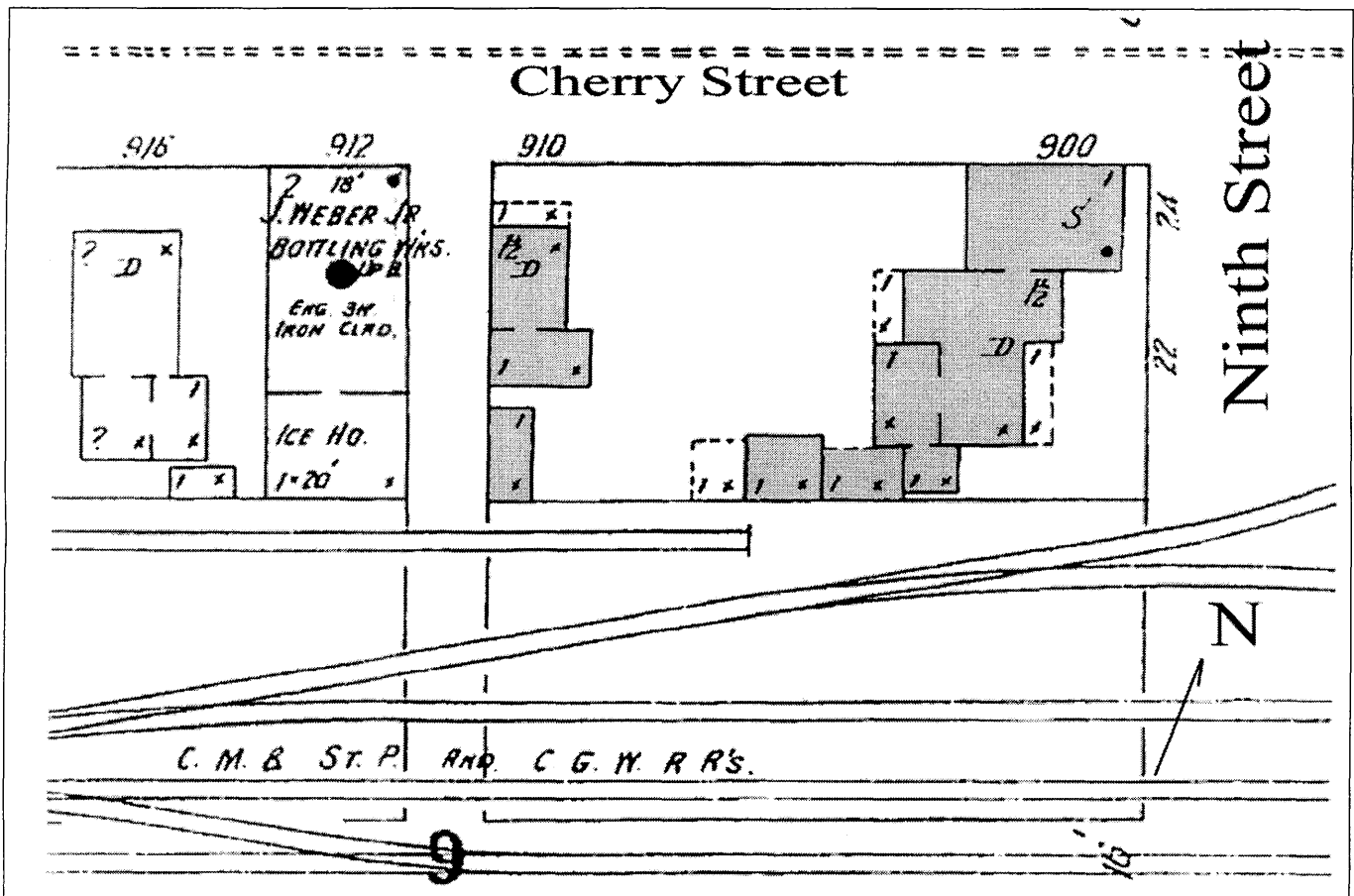


Figure 18: Detail, 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

The building's architect had the opportunity to design a façade that was visually unobstructed from the east, given that, as Figure 18 indicates, there was no building on the opposite corner due to railroad tracks. The building similarly was visually open to the south due to the numerous railroad tracks in that direction. The continuance of the face brick across the front of the south wing was likely the result of the need to present an impressive façade to the south. To the north, public uses always occupied the east half block on the north side of Cherry Street. Lincoln High School, later used as an elementary school, occupied the parcel until the 1920s, and the WPA-built Moderne style Central Fire Station replaced it in 1937-38 (see Figure 23 that depicts the shops from the Fire Department complex).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 20
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

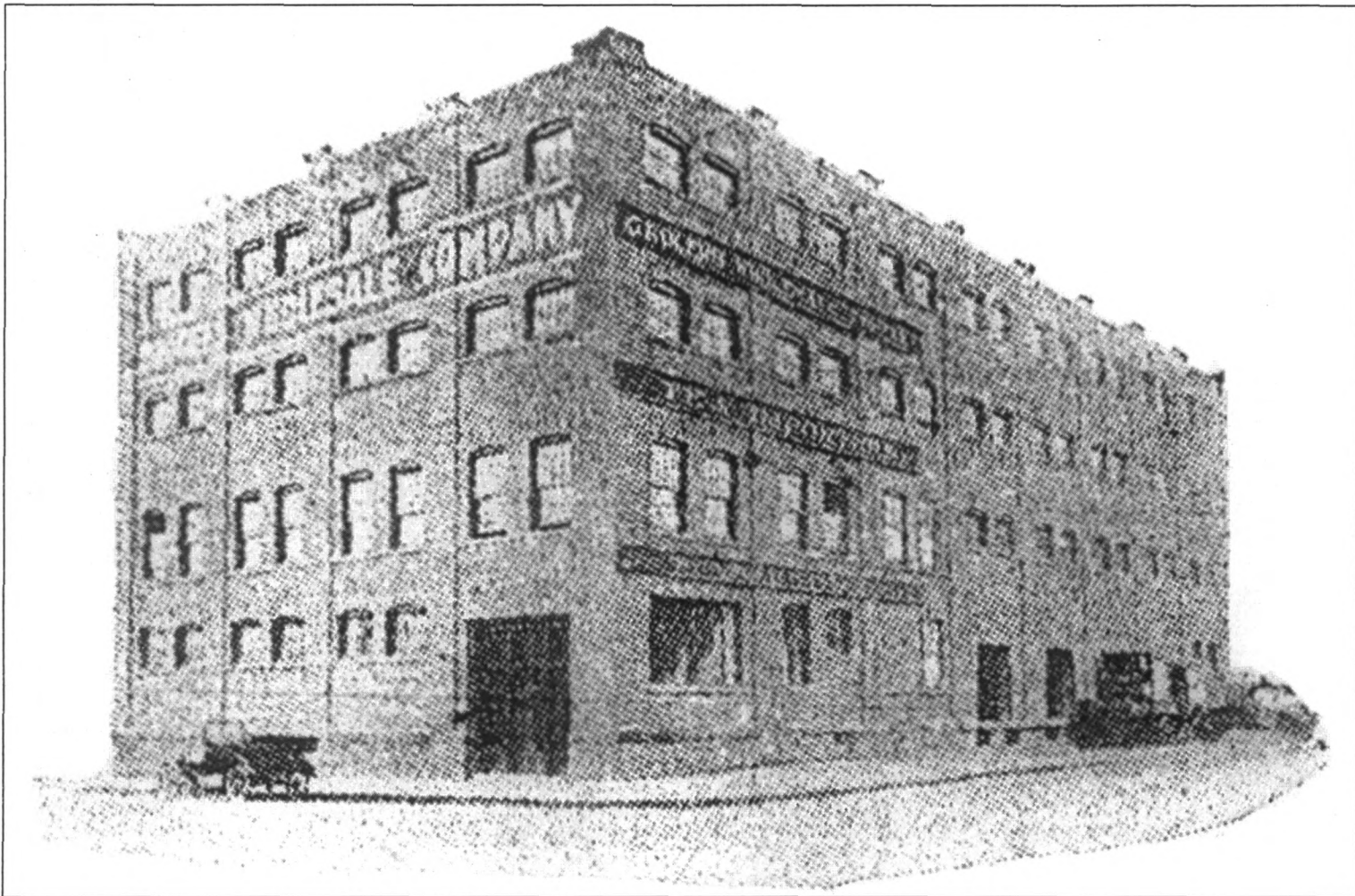


Figure 19: Grocers Wholesale Company, view southwest, 1921
(*Capital*, February 13, 1921)

Figure 19 depicts the still fairly new warehouse and shows its original front first floor windows and the original exterior painted signage. The photo was published in connection with the company's annual business meeting held February 15-16, 1921, in Des Moines. Over 400 member merchants were in attendance. The firm was described as being "one of the younger jobbing institutions in the city." Membership by this time exceeded 500 and business during 1930 exceeded \$3 million. Capitalization was at \$600,000. It was stressed that no traveling salesmen were employed by the company but that all business was transacted "through a weekly sales letter mailed out to the members (*Capital*, February 13, 1921).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 21
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa



Figure 20: View northwest, 1921 (*Capital*, February 27, 1921)

Figure 20, while damaged, nicely documents the original setting for the building. Railroad tracks and a coal yard are visible in the foreground, while Lincoln School and the Herring Motor Company and the Hotel Fort Des Moines are all visible to the north and northwest. The latter taller buildings and West 10th Street, which ran north/south between the Herring and Hotel Fort Des Moines, marked the west end of the downtown area at the time. The Central Fire Station would later replace Lincoln School. The school was taken down in 1929 but the Depression would delay the building of the long-planned fire station (*Capital*, February 27, 1921; *Register*, February 13, 1929).

By 1929 the company had 500 stockholders and was facing increasing chain store competition, at least according to the *Tribune*. Company vice president A. H. Minnus discounted the chain store threat, at least in public, claiming that they offered “no serious competition” and that the cooperative had lower operating costs since it had, unlike the chains, eliminated the middleman. The old facility had performed well for 13 years but by 1930 additional leased warehouse space was secured at 114-20 Tenth Street (Standard Glass and Paint Building). The company had hosted annual conventions for 17 years and the 17th such gathering took place in mid-May 1929. By this time the co-op had in effect established its own “chain store” in the form of the Briardale Stores, becoming what it was otherwise resisting. The unified name, combined with branded product lines as well as national brands, provided a firmer basis for successfully competing on the local community level. A \$200,000 financial commitment was voted to fund the construction of a new warehouse that was to measure 60x400. While trucking business was seen as the wave of the future as roads were being improved, the new facility would allow for considerably more railroad spur line access. The board of directors had been reduced to just five members (*Tribune*, May 18, 1929).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 **Page** 22
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

It would take another year before any action was taken on the new facility, and by that time the cost had grown to \$325,000. The revised plans envisioned a 107x300 foot plan, mostly two-story but with a central three-story section. The Ninth Street warehouse and the leased quarters provided 90,000 square feet of floor space, but the new plan contained 110,000 square feet. The fact that the Great Depression failed to halt the new building plans attests to the resolve and resources of the company. The company also went with a more famous architectural firm to design the new building, that being Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers and Thomas. The new plant employed a reinforced concrete skeleton, was completely fireproofed and, like its 1916 predecessor, had a sprinkler system. The design emphasized "the speedy handling of merchandise in and out of the warehouse" and a dozen railroad cars could be simultaneously unloaded on the west side. On the east front as many as 50 trucks could similarly be handled at once. What might have been a new key feature was a large refrigeration room in the center of the new building. It had a fourteen rail car storage capacity. All offices and a large product display area were on the second floor. The company owned four five-ton trailers and five large trucks that it used to supply local accounts. These were housed in an adjacent garage facility on the north end of the new complex (*Tribune*, May 14, 1930).

The early 1930's were the apparent best years for the Grocers Warehouse Company. Owner membership reached nearly 700 stores that were located in Iowa, southern Minnesota, northern Missouri and eastern Nebraska. A preferred stock dividend was paid in 1932 and between 1917 and 1933 members had received \$1.5 million in annual dividends. This payment was the real payback for coop membership. Members received cheaper product costs, with all owners paying the same rates. The more distant and isolated storeowner paid a penalty in increased shipping fees, however. The company provided a range of member benefits. Foremost was a collective purchasing power. This allowed for the purchase of higher volumes of goods and there was the added benefit of reduced rail shipping costs because of that volume. Rails delivered goods to all of the company's warehouse facilities through the 1970s. Along with volume came variety of goods, and increasingly this meant access to fresh produce and frozen foods. The company could procure bulk produce through direct purchase and make these items available. Over time, with the dominance of the supermarket concept, the storeowner had to deliver both competitive prices and product variety. The company also delivered effective unified advertising using the collective resources of the member stores. Finally, the company offered research capabilities and technical assistance to its members. Owners opening new stores could receive guidance in overall setup and store layout. The "Briardale" store title brought with it a standardized image, guarantees of quality product and service, and promotional support (interviews, Jerry Barkmeier, Russ Hale).

A major period of membership growth occurred under the leadership of Raymond J. Barkmeier (1918-1996), of Hampton who served as board president beginning in 1961. Membership increased to 300 retail stores and the wherewithal was developed to build new facilities. Additions to a pre-existing warehouse, located at 23rd and Fleur Drive, were designed by the successor architects to Proudfoot, Rawson, Souers and Thomas, Brooks Borg Skiles, in 1961 and the company occupied it, as the Associated Grocers of Iowa through 1976. That year a fourth warehouse facility was built in Ankeny, Iowa. The cooperative finally went out of existence in 1985 with its purchase by Fairway Foods of Northfield, Minnesota. The former retail owners joined Affiliated Foods, a competing Nebraska warehouse cooperative (interviews, Jerry Barkmeier, Russ Hale, Bob Gorsuch).

The restructuring of the company during the late 1950s resulted in the replacement of the truck fleet with a truck lease with John Ruan, his very first truck lease agreement. Local Des Moines entrepreneurs Larry Miller and Ruan were instrumental in refinancing and salvaging the company at that time. The third company plant was used from 1961 until 1985, when the Ankeny plant replaced it. The move to Ankeny was seen as an opportunity for the company to expand. Reduced to about 150 owner members, the company had to grow in volume in order to have to pay its member dividend. The dividend was the principal incentive for independent grocers to join a cooperative warehouse. The reality was that most of the retailers were not highly motivated to expand their home businesses, so the Food For Less franchise, a very early self-service box store concept, was established to produce volume growth. Prior to this time, the geographic focal point of the company was centered on Waterloo in North Central Iowa. With the establishment of four or five Food For Less stores in Des Moines, the latter point became the high volume point in what was then a bi-nodal distribution of member stores. In 1985, Fairway Foods purchased Associated Grocers of Iowa, primarily to obtain the Ankeny facility and the franchise. AIG ceased to exist. Former owner

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 **Page** 23
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

members pledged to continue as client stores for one year. At the end of that year, most of the key former members joined the Affiliated Foods cooperative in Eastern Nebraska, and the rest of the former client base followed suit. The new company in Ankeny, titled Fairco, was left with insufficient sales volume given the loss of its former client base and the inability to grow the Food For Less franchise. It was sold to Sysco Foods in early 2001.

The grocery industry consisted of two players, the cooperative warehouse and the independent warehouse. The latter organization assumes various forms. Most commonly a food distribution company owns most of its stores and franchised supply and services to independent stores that could assume the store brand name. Increasingly, these companies seek to own the best performing stores as their operating core, while they also service larger-scale independents, who own multiple stores in a single city or market area. In addition to this process of acquiring the best stores, another national trend has been the abandonment of smaller warehouse facilities in favor of massive regional hubs. The cooperative option is the only alternative for the other smaller independents and the story of Grocers Wholesale was, at least in its final decades, the struggle of the small-scale cooperative that was caught in the middle by much larger cooperative entities based in Illinois and Nebraska. Once the Iowa company folded, these entities were ready to take over its former market.

AGI, like many other regional Associated Grocers companies, was by this time marketing the Shurfine food brand and its new address in Ankeny was called Shurfine Drive, reflecting that streets' first major addressee. Fairway, Inc., a Louisiana-based food distributor, purchased AGI in 1985 and its organizational basis was changed from that of a cooperative to that of a volunteer wholesale group. The new corporate name was Fairco Associated Grocers of Iowa and it was also referred to as Fairco/AGI. Sysco Foods, Inc. purchased the Ankeny facility in March 2001 (1953 and 1959 Des Moines City Directories; *Register*, October 19, 2001).

Key Early Company Officers:

Bennison, Walter Scott (1868-1937+): Bennison was born in Illinois and lived in Dallas County, prior to moving to Des Moines in 1912. He is first listed in city directories in 1914 as the company cashier, and secretary/treasurer as of 1917, in which capacity he served through 1933. He was also the treasurer of Thrift Inc., a loan and investment firm, between 1930 and 1936, the last year he appears in city directories (Who's Who in Des Moines, 1929, pp. 27-28).

Cleland, C. B.: Was the original company president in 1912 and was otherwise the proprietor of Cleland's Dairy Lunch. He lived in Des Moines, although the 1912 city directory identified him as a resident of Ames, Iowa.

Grove, J. J. (?-?): Grove served as vice president of the company in 1912 and again in 1915-16.

Hill, David N.: He was the original company secretary/general manager in 1912 and a board member and is last mentioned in 1913 in those capacities. He lived in Des Moines but the city directories credit him to Grimes, Iowa.

Minnus, Albert H. (1875-1961): Minnus was born in Minburn, Iowa and was a graduate of Highland Park College in Des Moines. He headed Minnus Grocery Company that established the Peter Pan grocery store system in Des Moines and Valley Junction (West Des Moines) in 1918; was a co-founder of the Des Moines Building Loan & Savings Association in 1916; served one term as the mayor of Valley Junction (1910), served on the Valley Junction School Board (1910-25), and was a trustee and board chairman of Broadlawns county hospital (early 1920s-1952). He was vice president of Grocers Wholesale Company from 1913-1914, 1917-25+, 1939. His Minnus Grocery Company acquired the D. L. Skinner Wholesale Grocery Company in 1942 (*Register*, February 10, 1961).

Pearsall, George E. (1851-1933): He was the original company treasurer in 1912 (the only year he is listed as an officer, although he remained a board member) and was then Cashier of the Citizens National Bank and the State Savings Bank. He then lived in Des Moines as of 1893 and was also a company board member. He was more notable as a banker, first at Spirit

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 **Page** 24
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

Lake, and then in Des Moines, where he was made cashier of the State Savings Bank and Citizens National Bank (later merged with the Iowa Des Moines National Bank and Trust Company) in 1893.

Peck, Elmer E. (1866-1940): Peck embodied the company and was "widely known as one of the organizers of the Grocers Wholesale Co., a firm he headed 22 years." Peck was born in Winneshiek County. He was lauded at the formation of the company for his association with Reed, Murdock and Company, "the big wholesale house of Chicago." He is listed as merchandising manager and a board member as of 1912, and as company manager a year later, a position that he continued to hold until he resigned in February 1933. He continued serving the company as an advisor and board member. Beginning in 1937 he served as first vice president of the Polk County Federal Savings and Loan of Des Moines (*Register and Leader*, March 22, 1912; *Who's Who in Des Moines*, 1929, p. 205; *Tribune*, October 29, 1940).

Ray, William E. (?-?): Ray advanced to company manager when Elmer Peck resigned in early 1933. An East Sider, he was a partner in Ray Brothers Grocery and first appears as company secretary in 1914. Beginning in 1917, he was assistant manager and served as manager through 1957 (*Tribune*, February 4, 1933).

A host of grocers from across the state served as officers or board members. Most notable were C. M. Coulter of Bondurant, who was company president in 1913-14; Charles Brobeil of Lyton, who was vice president 1915-1916; G. E. Gouchner of Ankeny, who was vice president 1917-1922; J. J. Groves of Boone, who was vice president in 1912, and in 1915-1916; Julius Rohwer of Ida Grove, who was president 1923-25, and Ray A. Hough of Newton, who was president in 1939.

Early Building Site History:

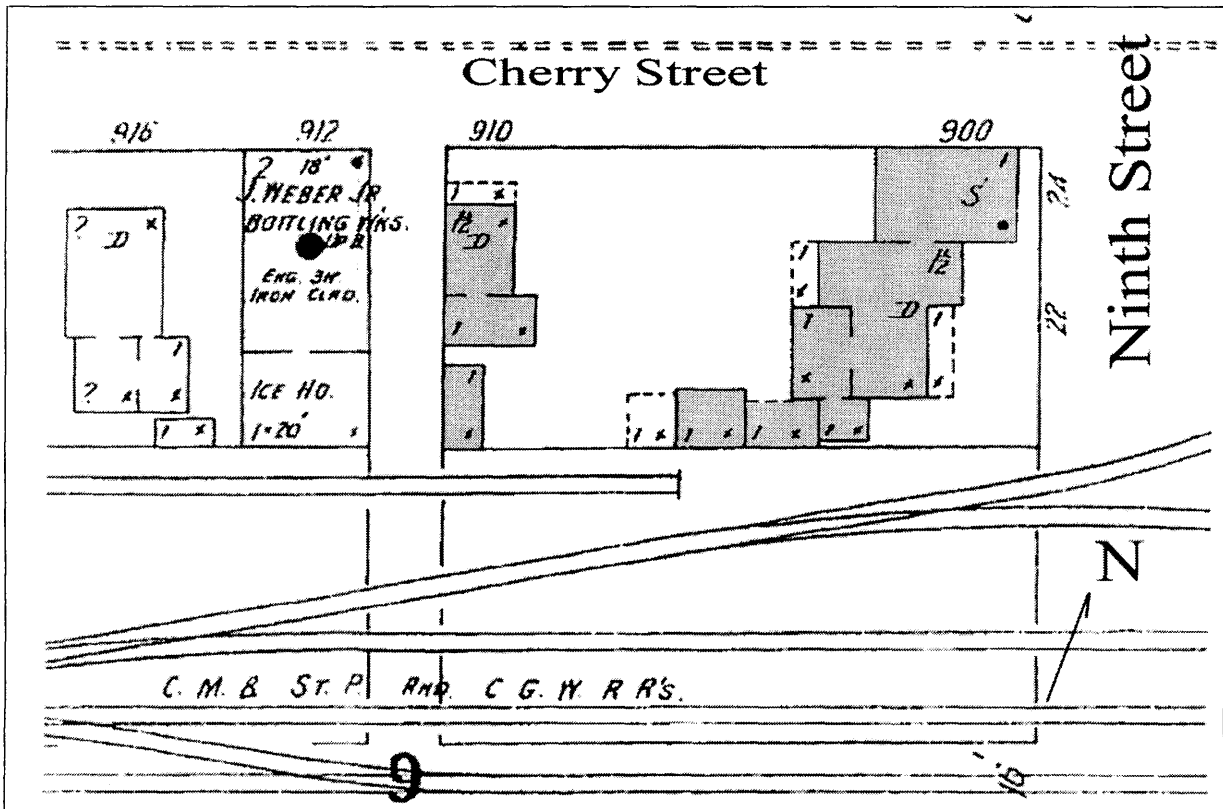


Figure 21: Detail, 1891 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service****National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**Section number 8 Page 25
Grocers Wholesale Company Building**Polk County, Iowa**

Calvin Graves held the original patent for Lot 4, Block 14, H. M. Hoxie's Addition to the City of Des Moines. The lot was sold to Clara Lounsberry in mid-1869, and then to T. L. Philo in mid-1870. Philo sold it to Theo F. Grefe in mid-June and it was sold again to George M. Coggshall in late October 1885. That family sold the property to Grocers Wholesale Warehouse Company on February 15, 1916 (deed filed for record March 20, 1916). Figure 21 depicts the T-plan cottage that fronted east on the lot. Frank Zarnow operated a grocery store at 22 or 24 West Ninth as of 1910, continuing through 1915, and he occupied the adjoining house. He had a second store at 1650 Lyon Street. The 1916 city director listing places his store at 812 Crocker Street.

Building History, Post Grocers Warehouse Company:

The target date for occupying the new plant was October 1, 1930. The original warehouse was retained by the company until 1968, but there is no indication that it continued in active company use. Long-time company manager Elmer Peck retired in early 1933, being replaced by William E. Ray. At that time it was noted that the 1916 building was still owned by the Grocers Wholesale Company. City directories relocate the company by 1932, at which time the old warehouse is listed as being vacant. The Paul Schulze Biscuit Company, with Charles L. Rouse as manager, is listed there in 1933, but 22 West Ninth is again listed as vacant in 1933. Miller Distributing Company, with D. Herman Malm as manager, occupied the building in 1935 but it was again vacant as of 1936 (*Tribune*, February 4, 1933).

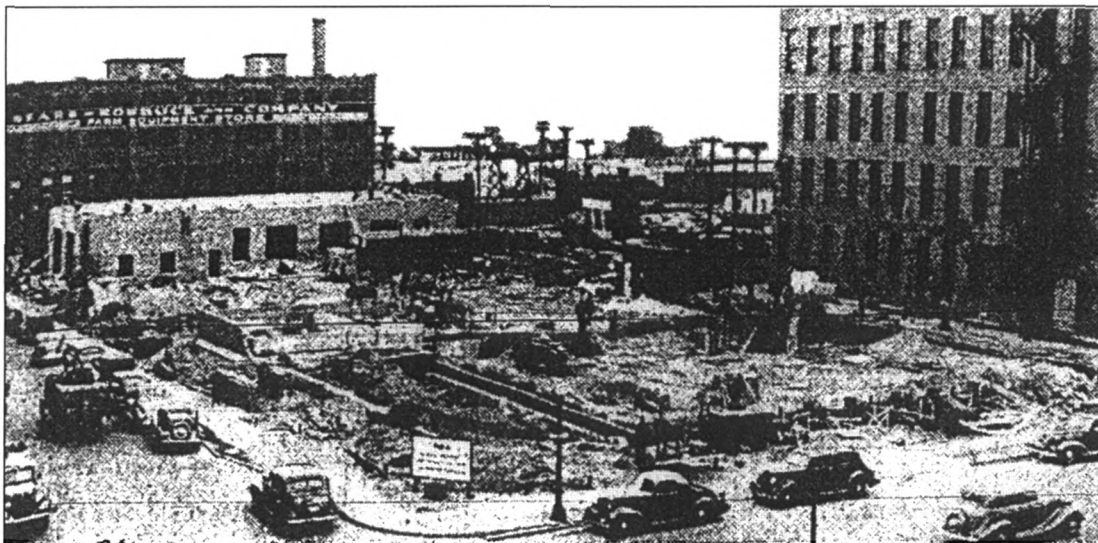


Figure 22: Sears Farm Equipment Store (left rear) and Central Fire Station construction, view southwest, 1937
(*Register*, May 23, 1937)

Sears and Roebuck Department Store came to Des Moines in early 1928, and occupied the former Davidson's Store at 412-18 Walnut, which was remodeled at a cost of \$100,000. The store opened in mid-August 1928. Store expansion and remodeling followed in July 1930. Seven years later the main store relocated to the six-story Chapman Building at 500 Walnut Street, which opened on April 1, 1935. The Sears Farm Equipment Store occupied 22 West Ninth Street beginning in 1937. The building also housed applied roofing and farm equipment. Donald J. Bone was likely the first branch manager. Sears continued to occupy the building through 1959, after which all of the Sears facilities (store, auto center and farm store) were relocated to 4000 Merle Hay Road (where the store remains today) (*Tribune*, March 21, July 18, August 15, 16, 1928; July 24, 1930; *Register*, September 27, 1935).

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 Page 26
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa



Figure 23: Partial view of the building, view southwest from 9th and Mulberry, c.1940
(State Historical Society of Iowa, Photo #5030)

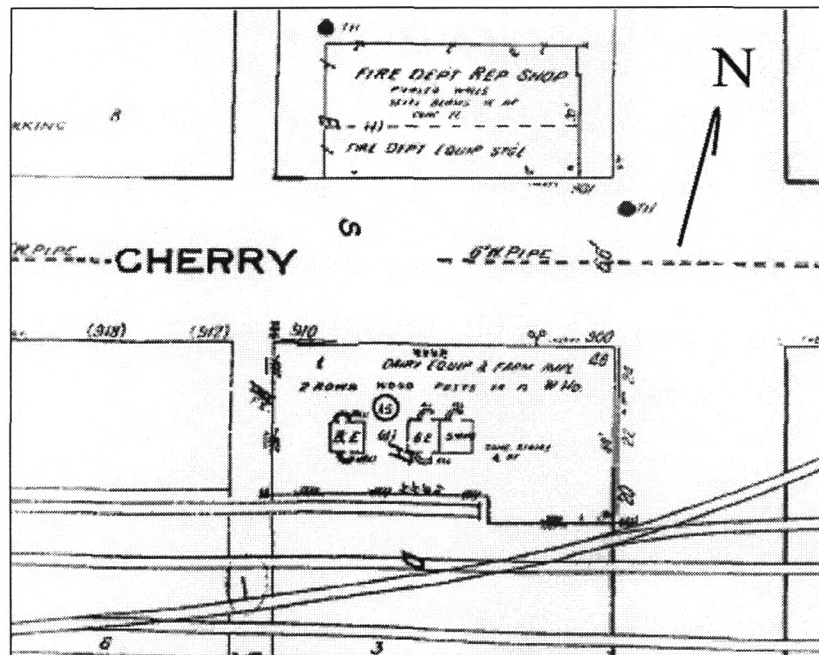


Figure 24: Detail, 1957 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map

Dempster Mill Manufacturing Company, a maker of plumbing supplies, occupied the building in 1961-1962. Lester C. Westerlund was the plant manager. The building was vacant 1963-1967. The building was sold to National Handcraft, Inc. at the end of November 1968. National Handcraft produced Mil order home craft kits. The company was dissolved in 1981 and the property was sold to Dennis B. Lumbard in late 1969. The building was vacant in 1981-1982. The Lumbard Investment Company continues to own the property at the present time. Lumbard was the president of Screen Images, a silk screening

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 8 **Page** 27
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

printing company. Don Short, dealer in architectural salvage and furnishings, purchased the building for his business. A coffee shop has been added to the east first floor part of the building.

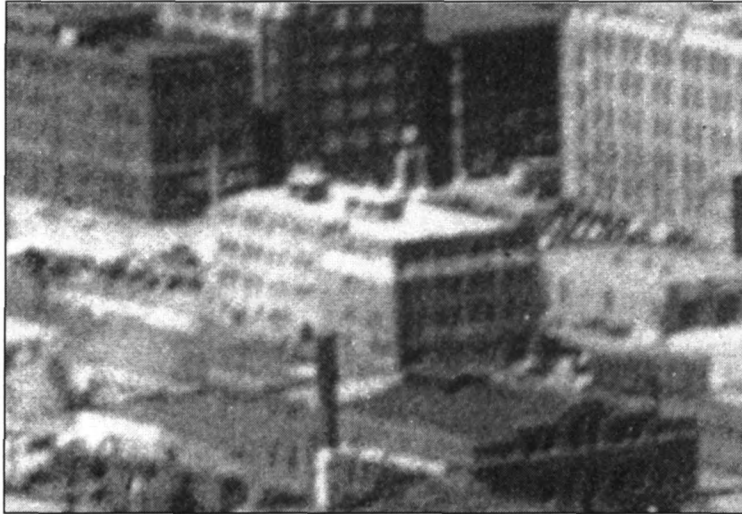


Figure 25: 1955 aerial view to the northwest
(Courtesy of John Patrick Zeller)

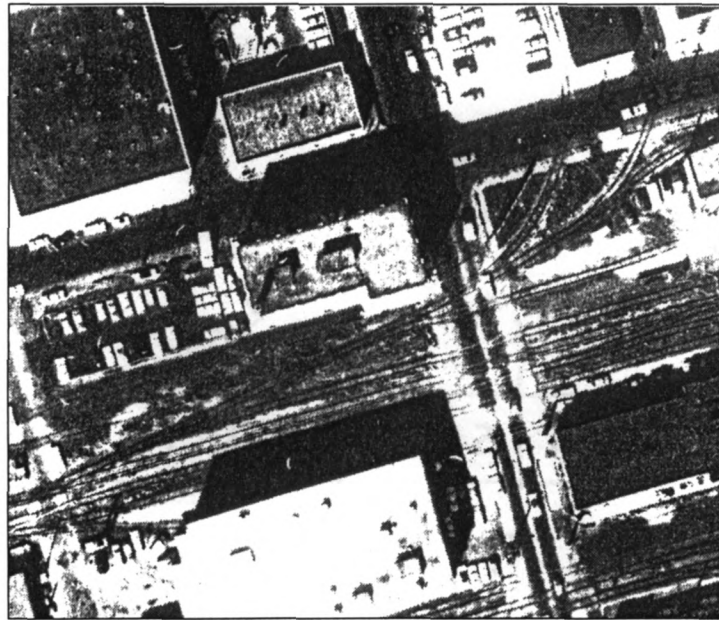


Figure 26: 1963 aerial view (City of Des Moines, Engineering Department)

Figure 26 indicates that the setting of the building remained largely unchanged as late as 1963 when this aerial photograph was taken. There were no buildings to the east, south or west and the building remained open and isolated to those directions. The railroad lines and particularly the spur lines remained in place including the one that ran alongside the south side of the building.

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9 Page 28

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

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Russ Hale (Fairco Manager, 1980s), June 21, 2006

Bob Gorsuch, June 28, 2006

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 **Page** 29
Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

10. Geographical Data:

Verbal Boundary Description:

Lot 4, Block 14, H. M. Hoxie's Addition, City of Des Moines.

Boundary Justification:

The boundary includes the city lot that has been historically associated with the Grocers Wholesale Warehouse since its construction. The boundary includes the site of the associated railroad spur along the south wall, and a vacated alley that was used historically as a truck loading and shipping area at the west or rear of the building. Sidewalks are included along the east and north sides of the building but the Ninth Street Viaduct is excluded.

Site Map:



Figure 27: Property site map (Topozone, 2003)
Arrow points to marked location

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

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 30

Grocers Wholesale Company Building

Polk County, Iowa

Photographs:

Photographer: James E. Jacobsen
Negatives: in owner's possession
Film: Ilford ASA 100
Date of Photographs: May 19, 2006

<u>Frame</u>	<u>View</u>	<u>Description</u>
1	SW	overview, façade and north sidewall, roof, setting with 9 th Street Viaduct
2	NW	lower façade, entrance
3	NW	upper façade, cornice, underside of viaduct
4	NW	entrance detail
5	NE	south sidewall, part of rear/west wall
6	NE	front portion of south sidewall, viaduct
7	NW	rear portion of south sidewall, chimney
8	SE	rear/west wall, fire escape, chimney
9	SE	north sidewall, viaduct, part of rear wall