



COVER

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

New Submission       Amended Submission

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1865 - c. 1945

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Central Business District Development in Cedar Rapids, 1880 - 1945  
Industrial Corridors in Cedar Rapids, 1865 - 1945  
Bohemian Commercial and Social Life in Cedar Rapids, 1875 - 1925

**C. Form Prepared by**

name/title Marlys A. Svendsen  
organization City of Cedar Rapids date March 5, 1997  
street & number N3834 Deep Lake Road telephone (715) 469-3300  
city or town Sarona state Wisconsin zip code 54870

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (  see continuation sheet for additional comments).

Patricia Quenking DSHPD      11-5-97  
Signature and title of certifying official      Date  
**STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF IOWA**

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

Linda McClelland      12/24/97  
Signature of the Keeper      Date of Action

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   1  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

**E. Statement of Historic Contexts**

***Introduction - Overview of the Settlement of Cedar Rapids***

Soon after the land of east central Iowa opened to settlers in the late 1830s, a stretch of land along the Cedar River in Linn County known for its swift flowing rapids was identified as a prospective town site. The bowl-shaped valley was nearly three miles wide with tree covered hills close to the river on either side both above and below the town. The possibilities that water power at the site offered for the operation of mills attracted both settlers and land speculators. The rich land in the nearby hills and prairies promised to sustain a steady supply of agricultural produce. The most farsighted observers anticipated that a steamboat landing could be developed here where the rapids would impede further movement upstream.

Confidence in these locational attributes caused seven local men - Nicholas Brown, Addison Daniels, Hosea Gray, George Greene, A.L. Roach, J.E. Sanford and S.H. Tyron - to form a company to plat a town at the site. The new community they platted on the east bank of the Cedar River in 1841 was known as "Rapids City." By the end of the decade in 1849, the town had grown to approximately 300 persons. It was incorporated officially on January 15, 1849 and given a new name - "Cedar Rapids."

On the opposite side of the river, another early land promoter, David King, owned a substantial parcel of land. In 1849, the same year Cedar Rapids was formally incorporated, King began operation of a ferry to connect his property with the growing east bank town. Several years later in 1852, he formally platted the area as "Kingston." Mills and factory sites were to be located along the river front with residential lots set away from the river.

The promise of steady population growth was not readily apparent when Cedar Rapids founders began promoting their new community to prospective settlers and investors in the 1850s. After all, the state capital had just been removed to Des Moines and Marion remained Linn County's seat of government. Other portions of the American West were opening to settlement from Missouri to Nebraska to Minnesota and the Dakota Territory before the Civil War. Cedar Rapids was certainly not uniquely situated.

As a result, population grew slowly in Cedar Rapids' first decades with the U.S. Census showing a population of only 1,830 people by 1860. This included 80 Bohemian families who had first started arriving in 1852 and would grow to become an important influence on the city by the turn-of-the-century. The conclusion of the Civil War and the arrival of additional railroad routes brought a marked increase with population tripling by 1870 and nearly doubling again by 1880.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  2

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

The physical boundaries of Cedar Rapids and Kingston remained unchanged for several decades. A second charter was granted the city by the General Assembly in 1856 replacing the 1849 legislative act but no boundary changes resulted. King continued to operate the ferry until his death in 1854 and the town bearing his name continued as a separately platted but unincorporated village until it was annexed by Cedar Rapids in 1870. Thereafter, the west bank portion of Cedar Rapids was familiarly called "West Cedar Rapids." A few years later in 1874, a series of additions on the east bank adjacent to the Original Town were added by court decree.

Ten years later in 1884 the irregular boundaries of Cedar Rapids were straightened with an annexation of just over 12 square miles of property. No new annexations would be made to Cedar Rapids for more than forty years. The annexation contributed to significant population gains. In the 1890 census population stood at just over 18,000. By the turn-of-the-century, nearly 8,000 additional residents brought the population to 25,656. The next two decades saw the city nearly double in size to 45,566 in 1920 despite the displacement and loss of life resulting from World War I and the influenza outbreak of 1918.

In separate special elections held in 1925 and 1926, the town of Kenwood Park and additional sections along each edge of the city were approved for annexation to Cedar Rapids by the voters. A review by the District Court and successful protests by several property owners in the outlying area caused the annexed area reduced by half in 1929. The newly configured, court-approved corporate limits gave Cedar Rapids an area of 28.11 square miles. Its eastern boundary abutted the corporate limits of Marion and its western boundary extended to the west line of Cedar Township. On the south, the limits went as far as the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad right-of-way and on the north, as far as the right-of-way of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad and a section of Blair's Ferry Road.

The difficult times experienced during the Great Depression years in other Iowa towns did not affect population growth in Cedar Rapids during the 1930s. By 1940, more than 62,000 persons called Cedar Rapids home and the local Chamber of Commerce boasted that the community had one of the highest homeownership rates in the country. Population growth continued steadily after World War II with many former soldiers finding employment in the city's burgeoning industrial base. By 1950, population stood at 72,296 and just a decade later an increase of 27% brought the population to 92,035. Cedar Rapids continued to outpace other Iowa metropolitan areas in population growth. An increase for the decade of 20.2% brought the population to 110,642 and made Cedar Rapids Iowa's second largest city by 1970, a position it still maintains in 1997.

### *i. Central Business District Development in Cedar Rapids, 1880 - 1945*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   3  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

The Original Town plat of Cedar Rapids was laid out with streets perpendicular and parallel to the Cedar River's northwest-southeast course. The plat had just over sixty square blocks stretching along twelve blocks of river front and extending approximately eight blocks back. The names for streets paralleling the river began with Commercial Street closest to the river (1st Street) and proceeded away from the river following the names of the American presidents (2nd Street - "Washington," 3rd Street - "Adams," 4th Street - "Jefferson," 5th Street - "Madison," etc.). Today's numbered avenues had a variety of names beginning with 1st Avenue as "Iowa Avenue," and a group of streets further south named for some town founders: 5th Avenue - "Greene Street," 6th Avenue - "Brown Street," 7th Avenue - "Daniels Street," and 8th Avenue - "Sanford Street."

The discussion of the development of the central business district that follows is based on four distinct areas: the riverfront and May's Island, the commercial core (2nd and 3rd Streets roughly between 1st Avenue and 4th Avenue, SE), the railroad corridor along 4th Street, and the ring of churches and public facilities along the outer edge of the downtown (mainly along 5th and 6th Streets from A Avenue, NE to 7th Avenue, SE).

*The Riverfront and May's Island*

The early impact of the Cedar River on downtown had more to do with the river's potential as a source of water power and to a lesser extent as a means of water transport. Beginning in 1842, successive efforts were made to construct a dam across the river to harness the power of the 14' drop where the rapids were located. The dams were built near the foot of B Avenue, NE just above the mill sites and a proposed riverboat landing downstream. Several flour mills were soon constructed with capacities ranging from 150 barrels per day for the larger operations to 500 to 600 barrels per week for the smaller mills. Steam power augmented water power in the 1860s increasing the capacity of the mills.

Nicholas Brown built a crude dam in 1842 which was replaced by Alexander Ely's dam a few years later. Another dam was constructed by Brown in 1870 at the B Ave., NE site. Brown is described as having operated the dam like a public utility, charging mill users for the water power it made possible.<sup>1</sup> Brown's timber and rock structure was repaired in 1894 after a portion of it was carried away by high water. Construction of Brown's new dam was ill timed, however. In the early 1870s, insect infestation set back Iowa's wheat crops, and the mills were gradually forced to close. The Anchor Roller Mills located between A and B Avenues, NE along the riverfront sustained operation the longest with flour produced through the 1890s. The most important effect derived from the early water powered flour milling industry was its capacity to attract the cereal milling interests of George Douglas and Robert Stuart to Cedar Rapids in 1873. This chapter in local industrial development is

---

<sup>1</sup>"Old Dams Were Built to Stay," *The Cedar Rapids Gazette*, (April 9, 1978).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  4

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

considered later.

In 1914 a new dam was begun as part of a series of riverfront improvements designed to deepen the pool above the downtown for recreational use and the manufacturing needs of the cereal processing mill operated by the Quaker Oats Company. The dam was completed in 1918 and was approximately sixty feet downstream from the Brown dam and a good deal higher. The new dam was constructed of concrete with hinged wooden flashboards along the top to raise or lower the effective height. Both the Brown dam and the 1918 dam were removed from the river bed when a new dam was installed in 1978 as part of the replacement of the B Ave., NE-F Ave., NW Bridge.

In the years following the founding of Rapids City and before the arrival of railroads, the river brought a brief period of steamboat transportation to the new community. As noted above, the city's founders anticipated an important role for river transportation by reserving a landing for river traffic. Whether this act was a studied, practical decision or the optimistic plan of the town site promoters is difficult to gauge. In 1843 the first steamboat to arrive in Cedar Rapids was the *Maid of Iowa*. A handful of boats made irregular calls between Cedar Rapids, Burlington, Keokuk and St. Louis over the next decade. In 1858 a local group of investors commissioned construction of the sternwheeler *Cedar Rapids*. She arrived safely to a warm reception with her 300-ton cargo. The next year, however, a navigation error by the captain of the *Cedar Rapids* brought a collision with another steamer. The local owners eventually gave up their interest in the *Cedar Rapids* to settle the loss of the other vessel.

Above the rapids, steam boating occurred on an even more sporadic basis between Waterloo, Cedar Falls and Cedar Rapids. The trip was hampered by sand bars, low water and snags. With the arrival of the Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad in 1859, attempts at navigating the Cedar River became limited to excursion trips.

For land travel, the Cedar River was a major impediment. Ferry crossings were hazardous and slow. As a result, bridging the Cedar River was attempted beginning in 1856-57. Located at the foot of Iowa Avenue (1st Avenue, today), the first poorly constructed wooden bridge was destroyed by an ice jam in the spring of 1857. A pontoon bridge was constructed in the same place the following summer but was destroyed in January 1858. In 1859 another bridge was constructed at the foot of Daniels Street (7th Avenue, today) which lasted for four years. Another bridge opened the next year connecting to Iowa Avenue and operated on a toll basis lasting until 1871. The same year this bridge went out, the Linn County commissioners installed a new bridge two blocks downstream of the toll bridge at 3rd Avenue. This Hammond wrought iron bridge had spans set on piers constructed of Anamosa stone.

One of the noteworthy features of the Rapids City townsite was the ¼-mile long, 6-acre island

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   5  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

known as "May's Island" originally extending between 2nd and 3rd Avenues opposite the downtown. Originally owned by Major J.L. May, the wooded island eventually played host to wagon traffic traversing the island via connecting bridges. Several commercial establishments had located on the island by the turn-of-the-century when discussions were first voiced about the value of municipal ownership of the island. Acquisition of the island was favored but a plan proposed to connect the island to the east bank with fill was not well received by the community. Following the adoption of the commission form of government in 1908, one of the first important actions by the new City Council was adoption of a recommendation of an urban planning study completed by C.M. Robinson. The report recommended acquisition of May's Island and construction of a new municipal building on the island. The island was purchased a short time later and between 1910 and 1912, a temporary city hall was established in the former Smulekoff Building and efforts at extending the island at its upstream end with fill were begun.

Municipal government affairs remained in a state of confusion and fiscal difficulty for a time. But by 1912, the Cedar Rapids municipal house was in order. Plans were begun for construction of a new city hall on May's Island now renamed "Municipal Island" and a new bridge across the island at 3rd Avenue. With the Municipal Island now in government hands, Cedar Rapids was prepared to instigate a campaign to have the county seat removed from Marion to Cedar Rapids one more time. The issue was put to a vote in the November election of 1919 and passed. Bonds were approved in 1922 for a new court house and jail to be constructed on the island. When the new Memorial Building and City Hall were finished in 1927, the city's plan for a civic center was completed. The new buildings not only memorialized local veterans of World War I, but provided a facility to attraction convention business.<sup>2</sup>

*Commercial Core*

In the years following its founding in 1841, Cedar Rapids' economy took the shape of many other Midwest communities - an economy of self-sufficiency and home-consumption. Much of the economy remained cashless with retail trade relying on a system of barter and consignment with settlers and immigrants moving west providing a limited source of hard currency. Cedar Rapids' first generation of commercial buildings, log and frame structures, were clustered along today's 1st, 2nd and 3rd Streets, SE between 1st and 4th Avenues, SE. From the earliest days of settlement, buildings along 1st Street suffered the effects of periodic floods making 2nd and 3rd Street addresses preferred. Wise planning in the original plat gave Iowa or 1st Avenue an extra width of 120 feet in anticipation of a bridge being built across the Cedar River at this point at some future date. Iowa Avenue was also the principal route connecting Rapids City to neighboring Marion, the

---

<sup>2</sup>The Municipal Island building complex is listed in the National Register as the May's Island Historic District.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   6  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

county seat of Linn County.

Population grew slowly but downtown Cedar Rapids nevertheless acquired commercial specialties typical of the day. Instances of individual commercial success combined with fires to replace this first generation of buildings with larger and more substantial brick and stone buildings. They housed merchants of hardware and tinware, livery operators and blacksmiths, drygoods and crockery merchants, bakers, butchers, hotel keepers, restaurant owners and saloon keepers. Land agents and brokers sometimes doubled as mortgage providers but banks soon opened as well. During its first decades, the handful of residences originally intermixed with commercial buildings in the downtown was gradually displaced by larger and more permanent commercial blocks. These two and three-story brick and stone buildings constituted a second generation of building stock.

Development in the commercial core of the central business district on the eve of the Civil War included several important changes. Efforts were made to attract the route of the city's first railroad to and through the downtown - a land use decision that would forever change the configuration of downtown. Another important change was the construction of a handful of churches scattered through the downtown. The impact of both of these changes is discussed below.

The first Cedar Rapids franchise for gas service came in 1871 when a gasification plant was installed downtown. Within a short time, 7-miles of gas mains had been laid serving 300 customers and 115 street lamps. A growing demand from new customers during the decade resulted in construction of a new plant during the 1880s. Gas street lights gave the central business district a warm glow during the evenings.

A third important change saw the beginning of upward growth in the central business district. Another generation of three to five-story buildings replaced earlier structures that succumbed to fire, poor construction, or a brisk real estate market. Multi-story buildings were erected to house the city's growing banks, insurance companies and real estate firms. Together, these enterprises came to employ hundreds of workers as clerks, cashiers, stenographers and sales agents by the turn-of-the-century.

A closer examination of several of the downtown's commercial sectors reflects the patterns of prosperity and decline seen in the city's general economy. These include the financial sector - banks, insurance companies and real estate companies; the retail goods sector; the wholesale/jobbing sector; and the entertainment and lodging sector.

Financial Sector

Cedar Rapids' first banks were organized in the 1850s based on the brisk trade in land and land

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   7  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

warrants in the region. Without a means of shipping out early products to secure currency, the cash that immigrants brought with them for the purchase of land became the basis for the early economy. Because of this practice, it was not surprising that early land agents such as John Weare, George Greene, Sampson Bever and Seymour Carpenter also become the city's first bankers.

Poor investment practices led to overextensions for some early banks and a generally unstable financial situation until passage of the National Bank Act of 1863. After that a national currency was traded throughout the country. Two banks chartered under this act opened in downtown Cedar Rapids the next year: the First National Bank (1864-1886) and the City National Bank (1864-1898). Sampson Bever, real estate developer and land agent, and his family were major investors in the latter bank resulting in its being called the "Bever Bank." The next banks to organize were the Union Savings Bank (1870-1879) and the private bank of G.F. Van Vechten (1877-1887). Savings banks were generally used by wage earners as safe places to deposit their modest savings. Cedar Rapids saw formation of a series of savings banks through the years with this purpose in mind.

The 1870s also saw the formation of two building and loan associations designed to encourage building and financing homes. The Cedar Rapids Building and Loan Association formed in 1874 and the Perpetual Building and Loan Association formed the next year. Employees of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad were the founders of Perpetual.

Cedar Rapids' general economy was healthy during the decade of the 1880s, a fact that was reflected in the downtown's development during the same period. Considerable change occurred in banking institutions with the closure and reorganization of several and the establishment of others. Two nationally chartered commercial banks opened, the Merchants National Bank (1881 to 1991) and the Cedar Rapids National Bank (1887-1931). The latter bank was formed through a reorganization of Van Vechten's private bank while Merchants National was established by some of the leading industrial and business leaders of the day including Thomas Sinclair (T.M. Sinclair and Co.), George Douglas (North Star Oatmeal Co.), S.L. Dows (contractor), and the Higley brothers, Mortimer and Wellington (merchants and real estate). Other banks that formed during the decade included savings banks - the Cedar Rapids Savings Bank in 1883 by the Hamilton brothers and the Security Savings Bank in 1889. O.N. Hull, a real estate investor and house builder, established a private real estate bank (1884-1890) that ceased shortly after his death.

During the 1890s the first banks to bear Bohemian-American names - the Bohemian-American State Bank (1892-1894) and the Bohemian-American Savings Bank (1894-1898) - were established, reorganized and absorbed into other institutions. A third organization was structured as a building and loan association in 1892 - the Bohemian Savings and Loan. In 1898, the "Bever

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  8

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Bank," City National, was reorganized as Citizens National Bank (1898-1908) and the American Trust and Savings Bank, another Bever initiative was formed the same year.

All of the banks established thus far were located in the downtown on the east side of the river. When a proposal was made in 1900 to establish a bank in the west side business district located along 3rd Avenue, SW, it was met with favor. The Peoples Savings Bank (1900-1988) organized that year and within in a decade was able to retain Louis Sullivan to design a permanent bank building on 3rd Avenue, SW and 1st Street, SW for their operations.<sup>3</sup>

More than a half dozen banks formed during the next two decades while several others reorganized leaving Cedar Rapids with more than a dozen banks throughout this period. The proliferation of banks paralleled Cedar Rapids healthy economy at the beginning of the century and contributed to the development of new residential neighborhoods. Mortgage money was readily available as bank ownership was closely tied to real estate interests. The impact of banks on the appearance of residential neighborhoods was felt as well. A long standing Czech resident in Cedar Rapids described how a bank loan officer was willing to lend money for the development of a subdivision during the 1940s but only if there was uniformity in the neighborhood - the houses must have a certain style, use specific finishes and have certain site improvements. This was the bank's practice, the loan officer insisted, based on their experience through the years.<sup>4</sup>

The 1930s brought an end to the proliferation of banks. When the national "Bank Holiday" came in March 1933 only six banks remained - Cedar Rapids Savings, American Trust and Savings, Iowa State Savings, United State Bank, Merchants National and Peoples Savings.<sup>5</sup> Only the latter three survived intact while the others went into receivership, their deposits were combined and their organizations were consolidated. In 1934, the Iowa State Savings Bank became the First Trust and Savings Bank and the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company formed from combination of the Cedar Rapids Savings Bank and the American Trust and Savings Bank.

As with financial institutions across the country, Cedar Rapids' bank buildings were designed as symbols of security and stability. The image projected by a Classical or Romanesque Revival design rendered in durable masonry materials was just that. Permanence was rarely a reality before 1900, however, for Cedar Rapids' banks as growing deposits and depositors constantly

---

<sup>3</sup>The People's Savings Bank is listed on the National Register.

<sup>4</sup>Interview with Ed Kuba, April, 1994.

<sup>5</sup>The Iowa State Savings Bank and the United State Bank were Bohemian-American banks headquartered outside of the central business district.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   9  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

encouraged construction of new buildings. The largest bank built prior to 1900 was the Cedar Rapids Savings Bank in 1895-96. Designed by Cedar Rapids architects, Josselyn and Taylor, the building was touted as the city's first business building over four stories in the city and the first fire-proof building of any size.<sup>6</sup> The building continued in use as a bank after a 1934 reorganization when the Cedar Rapids Savings Bank and the American Trust and Savings Bank became the Guaranty Bank and Trust Company.

After 1900 the structures erected to house downtown banks were multi-storied office buildings continuing the growth of the commercial core upward. The first floors and mezzanine levels were given over to banking uses and upper level office suites were used by other bank departments or a host of office tenants. Three of the best extant examples include the Security Building completed in 1908 for the Security Savings Bank (also designed by the firm of Josselyn and Taylor), the American Building erected in 1914 to house the American Trust and Savings Bank and the Merchants National Bank completed in 1926. As with the Cedar Rapids Savings Bank, the Security Building, American Building and Merchants National all occupied prominent corner locations in the commercial core.

Each bank building followed the tripartite form with each progressively taller as the decades went by - 8-stories in the Security Building, 10-stories in the American Building and 12-stories in the Merchants National Building. The increased scale of the buildings relative to their 19th century bank counterparts reflected the tremendous economic growth of Cedar Rapids after 1900 and a general growth in the service sector of the local economy. This latter fact is testified to by the diversity of office tenants in the Merchants National Building upon opening in October, 1926. Building occupants included 15 doctors, 11 dentists, 12 attorneys, nine insurance agencies, four retail shops and a number of other commercial organizations.<sup>7</sup>

Though outside of the commercial core the design of several banks built during the post-1900 period are worth noting. The People's Savings Bank completed in 1911 on the west side and the Iowa State Savings Bank built in 1917 in the Czech business district were, by contrast, of a smaller yet monumental scale. The National Register nomination for the People's Savings Bank noted that Louis Sullivan's design for the bank exhibited many of the hallmark's of Sullivan's art as an architect "bringing the block to life in different ways through geometry and ornament." The Neo-Classical design of the Iowa State Savings Bank was more traditional but like the larger downtown banks sought to evoke a sense of permanence and quality. Both banks served as important landmarks in

---

<sup>6</sup>American Architect & Building News, Volume II, No. 1046 (January 11, 1896), pp. 22-23 as recorded in the State Historical Society of Iowa's Architect Files.

<sup>7</sup>"MNB: Now a Century Old," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, February 15, 1981, page 9.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number  E  Page  10

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

their respective commercial districts.

Insurance companies and real estate firms comprised additional components of the commercial core's financial sector. Business families involved in establishing local banks were frequently the same individuals to head early insurance companies and real estate firms in Cedar Rapids. A handful of companies organized to provide protection for farm and residential property and later for automobiles. A lesser number formed as life insurance companies. The Farmers Insurance Company started in 1860 with Sampson Bever, a major real estate developer and bank owner, as one of its leaders. The company focused on farms and dwellings, grew to a sizable scale and was sold in 1921 to the Continental Company of New York.

Two automobile insurance companies that eventually prospered in Cedar Rapids had their beginnings in Des Moines. The Automobile Owners Protective Association relocated to Cedar Rapids from that city in 1913. The next year it changed its name to Iowa Mutual Liability Insurance and formed a parallel company, called Iowa Automobile Mutual Insurance. The two later merged and the new company became Iowa National Mutual Insurance Company and a major local employer. Located at various locations in the downtown, the company failed in 1985.

A second company, the United Fire and Casualty Company, began in 1937 with the relocation of Ace Mutual Insurance Association from Des Moines to a small office in the Iowa Theatre Building in downtown Cedar Rapids. Consolidation with North Central Mutual Association the next year saw the new company take the name United Mutual Insurance Association. In 1946 the firm organized a new casualty company as United Casualty Company, the first casualty company to be organized in Iowa since 1921. In 1950 the companies were reorganized as "United Fire and Casualty Company" and during the subsequent decade, smaller companies were acquired and new insurance lines added. Initially, the company was headquartered in a building at 810 1st Avenue. Growth caused United Casualty to move to a five-story building at 118 2nd Avenue, SE in 1965 and by 1990, the firm was one of the state's most important insurance companies.

Another important local insurance company was headquartered outside of the commercial core. The Zapadni Cesko-Bratska Jednota or Western Bohemian Fraternal Association organized in 1897 as both a fraternal association and an insurance company to serve its ethnic membership. Member lodges were located in communities across the country with large Czech populations including five in Cedar Rapids at one time. In 1908 the company moved to a headquarters building in the Czech business district which also served as a social hall for the various lodges. Success in selling life insurance eventually resulted in the association focusing exclusively on this line. The company changed its name to Western Fraternal Life Association in 1971.

The Retail Goods Sector

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   11  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

In the years following the Civil War, the commercial core of Cedar Rapids served the retailing needs of a growing regional market as well as those of local residents. Shoppers came from throughout Linn County and as the web of rail lines connected Cedar Rapids to towns along the line, shoppers originated from points further and further distant. The increasing interconnectedness of the country dictated national styles and merchandising trends. Easy rail connections allowed merchants to respond with growing ease to their customers desires. Newspaper advertisements reminded patrons that the best the East Coast had to offer could be found in the shops and stores along 1st Avenue and 2nd and 3rd Streets.

As the city spread out away from the blocks of the Original Town plat, certain retail establishments moved as well. New meat markets, bakeries, pharmacies, saloons and grocery stores popped up along well traveled routes and at busy intersections increasingly distant from the commercial core. The businesses that stayed downtown and expanded were of two general types - specialty shops and larger multi-department stores. Specialty businesses sold merchandise that was purchased infrequently and where proximity of access was not critical. Purchases made at shoe stores, hardware stores, stationers, book stores, millinery shops, dress shops, drygoods stores, tobacco shops and crockery stores were made seasonally or at regular shopping intervals. Specialty businesses such as these benefited from the central location downtown offered a customer base that was scattered throughout the city.

Dozens of specialty shops existed in the commercial core through the decades some for a few years and a number spanning several decades. Many were "mom and pop" operations with only a handful of clerks and sales staff supplementing the family workforce. Some businesses that had an especially long tenure, were unique or were well known on a regional basis. Others were simply appreciated for their tradition of quality, service and fairness. A few representative examples established in the decades preceding 1900 included Smulekoff's Company, Kubias Hardware Company, and the Morris Sanford Company.

Smulekoff's got its start when Henry Smulekoff, a Russian immigrant, settled in Cedar Rapids in 1889 and began selling his wares as a peddler in rural Linn County. After several years he opened a small cabinet shop in a building on May's Island and the business became known as the "Island Store." His business grew and when May's Island was acquired by the City of Cedar Rapids, he relocated the business to a new building at 107-115 3rd Avenue, SW adjacent to the then new Peoples Savings Bank. In 1941 the company moved again, this time to a much larger five-story building at the corner of 3rd Avenue and 1st Street (97 3rd Avenue, SE). By the 1980s, the firm claimed to be the largest furniture store in the state.

Like Smulekoff's the Kubias Hardware Company was established in the decade of the 1880s.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   12  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Frank Kubias and J.M. Marinek, both Bohemian immigrants, grew up on farms in rural Linn County. After working in several trades the two went to work in the same local tinshop which the two bought out in 1884. The business took the name of Kubias & Martinek. At around the turn-of-the-century, Kubias bought out Marinek's interest. The business continued to prosper despite competition from national franchise operations through three generations of Kubias family members. It was located in three separate locations on 1st Street and 3rd Avenue before closing in 1986.

The Morris Sanford Company got its start in 1896 when the Smith, Mullin and Vorhees Company, opened a book and stationery store on 2nd Avenue. Six years later when Mullin bought out his partners, he changed the name of the firm to George A. Mullin Company and moved to the Waterhouse Block located on 1st Avenue near 2nd Street. In 1912 the business moved to new quarters in a five-story fireproof building at 219-223 2nd Street and four years later in 1916, Morris Sanford became the majority owner. Over the years, new product lines were added. In addition to books and stationery, the company offered school and office supplies, wall paper and paint, office equipment, cameras, radios, records and record players and a year-round supply of toys. Business customers, however, remained the firm's mainstay. In 1933 the Sanford Company moved to the Wilcox Building on Third Avenue and to a 2nd Avenue address some years later where it continues in operation.

Department stores were introduced as the century neared its end. Their merchandising concept was similar to the pioneer general store - find a little bit of everything you needed under one roof. Unlike general stores, however, department stores were large and commodious with generous quantities of varied merchandise always available to meet a shopper's needs and desires. Goods were arranged by "department" including many of the lines also found in competing specialty shops. In some cases, department stores grew out of the desire of specialty shops to expand business through expanded product lines. Though often family owned, department stores required a significant staff and management structure.

The decade of the 1880s saw the introduction of Cedar Rapids' first department stores. In 1883 the Golden Eagle department store opened at the intersection of 1st Avenue and 2nd Street. It was noteworthy for several reasons - one, the fact that when it opened, interior lighting was provided exclusively by electric fixtures and two, its construction came just two years after the installation of the first streetcar line along 1st Avenue. Several years later in 1886, Charles Denecke opened the Denecke department store. Located at 127 2nd Street, SE, the business flourished as an important retail outlet. In the 1940s the firm was sold and renamed Newman's. It closed in the 1950s.

The decade of the 1890s saw the addition of the clothing firm of Armstrong, Fletcher & Company. A reorganization changed the company to Armstrong and McClenahan in a few years time. Under

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  13

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

the leadership of Sam Armstrong, a young retailing entrepreneur, the firm grew and prospered from its location at 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue. Its three-story building was eventually extended to the corner in 1913 and to the north in 1922 when a women's department was added. A sign of Armstrong's success was the nearly constant remodeling that went on in the store. Nearly 30 projects were completed between 1913 and 1958. In 1959 the company moved into a new \$2 million dollar building at 3rd Avenue and 3rd Street. The store remained the anchor retailer in the commercial core until it closed in 1990.

In 1893 just three years after Armstrong's started, Herman and Josephine Craemer relocated from St. Louis to open a small dry-goods store on 1st Avenue. The streetcar line along 1st Avenue had been recently electrified and within a decade cars operated every 15 to 20 minutes along 1st Avenue and the nearly 13 miles of various routes. Josephine gradually took over more responsibility, and following her husband's death in 1908, she headed the firm until her son took over in 1919. Craemer's store expanded across the alley in 1937 as business grew despite the Depression. After opening up a branch mall outlet in the 1960s, the business took a downturn and closed their downtown location in 1972.

It was almost twenty years after Armstrong's founding before a new department store appeared in the commercial core. Two Nebraska brothers and their cousin opened Killians department store in 1911. Just two years later they erected the five-story Fidelity Building at the corner of 3rd Avenue and 2nd Street which remained Killians' base for operations for more than 70 years. Killians expanded quickly after establishment despite predictions for a "speedy failure." The location on 3rd Avenue was considered poor due to the fact that there was no 3rd Avenue bridge at the time. Others considered the operation too large - five floors, 35 departments and 175 employees. Killians business grew in the post World War II prosperity of Cedar Rapids making significant expansions including the addition of a parking ramp in 1964 and a storewide renovation in 1978. It, too, opened branch mall outlets but in 1982 was forced to close its downtown location.

Commercial Blocks and Office Buildings

The economic growth that Cedar Rapids experienced after the Civil War was reflected in the construction of a host of new buildings designed to house the new and expanding banks, specialty shops and department stores. The commercial blocks, generally 3-stories in scale, were built at prominent intersections in the commercial core. Multiple, plate glass storefronts showed off retailer's goods, with angular entrances at the corners and elaborate cornices commonplace. Dozens of double-hung windows lighted the offices and social halls contained in the upper floors.

Many of the buildings were built by prominent local families with the cornices bearing their names. Members of the Waterhouse family constructed three separate commercial blocks along 1st

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  14

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Avenue prominently displaying the family name as well as construction or remodeling dates (1877, 1879 and 1882). The Dows family did the same thing with a building (southeast corner of the intersection of 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue) erected in 1874 that later housed the Cedar Rapids Business College and the Weller and Dows Building built a decade later in 1885 (corner of 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue), the latter building designed by the local architectural firm of Smith & Fulkerson. Still other examples included the Calder Block (northwest corner of 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue) erected in 1882, the Ely Building (southwest corner of 2nd Avenue and 3rd Street) in 1881 which housed the Merchants National Bank, and the Mansfield Block (corner of 2nd Street and 2nd Avenue) built prior to 1870 which housed the YMCA in upper level rooms as well as the post office for a time.

Two of the largest commercial blocks completed before 1900 in the downtown included the Kimball Building and the Granby Building. The Kimball Building (northwest corner of 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue, SE) was constructed in c.1888 by a Boston investor and succeeded the Blair Building, a smaller commercial block built on the same site in 1868. The Kimball Building's modern design by the local architectural firm of Josselyn and Taylor included an arcaded first floor, curved wall at the corner, three floors of offices and a simplified cornice and balustraded parapet. The Iowa Railway Land Company, the former Blair Building's owner, was among the Kimball Building's many office tenants. The building burned in 1915 and a portion rebuilt a short time later.

The four-story Granby Building (230 2nd Street, SE) built in 1891 was also designed by the firm of Josselyn and Taylor. It reflected a Richardson Romanesque influence, its massing resembling that of the Rookery Building in Chicago built in 1886. The Granby Building was built by Elmer Higley and they named it after the hometown of his grandmother, Prudence Crane Higley. The Granby housed a variety retail establishments and office tenants through the years including Cedar Rapids' first public library on the second floor beginning in 1897.

One of the last commercial blocks was completed in c. 1905 to house the Cedar Rapids Business College. Austin Palmer, creator of the Palmer Method of penmanship, had opened the college in another downtown location in 1877. When the three-story Palmer Building was completed, the first floor and basement were used for publishing copy books, business forms and other commercial literature connected with business education. A monthly magazine devoted to business penmanship based on the Palmer Method were among the materials published. The two upper floors of the building were used as class rooms for the business college. Palmer died in 1927 but the college continued from this location until 1946 eventually closing in 1973.

The construction of high rise office buildings in the commercial core stimulated growth of the downtown in an upward direction. Like their 1880s equivalents, several major projects were initiated by prominent business families while others were headquarters for banks previously

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  15

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

mentioned. The new buildings took up prominent locations at major intersections replacing many of the important commercial blocks that were only twenty to thirty years old. They soon housed medical and dental offices, insurance firms, real estate companies, architectural offices, photographic studios and business offices of all sorts. Some of the office buildings were built with a speculative eye towards future growth opportunities while others had anchor retail businesses and banks on the first floors or major office tenants planned for one or more upper floors.

Several modern office buildings were completed before World War I, each constructed using a skeletal steel frame and outfitted with passenger and freight elevators, telephones, electrical power and lighting. The Security Building (203 2nd Street, SE) was designed by architects Josselyn and Taylor and was Cedar Rapids' first high-rise office building built using a steel framework and reinforced concrete construction. The 8-story building was finished in 1908 to much local acclaim and originally housed the Security Savings Bank. The American Building (103 2nd Street, SE) was erected in 1913 to house the American Trust and Savings Bank and the typical variety of office tenants in the balance of its nine floors.

Two high rise buildings along 4th Avenue, SE on the south edge of the commercial core were actually manufacturing and wholesale distribution facilities. The 6-story Welch-Cook-Beals Company building (321 3rd Street, SE) was completed in 1909 to house both the wholesale dry-goods facilities and the clothing manufacturing operation of the company. It had the appearance of an office building but its location at the periphery of the commercial core belied the building's manufacturing and jobbing use.

A similar building, the Lyman Building (221 4th Avenue, SE), was located across the street from the Welch-Cook-Beals Company. It was noteworthy for its initial failure rather than its success. Construction on the 7-story steel and reinforced concrete building was underway in 1913 when a section of columns on the sixth and seventh floors failed and collapsed. A five-day rescue eventually located seven bodies including the construction superintendent. Local debate raged for months over the building design, the quality of the contractor's work and suitability of the materials. The opinion of experts put the blame on some of each. The building was completed in 1914 and housed the Lyman Company, millinery manufacturers, until 1933. Century Engineering acquired and renamed the building the Iowa Building. The construction accident was one of hundreds experienced in the building trades across the country as the skeletal steel and reinforced concrete building system was perfected in the decades following the turn-of-the-century.<sup>8</sup>

Office building construction continued during and after World War I. Important buildings included the Higley Building (225 2nd Street, SE) completed in 1918. The 8-story building was constructed

---

<sup>8</sup>Stevens, Nancy, "The Lyman Building Collapse," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 26, 1983, p. 20A.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  16

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

under the direction of Elmer Higley and his son Frederick and located on the corner opposite the Granby Building and Killians Department Store building, both owned by the Higleys as well. The building housed the usual variety of legal and professional offices.

Development of the downtown's most important high-rise office building began in 1916 when the Merchants National Bank acquired the Kimball Building in 1916. The Bank leased the building's offices and retail space until 1925 when the Kimball was demolished and construction begun on a new Merchant's National Bank on the site (222 2nd Avenue, SE). The 12-story building was built under the direction of the Weary and Alford Company, construction engineers, of Chicago. Total cost of the building exceeded \$1 million, a price tag previously unheard of in Cedar Rapids. The building was recognized as a significant advancement in the downtown, its opening in 1926 heralded in a special section in the *Cedar Rapids Republican*. One editorial written about the building could have summed up the spirit of expansion in the downtown as well:

"The new building has raised the skyline of the city, and with it the visions, hopes and aspirations of its already progressive citizens. It has taken a long time and many hours of relentless toil together with unceasing effort and scrutiny to mould and cement together an institution possible of such an undertaking. But the deed has been done and having reached what to them twenty years ago was their El Dorado, the business heads back of that institution now find their gilded realm a few leagues on..."<sup>9</sup>

Despite the advent of the Great Depression, several new office buildings were added during the decade of the 1930s. The 8-story Dows Building (201-207 2nd Avenue, SE) was completed in 1930 under the direction of William Dows to house a series of family-owned businesses. They included the Cedar Rapids Electric Light and Power Company (forerunner to Iowa Electric Co.), Central Iowa Telephone Company, and the CRANDIC (Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railroad), the electric interurban connecting the two eastern Iowa cities. A few years after the Dows Building was finished, a 5-story office building was erected on the opposite corner. The United Fire and Casualty Company located in the building (125 2nd Street, SE) after it was completed in 1933.

### Hotels and Theatres

The commercial core has been the center for hotels and entertainment in Cedar Rapids from its earliest settlement to the present day. As was the custom in many pioneer communities, hotels and boarding houses were quick to establish in crude log buildings. During the 1840s, Shepherd's

---

<sup>9</sup>Coquillette, Calvin, *A History of the Merchants National Bank of Cedar Rapids*, Cedar Rapids, Merchants National Bank, 1981.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   17  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Tavern stood at the intersection of 1st Avenue and 1st Street, SE and was used as a stopping place for travelers. John Young's Astor House was located at few blocks away at 4th Avenue and 1st Avenue, SE. It operated as a boarding house until about 1850.

A series of small hotels were established during the 1850s in simple one and two-story frame buildings. The Coffman House was built along 2nd Street early in the decade. It provided guest quarters in a common sleeping room on the second floor that doubled as a social meeting hall. Three more hotels - the Brown, the Southern and the Plantation - lined the riverbank from 1st Avenue to B Avenue. The Southern Hotel was the most elaborate with three floors and elaborate balconies.

The arrival of the railroad in 1859 and the end of the Civil War made Cedar Rapids the railhead for the migration of settlers headed for western Iowa, the Nebraska Territory and the Dakota Territory. The immigrants would stay at local hotels while obtaining supplies for the trek west. New hotels included the American House (2nd Avenue and 2nd Street) and the Empire House (3rd Avenue and 2nd Street, SE). The American House was favored by commercial travelers and the Empire House was purchased for use as the city hall in the 1880s.

The completion of several additional rail lines into Cedar Rapids by the 1860s prompted construction of several new hotels along the 4th Street railroad corridor. The Northwestern Hotel, the Pullman Hotel, the Norva Hotel and Clifton House went up along 1st Avenue near the passenger depots. A block away at 3rd Street and 1st Avenue, the city's finest hotel was built in 1880. The Grand Hotel had three-stories and featured fine appointments in its guest rooms and restaurant. The Grand catered to elite travelers and the international performers and lyceum lecturers who graced the stage of the Green Opera House after it also opened in 1880.

Other hotels opening before World War I included the Union Hotel, the Allison Hotel, the Montrose, the Lincoln Hotel (later, the Taft Hotel) and the Magnus. The Union Hotel was established in the Weller and Dow Building (corner of 3rd Street and 3rd Avenue) in 1898. The Clifton House burned in a disastrous fire in 1903 that took the lives of several guests and caused injuries to many others. This was the first of a series of downtown and industrial fires to prompt improvements in the city's firefighting capacity. The Allison Hotel was erected on the site of the former Clifton House in 1908 at the southwest corner of 1st Avenue and 4th Street, SE. The Magnus Hotel was built across the alley facing 2nd Avenue, SE along the railroad tracks in 1912.

The first modern hotel built in the downtown was the 7-story Montrose Hotel (3rd Avenue and 3rd Street) constructed just a block away from the Union Station which was located at 4th Avenue and 4th Street, SE. Montrose Hotel was designed by architects Josselyn and Taylor. It opened in 1906 as the result of a promotion by the Cedar Rapids Commercial Club, forerunner of the Chamber of

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   18  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Commerce. A first-class hotel, it was considered a prestigious address for civic and community activities until it was razed.

The Lincoln Hotel (403 2nd Avenue, SE) was established in the former Perfection Manufacturing Company building. This location was adjacent to the railroad corridor and ideally suited for attracting travelers and drummers. It opened before World War I with its name portending the arrival of the Lincoln Highway a short time later. In 1940 the name was changed to the Taft. It continued in operation until 1975 and was razed a few years later.

Two decades after the Montrose opened, another first-class, modern hotel was built in the commercial core. The Roosevelt Hotel opened in 1927 during a wave of downtown construction activity that included the Merchants National Bank and two theatres within a two-year time period. Owned by Chicago interests, the 12-story hotel originally housed 241 sleeping rooms, three public restaurants, a ballroom, three private dining rooms, and a two-story lobby. The economic malaise of the 1930s proved the Roosevelt's downfall and the hotel's owners were forced into bankruptcy in 1932. The hotel was taken over by local business men and after World War II was remodeled.

From pioneer days on, downtown Cedar Rapids was the center for social activities and diversions. Traveling entertainers, musicians, and lyceum speakers made regular stops performing at whatever public hall or theatre was available for the booking. Located one day's travel by train between Chicago and Omaha and between St. Louis and Minneapolis, Cedar Rapids made a convenient stopping point for touring performers.

Communities vied to attract the best performers offering large audiences and the best stages possible. Judge George Greene maintained a theatre in the Union Block to host traveling performers as well as local talent. When audiences outgrew it, he launched an effort to build a new opera house suited to Cedar Rapids' growing stature. Located on 1st Avenue between 1st and 2nd Streets, SE, Greene's Opera House was nearing completion in 1880 when Judge Greene died. For the next four decades, the 1,500-seat Opera House was a center for the performing arts with all of the national stage celebrities of the day making appearances here. In the 1890s the Redpath Chautauqua sponsored a lecture series here and later, the State University of Iowa sponsored extension lectures.

After the turn-of-the-century, Greene's Opera House was one of several stages to host traveling vaudeville troupes. The People's Theatre was located along 1st Street, NE and the Majestic Theatre on 3rd Street, NE. Greene's Opera House closed in the 1920s as a result of increased competition from the small theatres and movie houses.

In the years before and after World War I, Greene's Opera House counted three large theatres

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   19  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

among its competitors. The Strand Theatre (314-318 3rd Avenue, SE) opened in 1915 to a popular reception. The 1,300-seat theatre was lavishly decorated with paintings from Greek mythology on the walls and ceilings. Cedar Rapids' first professional stock acting company, the Strand Players, performed in the theatre as well as vaudeville acts. Shortly after opening, silent pictures were introduced. The theatre changed names and owners frequently becoming the State Theatre in 1926 and the New World Playhouse in 1960. The World closed in 1981.

Both the Iowa Theatre (301 1st Avenue, SE) and Capitol Theatre (Paramount Theatre, 123 3rd Avenue, SE) opened in 1928. The Iowa Theatre was designed to serve as a vaudeville house and a true "movie palace." Its owner, Calvin Bard, retained an Omaha architect, George L. Fisher, who specialized in theatre designs and office buildings. The theatre had approximately 1,500 seats and was outfitted with a Barton organ and an air conditioning system. The theatre's unusual two-story high sign hung at the building's corner and was shaped as an ear of corn bearing the name "Iowa." In addition to the theatre stage and auditorium, the building held a series of small shops and professional offices. Through the years, tenants included a physician, several drug stores, jewelers, candy shops, shoe stores, and barber shops.

The Capitol Theatre had a seating capacity of 1,900 and was considered one of eastern Iowa's showcases. The Capitol's design wrapped office space and retail shops around the theatre in order to provide an alternate source of income for the theatre operations. Technical advancements in the theatre included air-conditioning, three floors of dressing rooms joined by an elevator, a 1,000 kilowatt light board and a Wurlitzer theatre pipe organ. The Capitol, renamed the "Paramount" in 1929, was designed to host a mixture of motion pictures and stage acts but during the 1930s turned exclusively to movies.<sup>10</sup>

*The 4th Street Railroad Corridor*

In the 1850s when Cedar Rapids seriously began recruiting railroads to make connections to Cedar Rapids, local leaders were quick to offer railroad companies easy access to the city. For the central core, this meant guaranteeing railroad interests the exclusive use of the 4th Street public right-of-way as created on the Original Town plat. In 1859 when the Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad was completed to Cedar Rapids, it followed the 4th Street route thus establishing a railroad corridor along the eastern edge of the central business district. The first terminal was constructed near A Avenue, NE.

After the Civil War concluded, other railroads completed lines to Cedar Rapids. Soon additional

---

<sup>10</sup>The Paramount Theatre is listed in the National Register. Newspaper advertisements indicate the Capitol officially changed its name to the Paramount on May 18, 1929.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  20

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

rail facilities sprang up between 1st Avenue and B Avenue, NE. Competition was keen between the railroads forcing passengers to embark from separate depots depending on the lines they chose. In addition to the first depot built by the Chicago and North Western (successor to the Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad), freight houses and passenger depots were built by the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad (later the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad) and the Dubuque and Southwestern Railroad (later the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul R.R.) when these lines were completed in 1865. Facilities for the Illinois Central were completed in the same general area after it entered the city two decades later in 1886.

Construction of the railroads brought additional development along their path through the downtown. In addition to the freight houses owned by the railroads, private warehouses and open freight yards were soon established adjacent to the 4th Street corridor. These shipping and receiving facilities, crude one and two-story buildings, were intended to be utilitarian and serviceable. Ancillary facilities to service rail passengers included hotels and restaurants such as the cluster of hotels that was built along 1st Avenue west of 4th Street. Hostelrys such as the Northwestern Hotel and the Pullman Hotel took their names from their association with the rail lines.

Cedar Rapids' hometown-sponsored railroad, the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad, marked its twenty year anniversary with construction of a new 4-story headquarters building in 1885. The building was designed by the local architectural firm of Josselyn and Taylor and was built along 1st Avenue near the 4th Street railroad corridor. Daily management of the 368-mile trunk line route extending from Burlington to Spirit Lake was handled from this facility. The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern was acquired by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad in the mid-1880s and maintained as a division of the parent company.

The local economy was flourishing as the decade of the 1890s began. Talk of constructing a union passenger station soon began. It was argued that such a facility would be a great convenience for passengers embarking and disembarking from different rail lines. It would also be a sign that Cedar Rapids was a first-class rail city - a reputation civic leaders thought well-deserved with four major railroads and seven separate lines servicing the city. The Manufacturers and Jobbers Association, a bureau of the Cedar Rapids Board of Trade - forerunner of the Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce, advocated construction of the new union station making presentations to the various rail companies. The construction of the station was deemed so important that permission was granted to build it at the intersection of 4th Street and 4th Avenue, SE opposite Greene Square.

Construction of Union Station was announced in 1896 with the Chicago and North Western Railroad and the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad agreeing to participate in the venture. Charles S. Frost of Chicago was selected as architect for the project and a price tag of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   21  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

\$105,000 was proposed for the building. Not to be outdone by its competitors, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad announced the next year that it, too, would build a new passenger station along 4th Street, SE between 1st and 2nd Avenues, SE. Both facilities were welcomed by the traveling public and proud local residents though the goal of a "union station" was only partially met by construction of the two new passenger depots.

At the upper and lower ends of the central business district, several of the railroad lines crossed the Cedar River on steel truss bridges by the time the Union Station was completed. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul RR crossed the river at 9th Avenue, SE and the Chicago and Northwestern RR crossed between D and E Avenues, NE. During the decades before and after the turn-of-the-century, these crossing points saw the development of major industrial sites and jobbing facilities. At the upstream crossing, the facilities of the North Star Milling Company (later known as Quaker Oats Co.) was established. Further upstream was a large tract of land owned and developed by the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern RR for use as machine shops. The site was partially on built-up land. The shops contained several round houses, sand and coal tipples, engine and car shops, an ice house, spur lines, and "Y"-tracks. At the downstream crossing point, a series of wholesale warehouses and open storage yards for lumber and coal were established. As a result, growth of the central business district was effectively contained by the routing of the rail lines and the attendant industrial and commercial development.

*Churches and Civic Facilities*

There was no single pattern followed for the building of churches and civic facilities in Cedar Rapids. The locations were the result of available land, the gifts of benefactors, and the individual needs of a building project. The common factor they responded to among many through the years, however, was the increasing value of real estate in the central business district. For churches looking to maximize their assets, this factor was a catalyst to relocate outside of the downtown as values rose. Civic facilities that needed to stay in the downtown found themselves relegated to locations on the periphery of the central business district. By 1900 the result was the elimination of churches from the commercial core and the establishment of a cluster of civic facilities and churches along the outer edge of the downtown mainly along 5th and 6th Streets from A Avenue, NE to 7th Avenue, SE. An examination of how this land-use practice evolved follows.

Soon after its founding, the church-going population of Cedar Rapids was holding services in public halls and meeting rooms. Within a few years, the congregations grew and financial resources generally allowed the construction of separate church buildings. These buildings not only marked the religious success of their congregations but the growing population of Cedar Rapids and its economic well-being. These modest first generation churches intermixed with commercial buildings and dwellings on lots scattered throughout the Original Town plat. The Presbyterians, Baptists,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  22

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Episcopalians, and Methodists all erected buildings before the Civil War.

Spurred by a quadrupling of population between 1860 and 1870, many of Cedar Rapids' churches found themselves outgrowing their buildings. New buildings were constructed for the Presbyterians, Universalists, Baptists, Lutherans and Methodists within a decade of the Civil War's end. Their spires were sprinkled throughout the downtown, their bells tolling a competition of sorts among the congregations.

Continued growth during the latter decades of the century combined with other factors to encourage the abandonment of these first generation church buildings. Among the factors considered was the considerable rise in property values due to the increase in surrounding commercial activity. At the same time, the congestion and noise of the commercial core and railroad corridor made the central locations of the churches less desirable. Four rail lines followed the 4th Street railroad corridor through the downtown. At-grade crossings for passenger train arrivals and departures along with the constant switching necessary to make up freight trains made the central part of the business district inconvenient to reach from some of the growing residential districts.

Two solutions were employed to deal with the situation - erection of new, larger churches in locations more central to the church's membership or construction of larger churches on the existing sites. Several downtown churches demonstrate this pattern of church building and rebuilding. Local Presbyterians were the first congregation to erect a building of their own in the downtown in 1850. Located in the heart of the new town at the southeast corner of 2nd Avenue and 3rd Street, SE, the church was referred to as "Little Muddy" because its soft lime stucco exterior turned to mud every time it rained. After the Civil War, church membership rose and the congregation outgrew this inadequate building. Members selected a site just a few blocks away at 2nd Avenue and 5th Street for a new stone building completed in 1869. The move was actually greater than the short distance made it appear. By removing to the opposite side of the railroad tracks, congestion and noise associated with train traffic were significantly reduced. The wisdom of this decision was born out by the fact that First Presbyterian Church continues at this location today having been enlarged with several additions.

Examples of other churches that got their start in the downtown but eventually relocated in residential neighborhoods included several churches that were once located along 5th Street, SE. St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church followed the example of First Presbyterian when they moved from their 1856 building located at 4th Avenue 3rd Street to the northeast corner of 4th Avenue and 5th Street, SE less than twenty years later in 1873. First Christian Church adopted an existing dwelling at the southeast corner of 4th Avenue and 5th Street, SE for its home in 1881. Both St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church and the First Christian Church relocated to new buildings along 3rd Avenue, SE in 1913.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   23  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Other churches to relocate from the commercial core included the First Baptist Church and the Second Presbyterian Church. The First Baptist congregation held services in the Franklin Hall on 1st Avenue beginning in 1860 and later in Baptist Hall on 1st Street, SE. In 1869, the First Baptist Church, a twin-spired building, was erected at the northeast corner of 2nd Avenue and 3rd Street, SE. When that building was destroyed by fire in 1915, the congregation removed to a location along 2nd Avenue, SE outside of the downtown. The Second Presbyterian Church met in Daniel's Hall along 1st Avenue until its first building was constructed at the southeast corner of 3rd Avenue and 3rd Street, SE. Shortly after 1900, church leaders made the decision to relocate outside of the downtown and in 1904 were the first downtown congregation to relocate along 3rd Avenue, SE. The new church took the name Westminster Presbyterian.

Two other early churches originally located further distant from the central business district, decisions that allowed them to stay at these same locations despite the changes and growth that took place in the downtown after 1900. In 1852, the Episcopalians began construction of a church at the southwest corner of A Avenue and Sixth Street, NE. Grace Episcopal Church's location was a good distance from the downtown in part as a result of the persuasion of one of its leading members, Judge George Greene. Greene owned Mound Farm north and east of the city. He gave the church the deed to the lot on which the new building was erected. When the building was outgrown less than forty years later, a new church was built on the same site in 1890.

The other church to build in a location removed from the commercial core was the First Universalist Church (600 3rd Avenue, SE). When completed in 1878, the congregation feared that the site was too far in the country. The site and the building served the congregation well with it continuing in use more than 125 years later.

Buildings erected exclusively for civic functions were slower to appear than churches. County government was centered in Marion until after World War I while city government was initially housed in rented rooms in privately owned buildings and halls throughout the commercial core. Likewise, both private lending libraries and the city's first public library used rented space. And the same was true of the YMCA and YWCA, both occupying rented rooms in the upper levels of commercial blocks before locating in buildings of their own.

The first public property to be developed in downtown Cedar Rapids was Washington Square. The two acre tract was included in the 1841 plat of the town and tradition has it that the land was given to the city for park use by Judge George Greene in 1843. The square was located between 3rd and 4th Avenues, SE and the 4th Street railroad corridor and 5th Street, SE. Beginning in the years immediately preceding and following the Civil War, churches and public facilities were developed around the perimeter of the square.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   24  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

The construction of Washington School came first in 1855. Located along 4th Avenue, SE facing the square, it replaced an earlier school house at the northwest corner of 2nd Avenue and 5th Street. Washington School was used as a grade school until about 1870 when a portion of the building became Cedar Rapids' high school. By 1886 with the construction of new elementary schools in other areas of the city, Washington School was exclusively used as a high school. A few years later plans were made for construction of a new Washington High School on the same site opposite Washington Square. The new building was completed in 1891.

Development around Washington Square continued with the establishment of three churches discussed previously. They located along 5th Street, SE beginning with the First Presbyterian Church in 1869 and continuing with construction of St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church in 1873. In 1881 the First Christian congregation converted an existing private residence to church use located at the southeast corner of 4th Avenue and 5th Street opposite the square.

Despite the fact that Washington Square was Cedar Rapids only public park, it was not well developed or frequented. Its grade was irregular and generally several feet below the surrounding streets. The park was not covered with walkways or formal gardens. In 1891 Mayor John Henderson ordered the land cleared of mature cottonwood trees and the grade raised to that of the surrounding streets. New trees and grass were planted and paved walks installed. These improvements accompanied construction of the new school and efforts by the Manufacturers and Jobbers Association to attract construction of a new Union Station opposite the square along the 4th Street railroad corridor. Their efforts were successful and the Union Station opened in 1896. Proximity to Union Station proved fortunate when Washington Square hosted Teddy Roosevelt before a large gathering of local residents.

Washington Square remained the only city park in Cedar Rapids until Redmond Park was acquired in 1892 and Bever Park the following year. With the 5th Street side of Washington Square lined with churches, the only side left to be developed with public facilities was along 3rd Avenue, SE. This side of the square contained a few dwellings and a commercial laundry in the 1890s. Shortly after 1900 construction of the Cedar Rapids Public Library at the corner of 5th Street and 3rd Avenue, SE completed development of Washington Square's perimeter.

Cedar Rapids first public library had opened in 1897 on the second floor the Granby Building downtown and within a few years moved to larger quarters in the Dows Building. A permanent solution was needed for housing the library's growing collection and increasing patronage. In 1901 Andrew Carnegie offered \$75,000 for a library building if the city would complete the proposed riverfront plan then under consideration which would mean locating the library on May's Island. A flood that inundated the island in the spring of 1902 dashed the idea and library backers sought and received Carnegie's support for another site. The site was acquired in 1903 and the firm of

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  25

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Josselyn and Taylor was retained to design the new building. The Classical Style of the building was popularly received and both the collection and usage expanded in subsequent years.

The last civic facility erected on Washington Square was the Young Women's Christian Association. The YWCA grew out of the Bohemian Young Women's Union established in 1891 and officially organized as the YWCA in 1893. The group occupied various downtown rooms and in 1898 opened the downtown's first cafeteria. Following a successful community fund drive in 1911, \$80,000 was raised to acquire and remodel the vacant St. Paul's Methodist Episcopal Church parsonage on the square. The building was expanded in the 1950s with an addition onto the former church site. The YWCA offered a variety of programs, some aimed at young working women in "the loop" and others extended to female factory workers. The YWCA continues its operations from this location today.<sup>11</sup>

Washington Square's development entered a new phase after World War II. In 1949 Washington High School was closed and the building razed a short time later. Washington Square's name was changed to "Greene Square" before 1908. The Union Station gradually saw less and less passenger traffic and in 1961 the stately building was razed and 4th Avenue, SE reopened to vehicular traffic. A public rest room building was completed in Greene Square in the 1960s.

Other civic facilities in the downtown included the Young Mens Christian Association built at the northeast corner of 1st Avenue and 5th Street, NE. The YMCA had occupied rooms in various downtown commercial blocks and in 1888 acquired a building at the northwest corner of 1st Avenue and 1st Street, NE. The YMCA was eventually outfitted with a marble swimming pool which obtained its water from the nearby Cedar River. Some accounts note the legendary frigidity of the water was a result of its source. In 1918 as World War I was nearing its close, the new YMCA was completed up the 1st Avenue hill. In addition to gymnasium space, the building contained a dormitory with 93 rooms and a small theatre. This building was replaced by the new YMCA as part of the redevelopment of the north side of 1st Avenue in the 1970s.

The development of city and county governmental buildings on May's Island has been discussed previously. Construction of the Cedar Rapids central fire station took place in 1917. Located at 427 1st Street, SE, the two-bay building was outfitted for motorized vehicles when it was built. Its construction came as a part of a series of fire stations completed between 1906 and 1925 in

---

<sup>11</sup>The YMCA moved from rented rooms in the Mansfield Block into its own building in 1888. The building was located at the northwest corner of 1st Avenue and 1st Street, NE and contained the city's first swimming pool complete with marble walls. The YMCA's growing membership was accommodated in 1919 when a new buildings was completed a the northeast corner of 1st Avenue and 5th Street, NE. A modern annex was added in 1973 and the older building had its exterior remodeled in 1980.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  26

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

various locations. Most were designed to service fires that might arise at industrial sites such as the disastrous fires of the early years of the century that occurred at Quaker Oats Company in 1903, the Clifton House hotel in 1903 and the Douglas Starch Works in 1919.

*The West Side Commercial District*

The West Side Commercial District extends two blocks away from the Cedar River along 1st, 2nd and 3rd Avenues, SW. Originally platted as part of the town of Kingston in 1852, the area was annexed to Cedar Rapids in 1870. It was commonly referred to as "West Cedar Rapids" in later years. The area saw a mixture of small scale commercial buildings, single family dwellings and double-houses established before 1900. A combination of factors contributed to making the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Avenue, SW lots suitable for more concentrated commercial development in the decades preceding World War I.

One factor was the general growth experienced on the west side before 1900. New industrial plants were built along the Chicago and North Western Railroad during the 1880s and soon working class residential districts developed nearby. As the population of the west side grew, so too did the commercial advantage of the west side business district.

The introduction of mass transit connecting both sides of the river was a second factor. Horse drawn streetcars were introduced to the west side in 1882 and the car shops were built at 3rd Avenue, SW and 3rd Street, SW the following year. But the horse drawn routes proved unprofitable and the west side lines were pulled up in 1890. The next year following a reorganization and buy-out, new track was laid for an electrified system. The presence thereafter of reliable mass transit enhanced the value of the west side business district.

A third factor involved the general growth experienced in the central business district on the east bank of the river. Construction of new banks and office buildings on multi-lot parcels saw a scarcity in smaller commercial lots develop in the downtown after 1900. Commercial real estate values rose in response, and, as a result, the advantage of west side locations was enhanced.

A major building initiative in the west side business district was a fourth factor. The Peoples Savings Bank opened in 1900 maintaining rented quarters in a small building at the southwest corner of 3rd Avenue and 1st Street, SW. The bank moved into a larger building to the west a few years later and by 1908 was in the market for a permanent home. They acquired the site of their first building and in 1909 the board of directors retained Chicago architect Louis Sullivan to design a new bank building. The resulting building was completed in 1911, the second in a series of small Midwestern banks designed by the architect between 1907 and 1919. The bank's design was hailed as a "pleasing departure from the Grecian temple style of bank architecture, which however

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  27

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

beautiful...bids fair to become tiresome by its monotony."<sup>12</sup>

In subsequent years a series of one, two and three-story brick veneered buildings were built in the west side business district with most concentrated along 3rd Avenue, SW. In 1911, the same year the bank opened, Abe and Leo Smulekoff constructed a new furniture store (107-115 3rd Avenue, SW; nonextant) adjacent to the Peoples Savings Bank. Down the block at 219-221 3rd Avenue, SW the Warner Building was finished and occupied briefly by a bottling works before a meat shop and grocery store opened in the building's two shop spaces.

The next year in 1912, the Gatto Building (102-104 3rd Avenue, SW) was completed across the street from the Peoples Savings Bank. It was designed by the Cedar Rapids' architectural firm of Deiman and Fiske and like the other buildings along 3rd Avenue, SW contained a geometric patterned parapet and brick corbeling. Gatto's produce store was located in one shop space and Pohorsky Clothing next door. A meat market, grocery store, cafe and tavern variously occupied the building in later years. The 3rd Avenue, SW building boom continued two years later when the Colonial Theater opened next door at 108 3rd Avenue, SW. The theater's geometric brick and terra cotta decoration imitated the exterior treatments of neighboring buildings. The theater closed during the 1930s and subsequently housed a variety of retail businesses and offices.

World War I briefly interrupted growth along 3rd Avenue. The next building to appear was a one-story, five-bay brick building at 201 3rd Avenue, SW. The building's design included elaborate brickwork patterns and terra cotta detailing recalling the fine brickwork in the decade old People's Savings Bank. Occupancy was sporadic in the building's early years with a hardware store, bakery and barber shop among the early tenants. At the end of World War II, the Acme Greeting Card Company acquired the building and two years later in 1947 was the sole occupant.

When buildings were constructed at 110 3rd Avenue, SW in 1932 and ten years later at 220 Third Avenue, SW, they continued to follow the example set by earlier building designs. The Local Drug and Lunch Co. was the first occupant of the simple one-story brick building at 110 3rd Avenue, SW. The larger, more elaborate one-story building at 220 3rd Avenue, SW was the new home for the Great A & P Tea Company, a nationally franchised grocery store. Its brick veneer exterior included a two-tone brick finish and an arched parapet extending across the front facade.

Upper levels of the 3rd Avenue buildings provided office space, medical offices and apartments. The businesses occupying storefronts principally served the west side but concerns such as the Peoples Savings Bank developed a city wide following. Others, such as Smulekoff's Furniture

---

<sup>12</sup>"The Peoples Savings Bank of Cedar Rapids, Iowa," *The Bankers Magazine*, 1912 (reprinted in "Peoples Bank The First Seventy Five Years," Peoples Bank and Trust Co., Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1978.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   28  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Store, eventually relocated to the central business district on the east bank as their operation expanded. The west side business district reached full development by World War II. Though tenants changed through the years, it has continued to serve as a neighborhood shopping district.

### *ii. Industrial Corridors in Cedar Rapids, 1865 - 1945*

#### *East Bank of the Cedar River*

In the United States industrial land use is often associated with transportation. Industrial waterfronts follow rivers, canals and lake fronts. Industrial corridors parallel railroad main lines, bridges and spurs. And wagon routes and highways spawn industrial tracts and parks. This pattern of industrial land use development was true in Cedar Rapids which before 1900 already laid claim to the title of Iowa's manufacturing center.

In Cedar Rapids, the earliest industrial development occurred on the banks of the Cedar River. The city's early promoters planned industrial sites in lots that fronted on the river and Commercial or 1st Street. To enhance the value of these lots, the city's founders urged construction of a dam across the river at B Avenue, NE. When completed, the water power created became a second reason for the river edge to attract industry. As described above, the east bank of the river was soon home to flour milling operations which took advantage of both the promise of river transit and reality of water power. Later, when steam power was adopted, the mills were able to continue to operate from their waterfront locations, distributing their product locally by wagon.

Upstream of the flour mills, the Cedar Rapids waterworks located adjacent to the Chicago and North Western Railroad bridge at the intersection of D Avenue and 2nd Street, NE in 1875. The privately owned waterworks was initially envisioned as a source of fire protection. The coal-fired steam pumps of the waterworks soon provided river water through five miles of mains laid throughout the downtown. In 1888 the river was replaced by artesian wells as a water source and potable water became available throughout the delivery system. In 1896 an early metropolitan sand filtration system using river water replaced the wells. By 1903 the system had grown to 39 miles of water mains. Citywide improvements continued as Cedar Rapids' population grew and in 1929, a modern filtration plant was begun upstream at J Avenue and 7th Street, NE. The old plant was abandoned and the site absorbed by the Quaker Oats facility.

Other industrial sites along the east bank appeared up and downstream of the commercial core, their locations prompted by the presence of railroad lines and bridges. Major upstream industrial plants included the North Star Oatmeal Company (Quaker Oats Company) between, the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad Machine Shops, and the Eagle Brewery adjacent to the Cedar River's backwaters.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   29  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

The North Star Oatmeal Company was established in 1873. John Stuart and his son, Robert, were Scottish born Canadians drawn to Cedar Rapids because of the suitability of the area for growing oats. Initially, North Star sold the oatmeal it produced to Scotland and England. Their first mill depended on water power but soon they added a steam engine. A short time after getting started the senior Stuart suffered an injury that removed him from the business. Local businessman George Douglas joined Robert Stuart in North Star's management. Eventually, refinements in processing produced an oatmeal product that American breakfast eaters preferred. Production jumped from 200 barrels a day to 750 barrels in 1885 and the plant covered more than two-thirds of a city block.

Fire destroyed the North Star mills in 1876 and again in 1887. When rebuilt in 1888, North Star was considered one of the finest milling properties in America and was a major employer in the city. The same year, North Star joined approximately twenty mills from Ohio to Nebraska to form the American Cereal Company. They distributed their products under the tradename "Quaker."

Another tragic fire put 800 people out of work at the American Cereal Company mill following an explosion in 1905. Local residents worried that the \$1.5 million plant would not be reconstructed. The decision to rebuild and reorganize under the name Quaker Oats Company came later that year. The Cedar Rapids facility continued to expand in subsequent years. Additions to the plant included cleaning houses, elevators, warehouses, drying houses, mills for processing flour, oats and corn, and variety of packaging buildings. The rebuilt 1905 mill with subsequent additions eventually became the world's largest cereal mill occupying a 22-acre site between the B Avenue, NE wagon/automobile bridge and the Chicago and North Western Railroad Bridge.

Further upstream was a large tract of land owned and developed by the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern RR for use as machine shops. The site was partially developed on built-up land located between the main channel of the Cedar River and the slough fed by natural springs and the river's backwaters. This body of water came to be known as Cedar Lake in later years. The shops contained several round houses, sand and coal tipples, engine and car shops, an ice house, spur lines, and "Y"-tracks.

Along the southern edge of Cedar Lake several other grain processing plants located along the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad line. The most important of these operations was the Eagle Brewery located on 8th Street and C Avenue, NE. The brewery's owner was Christian Magnus, a German immigrant who settled in Cedar Rapids before the Civil War. In 1868 he bought out his partner and former boss, Jacob Wetzell. Magnus' operation was successful and by 1887, the Eagle Brewery employed 35 hands to turn out 25,000 barrels of beer annually. The operation had one setback in 1873 when the Wetzell Brewery burned. The replacement brewery was considered the finest west of the Mississippi when completed. The four-story masonry brewery

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  30

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

contained large storage vaults built into the hillside for cool storage during the aging process. During the protracted prohibition campaign, Magnus served four years as president of the Iowa State Brewers Association. The company ceased brewing operations prior to the passage of statewide prohibition in 1915 but continued as a bottling works until the mid-1920s.

The earliest major industrial site downstream from the commercial district was the meat packing plant of T.M. Sinclair and Company established in 1871 by John and Thomas M. Sinclair. These Irish immigrants settled on Cedar Rapids as a suitable community after considering a handful of other cities in Minnesota and Iowa. They acquired a 16-acre site about a mile downstream of the central business district outside of the city limits along the route of the newly consolidated Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad and the Cedar River. Soon the company was slaughtering 2,500 hogs each day and employing 500 men, many young Bohemian and German immigrants who lived in the neighborhoods next to the plant to the east and southeast. Half the Sinclair pork was shipped to Great Britain - testimony of the importance of the railroads in connecting Cedar Rapids industry to distant markets.

John Sinclair moved from Cedar Rapids within a few years but Thomas stayed and played a strong role in the community until he died in a factory accident in 1881. Family members continued the company constructing a new plant on the original site in 1906. In 1913 Sulzberger & Sons purchased the Sinclair family's stock but continued the Sinclair product name. Financial difficulties forced a restructuring for Sulzberger three years later. The resultant firm, Wilson & Co., became one of the "Big Four" meat packing concerns by the 1930s. During the 1940s the company became Cedar Rapids' largest employer with 2,500 workers. Successive reorganizations eventually resulted in loss of the Sinclair name from the company and product lines. The company's reorganization as "Wilson Foods" in 1976 was followed by a period of stiff competition and eventually, a filing for bankruptcy. The company was sold to Farmstead Foods in 1984 and closed in 1990.

### *West Bank of the Cedar River*

On the west bank of the river, several mills began operation after the Civil War. One of the most important was a planing mill established by Williams and Hunting Company in 1876. It became a major supplier of sash, doors, moldings, store and bank fixtures, and refrigerators. By 1900, the company had 125 employees and distributed their products throughout Iowa, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Minnesota and Wisconsin. The growth of the company paralleled that of Cedar Rapids residential districts with new dwellings outfitted in locally produced millwork. The company operated from a series of buildings located in the 400 block of 1st Street, NW near the B Avenue, NE - F Avenue, NW wagon bridge. A short distance downstream, the Merritt and Allen Planing Mill operated. Merritt and Allen, a much smaller operation, manufactured sash, doors,

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  31

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

moldings and "cracker box show covers."

Another industrial concern located upstream of Williams and Hunting along the west bank was the Hubbard Ice Company. Established in 1883 along 1st Street and K Avenue, NW, the Hubbard Ice Company maintained a series of ice houses that stored ice harvested from the river. In addition to household use, Hubbard supplied ice for all of the refrigerated cars operated by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific RR

Downstream from Mays Island along the west bank of the river, a series of smaller industrial operations located in the decades following the Civil War. The Cedar Rapids Candy Company (519 H St., SW) formed in 1892 and ten years later manufactured a variety of confectionery products including its well-known line of "Acme Chocolates." The company employed 75 hands in the three-story brick and stone building located along the riverfront. The company's 80 varieties of Acme Chocolates were promoted by six traveling salesmen throughout the state of Iowa.

Further south along the Cedar River, another major food processing concern located about the same time that the Cedar Rapids Candy Company got underway. George and Walter Douglas had been owners in the North Star Oatmeal Company and chose to sell their family's interests when the company joined the American Cereal Company in 1888. A few years later, George and Walter Douglas organized the Douglas Company as a linseed oil processor. The company operated successfully for five years and in 1899 was sold to the American Linseed Company. The Douglas brothers interest in agricultural product processing then turned to another locally produced crop - corn. In 1903 the two organized Douglas and Company to produce cornstarch. Within a short time it had developed into the largest starchworks west of the Mississippi processing 6,000 bushels of corn per day. This figure grew to 20,000 bushels per day by World War I.

Douglas and Company's future looked bright at war's end, and then, tragedy struck in the spring of 1919. A sudden, horrific explosion and fire turned much of the plant to rubble killing 42 people. As a spirit of grief and economic doom settled over the city, the question of rebuilding the plant became uppermost. By year's end, the Douglas family controlled what was left of the company and made the decision to sell the property to Penick and Ford, Ltd., Inc., a Louisiana-based firm experienced in sugar-cane syrup and molasses processing. Local investors in the new plant included former workers at Douglas and Company as well as George Douglas. The Chamber of Commerce helped in assembling additional land for the new facility. Rebuilding began in 1920 with the new \$8 million plant on line early the next year. Penick and Ford grew steadily in subsequent years as their corn starches and sweeteners became essential ingredients in hundreds of American food products. The company had a \$1 million payroll by the late 1930s with a manufacturing capacity of 33,000 bushels per day.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  32

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

By the beginning of World War II, an industrial corridor stretched along both banks of the Cedar River extending from the Municipal Waterworks downstream nearly three miles to the sprawling site Wilson & Co.'s meat packing operation. In between, the world's largest cereal mill and one of the country's most modern corn sweetener facilities turned Iowa agricultural products into food for the war effort and the homefront.

### *Railroad Corridors*

In the years following the Civil War, Cedar Rapids' railroad lines served as magnets for industrial development. The routes selected by the railroads followed courses with a minimal amount of terrain change making them suitable for the construction of factories, open storage yards and railroad spurs. Railroad corridors were also free from the threat of flood posed by some riverfront locations. Over time, the most important factor would be the presence of able and willing workers in the neighborhoods through which the railroad corridors meandered.

Construction of Cedar Rapids' railroad corridors began on the eve of the Civil War when the first of four major railroad lines that would eventually be constructed through the city was completed. The Chicago, Iowa and Nebraska Railroad was finished in 1859 after a land grant from the state legislature was received. The line provided direct rail connections to Chicago via Clinton, Iowa. Construction further west was not completed until after the Civil War when the route across the state was leased and later sold to the Chicago and North Western Railroad.

Separate rail connections after the Civil War were made to the north via the Cedar Rapids and St. Paul Railroad in 1865, and the south via the Cedar Rapids and Burlington Railroad in 1866. Promoted largely by local Cedar Rapids residents, these lines later were proudly called the "Home Road." In 1868 a consolidation of the two was completed. The newly organized company, the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad, built major repair shops, switchyards, and supply facilities upstream of the downtown and a general office building in the commercial core. The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad was eventually operated by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad as its north-south route between St. Louis and St. Paul with connections to points east and west along the main line between Davenport, Des Moines and Council Bluffs.

The third railroad line completed was the Dubuque and Southwestern Railroad. It finished a branch from Marion into Cedar Rapids in 1865. This railroad was sold to the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad in 1878 and was later extended from Marion to Omaha and Kansas City. The fourth major railroad to connect to Cedar Rapids was the Illinois Central Railroad with a feeder line to the main line that ran through Manchester to the north in 1886.

With completion of the four trunk lines through Cedar Rapids, railroad lines crisscrossed the west

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  33

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

side, the downtown, and the riverfront. Their routes established extensive industrial corridors and warehouse districts and, in turn, delineated working class residential neighborhoods. After the arrival of railroads in the 1860s, virtually every new or expanding industry of importance in Cedar Rapids from meat packing to oatmeal and grain processing to metal working companies located facilities along one of the four railroad routes or on readily accessible rail spurs. The river had been the impetus for a town site for Cedar Rapids but the railroads gave physical structure to the town and the means for growth.

By the turn-of-the-century, Cedar Rapids claimed to be the railroad "traffic pivot of the middle west." Direct connections were available to all major cities in the region and nearly 1,750 stations in Iowa alone. More than 200 trains arrived or departed from Cedar Rapids daily. Because of the substantial passenger and freight service originating in Cedar Rapids as well as the considerable servicing facilities for the Rock Island, Milwaukee and Northwestern railroads, thousands of railroad employees found it necessary or convenient to make Cedar Rapids their home. Railroad men of all sorts including engineers, firemen, conductors, switchmen, brakemen, yardmen, mail service workers, freighter operators, station clerks, baggagemen, machinists, and dozens of other specialized workers made Cedar Rapids neighborhoods their homes.

A well-known railroad worker neighborhood soon located on the west side of the Cedar River opposite the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern RR Shops north of the downtown. Here hundreds of modest residences, rooming houses and apartment buildings were built and occupied by railroad workers who commuted to work via the boardwalk built along the Chicago and North Western Railroad bridge located at the foot of J Avenue, NW. Beginning as early as the 1870s, the railroad company had difficulty meeting its payroll and workers were paid with checks that were delayed in payment - "time checks." Accommodating local merchants recognized the paychecks as good as cash. Over time, the workers were referred to as "time checkers" and their west side neighborhood as "Time Check."

Cedar Rapids also had a disproportionate number of railroad conductors scattered throughout its residential neighborhoods. This was due in large part to the location of the national headquarters for the Order of Railroad Conductors (ORC) in Cedar Rapids. The ORC, one of the major labor unions in the rail industry, had more than 45,000 members by 1906 with insurance and banking divisions as well as a department dedicated to publication of the *Railroad Conductor* magazine. Whether Cedar Rapids was selected as a national headquarters because of the large number of railroad conductors residing here or vice versa is not clear. Quarters for the ORC were in the Masonic Temple building in the central business district.

The presence of extensive railroad service in Cedar Rapids led to other types of rail dependent commerce and related jobs. For example, wholesale jobbers built warehouses along rail lines to

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  34

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

enable convenient distribution of products by rail over a multi-state region. This in turn meant jobs for warehouse handlers, shipping agents, supervisors and "commercial travelers" or salesmen. Dozens of wholesale operations were thriving by the turn-of-the-century with "commercial traveler" the most common employment of residents of neighborhoods northeast and southeast of the downtown. Another example of rail dependent employment, were the jobs created by the Railway Mail Service. Dozens of postal clerks, sorters and handlers employed by this operation resided in east side Cedar Rapids neighborhoods.

Railroads continued as a major source of employment through the Great Depression and World War II. The periodic demise of railroad company profits resulted in employment cutbacks but rail employees nevertheless proved to be stabilizing influences in many neighborhoods. Extensive examinations of city directories from the 1890s through the 1940s show a frequent pattern of railroad workers occupying the same residences for twenty or more years, all the time working either in the same railroad position, transferring laterally or moving up over time. In areas like the Time Check neighborhood where lay-offs were more frequent and paychecks less dependable, railroad employees had a more difficult time. Here, workers moved more frequently and house rentals were more common than homeownership.<sup>13</sup>

Railroads also continued to be one of the principal factors defining the urban geography of Cedar Rapids after the turn-of-the-century. The major access points and approaches to Cedar Rapids remained with several main line by-passes added south of the city limits to circumvent the congestion of the downtown. The railroad bridges continued in the same locations: at D Ave., NE and J Ave., NW; 9th Ave., SE and 9th Ave., SW; and downstream of the T.M. Sinclair Co. And, most important to the appearance of residential neighborhoods, alignment of the railroad right-of-ways did not change after the mid-1880s.

Rail lines paralleled the Cedar River on the east bank hugging the edges of the bluffs upstream and downstream of the business district. Another line followed the cut created by McCleods Run above Cedar Lake. On the west side, the lines followed diagonal routes as cut through the alluvial plain that extended away from the Cedar River. Facilities to service the trunk line railroads were generally established on the east side of the river before 1900.

An examination of railroad journals and Sanborn Company Maps from the 1880s through the 1940s provides a clear indication of the physical plant necessary to sustain the rail operations of the four trunk lines that passed through Cedar Rapids. In addition to the building stock typically expected -

---

<sup>13</sup>Svendsen, Marlys, *Historical and Architectural Survey Report for Community Development Block Grant Neighborhoods, Cedar Rapids, Iowa*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa: City of Cedar Rapids, Department of Planning and Redevelopment, (September, 1995).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   35  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

freight and passenger depots - each line maintained a round house with at least three stalls, ice house, water tanks, coal sheds and tipples, sand sheds, tool houses, and baggage rooms.

The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad, Cedar Rapids' "hometown railroad," maintained the most substantial facilities of any of the railroads servicing the city. Its corporate headquarters was located in a four-story office building erected by the company adjoining the 4th Street Railroad Corridor at 409-13 1st Avenue, SE and its passengers were served in the Union Station located at 4th Avenue, SE opposite Washington Square. The company's major local real estate investment was in the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Shops located northwest of E Avenue, NE between Cedar Lake and the Cedar River.

By the time the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad was acquired by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific RR in 1903, the shops contained a substantial collection of brick, frame and iron clad buildings. The 1913 Sanborn Company Map shows a 49-stall, brick round house; a stone tank repair and casting storage building; an oil house, boiler shop, blacksmith shop, coach house/paint shop, and machine shop, all brick; a sand shed, supply house, coke shed, two lumber sheds and four sheds, all frame; and two iron clad sheds. During the booming decade of the 1920s, the company made a series of improvements to the shops. An addition was made to the machine shop, a water treatment plant was constructed and a woodworking mill was erected, all in 1923. The following year, the round house stalls were extended and a new engine house and repair shop were built. The hard times of the following decade and the general decline of the Rock Island company saw few improvements at the shops. The return of wartime prosperity saw construction of a new 12-stall engine house in 1944-45 for a cost of \$317,000.

Railroads joined Cedar Rapids to other communities but streetcar lines allowed the city to be both internally connected and linked to nearby Marion. Between 1879 and 1890 both steam powered and horse drawn streetcars were operated between Marion and Cedar Rapids and on a series of Cedar Rapids' routes. In 1891 the system was proving too expensive to operate and was acquired by a group of local promoters for electrical conversion. By 1910, nearly 13 miles of track operated in Cedar Rapids on both sides of the river with an additional 2.8 miles connecting to Marion from the northern corporate limits at Kenwood Park. Streetcars operated every 15 to 20 minutes along various routes making for an efficient transit system.

Electrification was not limited to streetcar lines, however. In 1904 the first electric powered interurban was completed by the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway, commonly called the "CRANDIC." The 27-mile route was covered in 75 minutes with 13 round trips made each day in 1904. When the electric interurban was established with a line to Iowa City, its service facilities were constructed on the west side where land was cheaper and more readily available. Interurban service to the north began ten years later with operation of the Waterloo, Cedar Rapids

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  36

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

and Northern Railway. It operated from 1914 until 1938, never proving as profitable as its sister line to the south. Service on the CRANDIC boomed during the 1920s but dropped off during the Depression years to a low of just eight trips daily by 1932. Gas and tire rationing during World War II saw a revival of usage but popularity of the automobile led to its eventual demise after the war. The last run between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids was made in 1953.

The discussion of Cedar Rapids' industrial corridors that follows is based on the routes of rail lines as they pass through the city singularly or on shared right-of-ways. The principal industrial corridor follows the route of railroad lines clustered along 4th Street and three railroad bridge approaches of the Northwestern, Milwaukee and Rock Island lines on the east side of the river. This combined route includes 1½ miles of trackage. A second corridor of lesser importance on the east side was the route of the Milwaukee line along the Cedar Lake as it headed toward Marion. The Illinois Central route also on the east side did not obtain importance as an industrial corridor until much later.

On the west side of the river, important corridors developed along the right-of-way of the Chicago and North Western Railroad and the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. The Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railroad (CRANDIC) interurban shared sections of the Milwaukee Railroad's alignment in the older part of southwest Cedar Rapids.<sup>14</sup>

Generally speaking, on both sides of the river the rail lines saw factory sites, open storage yards, and clusters of multi-story warehouses develop by 1900. The next four decades saw many of the "one-building" establishments replaced by larger, sprawling factories. Despite this change in industrial practice, the factory districts continued to be bordered by modest residential neighborhoods and small commercial enclaves.

### 4th Street Railroad Corridor

As noted in the discussion of the development of the central business district, the decision to cede the 4th Street right-of-way to the railroads was strategic to the prosperity of downtown Cedar Rapids. The presence of the railroad lines attracted hotels and railroad support facilities to the 4th Street alignment. Hundreds of workers drew their livelihood from the businesses that located along the 4th Street corridor of downtown.

This was also the case with the factories and warehouses that located along the balance of the 4th Street Railroad Corridor. Multiple tracks, switch yards, sidings and private spurs extended through

---

<sup>14</sup>Since the 1950s, the main lines of CRANDIC and Northwestern RR on the south edge of the city have developed as a separate industrial corridors not discussed below.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  37

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

the corridor's nearly 1½ miles. Workers from each of the four railroads that had trains in the corridor handled the rolling stock and switches. Trains were serviced by yard workers in the small round houses maintained by the Chicago and North Western, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul and the Illinois Central. The Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern (later the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific) service was done at the company's machine shops.

In addition, railroad employees handled goods shipped to their respective freight depots: Chicago and North Western Freight House - A Avenue and 4th Street, NE; Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Freight House - B Avenue and 4th Street, NE (1870s and early 1880s), 1st Street and 6th Avenue, SE (from the late 1880's); Illinois Central Freight House - E Avenue and 5th Street, NE (late 1880s-c.1900), 2nd Street and 5th Avenue, SE (from c.1900); and Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Freight House - E Avenue and 4th Street (1860s - late 1890s); 2nd Street and 6th Avenue, SE (from c. 1900).

Industrial users located at suitable available sites along the 4th Street Corridor. At the southeastern end of the corridor, the Rock Island line curves towards the Cedar River. Here the T.M. Sinclair and Co. meat packing plant located in the 1870s and grew to become one of Cedar Rapids' most important employers and both domestic and international exporters before 1900. The Sinclair and Co. site was a sprawling collection of brick, stone and frame buildings connected by catwalks, elevators and storage tanks. The Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad was critical to the packing plant's operation. Spur lines off the main line connected to unloading areas for hogs, sheep and cattle. Shipping docks were located along interior spurs where they were used to deliver wood and coal supplies and remove hides. Additional docks were located adjacent to the ham, bacon and sausage curing and storage buildings. Several siding tracks were reserved for rail car repairs. The integration of rail operations with the packing plant site made it a productive facility before World War II. As the meat packing operation turned to a truck delivery system in the years since, its rail location has hampered its smooth operation.

Soon after its establishment in the 1870s, residential neighborhoods grew up to the east and north of the packing plant site. Modest 1 and 1½-story houses were crowded onto small lots along narrow streets. Some were developed on land owned by Sinclair and Co. in an effort to attract a reliable workforce. One group of nearly identical cottages was developed along the 1200 block of 5th Street, SE opposite St. Wenceslaus Roman Catholic Church.

The Sinclair and Co. presence was evidenced in several other philanthropic gestures in the neighborhood adjacent to the packing plant. In the late 1880s, T.M. Sinclair supported the development of Third Presbyterian Church which was largely attended by his workers. In 1901, following his death his widow donated \$30,000 to build a new church as a memorial to Sinclair. The new building was located at the intersection of 9th Street, 12th Avenue and 17th Avenue, SE

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  38

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

and when it was completed in 1903, the congregation changed its name to the "Sinclair Memorial Presbyterian Church." Another neighborhood gift was the donation of a 2½-acre parcel located at 16th Avenue and 9th Street, SE to the City for use as a park in 1915 by Sinclair and Co.

During the 1880s and 1890s other factories located along the 4th Street Corridor between Sinclair and Co. and the downtown. Two metalworking firms included the Carmody Foundry, forerunner of Iowa Steel and Iron Works, and the J.G. Cherry Company. The foundry was established in 1880 and acquired by J.T. Carmody in 1889. The foundry produced architectural iron work, columns, steel and iron beams, boilers, shafting, pulleys, and engineers' supplies. In 1918 Howard Hall acquired an interest in the Carmody Foundry and by 1922 was its president under the new name, Iowa Steel and Iron Works. Hall saw the opportunity to develop a larger market for Iowa Steel's products and in 1923 formed the Iowa Manufacturing Company. The new company began production of an innovative line of rock crushing equipment well suited to the Good Roads Movement that was just getting underway in Iowa. Iowa Steel and Iron Works supplied the grey iron castings and steel to Iowa Manufacturing for the road equipment's manufacture. Iowa Steel remained independent until 1972 when it began a division of Iowa Manufacturing. The Iowa Steel facility extended nearly three blocks along the 4th Street Corridor from 14th Avenue to 11th Avenue. The plant contained an extensive foundry, structural steel fabrication plant, a steel storage yard and rail sidings. When the neighboring J.G. Cherry Company relocated after World War II, Iowa Steel took over a portion of their plant in the 400 block of 10th Avenue, SE. Manufacture from the Iowa Steel site was discontinued in stages beginning in 1979 when structural steel manufacturing ceased. Steel fabrication stopped in 1982 and foundry activity ended in January 1996 when the company closed. Some sections of the plant have been razed and others remain as a rusting ruins.

The J.G. Cherry Company began operations in 1880 and specialized in manufacturing cream cans, dairy machinery, butter churns and ice cream freezers and grew to become the largest exclusive manufacturer of equipment for the handling of milk and milk products in the world by the 1930s. The company began with the invention by J.G. Cherry of a jacketed cream can designed to withstand both heat and cold. The product proved exceptionally popular and the company soon developed a variety of machinery for processing ice cream and butter including coil pasteurization machines, and continuous ice cream freezers. In 1928 the Cherry-Burrell Corporation was formed as a merger of the J.G. Cherry Company and several other dairy equipment companies. The 4th Street Railroad Corridor was flanked by the Cedar Rapids plant which included a series of buildings located in the 300 and 400 blocks of 10th Avenue, SE. Continued growth of the company at the end of World War II saw the transfer of its Cedar Rapids' operation to a new nine-acre site in 1945 in southwest Cedar Rapids.

Midway between the downtown and the Sinclair and Co. site, the tracks of the Chicago, Milwaukee

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   39  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

and St. Paul Railroad cross the Cedar River and join the 4th Street Corridor. A series of wholesale warehouses and smaller manufacturing plants are located between the 9th Avenue Bridge and downtown. Two of the largest warehouses belonged to the Churchill Drug Company and Witwer Grocery Company. The two buildings are located between 2nd and 3rd Streets fronting on the south side of the 9th Avenue bridge approach. Though their principal orientation was towards 9th Avenue, both warehouses were also served by a Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad spur line that extended from 4th Street, SE to loading docks located at the rear of the two buildings. This configuration gave the warehouses ready access to multiple lines for both north-south and east-west shipments.

The Churchill Drug Company was lured to Cedar Rapids by the Manufacturers and Jobbers Association in 1902. Originally established in Burlington, Iowa, the wholesale drug company flourished in Cedar Rapids. It initially rented a five-story warehouse on 1st Street, SE (nonextant) and in 1925 moved into a new six-story warehouse at 900 2nd St., SE. In 1928 the company merged with several other Eastern Iowa wholesale drug companies and was acquired by the McKesson and Robbins Company. McKesson continued to operate from this location until 1980.

Witwer Grocery Company was a wholesale grocery business started by Weaver and Frank Witwer in c. 1921. The company was eventually involved in food processing and retailing under the direction of Weaver Witwer. He opened the "Me Too" supermarket chain in partnership with W.A. Drake in Cedar Rapids and Marion. Plans to build a \$500,000 food factory at 3rd Street facing the railroad right-of-way along 9th Avenue, SE were announced in 1945 but were suspended briefly until the war concluded. When completed, the 3rd Street building was used for processing, packaging and distributing foods for the company's wholesale and retail operations. The company thrived from its new location with their distribution system extending into adjacent states.

On the north side of the 9th Avenue bridge approach, a series of "Y" spur lines and sidings developed by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, Illinois Central Railroad and Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad extended rail service into the southwestern section of the downtown. The Milwaukee Railroad built the first freight house in the area in the late 1880s. The freight house and an ice house were situated between the river and 1st Street, SE between 5th Avenue to 6th Avenue, SE. Milwaukee sidings continued along the rear of the 1st Street buildings as far as 3rd Avenue and down the middle of 1st Street, SE as far as 5th Avenue.

Separate spur lines were operated by the Illinois Central Railroad, the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad along the west and east sides of 2nd Street, SE between 8th and 5th Avenues, SE. New freight houses were built by both companies shortly after 1900. Together these three spur lines provided critical, central delivery points for railroad freight and were essential to the manufacturing, jobbing and retailing businesses that located along them in subsequent years.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  40

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Businesses served by the Milwaukee and Illinois Central spur lines included a series of successive lumber and coal companies fronting on 8th Avenue, SE. A group of wholesale warehouses in the 500 and 600 blocks of 1st Street, SE dealt in products ranging from farm machinery, paper products and electrical supplies to groceries and household wares. The lumber and coal companies included the Linn County Lumber and Coal Company (1906-1909), Cedar Rapids Lumber Company (1909-1922) and Hatch and Brookman Lumber Company (1923-1966). Among the larger buildings closer to the commercial core was a warehouse built by Hamilton Brothers, wholesale dealers in farm machinery, wagons, buggies, seeds and coal. Hamilton Brothers organized in 1868 and built their new warehouse at 4th Avenue and 1st Street, SE in 1899. The utilitarian four-story building had ready access to the Milwaukee spur and the downtown street system.<sup>15</sup>

Like many of the downtown warehouses, however, the Hamilton Brothers Building had several changes in use and ownership through the years. The first came in 1911 when it was occupied by Warfield-Pratt-Howell Company (401-411 1st Street, SE), a grocery wholesale company. Warfield-Pratt-Howell Company claimed to be the largest wholesale grocery firm in Iowa in 1902. The firm began as Warfield-Howell-Watt Company in Cedar Rapids in 1880 and in 1899 adopted the Warfield-Pratt-Howell name. More than 35 traveling salesmen covered a multi-state territory with branch warehouses located in Sioux City and Des Moines. In addition to groceries, the company handled woodenware, enameledware, tinware and light hardware. Warfield-Pratt-Howell Company continued at 401 1st Street, SE until 1928. Like the other warehouses along the west side of 1st Street, the Warfield-Pratt-Howell Company building had docks for loading and unloading cargo directly onto rail cars.

Just two blocks away, the Burlington based John Blaul's Sons Company moved into a new 4-story building in 1914 at 600-608 1st Street, SE. A wholesale grocery competitor of Warfield-Pratt-Howell, John Blaul's Sons had its own corps of salesmen traveling throughout Iowa and surrounding states to promote the company's product lines and able service. Several dozen workers roasted coffee, processed goods for distribution, and stored other items for trans-shipment from their modern warehouse. The company was headed by Charles Blaul as president with his brothers John and Theodore as vice-presidents. Theodore Blaul became president by the mid-1920s and continued in that position until the company discontinued operations from this site during the late 1950s.

Other new buildings went up in the 600 block of 1st Street, SE at the same time that John Blaul's Sons erected their new building and both the Illinois Central and Rock Island lines completed nearby freight warehouses. These businesses included the Orr Brothers Supply Company,

---

<sup>15</sup>The Hamilton Brothers Building is listed in the National Register.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  41

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

suppliers for mills, grain elevator machinery and agricultural implements, in 1912; the J.P. Grissel Cornice Company (614 1st Street, SE), manufacturers of metal cornices, window caps, ceilings and roofing, in 1912; and the Baker Paper Company (616 and 618 1st Street, SE) in 1914 and 1909 respectively. In addition to the downtown street system, all of the firms on the east side of 1st Street had the advantage of being served by both the Milwaukee tracks that ran down 1st Street and the Illinois Central spur that followed the alley at the rear of the buildings. As a contemporary newspaper account noted, Baker Paper's access to trackage gave the company an "unsurpassed location."<sup>16</sup>

One of the last important buildings to be added to this warehouse district came on the eve of World War I when the Cedar Rapids central fire station was completed. Located opposite the Milwaukee Freight House, Fire Station No. 1, (427 1st Street, SE) was built at a cost of \$40,000 and with a capacity for four vehicles including a pump engine, two hook and ladder trucks, and the fire chief's car. Sleeping accommodations for a crew of 25 were available on the upper level of the two-story brick building when it was completed in 1918.

As might be expected, the section of main line tracks along the 4th Street Corridor between 9th Avenue and the downtown (5th Avenue, SE) provided a variety of factory sites and excellent warehouse locations. Early frame buildings built in the corridor after the Civil War were little more than large barns. They were inexpensive in terms of initial capital outlay but were quick to succumb to fires and industrial hazards. By the 1880s, successful manufacturers had used profits to replace their earlier buildings with two and three-story brick factories. Typical factories were utilitarian designs with windows generally spaced every ten feet. Building lots measured 50' by 140' with the narrow dimension facing the avenues. The alleys measured 20' and paralleled the avenues providing a secondary access point. Wagon doors faced both side or rear loading docks located along railroad sidings and private spur lines.

As the companies expanded or new owners acquired these factories and additions were erected to the extent available property allowed. As late as the 1940s, this common construction practice was commented on by a writer for the *Saturday Evening Post* in a series about American cities. In writing about the city's industrial appearance he could have been describing portions of the 4th Street Railroad Corridor south of the downtown - "rambling, old-fashioned buildings that have been telescoped out as the business grew."<sup>17</sup>

Several examples of companies that saw their physical plants expand as their business grew

---

<sup>16</sup>"Baker Paper Company," *The Saturday Record*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, July 10, 1909, p. 19.

<sup>17</sup>Bird, John, "The Cities of America: Cedar Rapids," *The Saturday Evening Post*, June 18, 1949.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   42  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

remain along the 4th Street Corridor. One was the Cedar Rapids Marble and Granite Works located at 315-317 3rd Avenue, SE. The original building consisted of a single storefront when it was constructed in 1893 just south of the railroad corridor but within dozen years an addition twice the size of the original building was added.

A second example was the Parlor Furniture Manufacturing Company established in 1899 by Charles Luburger, Conrad Karlan and Hiram Jones. The company manufactured a line of upholstered furniture including couches, lounges and parlor pieces with their trade extending into Minnesota, Nebraska, Illinois and throughout Iowa by 1900. The company began operating from its 319 7th Avenue location in 1907. Four years later the company had a workforce of 40 employees and four salesmen on the road. The free-standing building provided ample lighting on the two lower floors with twice the typical allotment of windows. Upholstering and finishing were handled on these floors. The third floor was used for storage of stock and finished furniture prior to shipment. Sometime prior to 1928 when the company needed more space, the Parlor Furniture Manufacturing Company extended the building upwards with the addition of a fourth floor. By then, the company had added the states of Wisconsin, Kansas, Oklahoma and Missouri to its trade area. The Parlor Furniture manufacturing Company continued at this location until 1956 with the Karlan family part of the business until the early 1950s.

Two other examples of small factory buildings suited to use by several manufacturing concerns were located at 400 and 406 9th Avenue, SE. The first of these was a two-story brick building constructed for the Blue Valley Creamery in c. 1912. Beginning in 1939 it was owned and used by the Wapsi Valley Creamery Company. This building was sandwiched between the main line tracks located along 4th Street and a Rock Island spur line on its east side. The spur was critical to the wholesale operations of Ellis and Roth located next door at 406 9th Avenue, SE beginning in 1912. Ellis & Roth sold implements and supplies. Like the Parlor Furniture Company building, the Ellis & Roth building had a free-standing configuration allowing abundant natural light. The building was later used for a variety of manufacturing concerns including the production of seed corn dryers, gasoline engines and gloves. In 1931 the Cedar Rapids Sheet Metal Company located in the building where they continue today.

The organic industrial development in the section of the 4th Street Railroad Corridor south of downtown saw construction of several entirely new buildings following World War I. In 1921, the Harper and McIntire Company of Ottumwa, Iowa was successfully persuaded to develop a four-story warehouse to stock the company's wholesale hardware product line. The new warehouse was located at 407 6th Avenue, SE - a convenient two block walk from Union Station for both wholesale buyers and hardware company suppliers. The jobbing trade of Harper and McIntire soon dominated the state of Iowa. Construction of a railroad siding along the west side of the Harper and McIntire building provided for easy shipping and receiving. The reinforced concrete construction of the multi-storied building made it suitable for adaptation to a furniture warehouse in

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  43

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

1981 when the hardware company closed this site.

A second wholesale company, the Metropolitan Supply Company, relocated to a building just a block away at 600 3rd Street, SE in 1937. First built in 1919 for Brown-Evans Manufacturing Company, and later occupied by the Evans Garment Company, the building was readily adaptable for the operations of the Metropolitan Supply Company. The well-lighted upper level was outfitted for printing and binding production and the balance of the building was used to store supplies distributed by the company.

Wholesale companies continued to find this section of the 4th Street Railroad Corridor suitable for development after World War II. The Terry-Durin Company, a wholesale dealer in electrical supplies built offices and a warehouse at 409-411 7th Avenue, SE along side the same siding used by Harper and McIntire. Diagonally across the intersection from Harper and McIntire at 308 6th Avenue, SE, the Petersen Baking Company built an unusual half-block long complex of buildings. City directories indicate a bakery was located amidst a half-dozen dwellings on the block before World War I and by 1931, Petersen Baking Company occupied the entire block. The bakery was designated as the "Home of Peter Pan Bread" by the mid-1930s. The bakery was acquired by Peter Pan Bakers, Inc. in the early 1960s and closed bakery operations in 1965. Sanborn maps indicate portions of the building date from as late as 1950. The facade of the building was executed as multiple storefronts with varying parapet treatments and fenestration designs which may mean the building was constructed in sections. The building's east wall had a diagonal configuration to accommodate the layout of the railroad spur adjacent to the building. The large open floor plan of the building has made it readily adaptable for subsequent users including a glass company, a computer builder and a branch post office.

The balance of the 4th Street Railroad Corridor north of 5th Avenue passes along the eastern edge of the downtown. Through the years, this stretch of the 4th Street was the section most intensely used for railroad purposes. Freight depots, separate and combined passenger stations, engine houses, coal and sand tipples and water tanks were all located between 5th Avenue, SE and E Avenue, NE. Whether present for utilitarian or showpiece purposes, the presence of these structures was an indicator of the importance of railroading in Cedar Rapids. Their disappearance during the 1960s and 1970s, marked an abrupt end to the importance of the 4th Street Railroad Corridor as a major route of mass transit.

North of the downtown, the Chicago and North Western Railroad tracks turned west to cross the Cedar River passing through one of the city's largest industrial sites - the Quaker Oats Company Mill. First established in 1873 as the North Star Oatmeal Company, the milling operation grew to become one of the largest such facilities in the world. Disastrous fires occurred at the mill in 1876, 1887 and 1905. Mergers and reorganizations changed the name of the company to the American

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  44

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Cereal Company in 1888 and to the Quaker Oats Company in 1905. The site grew to include dozens of buildings, annexes and storage facilities on its 22-acre site which was located between the B Avenue, NE wagon/automobile bridge and the Chicago and North Western Railroad Bridge.

### Chicago and North Western Railroad Corridor

On the west side of the Cedar River across from the Quaker Oats Mill, the Chicago and North Western Railroad Corridor follows a gently curving diagonal course from the bridge approach at J Avenue, NW southwest towards 1st Avenue. Along the nearly 1¾-mile section of track, the Chicago and North Western line passes through working class residential neighborhoods and several industrial sites. Development of factories along the railroad corridor did not begin until after the Civil War and as with the 4th Street Railroad Corridor on the east side, early buildings were little more than frame sheds and barns. By the 1880s more permanent factories were being constructed and at the turn-of-the-century, one account listed ten manufacturing and wholesaling concerns along the right-of-way of the Chicago and North Western.

The Williams and Hunting Company planing mill and extensive storage yards were among the first companies to be located on the west side. The planing mill was started in 1876 by two early craftsmen and in the 1880s it moved into a former woolen mill on the site adjacent to the river and the railroad just downstream of the railroad bridge. Success of the millwork operation saw the brick mill soon obscured by drying kilns, additional mill buildings and enormous piles of lumber. By 1900 the company had 125 employees and credited its excellent rail shipping connections for its growth. Williams and Hunting continued to produce various millwork products through World War II. By the 1960s, the planing mill was replaced by a lumber wholesaling operation and the manufacturing facilities for sash, door and millwork production were removed.

Immediately upstream of the Williams and Hunting Company adjacent to the railroad bridge was the Hubbard Ice Company. Established in 1870 on a site above the dam on the east side of the river, the company sold its site to the Chicago and North Western Railroad in 1883 when a new bridge was constructed. Hubbard moved to the west bank of the river and built a series of new ice houses to store ice harvested from the river. By the turn-of-the-century, Hubbard Ice operated thirteen ice wagons to supply household and commercial users throughout the city and in 1915 modernized its operation by the addition of equipment to artificially manufacture ice. In addition to its retail operation, Hubbard supplied ice for all of the refrigerated cars operated by the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific RR. Later changes included the addition of coal and fuel oil to the company's operation and by the 1940s, a commercial cold storage facility.

Several blocks from the Williams and Hunting mill and the Hubbard ice houses, another factory of substantial proportions appeared before the turn-of-the-century. The Cedar Rapids Pump

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   45  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Company was established in 1881 and by the end of the decade was manufacturing wood and iron pumps, wood stock tanks, soil pipe and various fittings from its 605 G Avenue, NW location. Their wholesale business in iron pipe and plumber's supplies also created demand for considerable warehouse space. The factory site occupied nearly a half-block and included a foundry, lumber shed, pipe warehouse and general warehouse with a rail siding extending along the alley. The two-story brick buildings were utilitarian in nature. Large windows provided generous natural light on both levels. By 1900 the Cedar Rapids Pump Company had 110 factory workers and eight traveling agents to handle accounts in Iowa and adjacent states.

Between the Cedar Rapids Pump Company and the next important group of industrial sites, the Chicago and North Western Railroad Corridor passes along several blocks of smaller factory sites intermixed with residential and commercial buildings. The next large industrial complex is located at the intersections of A, B and C Avenues, NW and the railroad line. Factory sites for three companies are located here - the Universal Crusher Company (625 C Avenue, NW), the Dearborn Brass Foundry (805 B Avenue, NW), and the Chandler Pump Company (807 A Avenue, NW, 707-711 B Avenue, NW and 200 8th St., NW).

The oldest of these firms was the Chandler Pump Company started by J.A. Chandler in 1890 after being recruited by the Manufacturers and Jobbers Association, a bureau of the Cedar Rapids Board of Trade. By 1900, the company was well-known for its "Chandler Iron Pump" and was a major wholesale supplier of iron pipe, plumbers' supplies and well casings. The company's factory site included an extensive machine shop, pattern shop, iron foundry, several warehouses and an iron pipe shed. The buildings were situated on an irregular parcel located along a block of railroad sidings between B Avenue, NW and 1st Avenue. The warehouses were two-story brick buildings and the machines shops and foundry were one-story brick buildings. The company saw its product lines shift through the years and in 1952 moved operations to a new larger facility along the Illinois Central Railroad north of the downtown. The company was reorganized as Chandler Machine Products.

In 1901 the Dearborn Brass Manufacturing Company relocated to a site adjacent to Chandler Pump Company from its location along Chicago's Dearborn Street. The company manufactured brass fittings and nickel-plated faucets. Soon after the move, company founders Fredrick Erickson and Louis Kruber erected a new building to house the brassworks. The company's tubular brass plumbing products were soon distributed throughout the country in brass traps, sink and bathtub wastes, wall and yard hydrants, brass valves and hose faucets, shower curtain rods, basket sink strainers and components and related plumbing products. The brassworks buildings consisted of a sprawling one-story brick building that housed a foundry and machine shop. Rail access was not directly available to the site. Shipments were instead handled via access to the Chandler Pump yard. In 1926, control of the company was acquired by Esac Cohn and the firm subsequently

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  46

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

headed by members of the Cohn family. In 1954 the operation relocated part of its operation from its B Avenue, NW location to a building constructed several years earlier by its former industrial neighbor, the Chandler Machine Products Company. Dearborn's workforce stood at 125 at the time. Popularity of plastic plumbing fittings during the 1970s, saw Dearborn's market share decline. Manufacture at the B Avenue, NW plant was discontinued in 1978 and the company consolidated its operations to locations in Texas and Colorado closing its last warehouse in Cedar Rapids in 1981.

Universal Crusher Company operated the third manufacturing concern in the cluster of factories north of 1st Avenue. First organized in 1906, the firm moved to several locations before establishing its plant at 625 C Avenue, NW in 1924. The company produced commercial rock crushers principally used for road building. They later developed and built asphalt mixing plants, mixing and screening plants, spreaders, quarry and gravel equipment and hydraulic units. A measure of the company's success was seen in its expansion. The C Avenue factory saw additions completed in 1925, 1927, 1931, 1941, 1942, 1944, 1947, and 1951. The building included an erecting shop, machine shop, raw materials storage area and general offices. The factory storage yard paralleled the siding of the Chicago and North Western.

Business prospered for Universal Crusher during the Good Roads Movement of the 1920s. The company saw a precipitous decline during the next decade, however, when government funded road-building was cut back sharply. The advent of World War II saw the company turn to construction of ordinance-manufacturing devices for the military including machine gun cradles, aircraft instruments and assembly turrets. In 1942 Universal Crusher's name became "Universal Engineering" to reflect these new products. During the 1940s employment stood at 325 workers. At war's end, the company returned to the manufacture of a variety of equipment used for mining and road building. Universal Engineering was part of the group of local manufacturing concerns that gave Cedar Rapids the title of "road machinery capital" - Iowa Manufacturing, LaPlant-Choate Manufacturing, Link-Belt Speeder, the Highway Equipment Company, and Fruehauf Trailer Company.

The presence of industrial sites along the Chicago and North Western Railroad Corridor between the Cedar River and 1st Avenue did not discourage the building of residential neighborhoods. To the contrary, hundreds of single family dwellings and double houses were built along tree lined streets. The ready employment provided by the factories was viewed as an asset of the neighborhood. Workers walked to work at one of the warehouses or factories located along the railroad corridor or hopped aboard one of the street cars that passed through the neighborhood by 1900. When economic recessions and the Great Depression hit, however, working class neighborhoods such as those in northwest Cedar Rapids were the first to feel the impact.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  47

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

The balance of the neighborhoods fronting on the railroad corridor were intermixed with food markets, meat shops, bakeries, restaurants, drug stores and saloons. Churches of every denomination appeared by 1900. Those located closest to the Chicago and North Western Railroad Corridor were St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church and School at 5th Street and 1st Avenue, NW and the Free Methodist Church at 6th Street and G Avenue, NW.

City government made an investment in the west side in 1908 with construction of a new fire station, Hose Station No. 2, at 423 5th Street, NW. The presence of new manufacturing concerns and the residential districts which grew up to provide worker housing nearby created a need for expanded fire protection on the west side at the turn-of-the-century. Disastrous fires at the Clifton Hotel in downtown in 1903 and the American Cereal Company in 1905 increased concern with fire department officials who regularly warned of low water pressure on the west side and the need for improved equipment. The construction of Hose Station No. 2 was in part a response to these concerns.

South of 1st Avenue, the Chicago and North Western Railroad Corridor continued its diagonal course heading for Cedar Rapids city limits and then on to points west. Industrial development along this stretch of the Chicago and North Western Railroad Corridor came well after 1900 and only a handful of residences populated the area before then. The construction of repair shops for the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway took place approximately where the Chicago and North Western lines joined the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul lines between 13th Avenue and 15th Avenue, SW. The 1¼-mile of Chicago and North Western Railroad line in between 1st Avenue and the juncture point saw terrain change from the flat alluvial plain along 1st Avenue to gently rolling hills southwest of 8th Avenue, SW. The terrain change proved prohibitive to substantial industrial development.

### Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Corridor

The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad followed a curving northeast-to-southwest route through Cedar Rapids. On the east side of the Cedar River beginning in Marion, the railroad cut through Judge Greene's Mound Farm and then passed along the south side of Cedar Lake before joining the 4th Street Railroad Corridor and crossing the Cedar River at 9th Avenue, SE. On the west side of the river, the Milwaukee line followed a southwesterly route along 9th Avenue, SW until it joined the tracks of the Chicago and North Western Railroad and Cedar Rapids and Iowa City interurban at 14th Avenue, SW.

Building of the Milwaukee line began at the end of the Civil War when railroad fever gripped Cedar Rapids. In 1864 George Greene, a pioneer promoter and industrialist, sold a right-of-way through his 1,900-acre Mound Farm north of the city to the Dubuque and Southwestern Railroad. Coe

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number  E  Page  48

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Collegiate Institute, forerunner of Coe College, located on an 80-acre tract along the line in the vicinity of 12th and 13th Streets, NE in 1872. The line was taken over by the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad in 1878.

By the 1870s several grain processing plants had located along a stretch of the Milwaukee line north of the downtown adjacent to Cedar Lake. Among these operations were the Eagle Brewery owned and managed by Christian Magnus located on 8th Street and C Avenue, NE and several other smaller breweries including the Cedar Rapids Steam Brewery and the George Williams Brewery. The Eagle Brewery which was previously discussed, ceased operations prior to the passage of statewide prohibition in 1915 but continued as a bottling works until the mid-1920s. Portions of the brewery's storage vaults were discovered during construction of Interstate 380 during the 1970s.

The Cedar Rapids Linseed Oil Company was established in 1869 by Sampson Bever and R.D. Stephans at 5th Street and D Avenue, NE. By 1875 it consumed 100,000 bushels of flaxseed annually producing 200,000 gallons of linseed oil. The product was shipped by rail to the East and the by-product of linseed-oil cake was shipped to Europe. The linseed oil works grew to an annual production of 200,000 gallons but closed shortly after 1900.

The industrial development that took place along the balance of the Milwaukee Railroad's route to the north took place beginning at the turn-of-the-century and continued in the years following World War I. Pawnee Mills was built during 1906-07 along the north side of the railroad tracks between 15th and 16th Streets, NE. The site was just outside of the city limits on land owned and promoted for industrial development by the Cedar Rapids Improvement Company. The Improvement Company also owned other land along both sides of the railroad and adjacent to Cedar Lake's northeast edge. Local residents followed the recruitment of Pawnee Mills on the front pages of local newspapers during the months leading up to the decision to locate in Cedar Rapids. The mill's first owners were not successful with the operation and in 1910 it was sold to an East St. Louis company. The new name became "National Oats Company."

The National Oats Company operation stretched for a block along the Milwaukee Railroad Corridor with a spur line built through the center of the factory site. When the Pawnee Mill was first constructed it included a six-story factory that contained the rolling mills and packaging house. An adjacent elevator had extensive storage silos. The company's physical plant was modernized and updated periodically.

Demand for the Cedar Rapids mill's rolled oats was high during World War I. After the war, the product was chiefly distributed across the southern states. A breakthrough in the processing of rolled oats created increased popular demand for the company's "3-Minute" brand of oat meal.

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   E   Page   49  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Bulk oats continued to comprise a major segment of National Oats business. Another successful product line added during the late 1940s was popcorn. Its marketing accompanied the introduction of the television set into American homes. The company continued as a family business until it was acquired by Liggett-Myers Tobacco Company in 1967. In 1980, it was sold to Curtice-Burns, Inc. a national corporation specializing in food products. Along with Quaker Oats Company, this company helped to make Cedar Rapids a "Cereal City."

A second important industrial concern, Iowa Manufacturing Company, located a block north of the National Oats mill after World War I. The company was established by Howard Hall in 1923 and was an outgrowth of his efforts at Iowa Steel and Iron Works. Hall had acquired an interest in the Iowa Steel and Iron Works when he returned from the war in 1919. The company's foundry and machine shops were located along the 4th Street Railroad Corridor and 12th Avenue, SE. Hall became president of Iowa Steel in 1922 and the next year began looking for additional users of the company's steel output. Iowa Manufacturing Company began operation with production of an innovative portable rock-crushing, screening and conveying plant. It became an instant success. In later years, Iowa Manufacturing produced a series of "firsts" in the road building field: a continuous hot mix asphalt plant, a traveling road mix plant, a portable asphalt plant with self-contained power erecting hoist assembly, a tractor crusher, and a tandem straight line crushing plant. By the end of World War II, the company employed 1,800 workers. The company's products were shipped throughout the country and overseas following the war. In 1971, the company was acquired by Raytheon Company and in 1985 the name was changed to "Cedarapids, Inc.," the trademark used by the company through the years.

The Iowa Manufacturing plant was located between the Milwaukee Railroad tracks and I Avenue, NE north of 16th Street, NE. The level terrain of the factory site changes abruptly with the land west of I Avenue becoming hilly and irregular. The Iowa Manufacturing plant included a series of factory buildings containing more than 100,000 square feet of manufacturing space, a foundry, an extensive steel products yard which eventually extended to 20th Street, NE and was accessed by a system of traveling cranes, and a warehouse and machinery storage yard. Rail spurs into the plant site allowed for steel deliveries and the shipment of Iowa Manufacturing's products.

On the east side of the Milwaukee Railroad opposite the Iowa Manufacturing plant, a series of small scale factory and warehouse sites were eventually established. Among the older businesses was the Vetter-Parks Lumber Company, a retail lumber distributor. Located at 620 17th Street, NE, Vetter-Parks Lumber Company was established before World War I.

The pattern of residential neighborhoods developing immediately adjacent to industrial sites seen on Cedar Rapids' west side continued in the areas surrounding the National Oats mill and the Iowa Manufacturing plant. Block after block of detached single family dwellings of varying size were built

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  50

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

on small lots fronting on narrow streets. Factory workers resided in many of the houses but the neighborhoods were favored by railroad workers as well. The Rock Island Railroad Shops described earlier were located west of Cedar Lake approximately 1¼-mile southwest of the National Oats mill. As an example, one can look at a cluster of houses located along the southeast side of C Avenue, NE. No single block in the city likely employed more railroad workers than the 1400 block of C Avenue in the years immediately before and after World War I. City directory records from 1915 through 1930 show the houses occupied by two brakemen, an engineer, two machinists, a motorman, a chief clerk, a fireman and several Railway Mail Service employees. Other working class residents rounded out the block.<sup>18</sup>

On the opposite side of town west of the river, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Corridor headed in a southwesterly direction from the 9th Avenue railroad bridge to the juncture with the Chicago and North Western Railroad. Two major factory installations, the Douglas and Company starchworks and the Link-Belt Speeder Company, located along the 1¼-mile of track in between. The oldest of the two, the Douglas and Company starchworks was established in 1903 at 10th Avenue and First Street, SW. The company was founded by George Douglas, Jr. and Walter Douglas who had been involved in oat and linseed oil milling in Cedar Rapids and Minneapolis prior to 1900. Douglas and Company starchworks processed another grain which was growing in popularity among Iowa farmers - corn. The starchworks manufactured bulk corn starch shipped in starches and barrels, gluten feed, corn oil cake and crude corn oil. Starting with 1,800 bushels per day, the company soon grew to be the largest starchworks west of the Mississippi processing 6,000 bushels daily. A series of other retail products were added including corn and gloss starch and by 1919, production reached 20,000 bushels daily.

Then, on May 22, 1919, a massive explosion destroyed nearly the entire starchworks, shaking buildings and breaking window glass a mile away in the downtown. Debris and bricks were hurled for miles and 43 people lost their lives. In the wake of the fire, there was doubt and uncertainty as to whether the starchworks would be rebuilt. Late that year, a sugar cane syrup and molasses processor from Louisiana, Penick and Ford Ltd., Inc. bought what was left of the factory and the riverfront site and commenced rebuilding the plant. Eight million dollars was expended on the rebuilding and it resumed operation in early 1921. The company experienced steady growth in the decades that followed with production reaching 33,000 bushels per day by 1937 with an annual payroll of over \$1 million. More than 60 products were developed and by 1965, Penick and Ford had a workforce of 1,000 people.

---

<sup>18</sup>Svendsen, Marlys, *Historical and Architectural Survey Report for Community Development Block Grant Neighborhoods, Cedar Rapids, Iowa*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa: City of Cedar Rapids, Department of Planning and Redevelopment, (September, 1995), p. 60.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  51

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

The R.J. Reynolds Tobacco company bought Penick and Ford that year and for the next six years, operated the plant under a cloud of legal problems and labor difficulties. In 1971 R.J. Reynolds was forced to divest itself of Penick and Ford selling the company to VWR United Corporation of Seattle. A few years later, the Cedar Rapids plant was mothballed and not reopened until 1981. The company continues production of corn sweeteners, starches, and dextrins.

The second multi-block industrial site along the Milwaukee Railroad Corridor west of the river was developed by the Speeder Machinery Corporation following a move by the firm to Cedar Rapids from Fairfield, Iowa in 1926. The company located in an existing building at 1201 6th Street, SW and employed fewer than 100 workers at the time in the manufacture of drag lines, shovels and cranes used in road building and heavy construction. In 1939 the company was purchased by Link-Belt Company of Chicago and became known as Link-Belt Speeder Corporation. Shortly thereafter, the Chicago company's crane operations were merged into the Cedar Rapids site. The company operated at capacity during World War II with a workforce of 500 at their factory located on 6th Street, SW.

In 1948 a new plant with 200,000 square feet of manufacturing space and offices was completed on an expanded site in the 1200 block of 6th Street, SW adjacent to the Milwaukee Railroad corridor. The company continued to expand with sizable additions made in 1953, 1956, and 1957 until the factory exceeded a half-million square feet and the site comprised six city blocks. Link-Belt Speeder's growth directly paralleled the national boom in road building spawned by President Eisenhower's interstate highway program. As the president of Link-Belt Speeder Corporation said in 1957, the new structure will give Link-Belt Speeder "the capacity to take full advantage of the substantial sales potential in the nation's long-range road-building program."<sup>19</sup>

In 1966 a second plant in southwest Cedar Rapids was completed and the next year, Link-Belt Speeder was purchased by FMC Corporation. In 1979, employment hit its peak of 2,300. A recession in the construction industry forced reorganization of the company and eventual closure during the 1980s.

### *Summary*

As with so many American cities, the Civil War was a watershed in economic terms. For Cedar Rapids it marked the end of an era of home production and consumption. When the war concluded, the flow of immigrants headed west again through rail heads like Cedar Rapids. Soon the railroad line was finished to Omaha and then to California and hundreds of towns of promise

---

<sup>19</sup>"Link-Belt to Expand Plant During 1957," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, no date (clipping in Cedar Rapids Historical Archives vertical files).

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  52

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

along the way. Cedar Rapids was no longer the end of the line. Some worried that their hometown would be passed by in the mad rush west. Instead Cedar Rapids' economy became inextricably linked to the balance of Iowa, the states along its borders, and the nation as a whole.

Manufacturers and jobbing houses busied the city's four railroads with shipments of millinery, hardware, groceries, millwork and windows, machinery, pumps and plumbing supplies. Some of the nation's largest mills turned out oatmeal and corn starch while the country's largest independent packer processed pork and beef. The Good Roads Movement began an era of heavy equipment manufacture for the road building industry that spanned two world wars and the development of the nation's interstate highway system. Thousands of Cedar Rapids men and women were employed in a thriving central business district and along the city's industrialized railroad corridors. And along the way, an economy of home consumption was transformed into one of regional and international manufacture and distribution.

### *iii. Bohemian Commercial and Social Life in Cedar Rapids, 1880 - 1925*

#### *Settlement Patterns*

Like most Midwest urban centers, Cedar Rapids saw much of its population growth during the nineteenth century come from the settlement of members of various immigrant groups. Bohemians or Czecho-Slovaks<sup>20</sup> eventually made up the city's largest immigrant group and were the only one to be associated with distinct areas of the city.

The first Bohemians arrived in Cedar Rapids in the early 1850s in the wake of revolutionary activities in central Europe. Even greater numbers arrived after the Civil War and the end of the Prussian War in Austria in 1880. By the turn-of-the-century, Bohemians had established dozens of social and cultural institutions, were well-represented in elected positions in local government, and were active and successful participants in the city's bustling economy.

The city's first Bohemians populated a multi-block area that extended south of the downtown from 5th Avenue, SE to the city limits where the T.M. Sinclair and Company meat packing plant was located in 1871. Beginning with the blocks closest to the river, the neighborhood eventually

---

<sup>20</sup>This central European ethnic description has changed as political boundaries have changed. The first immigrants to Cedar Rapids from this part of the world referred to themselves as "Bohemian" and named their social and religious organizations in this manner. The term Bohemian fell out of popularity following World War I and the creation of the new European nation with the name "Czechoslovakia." Negative associations with the Greenwich Village lifestyle referred to as "bohemian" also discouraged use of this term.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  53

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

extended east several blocks beyond the 4th Street Railroad Corridor. These level blocks were easily developed and hundreds of homes were built and occupied by Bohemian families here before 1900. Most of the houses were of frame construction with a handful made of brick. One-story side-gable, front-gable and hipped cottages were narrowly spaced along deep lots. Two-story gabled-ell cottages and 1½-story gable cottages appeared as the century concluded and the economic wherewithal of the immigrant families improved. Decorative elements on the otherwise simple dwellings included gable shingles in fish-scale, square-cut, diamond-cut, and saw-tooth patterns, modestly ornate porch posts and balustrades, and occasionally, a stained glass window.

### *East Side Commercial and Industrial Development*

The same flat land that attracted residential development provided level routes for several railroads that eventually criss-crossed it. The Chicago and North Western Railroad, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad followed along the right-of-way of 4th Street, SE, the latter two lines following nearby bridges across the Cedar River. When constructed after the Civil War, the Milwaukee Railroad crossed the Cedar River at 9th Avenue, SE and the Rock Island Railroad at the south edge of Sinclair and Company and Burlington Street, SE. The first wagon bridge over the river connected 14th Avenue, SE and 16th Avenue, SW in 1875.

In the decades before the turn-of-the-century, Cedar Rapids saw the city's Bohemian commercial and social center locate in the heart of the residential neighborhood. The commercial district grew up principally along 3rd Street south of 10th Avenue and along both 12th Avenue and 14th Avenue, SE. This "F" shaped commercial district became the "Main Street" for the city dwelling Bohemian-Americans who made Cedar Rapids their home as well as the Czech-speaking residents of rural Linn County.

The earliest industrial development in the Bohemian neighborhood involved a handful of concerns scattered throughout the neighborhood. The good transportation connections to and through the Bohemian neighborhood made the area attractive for manufacturing and warehousing sites. For example, the G. M. Olmstead Soap Factory occupied a series of single and multi-story frame buildings at the foot of 14th Avenue and the Cedar River by the 1880s. Location of the company at this site just a few blocks away from the T.M. Sinclair and Company meat packing plant was a logical choice for a processor of a slaughter house by-product. The pungent smelling operation was abandoned by the mid-1890s, however.

Among the larger concerns to grow up in the Bohemian area from the 1870s to the 1920s were the T.M. Sinclair and Company meat packing plant, the J.G. Cherry Company dairy equipment company, the Star Wagon Works, the Cedar Rapids Carriage Company, the Churchill Drug

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  54

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Company, and the Carmody Foundry - later Iowa Steel and Iron Works. The companies provided welcome employment opportunities for newly arriving immigrants as well as second and third generation Bohemian-Americans.

During the 1880s the Bohemian residential neighborhood saw several new commercial concerns displace dwellings at key intersections along 3rd Street and 14th Avenue. They included the two-story brick Lesinger Block (1317 3rd Street, SE) built in 1883 at the northwest corner of 14th Avenue and 3rd Street, SE and the Petrovitskys Block (nonextant) at the southwest corner of the same intersection. These buildings and others at this intersection were the most significant cluster of commercial buildings in the neighborhood housing three grocers (one in the Lesinger Block), a tin shop, a drygoods store, a billiard parlor, a bakery and a meat market by 1889. Two saloons and a grocer were located at the intersection of 14th Avenue and 2nd Street, SE while a barber shop, meat market, saloon, cigar shop, grocery and drygoods store were scattered along 3rd Street, SE between 14th Avenue and 11th Avenue.<sup>21</sup>

The most important new construction to take place during the decade of the 1890s in the Bohemian neighborhood was the C.S.P.S. Hall, commonly referred to as the Bohemian Hall, built in 1891 at 1105 3rd Avenue, SE. Its location two blocks north of the intersection of 14th Avenue and 3rd Street, SE, the previous center of the commercial life of the neighborhood, marked the growth of Bohemian commercial enterprise along 3rd Street. The substantial scale and monumental design of the building was testimony to the coming of age of the commercial as well as social institutions of the Bohemian community.<sup>22</sup>

A few years after the C.S.P.S. Hall was built, the importance of the 12th Avenue and 3rd Street, SE intersection was solidified when Anton Matyk built a new store across the street at 1029 3rd Street, SE in 1896. The two-story brick building bears the family name and housed the dry goods business started by Anton's father and operated under the name "Peter Matyk and Son" until after World War II. Matyk was an important Bohemian business and political leader representing the Third Ward on the city council in 1887 and 1888.

The commercial vitality of the Bohemian district continued into the new century. A number of brick and frame two-story brick buildings were constructed along 14th Avenue between the bridge and 3rd Street by 1910. Pugh & Kucera opened a livery and undertaking business at 219-223 14th Avenue, SE in 1899 but before the decade was over, Smid's Hardware occupied the building. A half-block away Peter Hach constructed a new saloon and bottling works (1326 2nd Street, SE) in

---

<sup>21</sup>Sanborn Map for Cedar Rapids, Iowa, August, 1889, p. 16.

<sup>22</sup>The C.S.P.S. Hall is listed in the National Register.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   55  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

1901. During Prohibition the business added a bowling alley and sold soft drinks.

Three buildings appeared in the 100-block of 14th Avenue, SE, one in 1899 and two in 1905. The oldest of the group was a blacksmith shop that opened in a small frame building at 119 14th Avenue, SE. A feed and flour store occupied the building at 123-125 14th Avenue, SE in 1905. As a sign of the times, an auto repair business became the new user shortly before World War I. The second building completed in 1905 was at 131 14th Avenue/1401 2nd Street, SE. It variously housed a hardware store, shoe store and grocery store before World War II.

Important changes took place after the turn-of-the-century along 3rd Street, SE as well. At the north end of 3rd Street Frank Suchy constructed a two-story brick building at 1006 3rd Street, SE in 1907. As with many of the commercial buildings in the neighborhood, Suchy and his family lived on the upper level and had their business in the first floor shop space. Suchy's jewelry store continued here until the 1930s.

At about the same time that Suchy's building was going up, the grocery and dry goods business in the Lesinger Block (1317 3rd Street, SE) was closing and the building changing hands. In c. 1907 Louis Pazdernik opened a saloon in the building but state prohibition laws in 1915 brought soft drink sales and a restaurant to this site. Little Bohemia, a tavern, was reintroduced to this active intersection in 1936 and continues in 1997.

In 1906 the Iowa State Savings Bank was established by a group of Bohemian-American business and civic leaders. The bank selected a 3rd Street location (1129-31 3rd Street, SE) midway between the C.S.P.S. Hall and the traditional center of commercial activity at 14th Avenue, SE. Business at the Iowa State Savings Bank was booming and in 1917 a new building with a Neo-Classical design was constructed across the street at 1201 3rd Street, SE. During the next decade, the bank building also housed professional offices including quarters for Slavia Realty Company and Klepach Construction, two businesses that benefited from the presence of a financial institution in the Bohemian district. When Iowa State Savings Bank reorganized in 1934, Frank Mitvalsky, president of Slavia Realty, assumed a leadership role and by 1940 was the bank's president as well.

The last of the large scale commercial blocks completed in the Bohemian commercial district appeared in 1908. The three-story brick building was located at 1200 3rd Street, SE and was the headquarters and social hall for the Z.C.B.J Lodge and its fraternal life insurance company. It was located diagonally across the intersection from the first Iowa State Savings Bank and directly across the street from the second bank. The first floor shop spaces in the Z.C.B.J. Building housed the Severa Clothing Company and a barber shop prior to World War II and a tavern thereafter. Sidewalks in front of the building bear the names of neighborhood businesses. The sidewalk

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  56

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

advertisements helped to pay for new sidewalks in the area in the early decades of the century.

A pair of buildings at 1125 and 1121 3rd Street, SE were completed in 1911 and 1912 respectively. The former address was a one-story brick building first occupied by John Krejci's grocery store and later by the Globe Grocery & Market and the Red Mill Ice Cream Company. The latter address was for the Jacobs Building which was occupied by Jacobs & Kurik Drygoods. Two women, Anna Jacobs and Anna Kurik operated the store and, for a time, leased space to a third "Anna," Anna Lesinger who worked as an undertaker from this address.

Other businesses to appear in existing or remodeled shop spaces along 3rd Street and 14th Avenue before World War I included a pharmacy, two shoe stores, a furniture store, print shop, and several restaurants. Two theaters opened for what turned out to be short runs before World War I. The Ideal Theatre opened in c.1914 at 213-215 14th Avenue, SE and the Praha Theatre just a few doors away at 227 14th Avenue, SE. The Ideal Theatre proudly hosted the motion picture *Prodana Nevesta*, advertised in January 1915 as "the greatest Bohemian motion play every produced."<sup>23</sup> Shortly after World War I, the Ideal closed. The building housed a variety of retail and small manufacturing concerns in subsequent years. When the Praha Theater closed about the same time, a milk depot and later a tavern were opened in it.

Expansion of the east side Bohemian commercial district ebbed following World War I. Several factors contributed to the slow down including increased growth west side residential neighborhoods following completion of the new Cedar River bridge connecting the two areas, the occurrence of the Cedar River flood of 1929 effected the east side more adversely than the west side, and the generally bad economic times associated with the Great Depression years.

The most recent physical changes to take place in the east side's Bohemian commercial district involved construction of service stations at three locations. The Friendly Service Station, later a Texaco franchise, included several auto repair bays in its complex at 1401 3rd Street, SE when it was completed in the late 1930s. Recognizing a good location along the bridge approach and near the meat packing plant, the Sirowy & Novak Service Station, later a Skelly Station, opened diagonally across the intersection at 1318 3rd Street, SE at the end of World War II. A third station opened at 203 14th Avenue on the eve of World War II and eventually was both a Vicks and Sinclair franchise.

*Educational and Social Institutions*

The growth of social institutions paralleled the growth in homebuilding and commerce in the

---

<sup>23</sup>Advertisement, *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, January 1, 1915.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   57  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Bohemian district. Many established locations along 3rd Street, SE and the intersecting avenues. One of the first was not intended to be a Bohemian institution but its location within the burgeoning east side Bohemian residential district guaranteed its ethnic association. The Third Ward School was built in 1873 and two years later renamed "Monroe School." By the 1890s fully 85 percent of the children attending Monroe came from Bohemian families. When the school district determined to open a night school, Monroe School was chosen in 1887 due to the interest of the neighborhood's Bohemian residents. Continued growth in the residential neighborhood southeast of the downtown necessitated school house expansion by 1898.

Van Buren School was constructed on the west side in 1884 before much residential development had occurred. Growth of the Bohemian population during subsequent decades on the west side bore out the wisdom of the decision, however, and by 1900 an expansion of the school house was necessary. By 1906, fully 60 percent of the school's 800 students were of Bohemian descent. Meanwhile, the rising tide of student population at Monroe School was reaching its peak and on the eve of World War I was already beginning to decline. Industrial plants, warehouses and commercial establishments were displacing many of the east side's residential blocks. St. Wenceslaus Catholic School which had opened in 1894 just a few blocks away had become the school of choice for a number of children in the Monroe School neighborhood. And many young families with children were building homes on the west side. As Monroe School's student population diminished, Van Buren's was still expanding with the latter school assuming some of the Bohemian cultural role formerly held by Monroe. In 1923, the school board voted to close Monroe School.

Another public institution located in the 3rd Street, SE corridor was the Bohemian-American Hose Company. The hose company was housed in quarters at the rear of the C.S.P.S. Hall at 217 11th Avenue, SE in the 1890s. The company counted 29 volunteer members, nearly all bearing Bohemian surnames. Prior to World War I, the volunteer fire department was converted into a fully professional operation and a new Hose Station No. 4 was built at 1111 3rd Street, SE replacing the former facility in the C.S.P.S. Hall.

One of the most important social institutions established in the Bohemian neighborhood was the Cesko-Slovenska Podporujici Spolku or Czecho-Slovak Protective Society. The first local chapter organized in 1879 and three years later two more chapters formed. The C.S.P.S. offered members access to fraternal life insurance and a variety of social activities ranging from bazaars to dances and lectures. The popularity of the local chapters was reflected in construction of the C.S.P.S. Hall built in 1891 at 1105 3rd Avenue, SE. As was previously noted, the building's construction was an important stimulus to the commercial development along 3rd Street at the turn-of-the-century. Two additions to the hall were built in 1900 and 1908 to accommodate those who used the building's meeting facilities, stage, auditorium and ballroom. Commercial establishments were incorporated

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  58

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

into the building's ground floor with rents helping to sustain the hall's operating expense.

A second fraternal society, the Zapadni Cesko-Bratska Jednota or Western Bohemian Fraternal Association, organized in 1897 with its national headquarters in Cedar Rapids. Member lodges were located in communities across the country with large Czech populations including five in Cedar Rapids at one time. As was noted above, in 1908 the organization moved to a new headquarters building in the Bohemian business district at 1200 3rd Street, SE. The Z.C.B.J. principally served as an insurance provider for its members but the headquarters building also served as a social hall for the various lodges. Success in selling life insurance eventually resulted in the association focusing exclusively on this line. The company changed its name to Western Fraternal Life Association in 1971.

Another Bohemian organization that had several locations along 3rd Street, SE was the Cedar Rapids Sokol Association founded in 1873 as a branch of the Ctenarsky Spolek or Bohemian Reading Society. Similar to the German turnvereins, the Sokol Association was a gymnastic organization dedicated to educating its members on physical fitness and moral conduct. One location was an adapted residence near the corner of 3rd Street and 7th Avenue, SE which they acquired in 1896 and added onto in 1901. This, too, proved insufficient for the group and in 1907-08 a three-story building was constructed at the south edge of the downtown at 417 3rd Street, SE. Retail tenants, including the Bohemian Savings and Loan Association, helped sustain the construction cost and operating expense of the new building.<sup>24</sup>

Another important Bohemian institution located just off 3rd Street, SE. The Matice Skolaska or Bohemian School began in 1870 as a combined effort of various Bohemian groups interested in reinforcing retention of Bohemian language and culture through maintenance of various education programs. By 1900, a separate building was erected at 2nd Street and 10th Avenue, SE, to house the efforts of the Matice Skolaska.

Through the years various other Bohemian social groups and special events were housed in the Bohemian School and various Bohemian social halls built along 3rd Street, SE. They included the Bohemian library, bands, singing groups, literary clubs, dramatic associations, and a wide variety of women's groups. Concerts and native language performances were regularly held in the fraternal halls located along 3rd Street, SE.

Bohemian churches were established on both sides of the river with St. Wenceslaus Bohemian

---

<sup>24</sup>Although located outside of the Bohemian commercial district, the Bohemian Savings and Loan was an important catalyst for growth in the Bohemian neighborhood financing 955 homes during its first forty years of existence.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   E   Page   59  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Catholic Church (1224 5th St., SE) the first and largest. St. Wenceslaus was founded in 1874 just two years after the Sinclair Company started operation a few blocks away. Without governmental support as churches had received in the old country, the parish was slow to grow at first. In three decades, however, the church's sixty families had grown to 1,200 parishioners and in 1904, a substantial new church was built. The St. Wenceslaus Catholic School was established a decade earlier and eventually added a high school to its primary grades.

Two east side Presbyterian churches had largely Bohemian memberships. The Bohemian Presbyterian Church, later renamed the Hus Memorial Presbyterian Church, built its first church in 1889 and a second larger structure in 1915 at 631 9th Avenue, SE. Third Presbyterian Church was largely attended by Bohemians who worked at the Sinclair and Co. plant. In 1901, following the death of T.M. Sinclair, his widow donated \$30,000 to build a new church as a memorial to Sinclair. The new building was located at the intersection of 9th Street, 12th Avenue and 17th Avenue, SE and when it was completed in 1903, the congregation changed its name to the "Sinclair Memorial Presbyterian Church."

Other Bohemian sponsored churches included congregations on the west side. They included the Bohemian Methodist Episcopal Church (now, an apartment building, 100 block of 14th Avenue, SW), the Czech Reformed Church (1510 2nd Street, SW), the Reformed Bohemian Church organized in 1906 (nonextant, 8th Avenue, SW and M Street, SW), and the St. Ludmila Roman Catholic Church and School (215 21st Avenue, SW) founded in 1914 as a mission of St. Wenceslaus.

### *West Side Development*

Cedar Rapids' Bohemian community continued to grow after 1900 and eventually both commercial and residential sections spilled over onto the west side of the river. The first business to open on 16th Avenue, SW was a grocery store in 1906. Just one year later, a streetcar route formed a loop through the west side following 2nd Street, SW to K Street and continuing on 16th Avenue, SW to C Street and then returning along 13th Avenue, SW and 2nd Street. Construction of the new 14th Avenue, SE/16th Avenue, SW Bridge in 1910 and the establishment of Riverside Park helped to boost the popularity of the neighborhood before and after World War I.

By the end of World War I with homebuilding by Czechs accelerating on the west side, a third bank aimed at the Bohemian-American community opened. The United State Bank (originally the Citizens Savings Bank) was established at the intersection of C Street and 16th Avenue, SW. Homeownership was an important value for Bohemian immigrants and their descendants or, as one resident put it, Bohemians were guided by the principle of "God, motherhood and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number  E  Page  60

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

homeownership."<sup>25</sup> From the 1920s through the 1940s, residential development on the west side was brisk.

After Louis Pochabradsky opened his grocery store in 1906, other businesses grew up along the two blocks of 16th Avenue, SW extending away from the new wagon bridge. A harness shop opened in 1908 and a hardware store and cigar factory soon thereafter. They eventually were joined by a bakery, restaurants, a meat shop, grocery store, and saloons, all catering to the west side Czech residents.

The area upstream of 16th Avenue, SW was associated with Bohemian cultural celebrations even before it was acquired as Riverside Park in 1916. In 1906 festivities in the park honored Bohemian Day and a speechmaker proclaimed that "Cedar Rapids is known as the Bohemian Athens of America." A bathing beach along the river was patronized by children from both sides of the river and Bohemian national holidays and special events were celebrated there in subsequent years. Both of the Bohemian neighborhoods joined by the 14th Avenue/16th Avenue Bridge continue to maintain a Czech presence in the 1990s.

---

<sup>25</sup>Interview with Ed Kuba, April, 1994.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     61    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

### F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements)

#### i. Property Type:

#### Districts, Buildings, Structures, Sites and Features Associated with Central Business District Development in Cedar Rapids, 1880 - 1945

##### *Description*

A number of resources directly associated with the development of the central business district remain extant. They include four resource groups. The first includes several properties that represent various aspects of the development of the *Riverfront and May's Island* (later, Municipal Island) as a government center. The second, largest group is associated with buildings in the *Commercial Core's* financial sector, retail goods sector, commercial block and office building development, and hotel and theatre construction. The third resource group relates to the *4th Street Railroad Corridor*. All railroad structures have been removed from the right-of-way but the trackage itself remains. The final group of resources includes properties connected to various *Religious Groups and Civic Organizations* headquartered in the downtown.

Specific resource types include public open spaces, governmental facilities, multi-story commercial blocks, banks, warehouses/factories, office buildings, hotels, theatres, a public library, a fire station, churches, several civic facilities containing gymnasiums and public halls, and several railroad corridor routes. Significant non-extant resources include pre-1900 hotels, railroad passenger and freight stations, pre-1900 commercial blocks and individual shops, smaller scale pre-1900 factory-warehouses, street car passenger or servicing facilities, and both pre and post-1900 opera houses and smaller theatres.

Several important works of the Cedar Rapids architectural firm of Josselyn & Taylor are among the extant resources including a bank building, the public library and a commercial block. Works by several Chicago architects include banks and office buildings. The resources seen in the central business district range from simplified examples of architectural styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to well-executed forms of the Richardsonian Romanesque, the Renaissance Revival, the Neo-Classical Revival, and the Commercial Style. A group of buildings on the west side of the river along a short stretch of 3rd Avenue, SW (100 and 200 blocks) contain a bank designed by Louis Sullivan and a series of well-executed brick veneered commercial structures from c. 1910 to 1935.

Continuous redevelopment in the downtown from the 1880s to the 1990s has left only a few city

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     62    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

blocks containing intact groups of pre-1945 buildings and even fewer groups associated with a single era of development. The presence of an extensive public skywalk system built during the 1970s and 1980s further diminishes the historic district potential of the downtown blocks. As a result, significant resources survive on an individual basis rather than as a part of a historic district or collection of historic buildings.

There are several exceptions, however. One is the group of government buildings developed as a civic center on Mays Island, later renamed Municipal Island. Planned and built between 1912 and 1928, this historic district relates the story of riverfront improvement planning, the adoption of the commission form of government by Cedar Rapids and the relocation of the seat of county government from Marion to Cedar Rapids. The Municipal Island Historic District National Register nomination acknowledges the association of these important themes.

Other groups of buildings that survive from specific historic eras are located along the 400 and 600 blocks of 1st Street, SE, and the 200 block of 4th Avenue, SE and the 400 block of 3rd Street, SE. The 1st Street, SE buildings include two and three-story utilitarian brick buildings that were part of a warehouse district developed adjacent to railroad sidings added to the south edge of the central business district during the first decades of the 20th century. The 3rd Street buildings include two substantial manufacturing/wholesaling buildings and several smaller scale commercial buildings with upper-level public spaces. These groups of buildings may constitute small historic districts or be treated as collections of individually significant structures. The historical and architectural significance for three buildings (the Hamilton Brothers Building, the Lyman Building and Lattner Building) located in these potential districts are already identified in individual National Register listings.

### *Significance*

Historic resources are considered significant under this context based on their association with the business trends, commercial practices, and business leaders who gave definition to the downtown during the more than six decades (1880 - 1945) that Cedar Rapids grew from a county-wide retail service center to a regional retail and jobbing center in eastern Iowa. The buildings that were constructed to house this change in economic role were erected in the central business district and to a lesser extent in the west side commercial district. A number of buildings demonstrate singular significance by relating the story of the growth and development of specific businesses, their owners, and their success and/or demise over a period of time. Still other buildings derive significance from the architectural styles they embody, the work of an important architect they represent, or the construction methods and materials used.

### *Registration Requirements*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     63    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Criterion A: Properties that reflect the trends and patterns that typified the development of Cedar Rapids' central business district beginning in the decades following the Civil War and concluding with World War II.

Criterion B: Properties that are directly associated with individuals who played a leading, pivotal or important role in shaping the development of Cedar Rapids' central business district during the period c. 1880 to c. 1945.

Criterion C: No single architectural style predominated during this period in downtown Cedar Rapids. Instead, styles that were important during this period on a national basis also appeared in downtown Cedar Rapids including the Richardsonian Romanesque, the Renaissance Revival, the Neo-Classical Revival, and the Commercial Style. These styles and several vernacular variations appear on a number of building types found in the central business district including a fire station, a public library, wholesale warehouses, bank buildings, stores, office buildings, city and county government buildings, post offices and churches. The one exception to this varied architectural pattern was the group of buildings in the 100 and 200 blocks of 3rd Avenue, SW.

Criterion D: Sites of nonextant properties which contain intact subsurface deposits with the potential to provide information concerning the history of the development of downtown.

Integrity Considerations: A property should be considered eligible unless it has lost most of the characteristics that convey a sense of time and place associated with the central business district during all or part of the 65 years covered by this historic context. If a building no longer has the ability to provide information with respect to building type, construction technique or other related subject matter of scholarly interest within this context, it should be considered ineligible. Modifications of storefronts including changes in windows, transoms, doors, and exterior finishes are to be expected in surviving commercial neighborhoods such as those in the commercial core. If the modifications do not detract from the overall design and proportions of the building, the building should be considered eligible.

### *Eligible or Potentially Eligible Properties*

#### Reconnaissance Survey for Downtown and Industrial Corridor Area

Associated property types for the reconnaissance survey area have not been intensively surveyed. Historical information has been gathered for individual buildings by volunteer researchers and a preliminary analysis has been made of this material. A general examination has been made of the integrity of the properties and all resources listed below meet the integrity test described above.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     64    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Identified resources include the following:<sup>1</sup>

*1st Avenue*

200 1st Avenue, NE - Roosevelt Hotel, 1925 - *NRHP*  
203 1st Avenue, SE - Golden Eagle Building, 1888  
205 1st Avenue, SE - Reserve National Insurance Co.  
301 1st Avenue, SE - Iowa Theater Building, 1928  
411 1st Avenue, SE - Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Building, (First Avenue Building)  
417 1st Avenue, SE - Irvine Building, 1926

*2nd Avenue, SE*

201-207 2nd Avenue, SE - Dows Building, 1930  
215-221 2nd Avenue, SE - Martin Dry Goods Co. (Ginsberg Jewelry), c. 1881  
222 2nd Avenue, SE - Merchant's National Bank Building, 1925  
305 2nd Avenue, SE - Cedar Rapids Post Office, (Witwer Senior Center), 1908-1910 - *NRHP*  
320 2nd Avenue, SE - (Kurtz Pub)  
325-329 2nd Avenue, SE - Muskvaki Block (Dragon Restaurant), c. 1900  
419 2nd Avenue, SE - Coffits Building, (Hall Bicycle), 1902  
526 2nd Avenue, SE - Inter-State School Building, 1908

*3rd Avenue, SE*

97 3rd Avenue, SE - Smulekoff's Furniture  
116 3rd Avenue, SE - Sindelar Saloon, 1898  
119 3rd Avenue, SE - Fawcett Building, 1906  
123 3rd Avenue, SE - Paramount Theater Building, 1927 - *NRHP*  
200 3rd Avenue, SE - Granby Building, 1893  
302-308 3rd Avenue, SE (also 216-224 3rd Street, SE) - Cedar Rapids Savings Bank, (Guaranty Bank & Trust Building), 1896, 1910  
311 3rd Avenue, SE - Cedar Rapids Supply Company, 1902  
314-318 3rd Avenue, SE - Strand Theater, (World Theater), 1915  
313-315 3rd Avenue, SE - Cedar Rapids Marble & Granite Works (Foreman & Clark), 1893 & 1905  
420 3rd Avenue, SE - Cedar Rapids Public Library, (Cedar Rapids Museum of Art), 1904 - *NRHP*  
600 3rd Avenue, SE - First Universalist Church - *NRHP*  
@ 10th Street, SE - Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

*3rd Avenue, SW*

101 3rd Avenue, SW - People's Savings Bank, (Norwest Bank) - *NRHP*  
102-104 3rd Avenue SW - Gatto Building, 1912

---

<sup>1</sup>The list of eligible and potentially eligible properties includes a building's historic name, a common name in parentheses and the construction date, if known. If a building is listed in the National Register of Historic Places the description "National Register" is also included.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     65    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

108 3rd Avenue SW - Colonial Theater (Lederman Bail Bonds), 1914  
110 3rd Avenue SW - Local Drug Co. (Stalker Electric), 1932  
201 3rd Avenue SW - Acme Greeting Card Co. (Acme Graphics Building), 1924  
219-221 3rd Avenue SW - Warner Building, 1911  
220 3rd Avenue SW - Great A & P Tea Co. (Barron Motor Co.), 1942

*1st Street, SE*

101 1st Street, SE - Old Post Office (Federal Building), 1932  
401 1st Street, SE - Hamilton Brother's Building (Hach's Coffee & Tea Co.), 1899 - *NRHP*  
415 1st Street, SE - (Charlies-On the River Restaurant)  
427 1st Street, SE - Fire Station No. 1 (Science Station), 1917  
600 1st Street, SE - John Blaul's Sons (Great Furniture Mart), 1914  
610-612 1st Street, SE - Orr-Newell Building, 1912  
614 1st Street, SE - Grissel Co. Building, 1913  
616 1st Street, SE - Baker Paper Co. Building, c.1914  
618 1st Street, SE - Baker Paper Co. Building, 1909  
620 1st Street, SE - Aurox Tool & Die Building, c.1945

*2nd Street, SE*

103 2nd Street, SE - American Building, 1913  
118 2nd Street, SE - (Ajax Balloon)  
125 2nd Street, SE - United Fire & Casualty , 1933  
203 2nd Street, SE - Security Building, 1908 - *NRHP*  
219-223 2nd Street, SE - Mullin Building (Drake's Salad Bar & Enzler's), 1912  
225 2nd Street, SE - Higley Building, 1918  
230 2nd Street, SE - Granby Building, 1893

*3rd Street, SE*

100-112 3rd Street, SE - Iowa Theater Building (Community Theater), 1928  
216-224 3rd Street, SE (also 302-308 3rd Avenue, SE) - Cedar Rapids Savings Bank, (Guaranty Bank & Trust Building), 1896, 1910  
302-308 3rd Street, SE -  
321 3rd Street, SE - Welch Cook Beals Co. (MCI), 1909  
417 3rd Street, SE - Sokolovna Gymnasium Building, 1908  
419 3rd Street, SE - Hutchinson Building (Borden Building), 1921

*Miscellaneous*

130 B Avenue, NE - Jones, Douglas & Co. cracker factory (Ohsman & Sons Co.), c. 1880  
501 A Avenue, NE - St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church, 1946  
525 A Avenue, NE - Grace Episcopal Church, 1851, 1873, 1890  
616 A Avenue, NE - Scottish Rite Temple, 1908  
217 4th Avenue, SE - Lattner Auditorium Building - *NRHP*  
221 4th Avenue, SE - Lyman Building (Iowa Building), 1914 - *NRHP*  
117-123 5th Street, SE - Palmer Building (MCI), 1905

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     66    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

310 5th Street, SE - First Presbyterian Church, 1869  
318 5th Street, SE - YWCA, 1911  
May's Island Historic District - *NRHP*

### ii. Property Type

#### Districts, Buildings, Structures, Sites and Features Associated with Industrial Corridors in Cedar Rapids, 1865 - 1945

##### *Description*

A number of resources directly associated with the development of industrial corridors along the rights-of-way of the major trunk line railroads that pass through Cedar Rapids remain extant. They include factories, mills, foundries, warehouses, and a variety of industry-specific industrial facilities. All railroad structures have been removed from the rights-of-way but the historic railroad alignments, many of the related spur lines and the extensive sidings necessary to support the local industrial complex remain.

Specific resource types include factories, foundries, meat packing plants, warehouses (machinery, drugs, hardware, groceries, and paper), office buildings, cereal processing mills, elevators, storage tanks, storage sheds, cold-storage facilities, bottling works, fire stations, water towers, storage yards, and railroad yards. Significant non-extant resources include railroad passenger and freight stations, railroad shops buildings, ice houses, smaller scale pre-1900 factories and warehouses, interurban passenger stations and related servicing facilities. It is likely that the work of important industrial facility planners and engineers is represented in Cedar Rapids manufacturing concerns, but such an analysis will require completion of intensive level local survey work and the development of statewide and/or national historic contexts.

The three largest industrial sites have had major modifications over a multi-decade period. They include the Quaker Oats Co. mill, the Sinclair-Wilson Co. meatpacking plant, and the Link-Belt Speeder-FMC Corp. factory. The sites contain buildings designed for the specific manufacturing operations of each company. For example, the Quaker Oats Co. contains flour mills, elevators, packaging buildings, and warehouses. The Sinclair-Wilson Co plant. contains railroad spur lines connected to unloading areas for hogs, sheep and cattle, slaughtering facilities, curing and cold storage buildings, cooperage buildings, and a water tower. The Link-Belt Speeder-FMC Corp. factory contains a series of steel and concrete buildings that housed fabrication and assembly operations.

Because of the nature of industrial corridor development, industrial buildings were located within

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number     F     Page     67    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

close proximity to one another. Redevelopment of these areas, however, has promoted clearance for parking lots and new construction. Large parcels that once contained substantial factories or multiple buildings have been subsequently divided and redeveloped by smaller concerns. As a result, large industrial historic districts without the presence of non-contributing or intrusive buildings are infrequent.

There are several exceptions, however. One is the group of buildings built between 1900 and World War I that relates the story of railroad improvements and warehousing at the south end of the commercial district. They are located along the 400 and 600 blocks of 1st Street, SE. The 1st Street, SE buildings include two and three-story utilitarian brick buildings that were part of a warehouse district developed adjacent to railroad sidings added to the south edge of the central business district during the first decades of the 20th century. This cluster of buildings includes the Hamilton Brothers Building at 401 1st Street, SE is listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places.

Other industrial historic districts include a section of Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad corridor between the 9th Avenue railroad bridge and the 4th Street Railroad Corridor and a section of the 4th Street Railroad Corridor extending from 9th Avenue, SE south to 10th Avenue, SE. This stretch of railroad includes the city's largest surviving wholesale warehouses (the Churchill Drug Co. and the Witwer Grocery Co.), several smaller manufacturing buildings (the Cedar Rapids Fur & Hide Co., the Blue Valley Creamery, the Cedar Rapids Sheet Metal Co.) and a portion of a nationally important manufacturer of dairy equipment (the J.G. Cherry Co.). Spur lines, sidings and "Y" lines interweave the district. The multi-story brick buildings comprising the district were built between 1880 and 1920.

A third group of buildings is located north along the 4th Street Railroad Corridor at the intersections of 6th and 7th Avenues, SE straddling the railroad lines. The group includes buildings that once housed a wholesale hardware warehouse (Harper & McIntire Co.), a printer and school supply wholesaler (the Metropolitan Supply Co.), a bottling company, an electrical wholesaler (Terry-Durrin Co.), a commercial bakery (Petersen Baking Co./Peter Pan Bakery) and a furniture manufacturer (the Parlor Furniture Manufacturing Co.). The buildings are on the south edge of the commercial core.

On the west side of the river, a group of industrial buildings is located along the Chicago and North Western Railroad right-of-way north of 1st Avenue. The small district includes a collection of metalworking firms: the Chandler Pump Co., the Dearborn Brass Foundry, and the Universal Engineering Co. The one and two-story brick buildings juxtapose a rail line and a working class residential district. They date from 1880 to 1925 and because of their continued use through a period of dramatically changing technology, have experienced considerable change.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     68    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

*Significance*

Historic resources are considered significant under this context based on their association with the industrial trends, manufacturing and wholesaling practices, and business leaders who gave definition to the industrial corridors that developed along Cedar Rapids' railroads during the more than six decades (1880 - 1945) that Cedar Rapids grew from an economy of home consumption to a significant statewide and national food processor and machinery manufacturer. The buildings that were constructed to house the individual manufacturing and processing concerns were erected along the trunk lines of the Chicago and North Western Railroad, the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad and the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad. A number of buildings demonstrate singular significance - the story of the growth and development of a specific business, the creativity or industrial genius of its owner(s), the changing role the business played in the national industrial scene and its success and/or demise over a period of time. Still other buildings derive significance from the industrial technology and engineering practices they embody.

Cedar Rapids saw two important industrial groups take root along several railroad corridors during the period of 1880 to 1945. One group of enterprises gave the city the sobriquet of "Cereal City" and included firms such as the Quaker Oats Company, the National Oats Company and Penick & Ford. A second industrial group included a series of manufacturing concerns that gave Cedar Rapids the designation as the national "Road Machine Capital." The larger companies in this group included the Universal Crusher Company, The Iowa Manufacturing Company, and the Link-Belt Speeder Co. Because of their national and statewide importance, the building complexes associated with both of these groups of industries should receive prime consideration for purposes of nomination despite the fact that they are scattered.

*Registration Requirements*

Criterion A: Properties that reflect the trends and patterns that typified the development of Cedar Rapids' industrial corridors and riverbanks beginning in the decades following the Civil War and concluding with World War II. These areas include the riverfront, the 4th Street Railroad Corridor and the associated lines of the Chicago & North Western RR, the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul RR, and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific RR; the Chicago and North Western Railroad Corridor in northwest Cedar Rapids; and the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul RR Corridor in northeast and southwest Cedar Rapids. Special consideration should be given to resources associated with Cedar Rapids reputation as the "Cereal City" and the "Road Machinery Capital."

Criterion B: Properties that are directly associated with individuals who played a leading, pivotal or important roles in shaping the development of Cedar Rapids' industries that located in one of the

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     69    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

railroad corridors or along the river during the period c. 1865 to c. 1945. In addition, properties are included that are associated with individual inventors or engineering geniuses who contributed to the product lines successfully manufactured and distributed by local firms.

Criterion C: No single architectural style predominated during this period in the utilitarian factory building of Cedar Rapids. Instead, elements of styles that were important during this period on a national basis also appeared on some of the industrial buildings including the Craftsman, Commercial and Art Moderne styles. These styles and vernacular variations appear on several building types found in the industrial corridors including a fire station, wholesale warehouses, mills, factories, foundries and open storage yards.

Criterion D: Sites of nonextant properties which contain intact subsurface deposits with the potential to provide information concerning the history of the development of the industrial corridors. The railroad rights-of-way of the various railroads are an example of such a site.

Integrity Considerations: A property should be considered eligible unless it has lost most of the characteristics that convey a sense of time and place associated with the industrial corridors during all or part of the 80 years covered by this historic context. Due to changes in manufacturing technology and industrial use, it is expected that buildings significant under this context will have experienced minor and major alterations. If a building no longer has the ability to provide information with respect to building type, construction technique or other related subject matter of scholarly interest within this context or if its interpretive potential has been lost or severely diminished due to alteration, it should be considered ineligible.

*Eligible or Potentially Eligible Properties*

Reconnaissance Survey for Downtown and Industrial Corridor Area

Associated property types for the reconnaissance survey area have not been intensively surveyed. Historical information has been gathered for individual buildings by volunteer researchers and a preliminary analysis has been made of this material. An examination has been made of the integrity of each property and resources listed below generally meet the integrity test described above. Identified resources include the following:

*Northeast Quadrant*

620 17th Street, NE - Vetter & Parks Lumber Co.

200 B Avenue, NE - Quaker Oats (complex property with significant changes requiring an integrity decision based on an intensive survey of the property at a later date)

761 J. Avenue, NE - Cedar Rapids Water Purification Plant, 1930

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     70    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

*Northwest Quadrant*

805 B Avenue, NW - Dearborn Brass Foundry, (Jensen-Klich Supply Co.), 1901  
807 A Avenue, NW, 707-711 B Avenue, NW & 200 8th St., NW - Chandler Pump Company, c. 1890  
625 C Avenue, NW - Universal Crusher Co. (Universal Engineering Co.), 1924  
605 G Avenue, NW - Cedar Rapids Pump Co., (Cedar Rapids School District Warehouse), c.1890

*Southeast Quadrant*

221 4th Avenue, SE - Lyman Building (Iowa Building), 1914 - *NRHP*  
308 6th Avenue, SE - Petersen Baking Co. (Norand), c.1931  
411 6th Avenue, SE - Harper & McIntire Co. (Smulekoff's Warehouse), 1921  
317 7th Avenue, SE - Parlor Furniture Manufacturing Co., (Voelkers), 1907  
402 9th Avenue, SE - Blue Valley Creamery (Cedar Rapids Sheet Metal Co.), c.1912  
406 9th Avenue, SE - Ellis & Roth Co. (Cedar Rapids Sheet Metal Co.), 1912  
329 10th Avenue, SE - J.G. Cherry Co., 1919  
600 3rd Street, SE - Brown-Evans Manufacturing Co. (Metropolitan Supply), 1919  
401 1st Street, SE - Hamilton Brother's Building (Hach's Coffee & Tea Co.), 1899 - *NRHP*  
427 1st Street, SE - Fire Station No. 1 (Science Station), 1917  
600 1st Street, SE - John Blaul's Sons (Great Furniture Mart), 1914  
610-612 1st Street, SE - Orr-Newell Building, 1912  
614 1st Street, SE - Grissel Co. Building, 1913  
616 1st Street, SE - Baker Paper Co. Building, c.1914  
618 1st Street, SE - Baker Paper Co. Building, 1909  
900 2nd Street, SE - Churchill Drug Co./McKesson &-Robbins Co., (Hawkeye Seed Co.), 1925  
321 3rd Street, SE - Welch-Cook-Beals Co., 1914  
900 3rd Street, SE - Witwer Grocery Co., 1946  
3rd Street, SE & 16th Avenue, SE - Sinclair and Co.-Wilson Co. site, includes nearly 100 separate but interconnected buildings: for example, Cooperage Building (Bldg.#1) dates to 1882 with others through 1970s; complex property with significant changes requiring an integrity decision based on an intensive survey of the property at a later date.

*Southwest Quadrant*

1115 C Street, SW - Hose Station No. 5, 1909  
42 7th Avenue, SW - Iowa Pipe & Supply Co.  
1201 6th Street, SW-Link-Belt Speeder Corporation, 1948, 1953, 1956, 1957  
519 H St., SW - Cedar Rapids Candy Co., (Knutson Metal Co.)  
1400 block Rockford Rd, SW - Rockford Road Station, CRANDIC Line

iii. **Property Type:**

Districts, Buildings, Structures, Sites and Features Associated with Bohemian Commercial and Social Life in Cedar Rapids, 1875 - 1925

*Description*

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     71    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

A number of resources directly associated with Bohemian commercial and social life in southeast Cedar Rapids remain extant including individually significant buildings and a small district. The properties represent various aspects of the commercial life of the Bohemian-American community. They included Bohemian owned retail establishments, banks, saloons and fraternal lodges all developed during the decades following the Civil War through the years immediately following World War I. Subsequent to 1925, growth in the Bohemian community mainly occurred on the west side of the Cedar River where no institutional buildings and nearly no commercial buildings survive in unaltered condition. The buildings recognized in this historic context are limited to the east side of the river in the heart of the pre-1925 Bohemian neighborhood along 3rd Street, SE from 10th Avenue to 14th Avenue, SE and along 14th Avenue, SE. The buildings are one to three-story contiguous storefront buildings with several free standing structures (bank and hose station).

Specific resource types include specialty shops, multi-story commercial blocks, banks, a fire station, churches, and several civic facilities containing gymnasiums and public halls. Significant non-extant resources include pre-1900 factories, theatres, and a school house. The resources seen in the Bohemian commercial district range from simplified examples of architectural styles of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to well-executed forms of the Richardsonian Romanesque, the Neo-Classical Revival, and the Commercial Style.

Redevelopment in the 3rd Street area from the 1950s to the 1980s has left only a few city blocks containing intact groups of pre-1925 buildings.

### *Significance*

Historic resources are considered significant under this context based on their association with commercial establishments, fraternal and social centers, and business leaders who gave definition to the Bohemian-American experience in southeast Cedar Rapids during the four decades (1880 - c.1925) that Cedar Rapids' Bohemian community grew to a significant force in the economy, local politics and social life. The buildings that were constructed during this period of immigration and establishment were erected along 3rd Street from 10th Avenue, SE to 14th Avenue, SE and along 14th Avenue, SE from 3rd Street, SE to the Cedar River. A number of buildings demonstrate singular significance - the story of the growth and development of a specific business, its Bohemian owner(s), and its success and/or demise over a period of time. A few buildings derive significance from the architectural styles they embody or the construction methods and materials used.

### *Registration Requirements*

Criterion A: Properties that reflect the trends and patterns that typified the development of Cedar

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     72    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Rapids' Bohemian commercial district from 1880 through World War I as well as cultural institutions and religious properties associated with the ethnic history and religious patterns of east side Bohemian neighborhood.

Criterion B: Properties that are directly associated with individuals who played a leading, pivotal or important role in shaping the development of Cedar Rapids' Bohemian district during the period c. 1880 to c. 1925.

Criterion C: No single architectural style predominated during this period in the utilitarian factory building and commercial blocks of Cedar Rapids. Instead, elements of styles that were important during this period on a national basis also appeared on some of the commercial buildings including the Italianate, Romanesque Revival, and Neo-Classical styles. These styles and vernacular variations appear on several building types found in the Bohemian business district including a fire station, commercial blocks, a bank, and lodge halls.

Criterion D: Sites of nonextant properties which contain intact subsurface deposits with the potential to provide information concerning the history of the development of the Bohemian business district. These may include industrial and residential sites that preceded later commercial buildings.

Integrity Considerations: A property should be considered eligible unless it has lost most of the characteristics that convey a sense of time and place associated with the Bohemian business district during all or part of the 45 years covered by this historic context. If a building no longer has the ability to provide information with respect to building type, construction technique or other related subject matter of scholarly interest within this context, it should be considered ineligible. Modifications of storefronts including changes in windows, transoms, doors, and exterior finishes are to be expected in surviving commercial neighborhoods such as those along 3rd Street and 14th Avenue, SE. If the modifications do not detract from the overall design and proportions of the building, the building should be considered eligible.

### *Eligible or Potentially Eligible Properties*

#### Reconnaissance Survey for Downtown and Industrial Corridor Area

Associated property types for the reconnaissance survey area have not been intensively surveyed. Historical information has been gathered for individual buildings by volunteer researchers and a preliminary analysis has been made of this material. A general examination has been made of the integrity of the properties and all resources listed below meet the integrity test described above for contributing structures in a historic district. Identified resources include the following:

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number     F     Page     73    

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

1326 2nd Street, SE - P. Hach Building (1901)

1006 3rd Street, SE - Suchy Building (Ryder's Saloon), 1907

1010 3rd Street, SE - (White Elephant Antiques), c. 1900

1029 3rd Street, SE - Matyk Building, 1895

1105 3rd Street, SE - C.S.P.S. Hall (Service Press), 1890, 1900, 1908 - *NRHP*

1111 3rd Street, SE - Hose Co. No. 4 (pre-1913)

1121 3rd Street, SE - Jacobs Building (1912)

1125 3rd Street, SE - Kreji Building (1911)

1129-31 3rd Street, SE - Iowa State Savings Bank, 1906

1200 3rd Street, SE - Z.C.B.J. Building (Left Bank), 1908

1201 3rd Street, SE - Iowa State Savings Bank (First Trust & Savings Bank), 1917

1317 3rd Street, SE - Lesinger Block (Little Bohemia), 1882

1318 3rd Street, SE - Zitek's Skelly Station (c. 1940)

119 14th Avenue, SE - Krejci Blacksmith, 1899

121 14th Avenue, SE - Darragh & Loufek Building, 1917

123-125 14th Avenue, SE - Karban Building, c.1905

131 14th Avenue, SE/1401 2nd Street, SE - Martinek Hardware, c.1905

213-215 14th Avenue, SE - Ideal Theater, 1914

219-221 14th Avenue, SE - Pugh & Kucera Building, 1898

227 14th Avenue, SE and 1401 3rd Street, SE - Friendly Service Station, c. 1940

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   G   Page   74  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

### G. Geographical Data

Boundaries for the reconnaissance survey area include the following:

#### *Central Business District and Commercial Neighborhoods*

An area within the corporate limits of Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa: from the edge of the Cedar River northeast in a straight line to F Avenue, NE and Oakland Road, NE; then south to 10th Street, NE; then five blocks southeast along 10th Street to 4th Avenue, SE; then following along and either side of 4th Avenue, SE five blocks to 5th Street, SE; then along 5th Street, SE one block to 5th Avenue, SE; then one block along 5th Avenue to the 4th Street railroad right-of-way; then southeast along the railroad right-of-way for nine blocks to 16th Avenue, SE; then in a straight line towards the Cedar River in a southwesterly direction along the southeasterly edge of the former Sinclair and Co. plant; then across the river along and the 14th Avenue Bridge; then southwest for two blocks along and either side of 14th Avenue, SW to C Street, SW; then northwest along C Street, SW to 11th Avenue, SW; then northwest seven blocks along 11th Avenue, SW to 4th Avenue, SW; then west for two blocks along 4th Avenue, SW to 3rd Street, SW; then northwest and north along 3rd Street to K Avenue, NW; and then east along K Avenue, NW to the Cedar River.

#### *Riverfront Corridor*

An area within the corporate limits of Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa: along both the east and west banks of the Cedar River from the Cedar Rapids Water Purification Plant at 761 J. Avenue, NE to the former Sinclair and Co. packing plant at 16th Avenue, SE.

#### *Railroad Corridors*

Along the rights-of-way of the historic routes of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad; the Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Paul Railroad; the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad (former Cedar Rapids Burlington and Northern Railroad); the Illinois Central Railroad; and the Cedar Rapids and Iowa City Railway within the corporate limits of the city of Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

The Central Business District and Commercial Neighborhoods contain approximately 735 acres or 1.2 square miles. The Riverfront and Railroad Corridors include approximately 44 linear miles.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   H   Page   75  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

**H. Identification and Evaluation Methods**

In the spring of 1996 the Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission received a Certified Local Government grant from the State Historical Society of Iowa to prepare a reconnaissance survey of Cedar Rapids' downtown and industrial corridors. The areas to be surveyed included approximately 65 blocks in the central business district and along Second and Third Avenues, SW; the Czech business district along Third Street and 14th Avenue, SE; the edges of the Cedar River; and approximately 40 miles of industrial corridors following the routes of the various trunk line railroads passing through Cedar Rapids. The project was coordinated for the City of Cedar Rapids by its Department of Development.

During the summer of 1996, the City retained Svendsen Tyler, Inc., a historic preservation planning firm from Sarona, Wisconsin, to complete historical and architectural reconnaissance survey work. Svendsen Tyler, Inc. had completed both reconnaissance and intensive survey work in a series of older residential neighborhoods ringing the central business district between 1992 and 1995. As with the earlier survey, the criteria for establishing significance for individual buildings, sites and districts were that of the National Register of Historic Places.

***Reconnaissance Survey***

The first phase for the survey was completion of a preliminary investigation of the geographically targeted areas. During this phase, research was completed on the general history of the economic trends of the community and commercial development of the city and how those stories are manifested in physical attributes of the contemporary city including street patterns and railroad routes, industrial sites and corridors, warehouse districts, retailing districts, and public or private institutions such as municipal and county government buildings. Further research was conducted to determine development patterns, periods of boom and panic, major disasters and the time frames involved in this formation.

Another aspect of the reconnaissance survey involved an examination of the physical relationships and the integrity of the building stock in the study areas. A visual inspection was conducted of the exteriors of buildings and streetscapes to identify architectural styles and forms, scale, material, setback and environmental context. The railroad corridors were investigated during a windshield survey conducted in the fall of 1996 when the absence of tree cover and brush made inspection feasible. No archaeological field investigations were made but areas likely to contain potential sites based on the presence of buildings in historic Sanborn Maps were examined closely. If buildings or structures were nonextant, the potential for historic archaeological resources was so noted.

In November, 1996, a volunteer training workshop was conducted by Marlys Svendsen and Leah

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

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   H   Page   76  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Rogers, historic preservation consultant. The purpose of the workshop was to recruit and train individuals to assist in doing research for individual buildings and sites identified during the windshield survey. The workshop discussed research sources available in a variety of Cedar Rapids collections, the steps involved in finding materials for various buildings, and a research checklist for volunteers to use. A slide show was presented showing the types of historic resources to be researched and at the end of the training workshop, the nearly two dozen volunteers attending the meeting selected buildings to research. More than 90 buildings were divided among the volunteers for research.

In January, 1997 a second meeting was conducted by Rogers and Susan Snow, a member of the Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission. The purpose of the second meeting was to exchange helpful research techniques and answer questions of the volunteers. Material was collected from the volunteer researchers in early February. The volunteers contributed more than 350 hours of research time to the project.

In March, 1997 the reconnaissance survey was completed and its findings are included in the Multiple-Property Documentation Form: "Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945." The form contains a general history of the development of the subject areas with material organized according to the various geographic areas studied: the central business district, individual railroad corridors, and the Bohemian business district along 3rd Street, SE. The report recommends intensive survey work based on research completed and visual inspections that identified individual buildings and districts meeting the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   1   Page   77  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

**I. Major Bibliographical Reference**

Abernathy, W.J. *The Natural Advantages and Business Resources of the City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa*. Cedar Rapids: Ayers, McClelland & Co., Printers, 1871.

"American Building Bought by Morris Plan." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, undated.

Andrews, Clarence. "Cedar Rapids in the Roaring Twenties." *Palimpsest*, Vol. 68, No. 1, pp. 32-48.

*Annual Report of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa Board of Trade*. Cedar Rapids: Republican Co., 1884.

"Armstrong's Clothing Store Celebrates Forty-Third Anniversary; Has Long Experienced Buying Staff." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, November 10, 1933.

"Armstrong's Store Notes 75th Birthday this Fall." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, October 24, 1965.

"Ask Receivers C.R. Savings and American Trust." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, April 8, 1934.

"Baker Paper Company," *The Saturday Record*, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, July 10, 1909.

Baylis, William. *Souvenir of Cedar Rapids, Iowa*. Cedar Rapids: Baylis Photo Co., 1907.

Belding, Robert E. "The Penman Builds an Empire," *Palimpsest*, 1980.

Biographical Sketches of Cedar Rapids and Marion, Iowa Business People Before 1938. Cedar Rapids Chapter, Citizens Historical Association (headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana), 1938. Linn County Genealogical Society Collection.

Brewer, Luther A. and Barthinius L. Wick, *History of Linn County*. Chicago: Pioneer Publishing, 1911.

"Brief History of W.F.L.A." unpublished and undated history of Western Fraternal Life Association, c. 1980.

Burkhalter, Edward Read. *History of the Early Churches of Cedar Rapids, Iowa*. Cedar Rapids: Ashley Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, 1923.

Burkhalter, Louis. *It's Only Money*. New York: Carlton Press, 1971.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   1   Page   78  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

*Camera View of Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Parlor City of the West.* Cedar Rapids Business College, c. 1900.

Cedar Rapids Historical Archives Collection. Miscellaneous vertical files dealing with industrial and business history of Cedar Rapids.

Cedar Rapids Centennial, 1856 - 1956. Miscellaneous clippings.

*Cedar Rapids.* Cedar Rapids: Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce, 1928.

"Cedar Rapids, Iowa." *North Western Lines*, pp. 29-30.

"Cedar Rapids, Iowa." Railroad Building Inventory, Historical Society of Iowa. (file inventory contains summary of railroad building information based on examination of railroad journals and Sanborn Co. maps; compiled in late-1970s by Marlys A. Svendsen)

*Cedar Rapids-Marion, Iowa: Area of Five Seasons.* Cedar Rapids-Marion Chamber of Commerce. Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1973.

"Cedar Rapids, A Model City." The Commercial Club of Cedar Rapids. Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1915.

*Cedar Rapids on the Banks of the Cedar and in the State Where the Corn Grows.* Cedar Rapids: Hanford Post, American Legion, 1924.

"Cedar Rapids has World's Largest Cereal Mill." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, undated (c. 1948).

"Cedar Rapids, Iowa Map - 1930." Linn County Genealogical Society Collection.

"Cedar Rapids Republican Semi-Centennial Magazine Edition, 1856 - 1906." Cedar Rapids: The Republican, 1906.

*Cedar Rapids Savings Bank and Trust Co.* Cedar Rapids: Cedar Rapids Savings Bank and Trust Co., 1926.

*Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA, A.D. 1891.* Cedar Rapids: Flower and Wilstach, 1891.

*Cedar Rapids of To-Day, 1904.* Columbus, Ohio: Bucher Engineering Co., 1904.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   1   Page   79  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

Cedar Rapids City Directories. 1877, 1880-81, 1881, 1885, 1890-91, 1892, 1893, 1895, 1896, 1898, 1899-1900, 1900, 1901, 1910, annually: 1912 - 1936.

"Cherry-Burrell Products Known in all Dairy Countries; One of City's Oldest Industries," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 5, 1937.

Cherry-Burrell information sheet, Cherry-Burrell Corporation, undated (post-1963).

*City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa*. Boston: Artistic Publishing Co., no date.

Clements, Ralph. *Tales of the Town: Little Known Anecdotes of Life in Cedar Rapids*. Cedar Rapids: Stamats Publishing Co., 1967.

Clements, Ralph. *Why's Why in Cedar Rapids*. Cedar Rapids: The Rapid Press, 1927. 364 pp. (A compilation of 364 interviews with leading business and professional men of Cedar Rapids, published daily in the *Evening Gazette and Republican* from April, 1926 - June, 1927)

"Clothing Trends for All Members of Family Have Revolutionized the Dry Goods Business." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 5, 1937

*Commercial Club Bulletin: Some Facts About Cedar Rapids*. Cedar Rapids: Laurance Press Co., 1903.

"Complete Plan to Liquidate 2 Local Banks. *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, November 10, 1933.

"C.R. Business College is Sold to Gates of Waterloo." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 17, 1971.

"C.R. Business College is Closed; Opened in 1877." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, April 24, 1973.

"C.R. Has Been Home to More than 30 Papers Since 1850s." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, March 3, 1985.

"C.R. McKesson Unit is 'State of the Art.'" *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, October 2, 1988.

"C.R. Road Machinery Firms World Known." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, undated.

Danek, Ernie. *Cedar Rapids: Tall Corn and High Technology: A Pictorial History*. Woodland Hills, California: Windsor Publications, 1980.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   1   Page   80  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

"Dearborn Brass Buys Chandler Factory Building." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 21, 1954.

"Dearborn Co. Merges with Food Firm." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 21, 1972.

"Dearborn Cuts Last C.R. Tie." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, March 3, 1981.

*The Developer Illustrated*. "Cedar Rapids, Iowa." Southwest Publishing Co., December, 1902.

Dows, Sutherland. *Seven Ages of a City*. Cedar Rapids: Iowa Electric Light and Power Co., 1957.

"Dows Make-over Uncovers History." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, April 28, 1992.

"Early Day Banks Helped Stimulate Growth in C.R." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 11, 1946.

Ewoldt, Harold F. *Cedar Rapids: the Magnificent Century*. Northridge, California: Windsor Publications, 1988.

Ewoldt, Harold F. "Crude, Plush or Mediocre, Countless Inns Marked Cedar Rapids' Growth." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, December 23, 1981.

"Excavators Pierce Eagle Beer Caves." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 6, 1977.

"Expansion, Renovation is Under Way at Smulekoff's." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, January 26, 1964.

"Final Curtain." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, March 15, 1992.

"Final Pull for Paramount Curtain." *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, May 16, 1929, p. 8.

"First Paper Established 95 Years Ago." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 11, 1946.

"First Train Reached Cedar Rapids on June 15, 1859." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 11, 1946.

"First Trust and Savings is Growing." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 5, 1937.

"First Trust and Savings Bank, 50 Years of Service, 1934-1984." Cedar Rapids: First Trust and Savings Bank, 1984.

"Giant Corn Industry Developed in Eighteen Years Since Penick and Ford Plant was Established in Cedar Rapids." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 4, 1938.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   1   Page   81  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

"The Grand Old Lady of Entertainment Turns 61." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 2, 1989.

"Greene's Opera House in Cedar Rapids, About 1890." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 7, 1958.

Griffith, Martha E. *The History of Czechs in Cedar Rapids*. Cedar Rapids: Czech Heritage Foundation, 1970. (Reprinted from *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, April and July, 1944)

"The Growth of Wilson Foods: A Chronology." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, undated (c. February, 1984).

*Guide to Cedar Rapids and Northeast Iowa*. Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, State of Iowa. Cedar Rapids: Laurance Press, 1937.

*The History of Czechs in Cedar Rapids, Vol. II, 1942-1982*. Ed. by Czech Heritage Foundation. Cedar Rapids: Lilly Printing Co., 1982. 112 pp.

"Huge Road Program Means Boom in Cedar Rapids." *Des Moines Sunday Register*, January 6, 1957, p. 16-GA.

Karr, Donald A. *Images of Cedar Rapids*. Cedar Rapids: Prairie Valley Publishing Co., 1987.

"Killians's The End for 71-Year-Old Firm?" *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 2, 1982.

"Kubias Hardware "A Store Where You Could Find Almost Anything." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, March 16, 1986.

*The Illustrated Review Devoted to Manufacturing, Commercial and Financial Interests: Descriptive of and Illustrating Cedar Rapids, Iowa*." Cedar Rapids: Clark-MacDaniel Co., 1900.

"Iowa Iron Works had long history in C.R." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, January 11, 1996.

"Iowa Manufacturing Company, Iowa Steel & Iron Works, An Idea - Plus Foresight - Gave Cedar Rapids World's Largest Producer of Rock Crushing Units." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, December 17, 1950

"Iowa Manufacturing Co. Machinery Used for Road Building in all Parts of World." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 4, 1938.

"Iowa National Enters 1984: "We're now in our 75th year." *Iowa National Imprint*," January, 1984.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet**

Section number   1   Page   82  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

"Iowa Steel Older than Iowa Manufacturing." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, undated.

Jones, Charles M. *Kenwood Park*. Cedar Rapids: Superior Press, 1912.

Laurance, Charles A. *Pioneer Days in Cedar Rapids, 1860-1880*. Cedar Rapids: Laurance Press Co., 1936.

"Like C.R., YMCA and YWCA Have Grown in Past Century." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, May 15, 1983.

"Link-Belt Speeder Corporation." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, December 24, 1950.

Linn County Genealogical Collection. Miscellaneous vertical files.

"Local Manufacturers Show: Parlor Furniture Co." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, March 15, 1911.

"The Lyman Building Collapse," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 26, 1983.

Marquette, Arthur F. *Brands, Trademarks and Goodwill: The Story of the Quaker Oats Company*. New York: McGraw Hill Co., 1967.

Martin, Pat. "Cedar Rapids's Colorful Czechs." *The Iowan*, Winter, 1980, pp. 19-65.

"Merchants National Bank: Now a Century Old." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, February 15, 1981.

"Milwaukee to Fill in Portion of Cedar Lake." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 25, 1912.

*Mobilization of Factories of Cedar Rapids, Iowa for Direct and Indirect War Needs*. Cedar Rapids: Wingert and Leefers, undated.

"Mrs. H.N. Craemer is Last Survivor of Early Cedar Rapids Retailing Era." *Marion Sentinel*, October 22, 1953.

"Mullin Building in C.R. Sold." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 21, 1984.

Murray, Janet Stevenson and Frederick Gray Murray. *The Story of Cedar Rapids*. New York: Stratford House, 1950.

"The National Oats Story." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 26, 1979.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number   1   Page   83  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

"New College a Source of Pride." *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, September 5, 1905, p. 5.

"100 Years Serving Iowa, A Friendly Message to Our Neighbors on this Our 100th Anniversary, Morris Sanford Company." Cedar Rapids: Morris Sanford Company, 1951.

"100th Anniversary of the Cedar Rapids, Iowa Fire Department, 1969 - 1969." Linn County Genealogical Society Collection.

"Ohsman Marks 100 Years on Philosophy of Service," *The Leather Manufacturer*, December, 1991, pp. 7-11.

Paulson, Clarissa. "Inside Cedar Rapids, Oat Milling: A Cedar Rapids Tradition." Cedar Rapids-Marion Business Education Task Force, Cedar Rapids Community School District, undated (post 1980)

"Penick Plant Turns Iowa Corn into Myriad of Products." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 5, 1937.

"Peoples Bank, The First 75 Years." Cedar Rapids: Peoples Bank and Trust Company, 1978.

"Presenting the Iowa Theatre." (Opening Program), Cedar Rapids: Lilly Printing Co., 1928.

"Peter Pan Bakery to Close Here." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, January 18, 1965.

"Progress Dooms Interurban." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, July 10, 1983.

Robinson, Charles Mulford. *Report of Charles Mulford Robinson with Regard to Civic Affairs in the City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, with Recommendations for City Improvement and Beautification.* Cedar Rapids: The Torch Press, 1908.

"Roosevelt Hotel Completes Its Large Air-Conditioning Program, Hostelry One of Midwest's Finest; Has New Equipment." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 6, 1937.

Schrader, Gus. "Remember the Pic, Hurdle, Foxhead?" *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, July 8, 1987.

*Semi-Centennial, 1871-1921: T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd.* Cedar Rapids: The Laurance Press, 1921.

*Souvenir of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1892.* Cedar Rapids: Laurance & Carr, 1892.

"Souvenir of Cedar Rapids Business College." (Grand Opening Program), 1905.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number   1   Page   84  

---

Commercial and Industrial Development of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, c. 1860 - c. 1945

- Souvenir Supplement to the Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*. Cedar Rapids: The Gazette Co., 1889.
- "Speaking of 'Way Back When, Here's Story of Hutchinson Ice Cream Company Then, Now." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, January 1, 1933.
- Steimel, Karen. "Corn Processing in Iowa - How Sweet It Is." *Iowa REC News*, November, 1985, pp. 16-19.
- Stepanek, William Henry. *History of the Municipal Affairs of Cedar Rapids*. 1936.
- "Taft Hotel to be Torn Down." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 23, 1977.
- Taylor, Joseph S. "A.N. Palmer: An Appreciation," *Educational Review*, , June, 1928, pp. 15-20.
- "Universal is 75 Years Old." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, July 21, 1981.
- Views in the Parlor City and Its Vicinity*. Cedar Rapids: William Baylis, 1899.
- Views of Cedar Rapids, Iowa through a Camera*. Cedar Rapids: Cedar Rapids Business College, 1899.
- "Water Service in Cedar Rapids, 1875 - 1975." Centennial publication of Cedar Rapids Water Department, 1975.
- "Western District Sokol Slet, Cedar Rapids, Iowa." (Program), Cedar Rapids, Iowa June, 1970.
- "Western Fraternal Life New Name for Western Bohemian." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 5, 1971.
- "WFLA Returns to C.R. for Conclave." *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, August 5, 1983.