Coon Rapids Commercial District:
Extended Reconnaissance Architectural/Historical Survey

Coon Rapids
Carroll County
Iowa

HADB Report #14-013

Prepared for the
Coon Rapids Historic Preservation Commission

by
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August 2009

The activity that is the subject of this Coon Rapids Commercial District study has been financed in part with Federal funds from the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior.

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Abstract

This report presents the findings of an extended reconnaissance architectural and historical survey of the Coon Rapids, Iowa commercial district. A potential commercial historic district was found to exist, but it is only about a third of the overall study area. The district contains 45 buildings, 28 (or 62%) of which may be deemed "contributing" buildings within the guidelines of the National Register of Historic Places. While the range of construction dates for all buildings in the 9-block survey area is 1880 to 2001 and represents the history of Coon Rapids' commercial district from virtually its inception until recent years, the "contributing buildings" only range from 1890 until 1957. This range, then, would be considered the appropriate period of significance for the potential district.

Coon Rapids has many historic assets and attractions, and a downtown historic district that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places would fit well with other activities undertaken by town officials and community leaders to enhance the quality of life for area residents. But this commercial Main Street district is a relatively weak historic district, largely because of integrity problems. At this preliminary level of study, the "contributing" status has been bestowed generously in order to encourage future preservation work with district property owners. The chances for a successful National Register nomination in the future will be strengthened if one or more property owners undertake rehabilitation projects that result in more historic-appearing storefronts. As it stands today, many storefronts have been significantly altered though upper façade walls above these storefronts remain generally historic and intact. Several two-story buildings have been paired with an adjacent single store building and uniformly clad behind modern materials, leaving the historic buildings completely hidden. Unfortunately, this is the case with the highly significant Garst Store at 501 Main. If an unspecified number of storefronts are rehabilitated, even with minor projects that enhance the building's integrity, and a National Register nomination is undertaken, then all property owners in the district would be potentially eligible for federal and state rehabilitation tax credits when and if they choose to rehabilitate their own properties.

Recommendations

1. Continue to research the history of the individual buildings within the proposed historic district and archive the information for use in the future if a National Register of Historic Places nomination is attempted.

2. Encourage property owners within the proposed historic district to rehabilitate their storefronts, especially at sidewalk level, and return them to more historically appropriate designs and materials.

3. Provide assistance to the property owners in determining what the historic appearance of their buildings was or might have been, and what would be "historically appropriate" for them.

4. Periodically reexamine the proposed commercial district for improved integrity and obtain the advice of the State Historic Preservation staff/Certified Local Government coordinator on when the district has enough integrity to assure a successful National Register nomination.

Coon Rapids Commercial District:
Extended Reconnaissance Architectural/Historical Study
Coon Rapids, Carroll County, Iowa

Introduction and Project Area

This project focused on the commercial and industrial buildings in the heart of Coon Rapids, Iowa, a farming community of about 1,300 located in the far southeast corner of Carroll County (Fig. 1). Its geographic location put the town at the juncture of two of the state's major landforms, the rolling hills and pastures of the Southern Iowa Drift Plain to the south, and the poorly drained but extremely rich soils of the Des Moines Lobe to the north (Fig. 2). The Middle Raccoon River flows through the southern section of town, on a southeasterly trajectory that eventually drains into the great Mississippi River in eastern Iowa. The railroad tracks through town follow this same diagonal course through town and through the southern portions of this project's survey area (Fig. 3).



Figure 1 General Project Area with Coon Rapids' location circled.

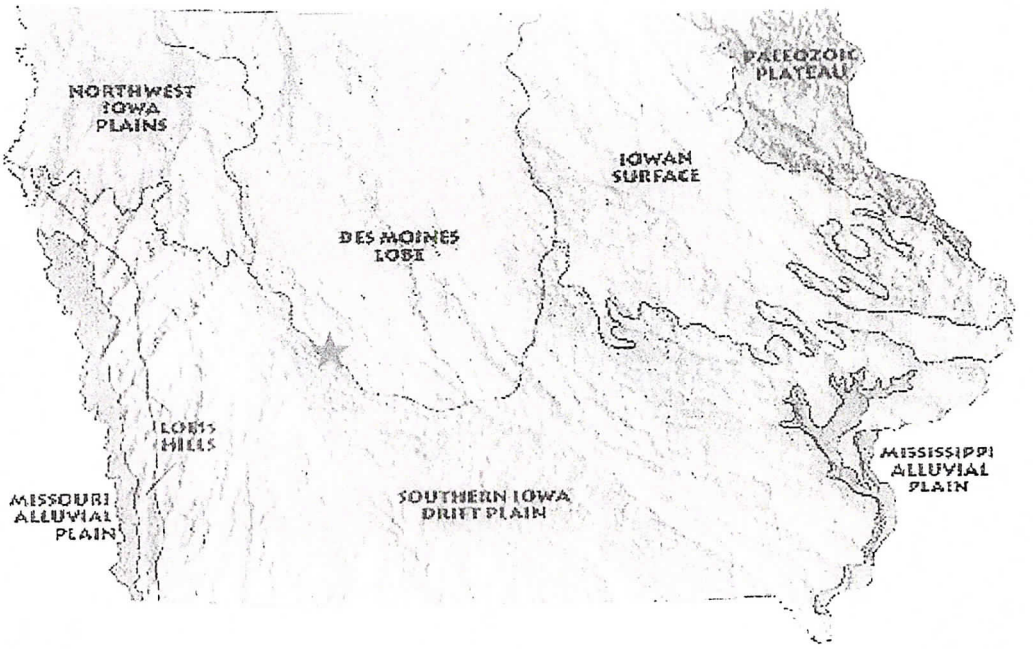


Figure 2 Landform Map of Iowa with the location of Coon Rapids noted. ***Taken from*** **Welcome to Coon Rapids, An Iowa Great Place!** ***Visitor's Guide (2008)***

Methodology

This survey was initiated by Coon Rapids Historic Preservation Commission members, who applied for and received a grant under the state's Certified Local Government program, which is administered by the State Historical Society of Iowa. Commissioners, local volunteers, and a small staff contributed essentially all the local research and field photographs that form the basis for this study over a period of months in 2008 and 2009. These efforts were well underway when the original consultant became unavailable in May, 2009, and Tallgrass Historians L.C. was engaged to complete the study.

To keep the local research organized, a table format was created and used to record several columns of data about each building within the survey boundaries. Local volunteers filled in the tables under Karan Benton's direction. Though initially intended to contain only information about the *extant* buildings located within the study area, the copious amounts of historical information that had been collected about the prior land uses and previous buildings on the same site were also added to the tables. Therefore, the tables should be considered to reflect the history of the property parcel or lot, rather than strictly the present building on that lot.

There were nine city blocks in the overall survey area (Fig. 3), with some of the square blocks distorted by the diagonal path of the railroad tracks. One Iowa Site Inventory form was completed for each of the four sides of the square blocks, using information contained on the four tables completed for that same block. While theoretically this method would result in 36 site

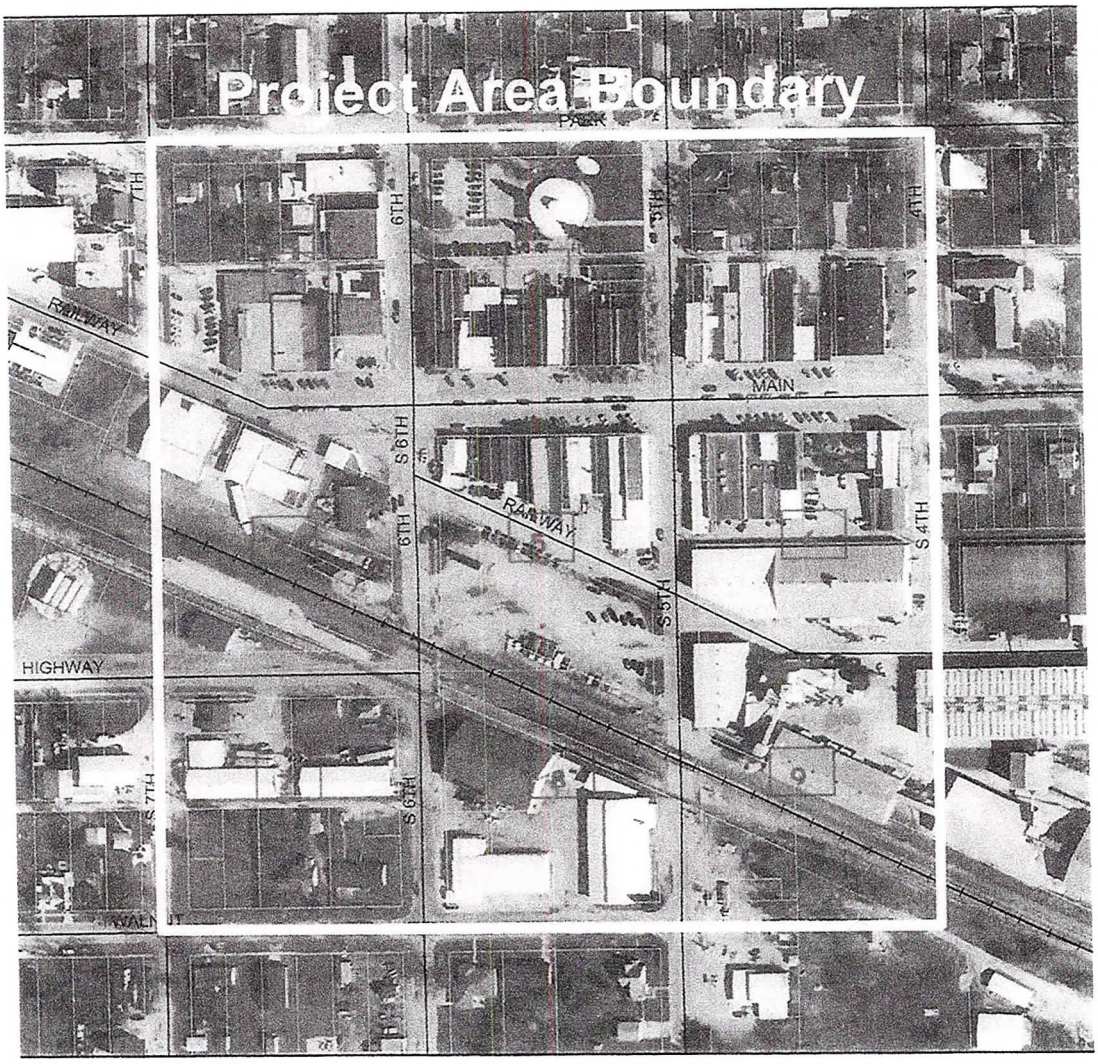


Figure 3 The nine blocks within the "project area boundary" are marked on this aerial photograph provided by the Coon Rapids Historic Preservation Commission and the City of Coon Rapids. These block numbers are arbitrary and do not coincide with legal plat block numbers.

inventory forms, as completed there were only 28 site forms because some blocks contained no buildings, especially those intersected by the diagonal railroad tracks. The groupings of buildings that appear on the individual site forms were determined by the tables and reflect decisions made in the field rather than by the consultant. In addition to the tables, each site form contained Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1930, which were used by Karan Benton and local volunteers as base maps to note (or draw in) the location of each present building. Current color photographs of the buildings were also included in the site forms, as were color aerial photographs of the overall study area and the block side represented by each site form. Allison Woods, research and office assistant at Tallgrass Historians, compiled the site inventory forms and managed the data received from local volunteers and staff. Woods also acquired Carroll County Assessor photographs from online sources and organized these together with current color digital photographs taken by Doug Carpenter, and historic photographs supplied by both Carpenter and the local newspaper publisher, Charles (Charlie) Nixon.

Jan Olive Nash compiled the historical narrative for the Coon Rapids Commercial District largely from previous research and past projects completed in the Coon Rapids area.[1] These projects provided the foundation for a historic context that addressed the founding, development, and growth of Coon Rapids as a farming community in western Iowa, as well as the unique role the town played in important agricultural advancements during the 20th century. Historic contexts are intended to provide the *broad* background for understanding the history of the buildings in a town's commercial district, not the specific history of each building in a survey. Nash also evaluated each building for its condition and integrity, as well as its ability to contribute to a potential commercial district. Finally, Nash determined the boundaries of the potential historic commercial district. These boundaries are reflected as red dashed lines on the various maps and aerial photographs contained herein.

As a part of the project, a records search was conducted in the State Historic Preservation Office's Historic Architecture Database in order to identify any previous studies and/or properties within the reconnaissance study area that had been previously reported as potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. Also, a search of the National Register's Information System Database was undertaken in order to discover any NRHP-listed properties located within the reconnaissance study area. Printouts of the results of these database searches are found at the end of this report. Because of Coon Rapids' proximity to Guthrie County, both Carroll and Guthrie jurisdictions were searched in each database.

Coon Rapids is fortunate in having a long-running local newspaper that is still operating today, the *Coon Rapids Enterprise.* Newspapers often are the best source of primary, local historical information about events and past residents. Historically, small-town newspapers such as the *Enterprise* provided the glue that helped keep community institutions connected. Unfortunately most Iowa towns now have lost their local papers. In addition to serving as the town's *de facto* recorder of local history over the decades the various *Enterprise* owners and publishers also have been the town's strongest local boosters. These publisher/editors took Coon Rapids' long-term success to heart and used the newspaper pulpit to applaud local residents' efforts at community building, as well as to occasionally chastise them for being slow to adopt measures the publisher deemed good for the town.[2] Not only does Coon Rapids' Main Street still boast its working newspaper office, the archives of this newspaper are on site, as are a couple of the early presses.

Coon Rapids is also lucky in having skilled local volunteers such as photographer Doug Carpenter who obtained current photographs of the commercial district or shared them from his personal collection. Many of these were printed in color format in the site inventory forms and

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[1] These past projects were reported as: "Will Likely Last a Thousand Years": Coon Rapids Bridge, Symbol of Progress" completed in 2000 for the City of Coon Rapids as mitigation for the historic bridge's removal and replacement; "Whiterock Conservancy: Reconnaissance Level Architectural Survey" a study of the farmsteads and other constructed features contained within a large agricultural area adjacent to Coon Rapids' southern border; "Armour Creameries Poultry House" a historical study completed in 2008 of a single poultry facility located along the railroad tracks within the present survey boundaries (found eligible for the National Register of Historic Places); and, finally, the "Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead Historic District," a nomination to the National Register of Historic Places completed in 2009.

[2] S.D. Henry was one especially energetic and vocal editor/publisher who operated the paper at the turn of the 20th century.

some were printed out on photograph paper to serve as the survey prints. The latter were converted to black and white images and printed using inks and papers accepted by the State Historical Society of Iowa and the National Park Service.

Acknowledgement of Local Efforts

A long list of Coon Rapids area residents and local volunteers worked on some portion of this study and their efforts and support should be acknowledged. The list below may not include everyone who advanced the project in some manner, and apologies are extended to those who were inadvertently omitted:

Volunteers and Service Contributors

- Rachel Garst, Creating Great Places, administered the project funding; provided public education through events and articles; provided staffing/office space, supplies and equipment from her office to help the Commission; provided assistance with early development of the project; provided early research and reconnaissance information;

- Mayor Keith Dorpinghaus, and the Coon Rapids City Council, for establishing and continuously encouraging the Historic Preservation Commission;

- Jesica Leighty, Coon Rapids City Clerk and liaison between City and Commission, provided research from City archives;

- Kerry McGrath, Consulting Historian;

- Head Librarian Faye Seidl and the Coon Rapids City Library staff, for help with *Coon Rapids Enterprise* newspaper, microfilm, and yearbook research, and for graciously expanded library hours to accommodate volunteers;

- Paulette McDonough, who shared photos of Coon Rapids, built a photographic panorama of Main Street, and identified uses of buildings;

- Doug Carpenter, photographer, for sharing existing photos in his collection and obtained new photos of other buildings;

- Nancy Brutsche, who provided funding management, administrative assistance to the Commission, acted as liaison to the State, assisted in the research of Coon Rapids City minutes, assisted in the generation of figures, sketches and maps, conducted interviews, and organized a Commission office available to the volunteers;

- Karan Benton, who acted as research assistant and provided administrative assistance to the Commission, acted as liaison to and provided special assistance to the Consultant, and generated final research tables, Sanborn map figures, and sketches for the nine blocks in the study area; conducted interviews, provided books and maps for Commissioner use, organized a Commission Office available to the public;

- Denise Gripp, Assessor and County Records Research – generated notebooks of County Assessor information and a chain of ownership for each property;

- Coon Rapids Municipal Utilities, which provided television publicity for events, and provided helpful aerial photography of project areas.

Coon Rapids Historic Preservation Commission Member Efforts

- Charlie Nixon, Project Manager/Commission Chair, focused on research in *Coon Rapids Enterprise* archives and archive photographs; generated site inventory research for Main Street, provided publicity and public education on the project and on Coon Rapids history;
- Cammy Brandt, assisted with interviews, conducted courthouse research and updated chain of ownership information, conducted extensive *Coon Rapids Enterprise* research;
- Penny Carpenter, Secretary of Commission, conducted site inventory research, and provided Commission minutes;
- Harry Siegler, Commissioner, provided railroad history from experienced research, aided in generating maps, conducted interviews and researched questions;
- Ruth McKenzie, Commissioner, conducted interviews, researched unanswered questions about buildings.

Historic Contexts

Coon Rapids, Outpost Trading Village to Small Town, 1854-1890s[3]

Commencing in the mid-1850s, the settlement patterns of the Coon Rapids region reflected the efforts of both the land speculators operating at the edge of the Midwestern frontier and of prairie farmers hoping for more permanent residency in this west-central region of Iowa. Settlement history here serves not only to illustrate the patterns of farm land acquisition, but also the town-building impulses of a group bent on creating new communities at the edge of the nation's frontier—the mercantile-minded who would profit by serving the needs of all varieties of settlers. By the time settlers reached west-central Iowa, often as not they were cash poor but well armed with military land warrants that had purchasing power, and Iowa was in the midst of a "speculation fever" in the 1850s, when the western Iowa land offices opened.

The roots of the Coon Rapids settlement along the banks of the Raccoon grew as early as 1854, just a year after the first white settler moved into the territory, some 18 miles to the north. The locale was attractive because of its timber for log cabins, fencing, and fuel, and because the river had a rapid fall of water, both features of the ridge-and-valley topography of the area. This rugged terrain was created eons before by glacial sheets that stopped here and then began to melt and back up, dropping their load of scoured gravel, sand, and cobbles as they receded. The Coon Rapids townsite sat near the terminal moraine of the Des Moines Lobe's "Bemis advance," the deepest penetration of these late glaciers into the state, which stopped just north of today's state capital, Des Moines.[4] Land to the southwest of the townsite was older geologically with well-

[3] Adapted largely from "Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead Historic District" National Register of Historic Places nomination (2009). Some versions of the town's early history are available online on the City's website and related sites.

[4] For a discussion and maps of the Des Moines Lobe and the Bemis advance, see Jean C. Prior, *Landforms of Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1991). The Des Moines Lobe was an advance of the Wisconsinan glacial expansion, which took place 10,500 to 30,000 years ago. Prior, *Landforms of Iowa*, 20.

developed drainage networks and wide rolling hills that supported diverse prairie grasses and promised fertile farming. Land to the northeast of the townsite grew more poorly drained the farther north one traveled, and was dotted with marshes and wetlands. Long after it was tamed with proper fenced farms, the landscape around Coon Rapids still reflected the diversity of being at the margins of two landforms. The local newspaper publisher's flattering description of his home in 1892 makes it clear the landscape was a major agent in this location's nineteenth-century development:

> To the north and east the plain gradually rises, a nice growth of timber extending as far around toward the west as the eye can reach. To the west there is a long stretch of rolling prairie, dotted with excellent farms, and to the south the picturesqueness of imposing hills, devoted to cattle range, meet the eye. As you stand on one of these promontories, either to the south or east, and look down into the valley below, you see a little city of tall church spires, large grain elevators and commodious store rooms, presenting a most delightful site, and this is Coon Rapids.[5]

This bucolic sounding town was not attained without starts and stops. Early on, the settlement was just a frontier outpost, a trading spot and a crude mill, with few residents other than the miller and a few peddlers who sold goods hauled in from hundreds of miles away.[6] O.J. Niles is often credited with being the first to settle "upon the land which Coon Rapids is now located," but that spot was not necessarily the mill site along the river, which has a confusing and contradictory historical record since the original town site is not where most of the present town stands today.[7] A 1934 *Enterprise* article states: "The second settlement to spring up in this pioneer county was below Carrollton on the Middle Coon on land purchase by O.J. Niles in 1853. Jacob Cretsinger, government mail carrier, is said to have suggested the name "Coon Rapids" [and] in the spring of 1864 a transient peddler, Augustus Frizell, opened a small store and became Coon Rapids first storekeeper and first postmaster...The following year [1865] Crockett Ribble came to the community and built a grist mill. William Minnich, early settler...visioned a new town here and purchasing twelve acres of land from Michael Shettler laid it out as the town of Coon Rapids. The new town site lay on the west side of the river, the

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[5] S. D. Henry, "Coon Rapids, Carroll County, Iowa: Sketch of Town and Country" (typed transcription of an article written in the *Coon Rapids Enterprise*, January 1, 1892), 7-8. [Located in the Coon Rapids Public Library.]

[6] When Carroll County was organized in 1856, the county's 250 or so residents—surely including more than a few land speculators—quickly organized a commission to locate the first county seat. Paul McClean, *History of Carroll County* (Chicago: St. Clark Publishing Company, 1912), 29.

[7] "Niles was the First Settler at Coon Rapids, 1855," *Coon Rapids Enterprise*, May 8, 1931. A June 16, 1966 *Enterprise* article, entitled "The Early History of Coon Rapids," states: "first mill established in Carroll County on which its residents depended for flour and lumber was built by Isaac Ferguson and Albert Brutshe in 1855", but this mill burned in 1859." Brutshe is a still a family name associated with the land around Coon Rapids, therefore this mill might have been on or near the initial village site of Coon Rapids. The article also states that in 1861, a Mr. Winfred bought "five acres on [the] Middle Coon and began the construction of a grist mill...[but] it was not until two years later, in 1863, Crockett Ribble, who was County Treasurer, bought the mill site and commenced to improve it..." According to this same 1966 newspaper article, a few years later, "William Minnich bought land in 1865 and laid out a town and put up some buildings. One was rented to Shoemaker and Endicott for a store ...[and] a Mr. Ribble and McCreas were the next occupants and Mr. Minnich built the hotel, since known as Ft. Sumpter and rented to Mr. Shettle. The old town of Coon Rapids never exceeded 15 houses and the census in 1880 gave the population as 54 (*Coon Rapids Enterprise*, June 16, 1966). The point of repeating two town creation stories is to suggest that the actual dates on which pivotal events occurred have been garbled over the years, however, it seems safe to say the 1850s saw the arrival of the initial Yankee settlers to the Coon Rapids vicinity and the 1860s found Crockett Ribble in the area and improvements to the mill underway.

south end being just west of the mill site." As part of the development, Minnich built a bridge near the site of the present bridge, a hotel, Old Fort Sumpter, which is still standing; and on the second lot south a building which later became the original Garst store. Michael Shettler was the town's first hotel keeper and also ran a store in the building." The March 30, 1934 *Enterprise* article continued: "In 1880, a year before the Milwaukee railroad reached Coon Rapids, the town consisted of about a dozen retail merchants and about as many homes, all close to the river. The Garst Store, operated by Ed and Warren Garst, stood about where the Puroil Oil station now stands. Morris and Putnam also ran a general merchandise store. J.H. Louthan had a harness shop, Pike's butcher shop and Callahan's shoe shop were two important places of business…During the year following the coming of the railroad the business houses of "Old Town" moved up to the present location of the town and many new store buildings were built. In 1882 Coon Rapids blosomed [sic] into a real town…" (Fig. 4).

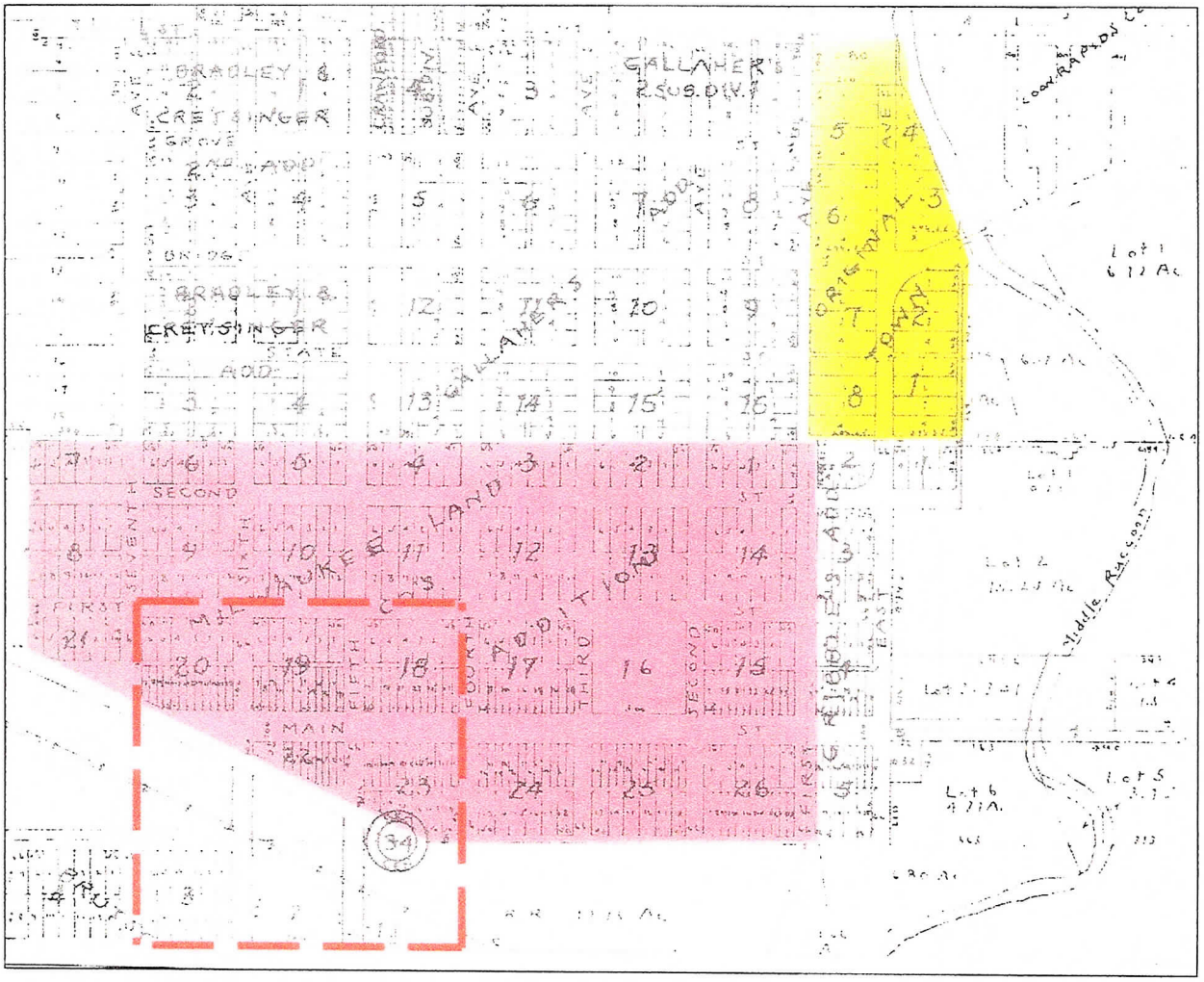


Figure 4 This 1940 map of Coon Rapids from the City Clerk's office is shaded to indicate both the Original Town near the riverbank mill site (yellow), and the Milwaukee railroad plat (pink), to which most of the town's businesses moved in the early 1880s, effectively shifting the commercial district away from the river. The present study area is shown by a red dashed line. *Taken from "Will Likely Last A Thousand Years", a mitigation report produced at the time the Sumpter Avenue Bridge was replaced in 2000.*

Early settler, county official, and miller Crockett Ribble was a distant relative of the Garst brothers, the founders of an important Coon Rapids business and a family enterprise that would become significant to the growth of the town. Edward Garst was the son of Boone, Iowa merchants, Michael and Maria Garst. When the elder Garsts' store failed, Edward collected the remaining inventory and left Boone to join Ribble in Coon Rapids, setting up a small general merchandise shop (Fig. 5). The years spent along the Middle Raccoon River before the railroad's arrival were economically uncertain, but Edward clearly prospered as a merchant. According to one historian, "a number of early settlers around Coon Rapids gave up, often coming into Edward's store where they bought their supplies, to announce that they were moving back to Ohio or Indiana. Edward would frequently either buy the land from them for cash, or offer to outfit the family with new clothes, trunks, and suitcases…taking in return their title to the farm and assuming the debts they owed." By the time the Milwaukee railroad arrived in 1882, Edward Garst owned thousands of acres of land around Coon Rapids.[8]

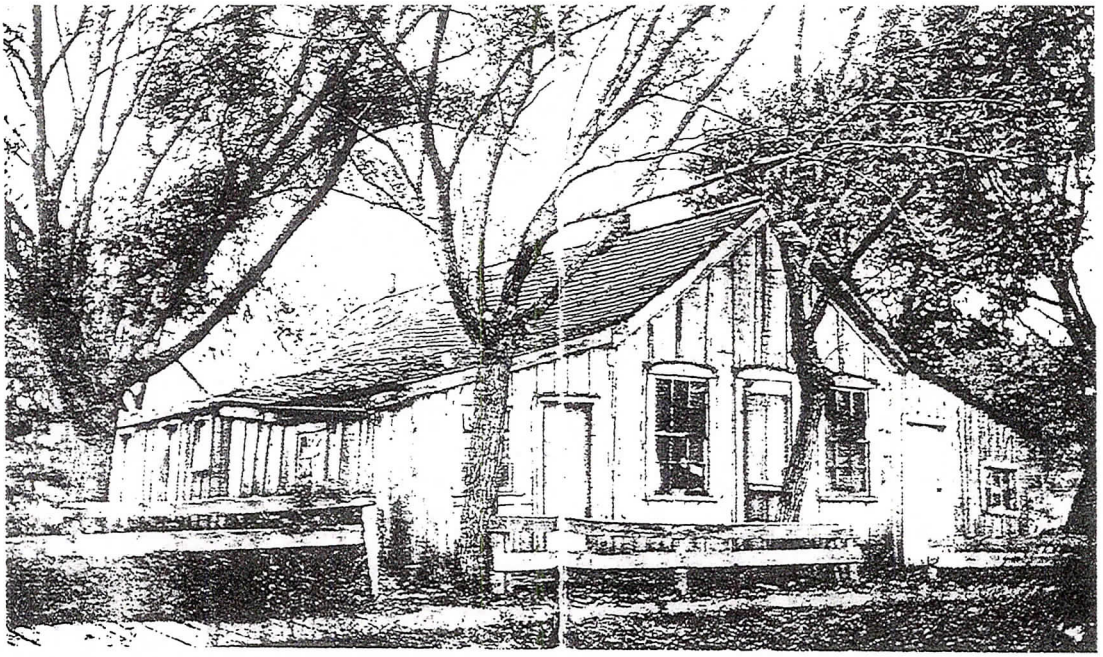


Figure 5 The first Garst store was originally located near the river but was moved closer to the Milwaukee railroad tracks in the 1880s. ***From*** **Recollections of a Half Century, The Garst Store** ***(1919) [Collection of the Coon Rapids Public Library]***

The Milwaukee railroad's construction slightly south of the nascent riverbank village created a bit of a dilemma for local settlers. The railroad avoided routing its tracks past the village itself, probably because the land was too rugged, but perhaps also because the village was already privately owned and not a part of the railroad company's land grant. Either way, the railroad's course to the south so worried the village residents that they shifted their reliance and hopes for

[8] Harold Lee, *Roswell Garst, A Biography* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1984), 13-14. Ten thousand acres was Roswell Garst's estimate of father's land holdings at the time.

the town's engine of growth from the mill and its water power, to the railroad and its steam power. The mill was left behind to operate in its original location, but most residents literally lifted their buildings off their foundation stones and moved the structures nearer the railroad's path.[9] And the railroad company was quite happy to sell them newly platted town lots through its real estate arm, the Western Town Lot Company. A Main Street corner lot, where Edward Garst moved his store, cost $75, an amount that may have seemed a fortune for less successful shop owners.[10] Citizens of the new town quickly incorporated the same year, and population began to climb.[11] Three years later, in 1885, the 59 "old settlers" of the mill town had been joined by hundreds of new residents and the new town's population reached 729. Edward Garst, joined by his brother Warren, a future governor of Iowa, had gotten rid of the old wooden store and constructed "the first brick building in this part of the country" (Fig. 6).[12]

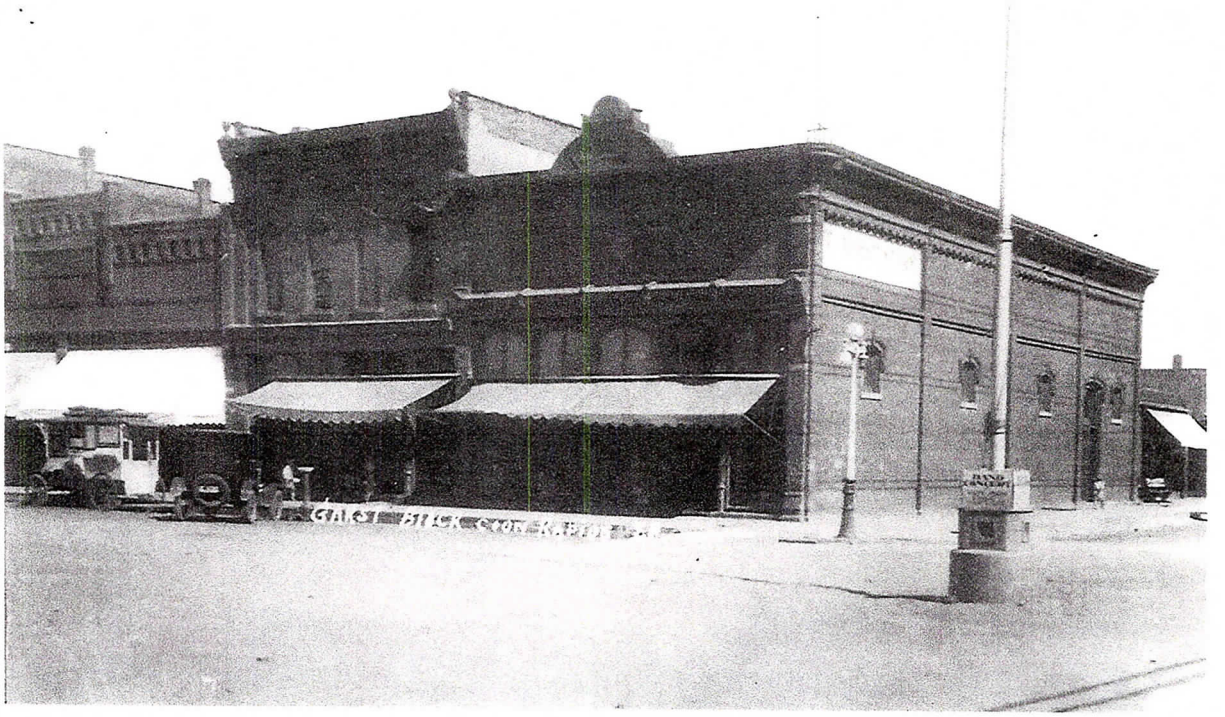


Figure 6 The Garst Store's brick building, at the corner of Main Street and S. 5th, was constructed in 1884 to replace the original wooden store. The business later expanded into the second building next door. ***Collection of John J. Schumacher; reproduced in 2000 with permission by Tallgrass Historians L.C.***

According to the town's 1963 centennial publication, "by the very nature of its location, Coon Rapids has always been an agricultural town. As a result, the businesses on Main Street have been, in the most part, the kind which would serve the needs of such a community." Historic photographs and Sanborn fire insurance maps suggest that, like many Iowa towns, these main

[9] Henry, "Coon Rapids, Carroll County, Iowa: Sketch of Town and Country," 10; also *Recollections of a Half Century: The Garst Store, 1869-1919* (n.pub., c. 1919), 22. [Located in the Coon Rapids Public Library.]
[10] McClean, *History of Carroll County,* 127.
[11] The town incorporated on September 29, 1882, according to Carroll County Recorder records.
[12] *Recollections of a Half Century*, 22.

street businesses were initially housed in small, detached wood-frame buildings, such as the first Garst store.[13] Through both good luck and bad, prosperity and natural disasters such as fires and tornados, these wooden buildings were replaced by masonry structures as merchants could afford it.[14] Sanborns are not available before 1901, but the years between 1901 and 1909, when the fire maps are available, suggest some conclusions about the growth and changing patterns of Main Street business blocks between 7th and 4th Streets. By 1901, the north side/south facing block that contained the Garst store seen above in Fig. 6 (survey block 2) already had been largely rebuilt as attached brick buildings, a pattern encouraged by Edward Garst's choice of materials in 1884. This block had become the primary commercial block, generally sporting two-story buildings that allowed for second story "halls" and meeting rooms or professional offices. Two upper floors in the brick buildings of this block were occupied by the town's opera house in 1901. There was also a brick bank located in this block. The next block to the east (survey block 3) was also boasted a few masonry buildings, including a second bank, but the south side of Main Street lagged behind with detached, single story, wood frame shops predominating (Fig. 7). These small shops were occupied by an assortment of merchants and services, including restaurants, saloons, barber, butchers, harness makers, and tailors. By 1909, the south block across the street from the primary brick block had two brick veneered buildings, while other south blocks along Main Street remained largely wood frame and single story. The 1915 Sanborn fire map shows a fair amount of reconstruction and improvements to the south block opposite the primary brick block. By 1930, most of the downtown buildings were either brick or brick veneered, and the streetscape pattern seen today of generally attached, single-story buildings (except for the primary block containing the Garst business) had been established.[15]



Figure 7 Detached wooden storefronts dominate the streetscape in this early postcard photo that looks west down Main Street. The tall buildings of the block containing the Garst store are visible in the distance on the right. ***Doug Carpenter Collection.***

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[13] Coon Rapids Centennial: 100 Years Proud, 1863-1963 (no publisher, c. 1963), not paginated but under heading "Coon Rapids Industries."

[14] This is a common pattern for Iowa towns of the 19th and early 20th centuries. See generally "Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture" National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPD), 2002.

[15] See fre insurance maps of Coon Rapids, including Sanborn-Perris Map Company, 1901; and Sanborn Map Company, 1909, 1915, 1930.

During these same early years of the 20th century, fire insurance maps (where coverage exists) reveal the blocks north of Main Street, along Park St. (formerly 1st St.) were lightly developed for commercial or industrial use and remained primarily residential. This remains true today. The cross streets that joined Main and Park, however, especially 5th and 6th Aves., did develop with small businesses and municipal uses that brought ancillary services and products to the business of Main Street. These included, by 1915, the Fred Davis Creamery and Bottling Works, a feed and implement yard, blacksmith shops, a garage, and the city's municipal electric light and power plant. By 1930 (Fig. 8), the Iowa Railway and Light Corporation operated the light and power plant, and a blacksmith shop had been replaced by a gasoline filling station, the latter clear evidence of the growing influence of the automobile on the commercial district. Finally, the large and prosperous Armour Creameries had replaced the earlier creamery operated by Jens Jensen. Armour Creameries at this location is now gone too, replaced by the Iowa Savings Bank and its parking lots.

Also during the early years of the 20th century, Sanborns indicate the blocks south of Main Street to the railroad tracks and beyond had been built up with industrial facilities that took advantage of both the shipping capabilities of the railroad and the undeveloped, open land that lay alongside the tracks. These facilities included the Coon Rapids Lumber Co., the McFarlin Grain Company, the D.J. Jenkins grain elevator, and the sprawling railroad stock yards in 1901. In 1909, the McFarlin business had become the J.J. Grosenbaugh elevator and grain storage facility, and the H.W. Pollack & Company grain elevator was newly located south of the tracks on 6th Ave. This latter facility became the Farmer's Grain Co. by 1915. The 1930 fire insurance map reveals the Wm. Grettenberg Grain Co. had taken over Grosenbaugh's 1880 elevator, the E.W. Miller & Son grain elevator had taken over for the Farmer's grain elevator, Keister Lumber Co. replaced the long-running Coon Rapids Lumber, and two new businesses had been constructed south of the tracks along either side of 5th Avenue—the A.J. Brutsche Concrete Products company and the Armour Creameries Poultry House. Of all these industrial businesses, a few features, including a tile block office/scale building of the Grettenberg Grain Co. (a post-1930 building) and the Armour poultry house (NRHP eligible) remain today. Additionally, the small 1910 office building of the Keister Lumber business remains. Not appearing on the 1930 fire maps, but constructed about the same time is the extant Garst & Thomas Seed Company, a business that was created in 1930-31 and still occupies land along the north side of the tracks to the east of all these other historic industrial sites (though the seed company facility is much expanded and under different ownership now). The histories of both the Armour Creameries Poultry House and the Garst and Thomas Seed Company appear below. Both of these businesses were important to the town's development and both signify the community's ties to the larger national and, ultimately, international markets. They represent a new chapter in the town's economic history, when Coon Rapids, like small towns all across Iowa, forever lost their sense of isolation and autonomy.

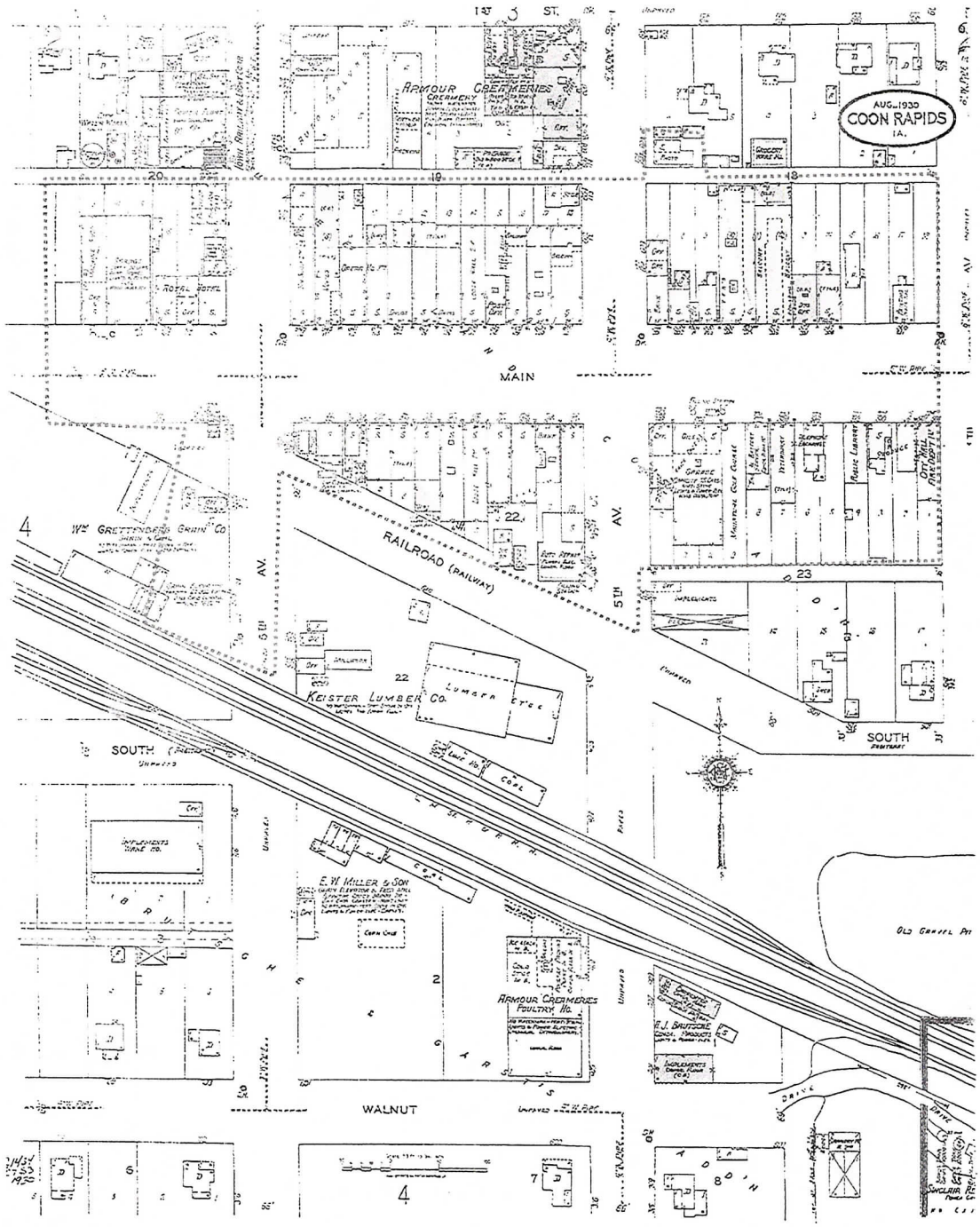


Figure 8 Detail from Sanborn Map Co. fire insurance map of Coon Rapids, 1930, page 2. Proposed historic commercial district boundaries are noted by the red dashed line.

Armour Creameries Poultry House History [16]

When local Coon Rapids entrepreneur Jens Jensen sold his successful regional creamery business to the nationwide meatpacking giant, Armour & Co., in June, 1928, he may have been unaware of Armour's plans to construct a new poultry processing plant in town too. But with the fall chicken-packing season fast approaching, Armour did not waste any time. Though the Jensen creamery facility was situated north of Coon Rapids' Main Street business district, Armour company officials knew the efficiency of locating packing facilities near rail service, and by August they were already erecting a new "poultry house" along the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul's (CMSP or "Milwaukee") tracks at the south edge of town. The Milwaukee had laid a double track between Chicago and Omaha in 1913, through Coon Rapids because "there was heavy traffic on the railway."[17] Much of this traffic was dedicated to shipping grain from small-town Iowa elevators along the line into Chicago each season. But grain was just one commodity that connected Coon Rapids and other Iowa towns to larger urban markets like Minneapolis, Omaha, and, especially, Chicago, and traffic on the rail lines moved in both directions. Based in Chicago, Armour, as well as the other big packers, had been relocating their packing facilities west to smaller cities for several decades, bringing the plants closer to the producers and their herds. Armour, for example, purchased an existing slaughterhouse in Sioux City in 1901 and Cudahy had been in that small city since 1892. The refrigerated rail cars that allowed this decentralization of packing plants, also had permitted long-distance shipping of other farm products like butter and cheese.

After purchasing Jensen's creamery business based in Coon Rapids, Armour also purchased the undeveloped (or lightly developed) east half of an irregularly shaped industrial outlot along south 5th Ave. and Walnut, south of the railroad tracks, in order to erect its poultry processing facility (Fig. 9). As the new poultry packing facility walls were rising in 1928, there was excited discussion of its construction and Armour's intentions in the local newspaper, the *Enterprise*. On August 3, 1928, the paper indicated the "chicken dressing plant" was rapidly "going up south of the railroad track. It will be 144 x 80 feet with a basement when completed, which will be in about four weeks, [and] will furnish labor during the chicken picking season for from 25 to 50 men and women who will dress and ship hundreds of tons of poultry during the season. These [chickens] will be picked up around Coon Rapids in part, but mostly shipped in from adjoining towns."[18] Two weeks later, on August 17, 1928, the reporter commented "It is believed that next year the Armour Co. will build a new creamery building on the vacant ground near where the chicken dressing plant is going up...Such a building alongside the railroad would save a good deal of expense in draying [from the old Jensen creamery to the north]." In another week, the August 24 newspaper edition announced that the "Legion expects to give one of the biggest dances of the year in the new Armour poultry dressing building when it is completed and before

[16] Adapted largely from Jan Olive Nash, "Armour Creameries Poultry House: Historical/Architectural Intensive Level Study" a historical study completed in 2008 that determined building was eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

[17] *Coon Rapids Centennial, 1863-1963*, n.p. but 12.

[18] Taken from Kerry McGrath notes from *Coon Rapids Enterprise*, which notes may paraphrase the text.

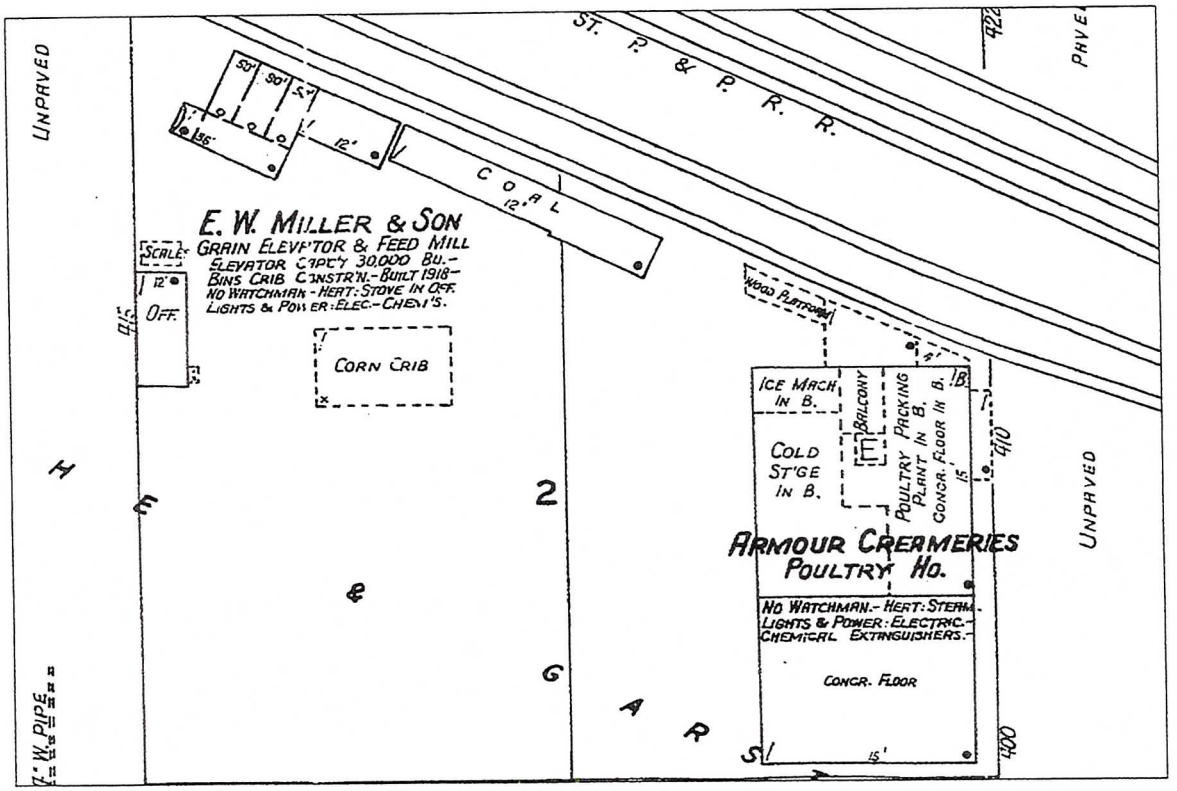


Figure 9 Detail of 1930 Sanborn fire insurance map, page 2, showing block 2 of the Brutsche & Garst Addition to Coon Rapids. The A.J. Brutsche concrete block factory was located just across the unpaved 5th Ave. to the east.

it is filled with machinery. The dance will be sort of a dedicatory affair." Indeed, in the spirit of meeting and joining the Coon Rapids community, on September 20, 1928, Armour permitted the local American Legion to host a dance on the 80 by 144-feet "dance floor", which, the paper proclaimed, "could take care of the biggest crowd ever assembled on a dance floor in Coon Rapids."

Soon afterward, the annual four-county regional fair used the Armour building to host the poultry exhibits. The newspaper predicted, on September 21, that the building "will afford ample room for all the prize poultry in the four counties. It is more than likely that the poultry show this year will far surpass any exhibits heretofore made at our fairs because of the excellent housing facilities and the unusual interest shown in poultry by the Armour Company." The fair even honored Armour & Co. by proclaiming September 22 "Armour Day." Armour, in return, opened the "big new building" to public inspections and welcomed experts who spoke on dairying and poultry raising. Armour handed out souvenirs to everyone attending and late in the afternoon hosted "a free baseball game between Coon Rapids and Bagley." Even the vice president of Armour & Co. in Chicago had traveled to Coon Rapids for Armour Day. "Mr. Johnson," the

Enterprise wrote, "is in charge of all butter, poultry, egg and cheese operations throughout the United States and [is] one of the most important men in the entire Armour organization."

The *Enterprise* also more fully described the nearly finished building in its September 21, 1928 issue, stating: "The new poultry building is one of the most up to date and modern in the United States. [It embodies] every known modern device for the feeding, dressing, packing and storage of poultry. Feeding batteries and an office will occupy the entire main floor, which is an model of construction in so far as light and ventilation are concerned. Three large coolers, killing and packing rooms are in the basement. The building is 88 x 144 [sic] inside dimensions and was erected and equipped by the engineering department of Armour and Co. of Chicago. The erection was under the direct supervision of Mr. L.A. Evers Building, with Ralph Austin of Coon Rapids as carpenter foreman. All machinery was bought and installed by Mr. Davis of the engineering department. Mr. Al Gunstrom of Chicago has had personal supervision of the installing of machinery...This plant will employ approximately 75 people and will mean a greatly enlarged payroll for Coon Rapids" (Fig. 10)

In a bit of a burst-the-bubble type announcement, the *Enterprise* reported also in its September 21 edition that "In keeping with Armour policy, much of the cream business of the local [Jensen] plan was transferred to the Denison and Des Moines plants because of reduced transportation cost." Further, while "practically all of the help from the Jensen plant were retained by Armour and Company...the executive force was augmented by transfers from other Armour plants." The newly transferred executives, all men, included a remarkably mobile list of transplants from other parts of the Armour corporate structure, including the overall plant manager who had managed Armour facilities in Osborn, Kansas, and Springfield, Missouri. The assistant manager was relocated to Coon Rapids from Creston, Iowa, and the "territory supervisor" was from Duluth, Minnesota. The cashier came from Creston also, but the assistant cashier was transferred from Quincy, Illinois. The creamery plant foreman came from Denison, Iowa, but the local Coon Rapids butter maker apparently survived the takeover.

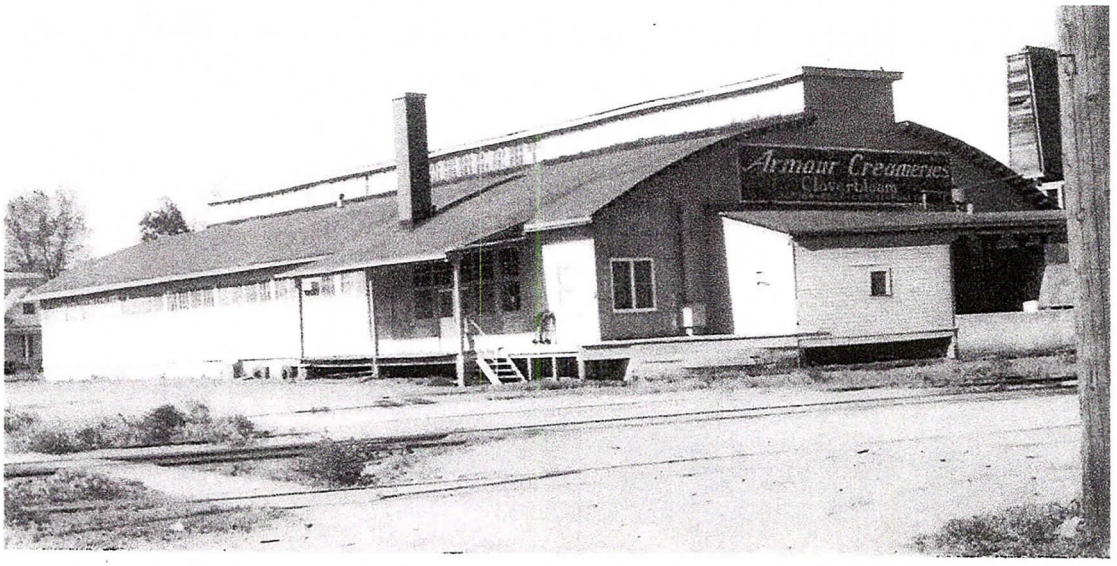


Figure 10 This 1958 photograph is from the collection of Charlie Nixon, publisher of the *Enterprise*.

The decision to buy the Jensen creamery system and build a new poultry facility, Armour officials from Chicago claimed, was part of an overall response to "changed business conditions" that "prompted Armour to establish numerous units over the country thus getting close to the producer..." Armour had 500 "branch houses" in the east and needed "8,000 refrigerator cars" to make shipments to them from "western plants, such as at Coon Rapids." Further, Armour had been attracted to Coon Rapids by Jens Jensen's success at building a regional creamery business (Jensen was also president of the local Commercial Club) and by the town's "central point," or central location within the Midwest and/or within Armour's physical system of branch offices outside Chicago. Indeed, Armour officials dangled the suggestion that even more capital might be invested locally. "If it seemed justified," the Armour man stated in a luncheon hosted by the Commercial Club, the company "might establish a cheese factory" in town too.[19]

Pronouncing Armour Day a "notable success," the *Enterprise* announced in its September 28 edition that "chicken dressing in the new Armour building began Tuesday morning [and] this will continue until spring. A number of men and women, principally women, are already employed, but the force will be increased in number materially as the season progresses." Like the seasonally-operated canning factories in many small Iowa towns of the early twentieth-century, women (and many children) found employment on the line processing and packing the products of the harvest, transforming raw material into a consumer-ready products.

Apparently, the business at the poultry packing plant was so vigorous that by mid-October, 1928, during its first packing season, the Armour poultry facility in Coon Rapids was "dressing about 3,000 head of poultry a day and there [were] 108 persons on the payroll." This created a housing crisis because many of these workers had not been local residents. The *Enterprise* reported in its October 12 edition that "employees with families are arriving almost daily and tenement [rental] houses are at a premium. In fact, it seems impossible to house the new employees." Making lemonade from lemons, the *Enterprise* suggested that "It might pay some of the capitalists who are loaning money to put up a few tenement dwellings. The Armour business here is permanent and is certain to increase. Investment in dwellings would be profitable." Indeed, Armour had invested "about $200,000" in Coon Rapids' industrial landscape, $80,000 of it alone in the poultry packing plant and its equipment.[20] The Jensen creamery business already was "by far the leading business enterprise of Coon Rapids" when Armour bought it in 1928. With the additional and immediate investment by Armour in the local poultry industry, the rising population, and the challenge for developers to meet the demand for rental housing, the community must have been supremely optimistic about the future of Coon Rapids.[21]

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[19] *Enterprise*, September 28, 1928.

[20] *Enterprise*, July 8, 1932.

[21] Armour's fortunes did not stay bright indefinitely. A shift of processing methods and technologies in the meatpacking industry on the magnitude of an earthquake and underway since before World War II, accelerated during the 1950s and eventually destroyed the one-time meatpacking giants like Armour during the 1960s. Since the Civil War, the relationship between producer, packer, and the transportation modes that connected them had created a dynamic triangle of interrelated and interdependent relationships. Change one agent in the relationship, and the ripple effects were quickly obvious on the other two. When grazing cow-calf herds moved west to Wyoming as Midwest land came under cultivation in the 19th century, the packers moved west out of Chicago too. When trucks overtook railroads in the middle of the 20th century, as the means of transporting animals to the slaughterhouse, smaller decentralized packing plants that could collect animals from multiple local producers began to make more

Origins of Garst and Thomas Seed Company [22]

About the time Armour was planning its acquisition of Jen Jensen's creamery business in Coon Rapids, another native son, Roswell Garst, was building an agriculture-based business that would become extremely significant to Coon Rapids' fortunes in the 20th century. Garst's parents were the prominent local merchant Edward Garst and his wife, Bertha Goodwin. Upon her marriage, Bertha had moved to Coon Rapids in 1889.[23] Between 1891 and 1898, the couple had four children. Roswell, their youngest, acquired business knowledge and Iowa land values from his father and respect for education and literature from his mother. Roswell listened and learned from those around him with authority and expertise, whether it was his father or the long-time town *Enterprise* publisher, S.D. Henry.[24] As an adult, Roswell "Bob" Garst became acquainted with Henry A. Wallace, the creator of hybrid seed corn, and through this relationship one of Coon Rapids primary economic engines was born, the Garst and Thomas Seed Company, formed during the winter of 1930-31.[25]

Roswell and his wife Elizabeth Garst joined forces with another Coon Rapids couple, Charley and Bertha Thomas, in the new Garst and Thomas Seed Company seed production facility.[26] By the end of the 1930s, the Garst and Thomas Seed Company was producing annually over 100,000 bushels of Pioneer hybrid seed corn, sold by nearly 900 farmer salesmen.[27] Following a bumper crop in 1937, the company expanded sales beyond western Iowa, into Nebraska, Missouri, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Colorado.[28] By 1970, the company's Coon Rapids facility had grown from one tall building used for sorting, testing, and bagging seed corn to a sprawling facility with multiple buildings and large warehouses located along the railroad tracks (survey block 9, Figs. 11-12).

By the time Garst and Thomas Seed Company celebrated their 40th anniversary in 1970, agriculture and the patterns of Midwest farming had changed dramatically, propelling rural residents off the land and out of small towns toward Iowa's larger urban areas. In 1930, the Midwest, and, ultimately, the world, about one-third of the nation's population still lived on f arms.[29] In 1970, the Garst and Thomas Seed Company claimed only 7% or fewer residents lived on the farm.[30] This figure would drop to less than 2% by the end of the century.[31] Fewer farmers

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sense. The old sprawling railroad stock yards were no longer needed and the compact vertical abattoirs of the big packing houses were aging and growing obsolete. The new plants were sprawling one-story structures with the capacity to quick-freeze meat packaged in vacuum bags, to be transported to the consumer in refrigerator trucks over interstate highways. This shifting industrial landscape directly affected Armour, which struggled to adapt. Like the ripple affect, Armour's deteriorating condition also inevitably affected Coon Rapids and many other Iowa towns.

[22] Adapted from Jan Olive Nash and Rebecca Conard, "Roswell and Elizabeth Garst Farmstead Historic District," National Register of Historic Places, 2009.

[23] Ibid., 14.

[24] Ibid., 22-23.

[25] Roswell Garst, *40 Exciting Years: 1930-1970* (Coon Rapids: The Garst & Thomas Hybrid Corn Company, 1970), 1.

[26] Ibid., 43.

[27] Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 78.

[28] Des Moines-based Pioneer was expanding eastward. Lee, *Roswell Garst*, 70.

[29] Garst, *40 Exciting Years*, 3.

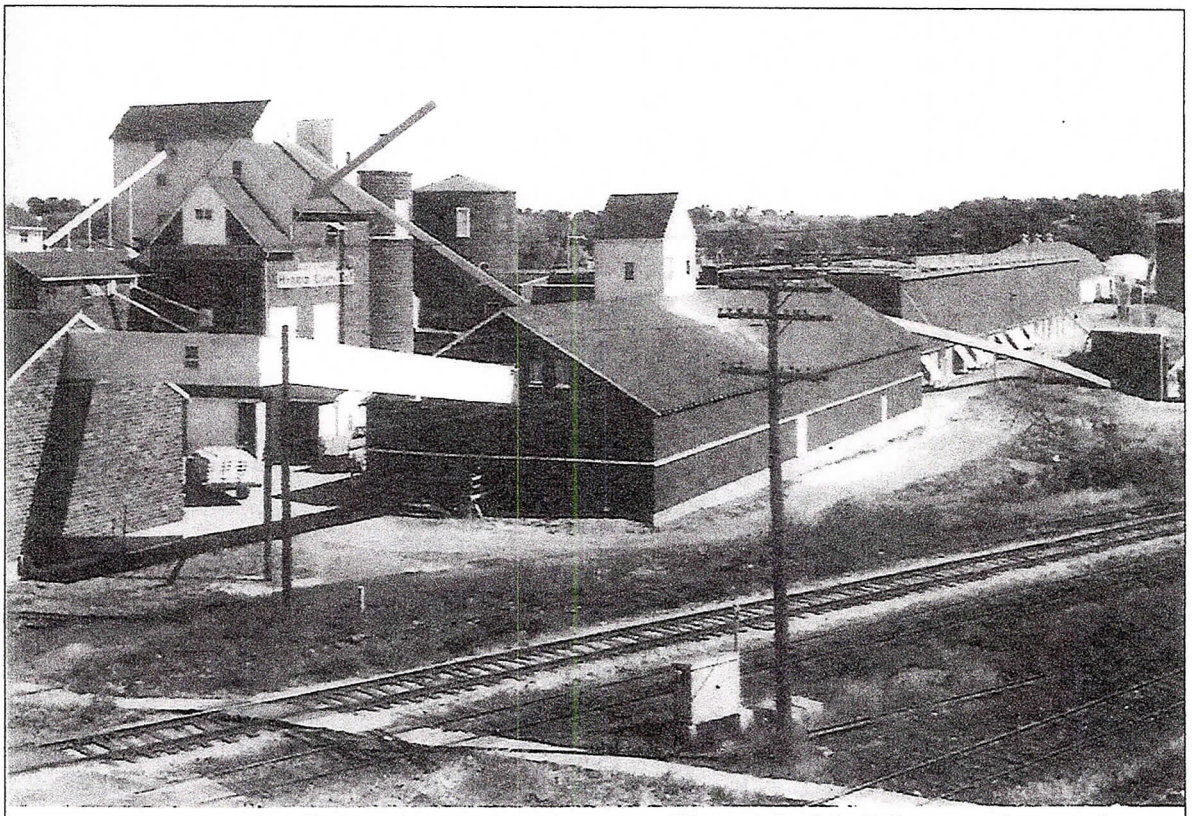
[30] Ibid.

were raising vastly increased amounts of corn, using mechanized means that encouraged larger farms and corporate ownership structures able to manage the capital investment farming on such a scale required.[32] In turn, with fewer farmers on the landscape, the small town merchants that catered to and traded with farm families shrank in numbers. They and their families left for the city and Coon Rapids Main Street commercial district struggles still with the impact of this changing agricultural landscape.[33]



Figure 11 The original Garst and Thomas seed corn plant was built about 1934 (extant). *From Doug Carpenter Collection.*

[31] U.S. Department of Agriculture, "Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service: About Us" (obtained on March 11, 2009 at *http://www.csrees.usda.gov/qlinnks/extension.html*), 1.
[32] Jan Olive [Nash] Full, "Hinterland or Heartland" (Unpubl. Ph.D. dissertation, Loyola University Chicago, 2006), 3. "Between 1949 and 1992 the average acreage of farms in Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio more than doubled, after half a century during which it had hardly changed…The number of farms in the four Corn Belt states shrank from three-quarters of a million in 1949 to only one-third of a million in 1992." John Fraser Hart, *The Rural Landscape* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 281.
[33] Full, "Hinterland or Heartland," 2-3.



The seed corn plant in 1953. The original building may be seen here as the nucleus of a much expanded facility. (Photograph by Joe Munroe)

Figure 11 The red arrow marks the original and first building of the Garst and Thomas Seed Company. ***Collection of Whiterock Conservancy.***

Findings and Recommendations

***1. Iowa SHPO Database Results*:** The potentially eligible properties that have been reported to exist within this Extended Reconnaissance study area are as follows. The full lists of Coon Rapids, and Carroll and Guthrie County properties that appear in the State's Architectural Data Base are included at the end of this report.

- 14-00445 – *Armour Creameries Poultry House* – 218 5th Ave. (2008 evaluation)
- 14-00500 – *Coon Rapids First National Bank Building* – 423 Main St. (2005 evaluation)
- 14-00079 – *Building* – 517 Main St. (1980 evaluation)

The author of this study is the same person who recommended the Armour facility as eligible. As a result of the present study, the Coon Rapids First National Bank Building is judged to strongly contribute to the potential historic commercial district and would also qualify for individual listing on the National Register. While the building at 517 Main contributes to the potential district, it does not appear to be individually eligible for the National Register any longer, largely due to integrity issues. (The Armour building was not recorded with a supplemental site form for this study, but additional information about it may be found on site inventory form #14-00445.)

***2. National Register of Historic Places Listings*:** None located within this Extended Reconnaissance study area, but there are two listed properties in the immediate Coon Rapids area, and one structure that is still recorded as listed but actually has been demolished. A full list of the Coon Rapids, and Carroll and Guthrie County properties listed on the Register is included at the end of this report.

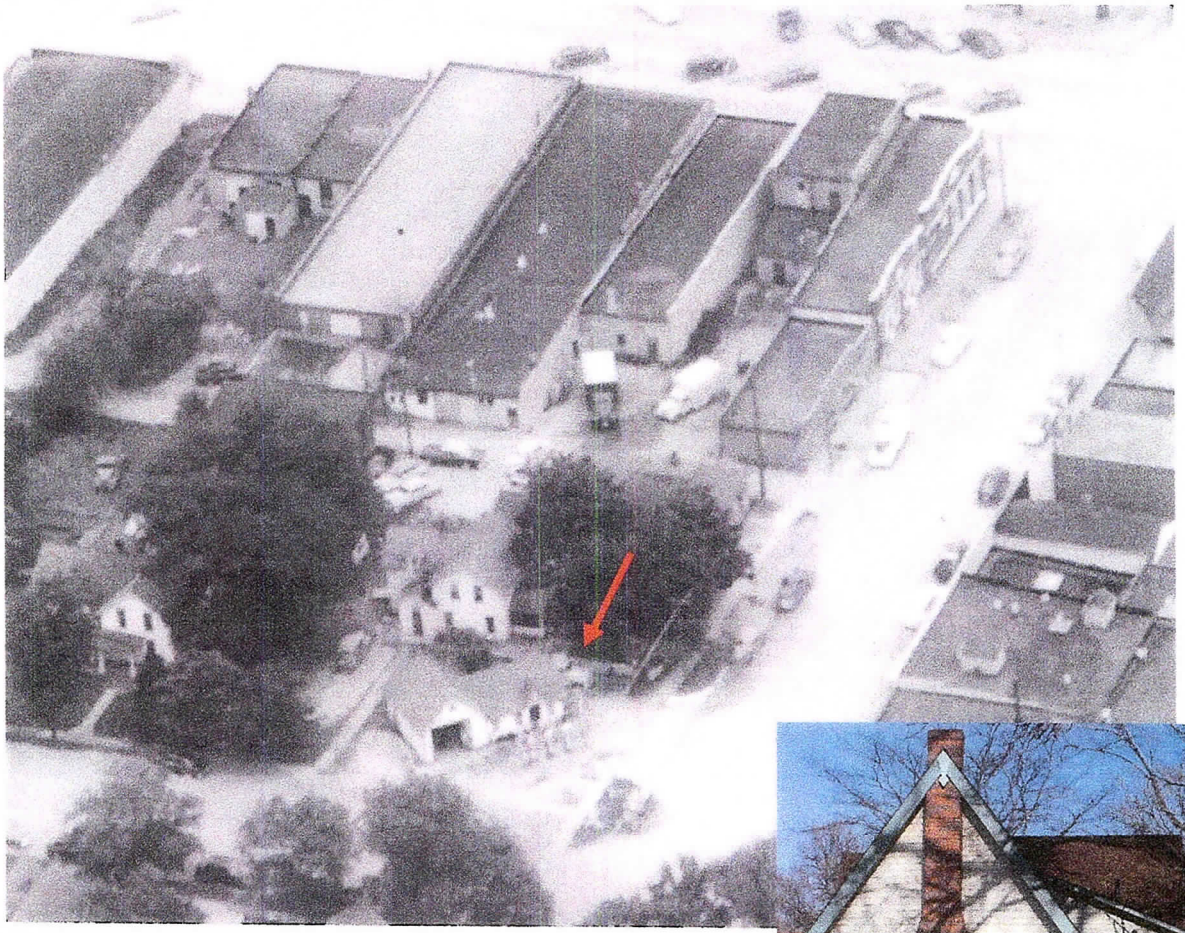
- *Cretsinger, John, House* – 1363 Burl Lane, listed in 1998
- *Garst, Roswell and Elizabeth, Farmstead* – 1390 Hwy 141, listed in 2009
- *Coon Rapids Bridge* – Sumpter Ave. over the Middle Raccoon River, listed 1998, demolished c. 2000 (The State's National Register Coordinator was notified of this.)

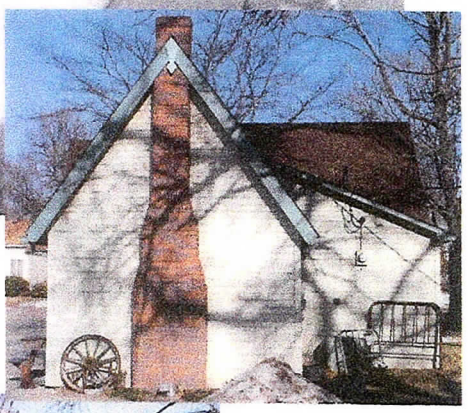
3. Buildings of Interest outside the Potential Historic District: Integrity problems, building function and historic use, and geographic location all combined to shrink the area that may have potential commercial historic district eligibility to something about a third the size of the original 9-block project area. Nevertheless several individual buildings with known or potential architectural and/or historical significance are located outside the smaller potential commercial district. Those buildings deserve additional study for their historical and/or architectural significance and are noted below. An aerial photograph on page 28 indicates the location of these buildings as well as the potential historic district boundaries.

The following are photos and notes about the buildings of interest outside the district:

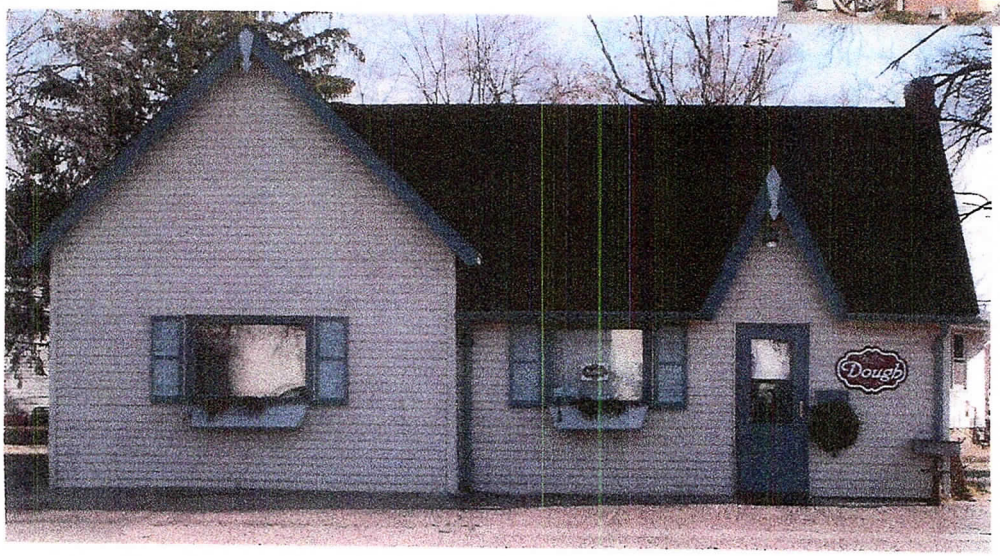
North of the potential Main Street commercial district:

(i) 121 5th Ave. "White Eagle" gas station. Built in 1920 according to the county assessor, but does not appear on the 1930 Sanborn fire insurance map. This early gas station is an example of the residence-inspired styles used by corporate oil companies in the 1920s and 30s.





ABOVE: 1950 aerial photo; RIGHT and BELOW: current photographs. ***All from Doug Carpenter Collection.***



South of the potential Main Street commercial district:

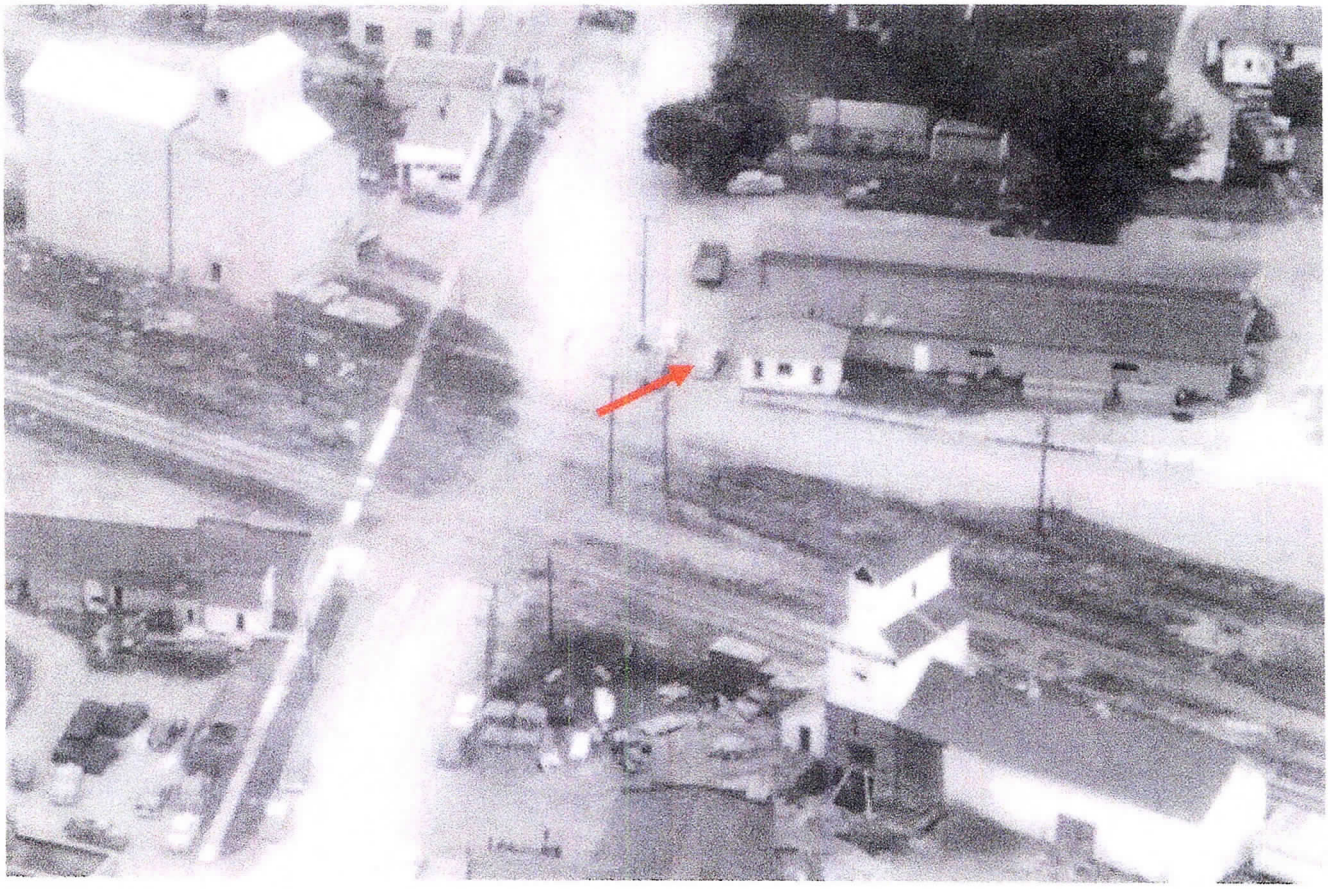
(i) 120 S. 6th Ave. "Grettenberg Grain Co." Site of the McFarlin Grain Co. by 1901 with elevator built in 1880 to hold 10,000 bushels of grain; J.J. Grosebaugh Elevators by 1909; Wm. Grettenberg Grain Co. by 1930.





ABOVE: This photo of the Grettenberg grain elevator and its tile block office/scale house, seen here in the lower right corner, is thought to date to 1925. BELOW: Current photo of the same tile buildings. ***All photos from Doug Carpenter Collection.***

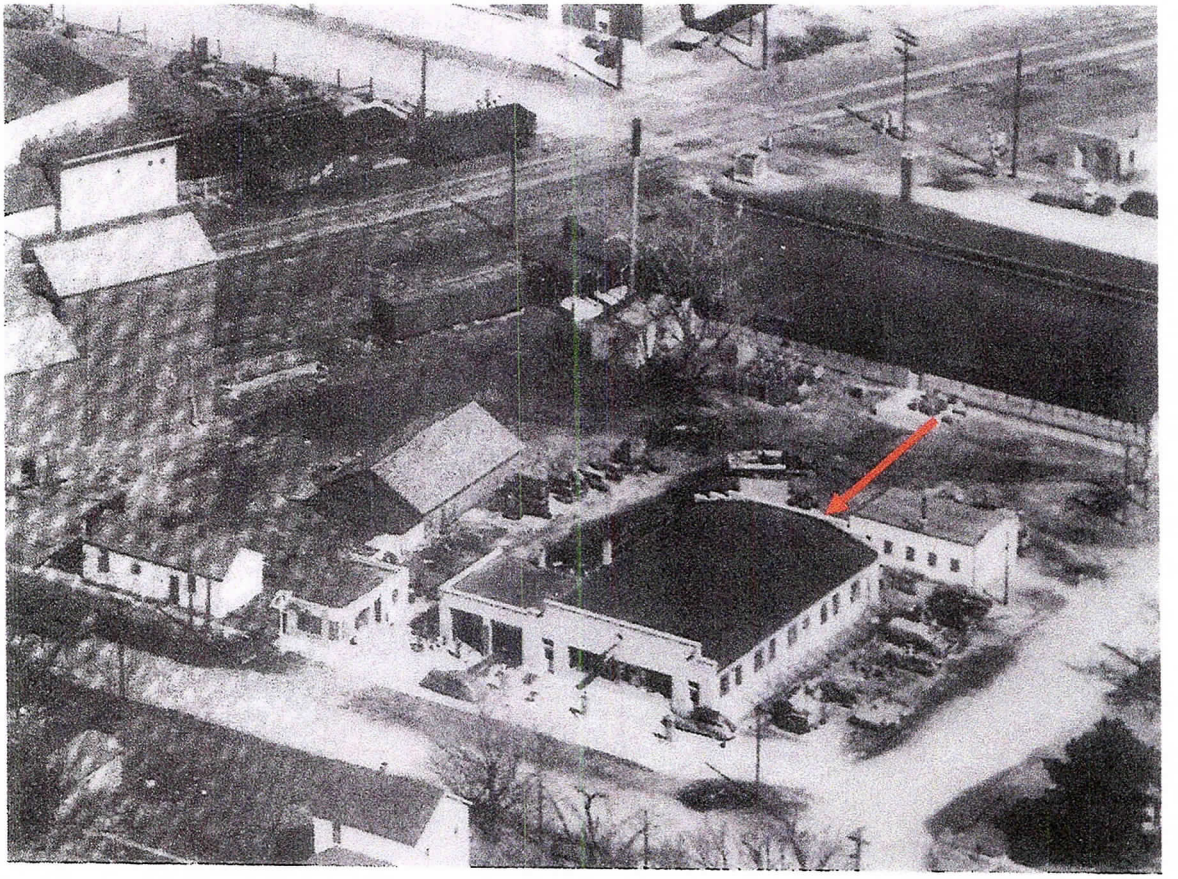
(ii) Small bldg. at northwest corner of S. 6th and the railroad tracks. This appears on the 1930 Sanborn as an office next to an implement warehouse, but the county assessor has a 1910 date for it. Little is known of its history, but it may be associated with the Keister Lumber company. Additional research might confirm its association with one of the large trackside lumber or grain dealers.



ABOVE: Detail from 1950 aerial. BELOW: Recent photograph. ***Both from Doug Carpenter Collection.***



(iii) 223 S. 6th Ave. "Coon Bowl III" [current name]. This building was constructed in 1948 as an implement dealer and has many of the same features found in auto dealerships and some theaters from the 1930s to about 1950, specifically the stepped gable façade covering an arched roof structure behind it. The arch visible from the exterior suggests an interior truss system is holding up the roof; therefore, enabling a wide volume of interior space uninterrupted by support posts. This was a popular structure for auto dealers who needed to drive cars in, out, and around the interior showroom. The Mills Theater in downtown Lake Mills, Iowa also used the arched-roof form for its auditorium, giving all seats an unobstructed view of the screen.



ABOVE: The "Coon Bowl" building appears at the bottom of in this 1952 aerial photo from Charles Nixon Collection. BELOW: Current image from Doug Carpenter Collection.

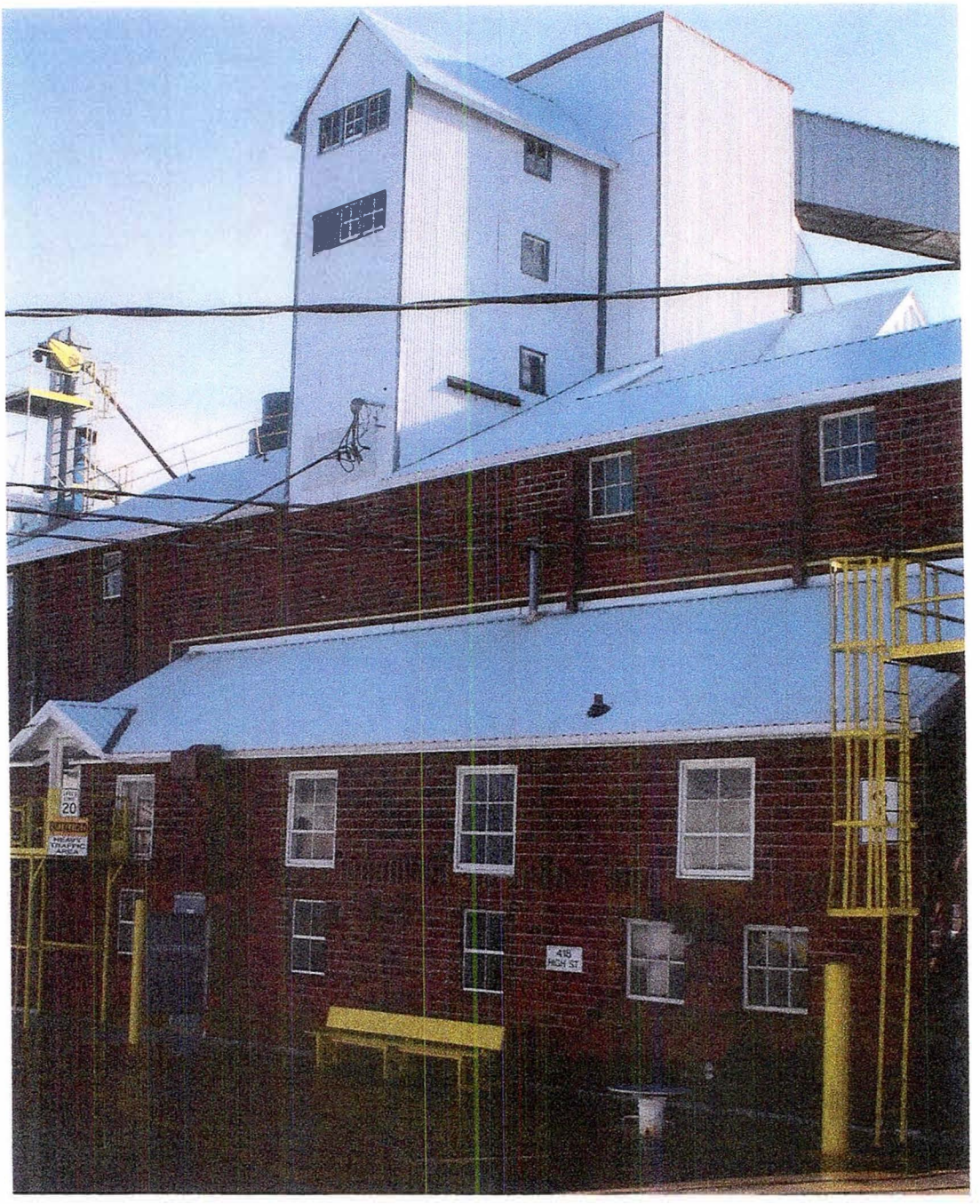


(iv) Garst and Thomas Seed Company, bounded by S. 5th, railroad tracks, S. 4th and vacated South Street. The original tile block building was constructed in 1930 or 1934, depending on which source is used, and occupies a site marked as an "old gravel pit" on the 1930 fire insurance map. Over the following decades, the Garst and Thomas company expanded the facility with additional buildings and structures. Three buildings, including the original, are within the project survey boundaries. The much larger current facility is now owned by Syngenta Seeds, Inc. The Garst and Thomas site is worthy of a separate survey that examines the entire facility for construction dates, historical associations with Garst and Thomas, and integrity. At a minimum, the original Garst and Thomas Seed Company building is historically significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

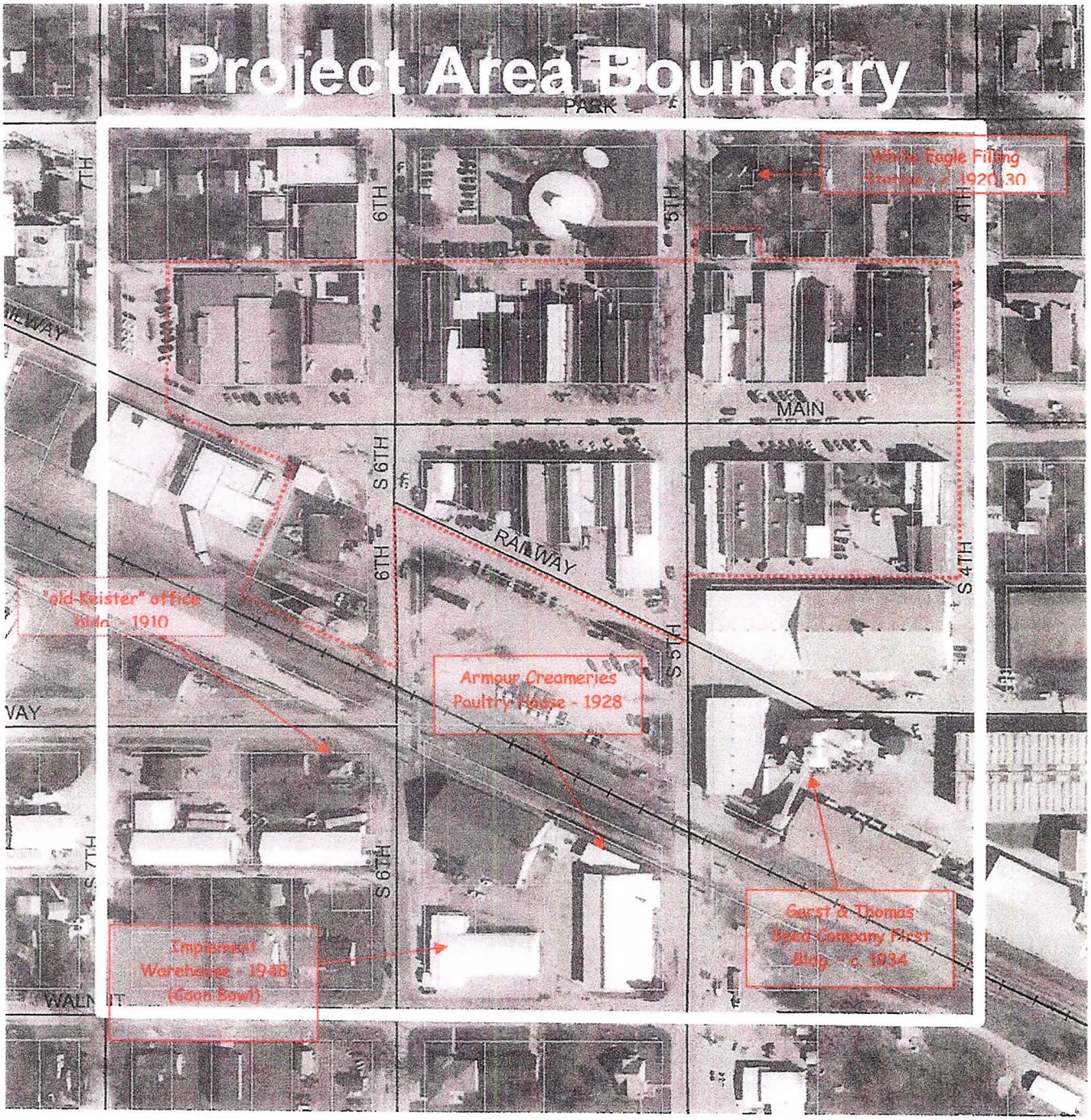


ABOVE: Garst and Thomas Seed Company, c. 1935. BELOW: Aerial of the G&T plant, 1960. NEXT PAGE: Current photo. ***All three photos from Doug Carpenter Collection.***




20
HEAVY TRAFFIC AREA
418 HIGH ST.

BUILDINGS OF INTEREST *OUTSIDE* POTENTIAL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES



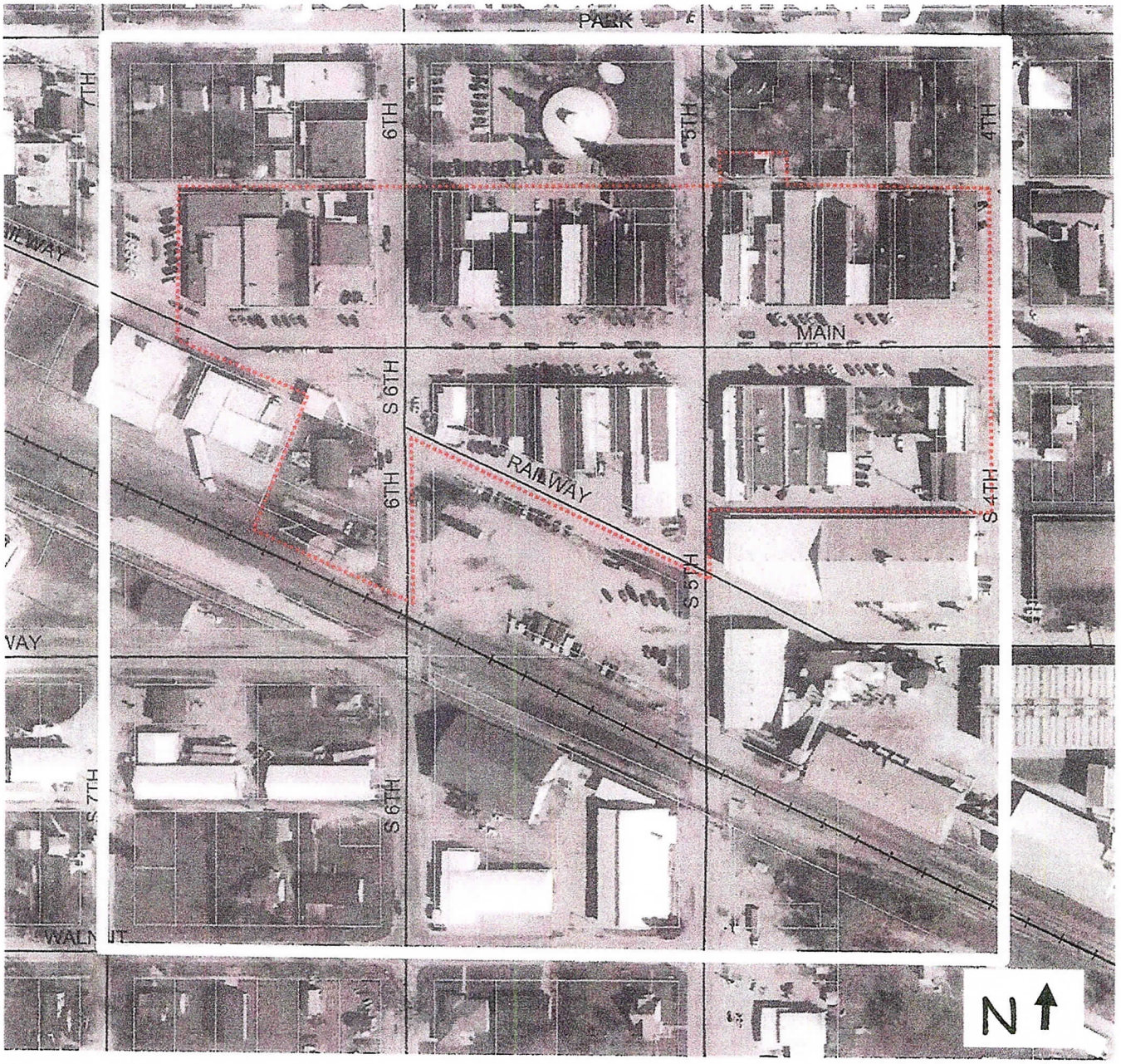
Base aerial provided by Coon Rapids Historic Preservation Commission, 2009

N

Potential District Boundaries =

4. Potential Eligibility of a Commercial District:

The potential historic district represented below contains of the majority of Coon Rapids' traditional Main Street retail stores, office buildings, banks, and shops. Several factors resulted in the omission of the northern study area from the district, but principally it was because most buildings there are residential. The few commercial buildings present in the north area had serious integrity problems. South of the railroad tracks, most buildings were either modern, seriously altered, or residential. Buildings within the borders as shown below are commercial in use and more than 50 years old, but are not without integrity problems. Refer to Table A for information on all buildings within the survey boundaries and to Table B for data on only those buildings located within the borders of the potential district. These tables start at page 31. Also, see the Iowa Site Inventory forms that accompany this report for additional information on all the properties.



Potential Commercial District Boundaries = ...

CR HPC, 2009

Analysis of the Buildings within the Proposed Commercial Historic District
Using just the buildings within the proposed district, represented by the data contained in Table B below, the following conclusions may be made:

1. Total number of principal buildings in district: 45
   Contributing buildings: 28 (62%)
   Noncontributing buildings: 17 (38%)

2. Range of Dates of Construction, All Buildings: 1880 – 2001

3. Range of Construction Dates of Only Contributing Buildings: 1890-1957 (period of significance)

This is a relatively weak historic district, largely because of integrity concerns. At this preliminary level of study, the "contributing" status has been bestowed rather generously to encourage future preservation work with district property owners, but the chances for a successful National Register nomination in the future will be strengthened if one or more property owners undertake rehabilitation projects that result in more historic-appearing storefronts. As it stands today, many storefronts have been significantly altered though upper façade walls above these storefronts are generally historic and intact. Several two-story buildings have been paired with an adjacent single store building and uniformly clad behind modern materials, leaving the historic buildings completely hidden. Unfortunately, this is the case with the highly significant Garst Store in 501 Main. If a few storefronts are rehabilitated, even with minor projects that enhance the building's integrity, and a National Register nomination is undertaken, then all property owners in the district would be potentially eligible for federal and state rehabilitation tax credits when they rehabilitate their own properties.

Recommendations
1. Continue to research the history of the individual buildings within the proposed historic district and archive the information for use in the future if a National Register of Historic Places nomination is attempted.

2. Encourage property owners within the proposed historic district to rehabilitate their storefronts, especially at sidewalk level, and return them to more historically appropriate designs and materials.

3. Provide assistance to the property owners in determining what the historic appearance of their buildings was or might have been, and what would be "historically appropriate" for them.

4. Periodically reexamine the proposed commercial district for improved integrity and obtain the advice of the State Historic Preservation staff/Certified Local Government Coordinator on when the district has enough integrity to assure a successful National Register nomination.

Sources

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Table A. ALL PROPERTIES WITHIN SURVEY BOUNDARIES
Coon Rapids Commercial District – Extended Reconnaissance Survey

Survey Block No. / Iowa Site Inventory No.	Address	Year Built / Remodeled	Main Street MPD Commercial Property Type*	Contributing or Noncontributing Status
BLOCK 1 N / 14-00529	608-620 Park Street	1895/1895/1902/1910	Residential	NC
BLOCK 1 E / 14-00530	110 6th Avenue	1949	III	C
"	112-114 6th Avenue	1900	V	NC
"	118 6th Avenue	1915	IV – *gas station*	NC
"	120 6th Avenue	1945	V	NC
BLOCK 1 S / 14-00531	615 Main Street	1900/1949	III	C
BLOCK 2 E / 14-00534	108 5th Avenue	1895	V	NC
"	110 5th Avenue	1937	V	NC
"	118 5th Avenue	1965	VI	NC
BLOCK 2 S / 14-00535	501 Main Street	1890/1930	V	NC
"	507 Main Street	1911		C
"	509 Main Street	1911	III	C
"	511 Main Street	1895	III	C
"	513 Main Street	1895	V	NC
"	515 Main Street	c.1895	V	NC
"	517 Main Street	1895	III	C
"	521 Main Street	1894	III	C
"	523 Main Street	1885	V	NC
"	Main Street (behind 521)	1894	V	NC
BLOCK 2 W / 14-00536	111 6th Avenue	1880/remodeled	V	NC
BLOCK 3 N / 14-00537	406-418 Park Street	1900/1962/1989	Residential	NC
BLOCK 3 E / 14-00538	118 4th Avenue	1875	Residential	NC
BLOCK 3 S / 14-00539	403 Main Street	1947	VI	NC
"	409 Main Street	1895	III	C
"	411 Main Street	1901	III	C
"	413 Main Street	c.1895	III	C
"	417-419 Main Street	1946/1994	VI	NC
"	423 Main Street	1912	III	C/individually eligible
BLOCK 3 W / 14-00540	109 N. 5th Avenue	1938	III	C
"	113-115 5th Avenue	c.1890/1901	III	C
"	121 5th Avenue	1920	IV – *gas station*	C
BLOCK 4 N / 14-00541	600 Railway Street	c. 1930	IV – *gas station*	C
"	608 Railway Street	1947/1970s	V	NC
BLOCK 4 E / 14-00542	120 S. 6th Avenue	1940	IV – *gas station*	C
BLOCK 4 S / 14-00543	623 Highway Street	2004	VI	NC
"	623 Highway Street	2006	VI	NC
BLOCK 4 W / 14-00544	610 Railway Street	1949	V	NC
BLOCK 5 N / 14-00545	500 Main Street	1890/1915/1930/1940	V	NC
"	504 Main Street	1910/c.1934	III - *Enterprise*	C
"	506 Main Street	1890/c.1934	III	C
"	508 Main Street	1911	III	C
"	510 Main Street	c.1895	III	C
"	512 Main Street	c.1910	III	C
"	514 Main Street	c.1895	III	C
"	518 Main Street	unknown/2001	V	NC
"	522 Main Street	1880	V	NC
BLOCK 5 S / 14-00547	500 Main Street	1940	V	NC
BLOCK 5 W / 14-00548	101 6th Avenue	1960	VI	NC
BLOCK 6 N / 14-00549	402 Main Street	1911	IV	C
"	402 Main Street (next to 402 on west)	1940	III	C
"	Main Street (no #)	1976	VI	NC
"	412 Main Street	1910	III	C
"	412 Main Street	1910	III	C
"	418 Main Street	1940	V	NC
"	418 Main Street	1937	V	NC

"	418 Main Street	1916	V	NC
	422 Main Street	1895	III	C
	422 Main Street	1940	III	C
BLOCK 6 E / 14-00550	402 Main Street	1911	IV	C
BLOCK 6 S / 14-00551	411 High Street	1969	VI	NC
"	411 High Street	1959	V	NC
BLOCK 7 N / 14-00553	Highway Street (no #)	1965	VI	NC
"	Highway Street (no #)	1980	VI	NC
BLOCK 7 E / 14-00554	208 S. 6th Avenue	1910	IV	C
"	208 S. 6th Avenue	1973	VI	NC
BLOCK 7 S / 14-00555	603 & 607 Walnut Street	1918/1984	Residential	NC
BLOCK 7 W / 14-00556	208 S. 6th Avenue	1986	VI	NC
"	Highway Street (no #)	1961	VI	NC
BLOCK 8 N / 14-00557	6th Avenue & Highway St	1979	VI	NC
"	6th Avenue & Highway St	1998	VI	NC
BLOCK 8 E / 14-00445	218 S. 5th Avenue	1928	IV – *Armour Creameries Poultry House*	C/individually eligible
BLOCK 8 W / 14-00560	223 S. 6th Avenue	1948	V	C
BLOCK 9 N / 14-00561	vic.railroad tracks & S. 5th Ave.	1934+	*Garst & Thomas Seed Co.*	C/individually eligible

*Taken from "Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2002, which defines "associated property types" found within commercial historic districts. Copies of "Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture" may be obtained from the Iowa SHPO or online at the National Park Service's website (currently under re-construction however) at http://www.nps.gov/nr/

Table B. BUILDINGS WITHIN THE POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT
Coon Rapids Commercial District – Extended Reconnaissance Survey

Survey Block No. & Side *Iowa Site Inventory No.*	**Address**	**Year Built / Remodeled** *(Dates provided by local researchers)*	**Main Street MPD Property Type***	**Contri-buting** *or* **Non-contri-buting**	**Comments** *(Jan Olive Nash's)*
BLOCK 1 East *14-00530*	110 6th Avenue	1949	III	C	
BLOCK 1 South *14-00531*	615 Main Street	1900 /1949	III	C	Historically affiliated with Garst seed company, unknown dates
BLOCK 2 East *14-00534*	108 5th Avenue	1895	V	NC	
	110 5th Avenue	1937	V	NC	
BLOCK 2 South *14-00535*	501 Main Street	1890 /1930/post 1959	V	NC	The Garst [Brothers] Store (2 bldgs as built)
	507 Main Street	1911	III	C	Post office
	509 Main Street	1911	III	C	I.O.O.F. hall
	511 Main Street	1895	III	C	
	513 Main Street	1895	V	NC	
	515 Main Street	1895, c.	V	NC	
	517 Main Street	1895	III	C	Opera House on 2nd floor
	521 Main Street	1894	III	C	Lyric Theater 1940s-1950s?
	523 Main Street	1885	V	NC	Also includes address 111 6th Ave. (site #14-00536)
BLOCK 3 South *14-00539*	403 Main Street	1947	VI	NC	Frohlich's Super Value
	409 Main Street	1895	III	C	
	411 Main Street	1901	III	C	Cast concrete block
	413 Main Street	1895, c.	III	C	Hampton bldg. historically
	417-419 Main St.	1946 /1994	VI	NC	American Legion "Community Building"
	Empty Lot- Main St.			NC	Between bank and 417-19 Main Street
	423 Main Street	1912	III	C Individually Eligible	Bank, neoclassical design
	Main Street	1915 – 1930 c.	IV	C	Appears to be similar vintage and design as the bank itself. Probably served as offices for bank.
BLOCK 3 West *14-00540*	109 5th Avenue	1938	III	C	
	113-115 5th Avenue	1890, c./1901	III	C	Two-part detached commercial bldg. historically
BLOCK 4 North *14-00541*	600 Railway Street	1930, c. (but see comment)	IV	C	1955 station replaced earlier filling station on site
BLOCK 4 East *14-00542*	120 S. 6th Avenue	1940 / 1957	IV	C	Grettenberg grain company, offc., warehouse, scale, grain bins
BLOCK 5 North *14-00545*	500 Main Street	1890 /1915/1930/1940	V	NC	Appears to be an altered mid-20th century bldg.
	504 Main Street	1910 /c.1934	III	C	Coon Rapids Enterprise in this bay, with relatively intact interior; historic photo from 1915 shows two-part bldg. intact; shared façade added in c. 1934 with neighbor at 506?
	506 Main Street	1890 /c.1934	III	C	historic photo from 1915 shows two-part bldg. intact; shared façade added in c. 1934 with neighbor at 506?
	508 Main Street	1911	III	C	Masonic Temple
	510 Main Street	1895, c.	III	C	Nice, intact storefront
	512 Main Street	1910, c.	III	C	Stepped gable above altered storefront. "City Meat Market" in c. 1915
	514 Main Street	1895, c.	III	C	Historic gable above altered storefront.

	518 Main Street	Unknown /2001	V	NC	
	522 Main Street	1880	V	NC	Altered but hidden behind façade could be a wooden "falsefront" shop building
BLOCK 5 South *14-00547*	500 Main Street	1940	V	NC	Alley building; metal clad; not a historic store building
BLOCK 5 West *14-00548*	101 6th Avenue	1960	VI	NC	"Modern" until 2010
BLOCK 6 North *14-00549*	402 Main Street	1911	IV	C	Town Hall/Fire Station
	Main Street (next to 402 on west side)	1940	III	C	Former public library; WPA project (SHSI photo. collection)
	Main Street (attached to rear of 402 Main)	1976	VI	NC	See site # 14-00550
	Empty lot next – Main St.			NC	Btw 402 and 412 Main St.
	412 Main Street	1910	III	C	Large, 6-bay storefront, likely two buildings as constructed
	412 Main Street	1910	III	C	See above
	418 Main Street	1940, 1937, 1916	V	NC	May be 3 bldgs. joined and counted as 1 with modern facade
	422 Main Street	1895	III	C	Corner bldg. with large rear addl.
	422 Main Street	1940	III	C	Large addn. to the Corner bldg.; long elevation on 5th Ave.

*Taken from, "Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, 2002.

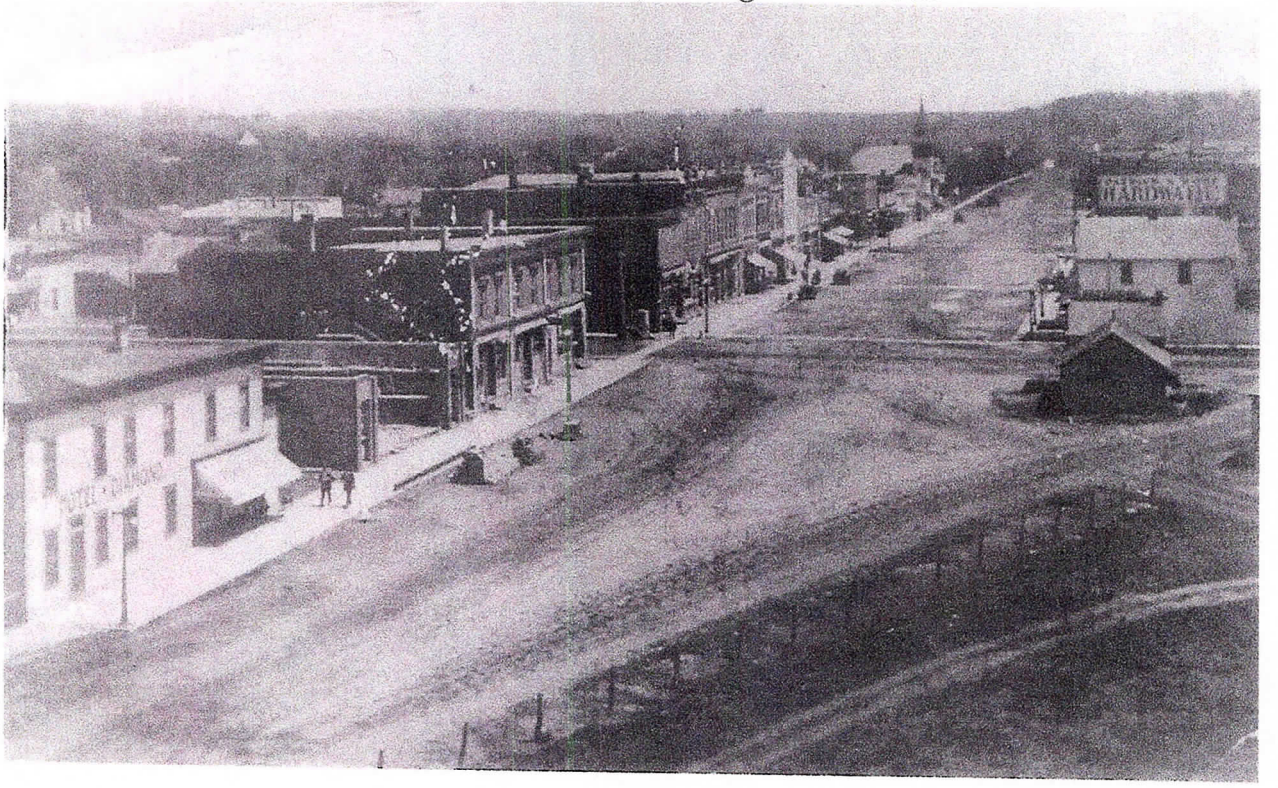
Maps, Historic and Current Streetscape Photographs, Database Property Search Results, and Iowa Site Inventory forms follow in Volume 2.

The Iowa Site Inventory Forms for blocks with properties located wholly or partially within the potential historic district are included first, by sequential site number, followed by site forms for blocks wholly outside the potential district.

BELOW: 500 block North side Main St., looking East - current



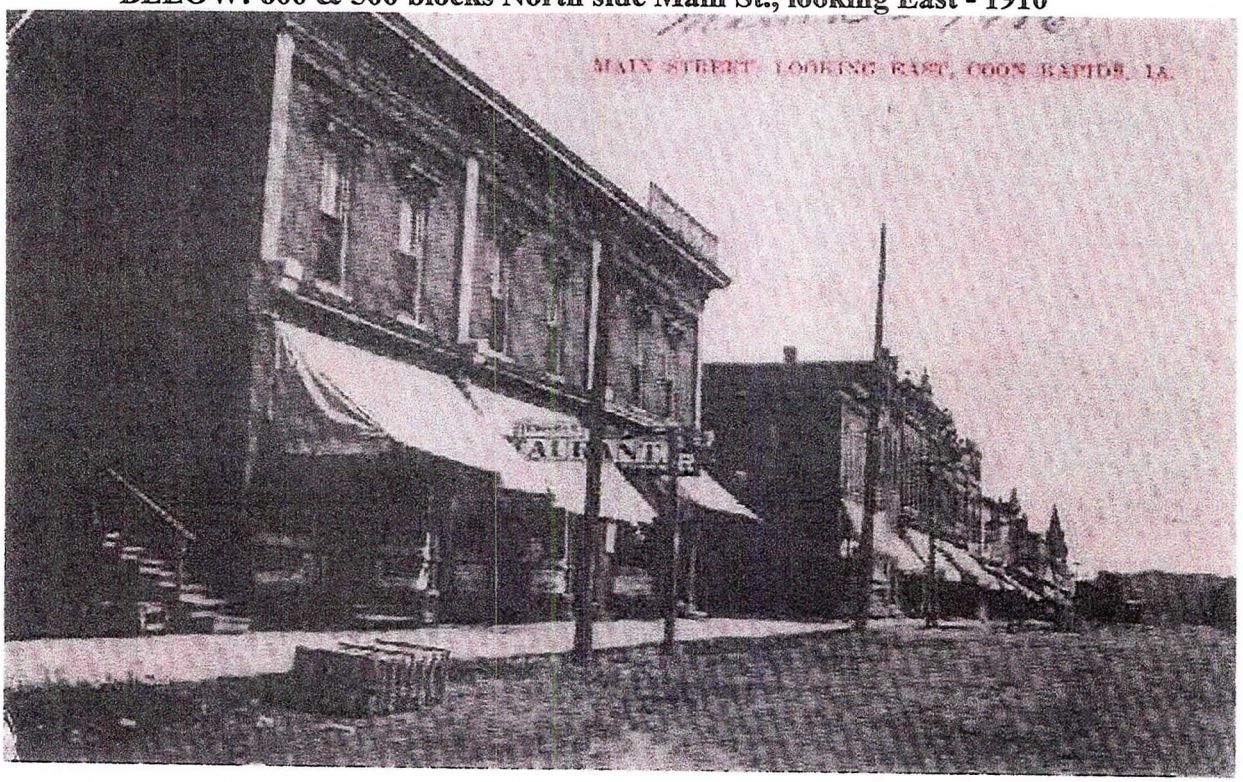
BELOW: North side Main St., looking East - c. 1915



BELOW: 600 & 500 blocks North side Main St., looking East - 1908



BELOW: 600 & 500 blocks North side Main St., looking East - 1910



BELOW: 500 block North side Main St., looking East – 1940s



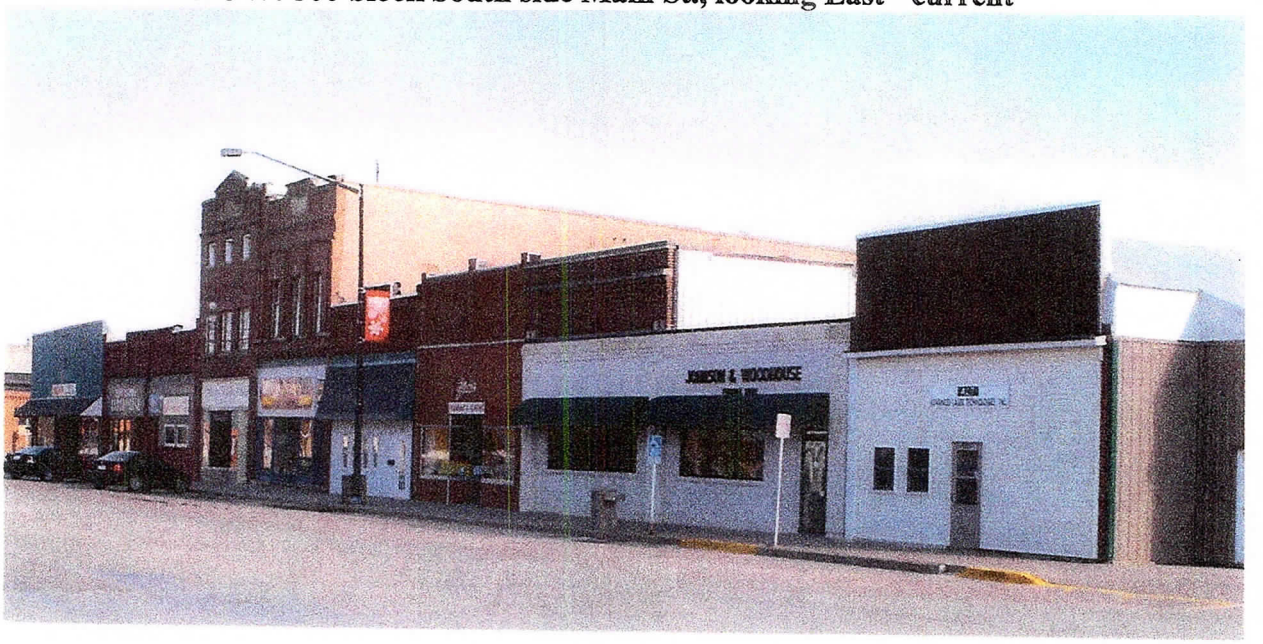
BELOW: 500 block North side Main St., looking East – c. 1950



BELOW: 500 block North side Main St., looking East – c. 1950



BELOW: 500 block South side Main St., looking East - current



BELOW: 500 block South side Main St., looking East - 1909



BELOW: 500 block South side Main St., looking East - 1915



BELOW: 500 block South side Main St., looking West – c. 1915



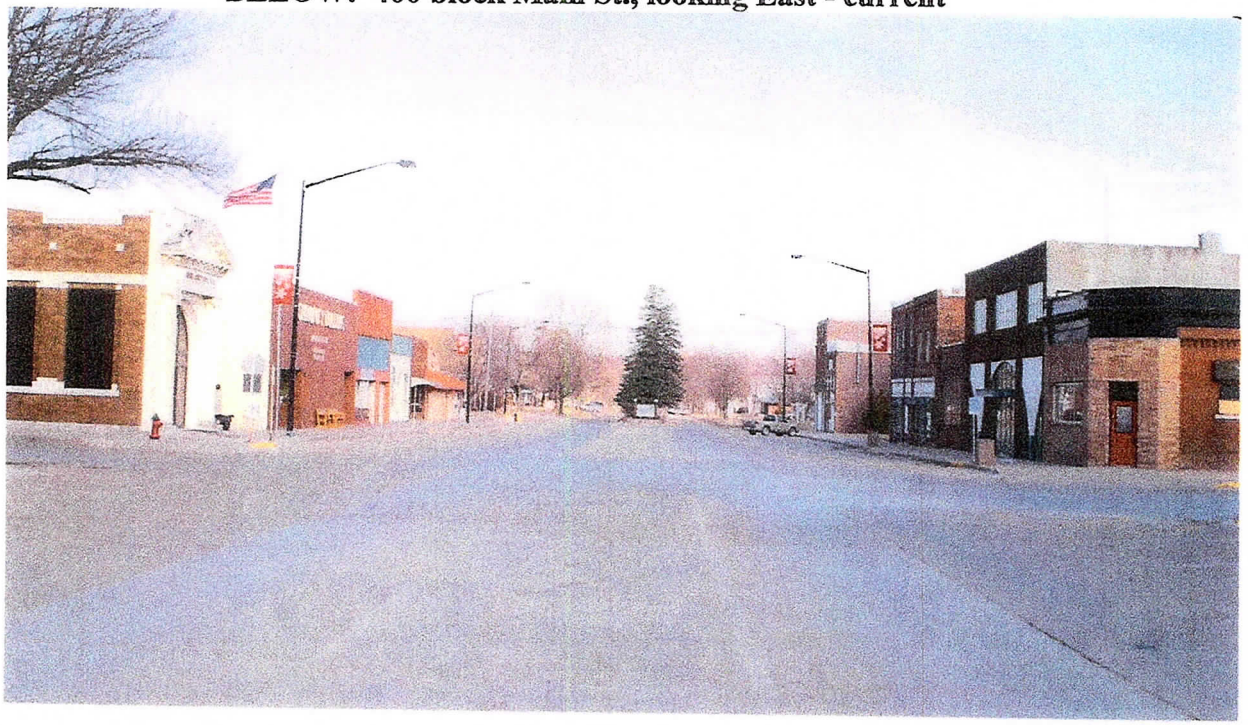
BELOW: 500 block South side Main St., looking West - 1948



BELOW: 500 block South Side Main St., looking East – c. 1950



BELOW: 400 block Main St., looking East - current



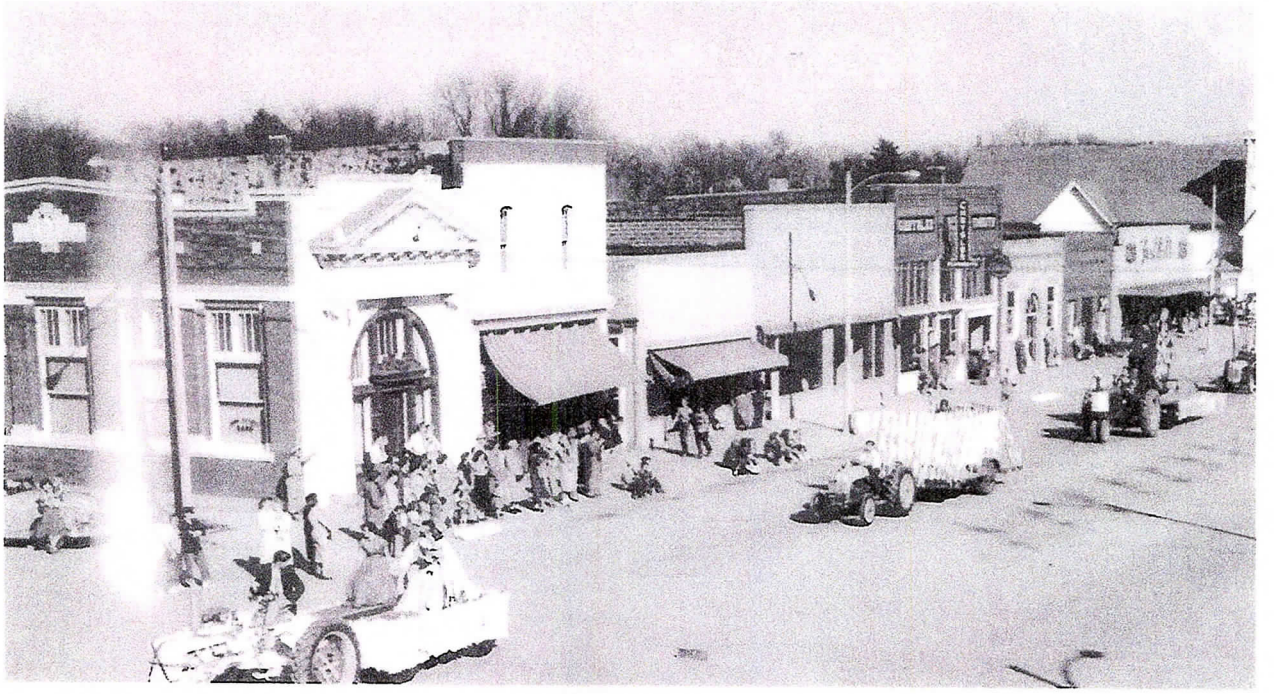
BELOW: 400 block Main St., looking West - 1911



BELOW: 400 block North side Main St., looking West – c. 1910



BELOW: 400 block North side Main St., looking East – c. 1960



End photos

INDEX TO SITE INVENTORY FORMS

Coon Rapids Commercial District - Extended Reconnaissance Survey

BLOCKS WITHIN THE POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

Assigned Site Number	Survey Block	Remarks
14-00530	#1	
14-00531	#1	
14-00532	#1	*Number not used*
14-00533	#2	*Number not used*
14-00534	#2	
14-00535	#2	
14-00536	#2	*Number not used (data merged w/ 14-00535)**
14-00539	#3	
14-00540	#3	
14-00541	#4	
14-00542	#4	
14-00543	#4	
14-00545	#5	
14-00546	#5	*Number not used*
14-00547	#5	
14-00548	#5	
14-00549	#6	
14-00550	#6	
14-00552	#6	*Number not used*
14-00558	#8	*Number not used (initially assigned to Armour Creameries Poultry Hs. -see 14-00445 below)**
14-00559	#8	*Number not used*
14-00560	#8	

BLOCKS NOT WITHIN THE POTENTIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

14-00445	#8 (Armour Creameries Poultry House)	Prior evaluation/ site number previously assigned / no supplemental form filed here
14-00529	#1	
14-00537	#3	
14-00538	#3	
14-00544	#4	
14-00551	#6	
14-00553	#7	
14-00554	#7	
14-00555	#7	
14-00556	#7	
14-00557	#8	
14-00561	#9	

**There were 26 site inventory forms completed as a result of this survey. The two site numbers marked with an asterisk above were eliminated well after the count of 28 was typed and printed on page 23 of the survey report "Coon Rapids Commercial District: Extended Reconnaissance Architectural/Historical Survey," August 2009.*