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CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY
DOWNTOWN LE MARS, IOWA
(HADB# 75-011)







Prepared for

LE MARS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

By

PRESERVATION SOLUTIONS LLC

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INTRODUCTION

A city can take steps to protect its significant historic resources only if it knows what it has. Thus a cultural resource survey is a basic building block for any local preservation program. Information gathered through survey can form the foundation for nearly every decision affecting a city's historic buildings and neighborhoods, guiding the planning, maintenance, and investment decisions of city officials, property owners, neighborhood groups, and developers. The inventory and evaluation of community resources is the principal step to developing local public and private programs that not only preserve important historic properties, but also utilize preservation as a tool for economic development and the revitalization of older neighborhoods and commercial centers. Furthermore, survey can have the more intangible benefit of raising awareness and community pride among citizens.

To aid Le Mars' development and transformation in the future, the City should continue to implement public policy promoting historic preservation. When integrated into the planning process and targeted at identifiable areas, historic preservation provides a level of certainty and permanence that is necessary to attract investment. Preserved commercial business areas and residential neighborhoods create stability of population, a greater tax base, and less drain on City services.

PREFACE

WHAT IS A CULTURAL RESOURCE SURVEY?

A cultural resource survey is the process of identifying and gathering information on a community's architectural and historical resources. To assess the significance of cultural resources, the survey process includes:

- a field investigation to photograph, verify the location, and determine the architectural character, associated features, and historical integrity of each resource;
- a literature search and archival research to gather information concerning the survey area's historical contexts and associated functional and/or architectural property types;
- analysis of the survey data and historic contexts to determine which resources appear to have historical/architectural significance; and
- formulation of management recommendations for future identification, evaluation, registration, and protection strategies.

Communities undertake cultural resource survey in response to the growing recognition that cultural resources have value and should be taken into consideration in planning processes. To this end, the information yielded in a cultural resource survey is important because it:

- identifies properties that contribute to the city's character, illustrate its historical and architectural development and, as a result, deserve consideration in planning;
- identifies properties or areas for which study and research may provide information about the community's historic growth and development;
- assists in establishing priorities for future survey, conservation, restoration, and rehabilitation efforts within the city;
- provides the basis for legal and financial tools to recognize and protect resources;
- provides planners with a property database and computer generated mapping to utilize for the establishment of preservation planning efforts;
- increases public and private sector awareness of the need for preservation efforts; and
- provides guidance in developing a comprehensive preservation plan, enabling local governments and federal agencies to meet planning responsibilities and review requirements under existing federal legislation and procedures.

Survey Products

Work products generated from the survey process include an inventory form for each property, photographs of each resource, and a survey report with maps outlining the survey area and findings. The inventory forms contain information specific to each property and should be incorporated into the city's ongoing record of historic resources. The survey report is a technical document providing an understanding of the survey data and methodology, historic contexts, associated property types identified, and recommendations for future evaluation and protection of significant resources.

PREFACE

BENEFITS OF PRESERVATION

Preservation has intrinsic value in celebrating a community's history and enabling citizens "to understand the present as a product of the past and a modifier of the future."[1] It provides a greater awareness of the relationships between the past, present, and future.

Historic settings are increasingly sought after by the public because they offer quality craftsmanship and materials, provide authenticity and variety, and encourage human interaction in a familiar context. Moreover, preservation has demonstrated practical value as a tool for economic development and environmental stewardship. Studies conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation have shown preservation provides the following benefits.

- The physical appearance of buildings and streetscapes reflects a community's overall vitality and economic health.

- Maintaining the strength of a city's older commercial and residential areas, including both rehabilitated historic buildings and well-designed new buildings, can attract larger commercial ventures to the community, even if they do not locate in the historic core of the city.

- Rehabilitation of individual buildings can be more attainable and stabilizing to a local economy than a single large economic development project.

- Historic preservation consistently outperforms other industries in job creation, creation of household income, and impact on other industries.

- Comparatively, historic preservation activity creates more jobs than comparable new construction activity, and often produces more jobs per dollar spent than leading industries.

- Cultural resources reflect a community and region's evolution and differentiate it from other areas.

- The value of a property is determined by the buildings and public improvements around it. Rehabilitation of a historic property directly benefits adjacent property owners and nearby businesses.

- The value of rehabilitated properties in a city's historic core increases more rapidly than the real estate market in the larger community.

[1] John W. Lawrence from Preservation Plan Work Team, City Planning and Development Department, and Mackey Mitchell Zahner Associates, "A Plan for Meaningful Communities: the FOCUS Preservation Plan" Preliminary Report (Kansas City: City of Kansas City, Missouri, Planning and Development Department, 1996), 1.

Economic Benefits

Nationally known real estate professional Donovan D. Rypkema, author of *The Economics of Historic Preservation*,[2] emphasizes that commitment to preservation may be one of the most effective acts of fiscal responsibility governmental entities can undertake. Older neighborhoods and commercial centers represent considerable taxpayer investment in infrastructure and building construction. Conservation of the historic core, older neighborhoods, and sites of historic and aesthetic value can be one of the best tools in recovering and extending the worth of past investments while stimulating new economic activity.

Nationwide, the most successful revitalization efforts incorporate historic rehabilitation as the core of their strategies. These efforts demonstrate time and again that the most successful approach toward creating sustainable communities combines the old and the new; capitalizing on the aesthetics and craftsmanship of earlier eras and enhancing a community's fabric and character.

The State of Iowa and the federal government recognize the role rehabilitation of historic buildings can play in strengthening local economies. To encourage sustainable communities and preservation of important cultural resources they provide incentives to encourage rehabilitation of historic buildings. Investment tax credits for rehabilitation of historic buildings are available from both the state and federal governments. The amount of tax credits is calculated based on qualified rehabilitation expenditures at the end of the project. Eligible properties must be eligible and/or listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

The **20 percent Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit** applies to owners, and some renters, of income-producing National Register-listed properties. More information relating to the federal program requirements can be found at the following National Park Service websites: http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/download/HPTI_brochure.pdf and http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/.

Many properties (income-producing and owner-occupied) listed in the National Register of Historic Places are eligible for a **25 percent Iowa Rehabilitation Tax Credit**. When used together, the federal and state tax credits can capture approximately 35 percent[3] of eligible rehabilitation costs in tax credits. Due to potential changes in the Iowa tax credit programs, property owners are encouraged to visit the State Historic Preservation Office's website (http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/tax-incentives-for-rehabilitation/index.html) and contact the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) early on in their project planning.

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[2] Donovan D. Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide* (Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2005).

[3] Since the Federal Government taxes the earnings from the Iowa rehabilitation tax credit, the final net amount is approximately 35 to 38 percent of the total eligible rehabilitation costs.

Additionally in Iowa, substantially rehabilitated National Register-eligible or listed historic buildings can qualify for **Temporary Historic Property Tax Exemption** equal to a four-year freeze on property taxes with the approval of the local County Board of Supervisors. Property taxes are frozen at the rate before the rehabilitation and incrementally increased at 25 percent each year.

To qualify for the either the state or federal tax incentive programs, the rehabilitation work must comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, which can be found at the National Park Service's website at http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/. The Secretary's Standards are designed to address changes that will allow older buildings to function in the twenty-first century.

In addition, a **10 percent Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit** is available for the rehabilitation of commercial, non-residential buildings that are *not* eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and were constructed before 1936. With no formal application process and limited restrictions to the design of rehabilitation work, this can be a good tool for buildings in locally designated conservation districts (see Recommendations for an elaborated discussion of conservation districts). For more information on the federal tax credit incentives, please visit http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/download/HPTI_brochure.pdf.

Environmental Stewardship

Utilizing preservation as a tool in the conservation of resources provides a practical and effective economic and environmental strategy for future planning. As "green" technologies and practices become increasingly part of public discourse, there is growing consensus in support of environmental protection efforts. After years of exploiting resources, citizens are now considering how their activities and surroundings fit into the larger environment. This includes the recognition of the massive investment of materials and energy contained in built resources and efforts to encourage better stewardship of older buildings and structures. Buildings contain materials and energy already expended in the mining and/or harvesting of raw materials, manufacturing and shipping of materials, and assembling of the structure; "extending the useful service life of the building stock is common sense, good business, and sound resource management."[4] Moreover, materials from the demolition of buildings accounts for up to 40 percent of landfill contents, the cost of which is indirectly borne by taxpayers. At the same time, new construction consumes new energy and resources. As stated by Carl Elefante of the U.S. Green Building Council, "The greenest building is...one that is already built."[5]

For more information about historic preservation and sustainability, please visit the National Trust for Historic Preservation at http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/sustainability/.

[4] Carl Elefante, AIA, LEED AP, "The Greenest Building Is...One That Is Already Built," *Forum Journal,* no. 4 (Summer 2007), 32.
[5] Elefante, 26.

METHODOLOGY

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of this project are to complete an intensive-level survey and evaluation of resources in downtown Le Mars, followed by the successful nomination of the largest concentration of downtown buildings, structures, and sites to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

An additional goal of this combined survey and NRHP nomination project is to fulfill Le Mars' duties as a Certified Local Government (CLG). The Iowa State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) recognized Le Mars as a CLG in 1996 and, thus, a partner in the preservation of Iowa's historic resources. A key requirement of the CLG partnership, fulfilled in part by this project, is that a municipality has "...an on-going process for identifying, evaluating, and recognizing historic properties within city/county limits."[6]

Partially funded by a Historic Preservation Fund Grant from the Iowa SHPO, the survey phase of this project will identify broad historic contexts, individual building histories, functional property types, eligible historic resources, and the boundaries of the geographic area containing the largest concentration of eligible downtown resources. The NRHP nomination phase will integrate the survey information into the NRHP format and provide additional documentation, as required by the Iowa SHPO and the National Park Service (NPS), to ensure the successful registration of the Downtown Le Mars Historic District in the NRHP by late summer or early autumn 2012.

[6] State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Cultural Affairs, State Historical Society of Iowa, "Local Historic Preservation Programs," http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/local-preservation/index.html (accessed May 6, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

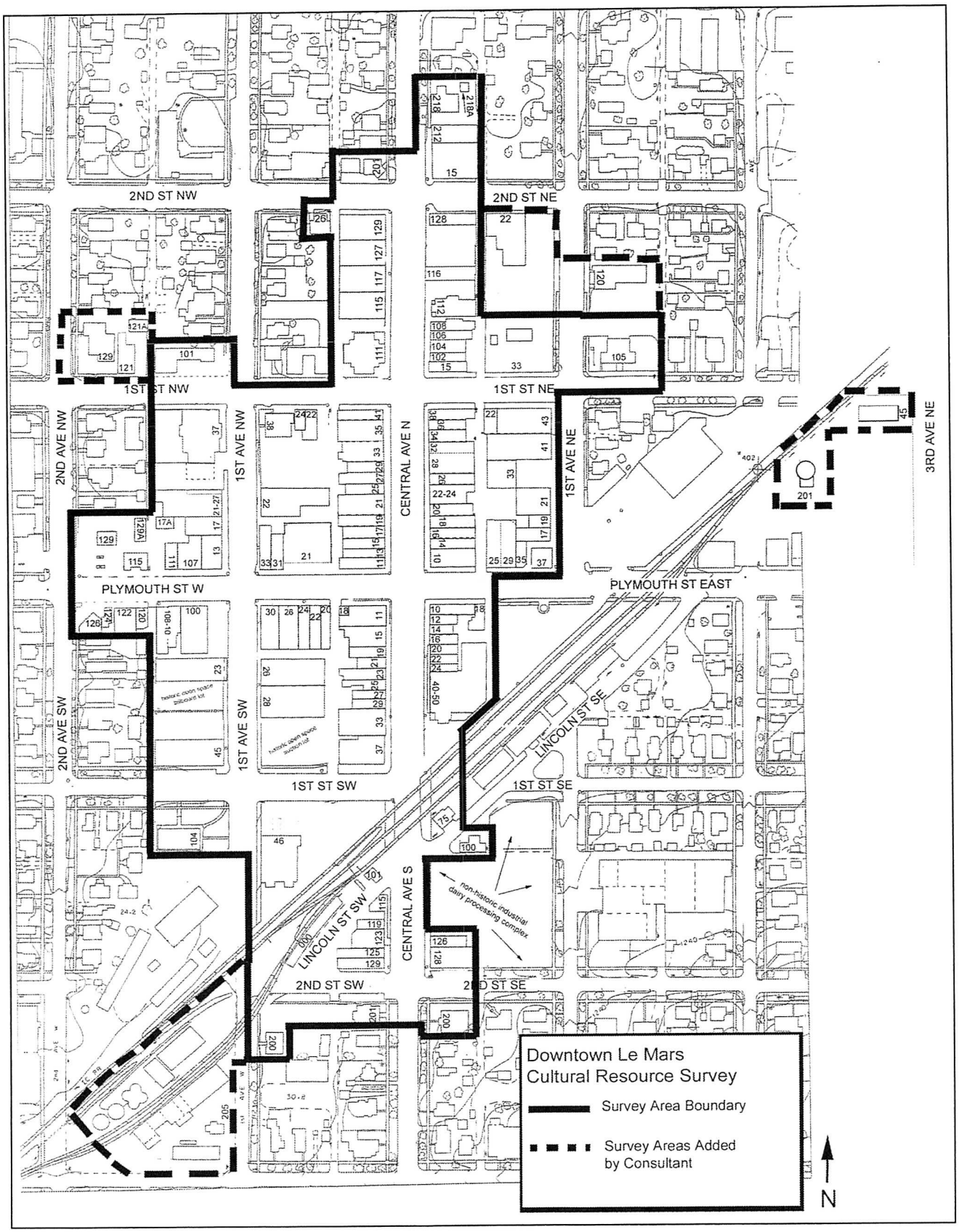
PROJECT AREA & GEOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Le Mars is at the center of America Township, which occupies the east-central portion of Plymouth County in northwest Iowa. The city occupies approximately 6.8 square miles in Township 92 North, Range 45 West. It is the county seat and population center with about thirty-seven percent of the county's 25,000 residents. Le Mars is located on the USGS Le Mars quadrangle.

The survey area consists of approximately 30 acres in the city's historic central business district (please see maps on the following pages). Within the survey area boundaries, a street grid aligned with the cardinal directions defines the circulation pattern, the vast majority of parcel boundaries, and thus many buildings' alignment. The Union Pacific Railroad grade[7] travels northeast-southwest across the south edge of the survey area. Approximately 125 resources exist in the survey area, comprised of late nineteenth through late twentieth century commercial buildings characteristic of a county seat's central business district.

A review of the available Sanborn Fire Insurance maps (1883-1947) shows the survey area boundaries generally follow the historic edge of the central business district as it appeared during the mid-twentieth century. The survey area is generally bounded by 2nd Avenue to the west, 2nd Street to the south, 1st Avenue to the east, and 2nd Street to the north. The exact boundaries of the historic district to be nominated to the NRHP will be determined subsequent to field verification of integrity.

[7] This section of railroad grade dates the arrival of the Illinois Central Railroad in 1870.



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METHODOLOGY

SCOPE OF WORK

This project was launched in May 2011. Fieldwork, preliminary research, and first public meeting were conducted in mid-May 2011. A kick-off meeting with SHPO staff and submittal of the research design also occurred at this time. Preservation Solutions (PSLLC) submitted the draft survey report on September 1, 2011 and a second public meeting and presentation will take place on September 14, 2011. Subsequent to Le Mars Historic Preservation Commission (LMHPC) and SHPO comments, PSLLC will submit survey forms and the revised survey report by November 1, 2011. The National Register nomination process will follow immediately, with presentation to the State National Register Committee expected in June 2012.

Personnel

Preservation Solutions architectural historian, Kerry Davis, acted as the project lead and conducted all aspects of project planning, fieldwork, archival research, and report preparation. Project managers for the LMHPC will be Mary Reynolds, Le Mars Main Street, with assistance from Iris Hemmingson, LMHPC Chair. Linda Smith, Plymouth County Deputy Assessor, facilitated provision of the preliminary parcel database and base map. Project reviewers for the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office were Ralph Christian, Historian, Elizabeth Foster Hill, Tax Incentive and National Register Programs Manager, and Paula Mohr, CLG Coordinator. In addition, numerous local volunteers provided assistance with research and documentation.

Archival Research

Intensive-level documentation of all historic buildings, structures, and sites within the survey area to sufficiently evaluate National Register eligibility required research of individual properties, as well as general community history to establish historic contexts. Archival research included both primary and secondary resources. The following repositories and collections were utilized: Plymouth County Historical Museum; LMHPC Archives; Private collection of Iris Hemmingson; Le Mars Public Library; City of Le Mars; Plymouth County Courthouse; State Historic Preservation Office; Mid-Continent Public Library, Independence, Missouri. In addition, local historians and volunteer researchers provided significant research support throughout the project.

Fieldwork

Combined with the applicable research on Le Mars' past development, the fieldwork provided a basis for an accurate analysis of National Register eligibility. A building-by-building analysis, which included field investigation and documentation of the exterior of each of the approximately 129 resources in the survey area was conducted. The lead field investigator recorded all building information sufficient to complete the Iowa inventory form, as well as general streetscape characteristics sufficient to describe the setting.

This fieldwork was comprised of on-site integrity assessments, address verification, and photographic documentation of all properties. Field analysis led to the identification of

contributing and non-contributing resources in accordance with *National Register Bulletin 15: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation.* Photographic documentation was in compliance with National Register and Iowa SHPO photography policies and included ample streetscape views, multiple views of each resource, and any other character-defining elements of the survey area, such as landscape elements.

Compilation and Analysis of Data

Preservation Solutions used a Microsoft Access database to compile the survey information based upon the information required by the Iowa Site Inventory Form. This included data fields for each building's historic and current functional use, physical features (e.g., principal materials, roof type, number of stories); architect and/or builder, if known; estimated or documented date of construction; presence of historic outbuildings; source(s) of historic information; and notes about the history of the property. In addition to these fields, the database includes fields for parcel identification numbers; historic architectural integrity; and assessments of eligibility. When linked with the digital records of future surveys, this database will enhance the understanding of historic resources in Le Mars. This information can also be linked to geographic information systems (GIS) software to create visual presentations of the data.

In order to accurately evaluate the eligibility of each resource and/or group of resources according to the criteria and standards for historic resources established by the Secretary of the Interior and the Iowa SHPO, the consultant analyzed the following four categories of data to identify contiguous districts, discontiguous thematic resources, and individual properties that are potentially eligible for National Register listing. A detailed description of the four areas of analysis and results appears in the "Survey Results" section of this report.

- Architectural Integrity
- Date of Construction
- Original Building Use/Function
- Building Form/Architectural Style

Evaluation and Analysis

As defined by the National Register of Historic Places, "historic integrity is the authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic period."[8] All properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and for local designation as Landmarks or Historic Districts, whether for individual significance or as contributing elements to a district,[9] must retain sufficient historic architectural integrity to convey the period of time in which they are significant.[10] Thus, to be

[8] National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, 1997), 4.

[9] A contributing property to a historic district does not have to meet the threshold for individual significance, but it must contribute to the district's area of significance. Properties contributing to a district's significance for architecture must retain a higher degree of architectural integrity than in a district significant for associations with an important individual or with historical events or patterns of history.

[10] Historic architectural integrity should not be confused with the physical condition of a building or structure. A building may be in excellent physical and structural condition, but may have lost its historical character-defining elements. Conversely, a building may retain all of its historical architectural features, but may be structurally unsound and, therefore, in poor condition.

listed in the National Register, a property must not only have historic significance, but it must also retain integrity.[11] The consultant visually inspected the exterior of buildings to determine the retention of integrity of each resource in the survey area.

After compiling and reviewing the results of the field study and archival research, PSLLC identified broad patterns of development in Le Mars. *The Buildings of Main Street* by Richard Longstreth[12] provided guidelines for nomenclature and determining commercial architectural forms, styles, and subtypes. *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia and Lee McAlester[13] supplemented architectural form and style classifications assuring the use of nomenclature consistent with National Register guidelines.

A National Register Historic District possesses a significant concentration and/or continuity of buildings, sites, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Areas that appear to retain contiguous resources that together might form a National Register Historic District are identified in the Recommendations section (see page 93). These properties possess historic integrity and are located adjacent to or near other similar properties that share the same historic context(s). Contributing resources do not have to be individually distinctive, but must add to the significance of the grouping within one or more historic contexts. The majority of the components that contribute to a district's historic character must possess integrity, even if they are individually undistinguished, as must the district as a whole.

Buildings Less than Fifty Years in Age

The National Register of Historic Places generally requires that a property be fifty years of age or more to be considered historic. This allows a sufficient period of time in which to objectively consider a property's significance. In order that this survey effort not become outdated too soon, context development and field study included analysis of resources and trends up to 1970. This methodology of including a forty year cut-off for resource study is a recommended procedure for multiple reasons, among them:

- The data collected does not become out-of-date too soon;
- Potentially significant buildings less than fifty years of age can be documented; and
- The City is made aware of buildings that may become eligible in the near future.

A good example of this type of resource is the Naef Building at 120 1st Street NW. Constructed in 1965, it is an excellent example of Modern Movement style architecture in Le Mars. If integrity is maintained, this landmark building may be individually eligible for listing in the National Register within a few years.

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[11] National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation* (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Interior, 1997), 44.

[12] Richard Longstreth, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* (Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1987).

[13] Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984).

METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION CRITERIA

National Register Eligibility

The physical characteristics and historic significance of a resource provide the basis for evaluating National Register eligibility. A property or district must be associated with an important historic context and meet a combination of the criteria outlined below. Opinions of potential eligibility should be approved by the Iowa SHPO prior to proceeding with nomination to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

Age Requirements

To allow sufficient time to gain historical perspective, the National Register uses a minimum age guideline of fifty years before a resource is considered eligible. However, it should be noted that it also allows for the evaluation of resources that have achieved significance in the past fifty (50) years if they are of exceptional importance.

Thus it is recommended that future survey efforts evaluate all resources at least thirty-five (35) years of age. This approach is beneficial because:

- The data collected does not become out-of-date too soon;
- Exceptionally significant buildings less than fifty years of age can be documented; and
- The City is made aware of buildings that will become eligible in the near future.

This methodology gives the City and the public a "heads-up" on buildings that may become eligible in the near future. Additionally, documentation of these resources provides the ability to plan future designations based on the significant impact of urban planning programs and development patterns associated with the mid-to-late-twentieth century in Le Mars.

Integrity Requirements

A property's level of integrity—the degree to which it retains its physical and historic character-defining features and is able to communicate its significance—is a key factor in determining whether it may be eligible for listing in the National Register. The National Register defines seven physical aspects of integrity against which a property or district must be evaluated:

- Location
- Design
- Setting
- Materials
- Workmanship
- Feeling
- Association

To maintain integrity, a property must possess at least several of these aspects, enough so that the essential physical features that enable it to convey its historic significance remain intact.

Determining which aspects are important to integrity requires knowledge of why, when, and where the property is significant.

Each building received an integrity rating of Excellent, Good/Fair, or Poor based primarily on how much of the building's original design, workmanship, exterior materials, and overall feeling of a past period of time remain.

Significance Requirements

In addition to retaining integrity of their historic architectural design, properties listed in the National Register must meet certain criteria of historic significance.[14] Historic significance is the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture of a community, a state, or the nation. To be listed, properties must have significance in at least one of the following areas:

Criterion A:	Association with events, activities, or broad patterns of history.
Criterion B:	Association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
Criterion C:	Embody distinctive characteristics of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values; or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
Criterion D:	Have yielded, or be likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

[14] For additional information about the National Register of Historic Places, visit http://www.nps.gov/nr/.

SURVEY RESULTS

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF SURVEY AREA

LOCATION AND SETTING

The Le Mars Downtown Survey examined one hundred forty-three (143) resources in the central business district of Le Mars, Iowa. The Survey Area is generally bounded by 2nd Avenue to the west, 2nd Street to the south, 1st Avenue to the east, and 2nd Street to the north. The survey also included a handful of scattered, landmark buildings to the east of the main Survey Area. The properties within the Survey Area contained a total of one hundred twenty-nine (129) primary resources, which included fourteen (14) secondary buildings/structures. (While the survey identified primary resources and ancillary buildings or structures, the architectural and functional analyses did not consider the design of ancillary resources).

Late nineteenth through late twentieth century commercial development characterizes the survey area. Commercial buildings dominate the vast majority of the survey area, with some interspersed vacant parcels. One- and Two-part Commercial Block buildings occupy the majority of parcels throughout the survey area, with residential and railroad-related industrial resources adjacent and beyond the survey area boundaries. Scattered institutional buildings, including governmental, educational, and social buildings, occur throughout the survey area, most often at or close to main intersections.

All lots in the survey area are on a grid system platted between 1869 and 1881, the majority of which belong to the Original Town Plat filed in 1870. Lot sizes vary depending on institutional or commercial uses and reflect numerous twentieth century parcel boundary alterations as a result of parcel subdivision or merging adjacent parcels/lots as part of replatting that occurred in the second half of the twentieth century. Asphalt-paved streets, concrete curbs, and concrete sidewalks characterize the commercial streetscapes. Some non-historic decorative brick sidewalk enhancements, flanking the concrete sidewalk, occur in the heart of the survey area.

The survey area features a diverse mixture of architectural styles and vernacular building forms on each streetscape. All reflect development over time beginning in the late nineteenth century and continuing through to the early twenty-first century.

The arrangement of the central business district reflects a development pattern of the traditional street grid system aligned on the cardinal axes, following the north-south, east-west grid of the section, township, and range divisions in the surrounding countryside. At the south end of the survey area, the Union Pacific railroad alignment runs northeast-southwest, diagonally bisecting the city. The core of downtown Le Mars is concentrated north of this railroad alignment. Warehouse and light-industrial buildings are located adjacent to the railroad alignments at the south survey area boundary.

A review of historic maps revealed street name and address changes over time. These changes are as follows:

- Between 1888 and 1893, the city did away with its building numbering system, which ran sequentially down the street, and adopted the more modern alternating numbering scheme with even building numbers on the west and odd numbers on the east.

- In March 1922 street nomenclature was completely revamped: Main Street became Central Avenue; 6th Street became Plymouth Street; all east-west streets were renamed 1st Street, 2nd Street, 3rd Street, etc., increasing each direction north and south from Plymouth; all north-south streets were renamed 1st Avenue, 2nd Avenue, 3rd Avenue, etc., increasing east and west from Central; and from the axes created by the intersection of Plymouth and Central, the street grid was divided into quadrants and all street names received suffix corresponding to its respective quadrant – NE, SW, etc.

- Also in 1922, all addresses were changed to conform to new quadrant street naming system, with numbers increasing out from the intersection of Plymouth and Central. The change assigned the east and/or north side of each street with odd numbered addresses and the west and/or south side with even numbered addresses.

SURVEY RESULTS

DATES OF CONSTRUCTION

Using the information provided by historic maps, city directories, newspaper accounts, and added secondary sources, as well as architectural style building form, the consultant determined estimated dates of construction for the resources surveyed. Analysis of the construction trends reveals more than 85 percent of surveyed resources are more than fifty years of age.

ESTIMATED DATE OF CONSTRUCTION	
ERA	NUMBER OF RESOURCES
Pre-1900	39
Early Twentieth Century: 1901-1929	53
Great Depression and World War II: 1930-1945	3
Post-World War II & Modern Era: 1946-1962	16
Non-historic: 1963-Present	18
TOTAL	**129**

SURVEY RESULTS

FUNCTIONAL PROPERTY TYPES

A property type is the categorization of a set of resources that share physical or associative characteristics. Property types link historic events and/or patterns with actual resources that illustrate these contexts. Buildings and structures in the survey area represent a broad range of original historic functions, including commercial, governmental, educational, social, and residential resources. The majority of blocks contain buildings from various periods, representing an extended period of time and adding to the diversity of resources. The individual commercial buildings, institutional structures, and other resources are literal reflections of Le Mars' history and evolution.

To identify historic property types present in the survey area, PSLLC identified resources according to original function, building form, and architectural style, thus recognizing both shared associative (functional), as well as physical (architectural style and building form) characteristics. The basic functional property types identified are outlined below, and then further categorized by building form and/or architectural style. (An expanded discussion of these functional property types can be found in the Associated Property Types section beginning on page 80.)

ORIGINAL BUILDING FUNCTION	
FUNCTION	NUMBER OF RESOURCES
Commercial	117
Government/Defense	3
Educational	1
Social	4
Health Care	1
Recreational	1
Residential	2
TOTAL	**129**

Commercial Building Property Type

The Commercial property type is the most prevalent functional property type identified in the project area. There is a high degree of diversity within this functional category due to the long time span in building construction dates (c1876-2010) and the field survey identified three property subtypes based on building form (see following Building Forms section). The majority of commercial buildings in the survey area have retail sales or service functions common in similar-sized cities throughout the Midwest. These business houses are usually sited on one or two lots and have rectangular plans with the short side facing the street. They are designed for small operations providing professional services or retail sales.

Institutional Property Type

The Le Mars Downtown Survey also identified historic governmental buildings (a city hall, an armory, and a post office), social group buildings (meeting halls), and an educational building (a library). All of the buildings incorporate varying degrees of high style architectural treatments from the period of their construction. The identified institutional buildings are located along commercial arteries and generally at or near the edge of the central business district.

Other Property Types

Several buildings in the Survey Area also have plans specific to their function and include a health care building (bath house/hospital); two residential buildings (a multi-family dwelling and a hotel); and a recreational structure (amphitheater). Because the survey included so few examples of these function-specific properties, it is not possible to define property type characteristics for these buildings. All have exterior architectural treatments reflecting conscious design choices specific to their function.

SURVEY RESULTS

BUILDING FORMS

The categorization of building forms identified in the survey area follow the classification terminology required and accepted by the National Register of Historic Places program. The nomenclature relies heavily on forms described in *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture* by Richard Longstreth. *Buildings of Main Street* provides standard classifications of commercial buildings by form and arrangement of façade features.

In *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, Richard Longstreth categorizes commercial buildings according to façade composition. Despite intricate detailing and stylistic treatments or the lack thereof, the organization of a commercial façade can be reduced to simple patterns that reveal major divisions or functional zones. Such nomenclature is often combined with a building's style, if present (e.g., "Italianate Style One-Part Commercial Block").

Despite the inclusion of commercial building form categories by Longstreth, there are still a number of commercial designs and forms found in Le Mars (as in other communities) that these architectural authorities do not address. Consequently, the nomenclature for a style or form type used by the National Register program does not categorize some buildings in the Survey Area. This does not imply that the design of these buildings cannot be classified or described, but merely that commonly accepted survey terminology does not take into consideration local building forms.

BUILDING FORMS	NUMBER OF RESOURCES
Commercial Buildings	
One-part Commercial Block	54
Two-part Commercial Block	51
Temple Front	2
Other Commercial Building Forms	10
Institutional Buildings	
City hall, library, armory, social halls, etc.	10
Other Building Forms	
Residential	2
TOTAL	129

Commercial Buildings Forms in Downtown Le Mars

Utilizing Longstreth's basic commercial building form typology, the field study identified historic examples of the One-Part Commercial Block, Two-Part Commercial Block, and Temple Front classifications. (An expanded discussion of these building forms can be found in the Historic Context section "Architectural Development in Downtown Le Mars: 1870-1970" beginning on page 61.) One- and Two-Part Commercial Blocks are the dominant commercial building forms found in downtown Le Mars. Typically of masonry construction, these buildings are between one and three stories in height. The storefront area typically features a transom window that spans the width of the building, display windows, and one or more recessed or flush entrances. Below the display windows a solid bulkhead supports the window frames. Pilasters and/or engaged piers often provide vertical definition, framing the ends of the display windows and the entrances.

Commercial buildings and the streetscapes they create in Downtown Le Mars define both the functional and visual character of the City's central business district. Dating from circa 1887 through the twenty-first century, many of Le Mars' commercial buildings are simple designs of one or two stories. The common building materials are brick and concrete block. A high number reflect mid-to-late twentieth century façade alterations, including the use of non-original stucco, stone, Perma-stone,© and metal wall cladding. (It should be noted that though non-original, many of these façade alterations occurred during the period of significance and are alterations that have gained significance in their own right, as per National Register guidelines.) The majority of changes reflect the modernization of the first-story display windows, transoms, and entrances. Many of these alterations left the original openings and spatial relationships of the storefront intact. Some changes are easily reversible, such as the addition of awnings and the applications of wood or metal sheathing over the original openings. The second stories often retain their original integrity and are the principal references used to identify the original appearance and style.

As noted previously many of the generic commercial building forms do not evidence a particular style of the period of their construction. Some have lost stylistic architectural elements such as window hoods, cornices, brackets, and/or bay windows over time and cannot be classified according to a style. Others are simple adaptations of commercial building forms that have no or only a few references to high style architectural design features. However, it should be remembered that their architectural form is often as important as a contributing element to a district as stylistic features.

SURVEY RESULTS

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

In addition to functional property type and building form categorizations, resource classification of shared physical attributes typically includes architectural styles. The architectural styles identified in the survey area and discussed below follow the terminology required and accepted by the National Register of Historic Places program.[15]

Of the 129 buildings surveyed only seventy-three (73) exhibit a discernable architectural style or reflect clear stylistic influences.[16]

ARCHITECTURAL STYLE	NUMBER OF RESOURCES
Late Victorian	
Italianate	14
Romanesque Revival	1
Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals	
Late 19th & 20th Century Revivals	22
Colonial Revival	3
Classical Revival	6
Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements	
Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements	1
Prairie School	3
Craftsman	1
Modern Movement	
Modern Movement	16
Neoeclectic Styles	
Neoeclectic	1
Mansard Style	3
Neoclassical Revival	1
Post Modern	1
TOTAL	**73**

[15] Architectural styles are arranged in this report based on the National Register classification categories and nomenclature relies heavily on the styles described by Carol Rifkind in *A Field Guide to American Architecture,* as well as those discussed in *What Style Is It?* by John Poppeliers, S. Allen Chambers, and Nancy B. Schwartz, as well as Virginia and Lee McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*, as recommended by the National Register of Historic Places.

[16] An expanded discussion of architectural styles can be found in the Historic Context "Architectural Development in Downtown Le Mars: 1870-1970" beginning on page 61). The elaborated discussion of architectural styles has been restricted to only the most prevalent styles for which at least two examples were identified in the survey. Also included are those styles for which singular, individually eligible examples are extant.

SURVEY RESULTS

INTEGRITY

All properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places must retain sufficient architectural integrity to convey the period of time for which they are significant. Each building received an integrity rating of Excellent, Good/Fair, Poor, or Non-Historic.[17] Of the 129 primary resources surveyed, 13 percent were found to be non-historic and 28 percent received an integrity rating of Poor. Of those, several may be potentially eligible for National Register listing if the non-historic siding materials covering the exterior walls and other character-defining exterior features are removed and the original building fabric and architectural features remain intact underneath.

INTEGRITY RATING	PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL RESOURCES
Excellent	5%
Good/Fair	53%
Poor	29%
Non-Historic (Constructed after 1962)	13%

[17] It should be noted that several buildings categorized as Non-Historic retain excellent integrity from their original period of construction and, if maintained, may become eligible for listing in the National Register within a few years.

HISTORIC CONTEXTS

DOWNTOWN LE MARS: A DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW

To fully appreciate the significance of Le Mars' downtown resources, it is important to understand the forces that influenced the evolution of the city in general, as well as the development trends that occurred regionally, statewide, and nationally. The National Park Service defines historic context as "a broad pattern of historical development in a community or its region that may be represented by historic resources."[18] According to the Secretary of Interior's *Standards for Preservation Planning, Identification, and Evaluation*, proper evaluation of the significance of historic resources can occur only when they are assessed within broad patterns of a community's historical development. Only then may the National Register criteria for evaluating property eligibility be accurately applied.

Establishing historic contexts is a means of organizing information about properties that share common historic, architectural, or cultural themes. A preliminary historic context overview identifying themes representing the Le Mars' downtown development over time follows. Le Mars' downtown property types, discussed in detail below and in the following section, relate to these themes. When historic resources are viewed in relationship to the context within which they were built, it is possible to apply the established criteria for evaluating eligibility for designation to the national and local historic registers.

Historic contexts developed as part of this study or any future survey should not be confused with a comprehensive history of the community. Historic context development is one component of a survey report that assists in providing technical analysis of the resources identified. The establishment of historic contexts is a first step in targeting the survey effort and in determining recommendations for future identification and evaluation effectively. The resulting information relating to this context is far from definitive, but establishes areas of obvious importance in relation to National Register criteria and allows specific management recommendations for future identification, evaluation, and protection of cultural resources.

The following narrative overview establishes historic contexts for defined chronological eras, within which it identifies important development patterns, including geographic limits, historical themes, and the evolution of architectural styles and property types. Because the Survey Area boundaries are restricted to the downtown area, the historic contexts do not fully address many of the established historical contexts for Le Mars in general, particularly the concurrent historical industrial development patterns associated with the railroad freight areas and/or residential construction.

[18] National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: Guidelines for Local Surveys* http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb24/chapter1.htm (accessed September 2, 2010).

ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS

- **Territorial and Early Settlement Period: up to 1869**
- **Early Evolution of Le Mars as a Regional Commercial Hub: 1869-1880**
- **"The Gateway City" of Northwest Iowa: 1880-1900**
- **Early Twentieth Century Le Mars: 1900-1929**
- **The Great Depression and World War II: 1930-1945**
- **Post World War II Recovery & and the Modern Era: 1945-1970**
- **Architectural Development in Downtown Le Mars: 1870-1970**

PREFACE

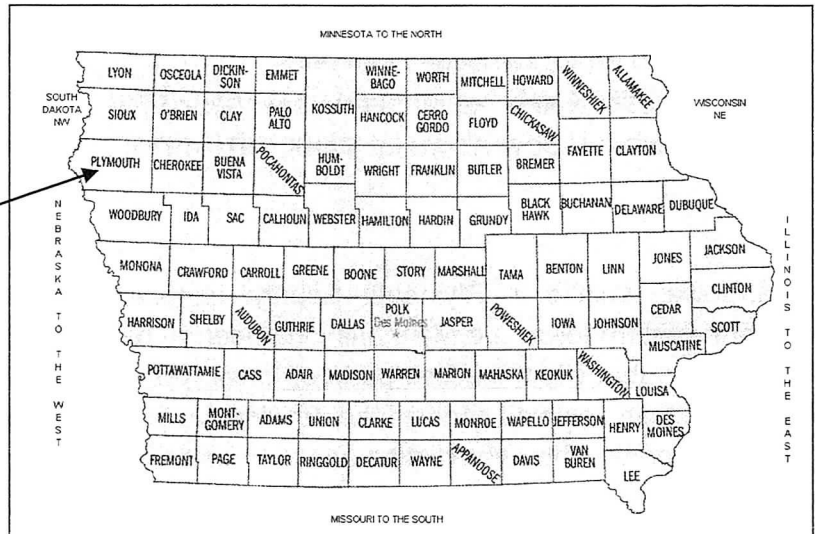
The City of Le Mars, Iowa, located in Plymouth County, is today a significant regional commercial center in northwestern Iowa. Le Mars has long been a marketing, commercial and transportation hub of a region that encompasses parts of Iowa, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Minnesota. The following historic contexts address the development of the City over a period of approximately one hundred years. The organization and discussion of historic contexts follows the National Park Service's recommended geographic-based organizational approach. This approach allows the discussion of contextual themes based on broad patterns of development within defined temporal periods. As is appropriate in the geographic-based approach, the themes focus on the development phases of the downtown's history; the economic, social, and political forces that affected its physical form; and the factors that gave the downtown its own distinct visual and cultural character. These themes form the contexts for understanding the evolution of downtown Le Mars' built environment. The identification and analysis of architectural and functional property types occurs as its own thematic context and is arranged according to chronological time periods. This creates a cross-reference to the other themes that are based on specific time periods. The discussion of the location patterns of specific property types occurs within selected themes as appropriate.

LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Plymouth County lies approximately 40 miles south of the Minnesota border on the west border of Iowa adjoining South Dakota and is in the third tier of counties from the Minnesota line. Located on the east slope of the Big Sioux River valley, Plymouth County has numerous water-courses. Aside from the Big Sioux River, the principal rivers are the Floyd River, which flows southwest through the central part of the county and the West Fork of the Little Sioux River, which runs from northeast to southwest across the southeast corner of the county. Tributaries of the Floyd River are numerous and were described in the late nineteenth century as "affording fine stock water and drainage...[as well as] water-power for mills."[19] At the time, the county's terrain comprised primarily rolling prairie, with only limited timber sources along the banks of the

[19] A.T. Andreas, *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Iowa* (Chicago: Andreas Atlas Co., 1875). Available from USGenWeb Archives, http://files.usgwarchives.org/ia/plymouth/history/plymouth.txt (accessed July 15, 2011).

principal waterways. A.T. Andreas Atlas Company described the county's soil as "productive bluff deposit peculiar to the western part of the state," in particular along the Big Sioux and Floyd rivers where there were "splendid belts of rich farming lands."[20] While the local stone was not suitable for building, there were sufficient quantities of clay for brick making.[21]



Iowa Counties

Map courtesy of http://www.censusfinder.com/mapia.htm

TERRITORIAL AND EARLY SETTLEMENT PERIOD: UP TO 1869

Following the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, Euro-American settlement pushed west of St. Louis across the Mississippi River. Sufficient settlement had occurred to support the establishment of the Iowa Territory in 1838, which in turn stimulated an immediate influx of immigrants pushing increasingly further west across the state. During this period, the population of the Iowa Territory doubled every two years – from 10,531 residents in 1836, to 22,859 in 1838, and to 43,112 in 1840.[22] The territory's population more than doubled again to 102,338 by the time of statehood in 1846.[23] The onset of various westward migrations, including Mormon resettlement beginning in 1846, the 1849 California and 1859 Colorado gold rushes, as well as drought and cholera epidemics in the Ohio River Valley during the mid-1850s, drove people west to newly organized lands such as Iowa.[24] After statehood, the population skyrocketed to 674,913 by

[20] Andreas.
[21] Ibid.
[22] "Iowa Pathways Timeline." Iowa Public Television, http://www.iptv.org/iowapathways/timeline.cfm (accessed June 24, 2011).
[23] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa, http://www.uni.edu/iowaonline/prairievoices/ (accessed June 24, 2011).
[24] Ibid.

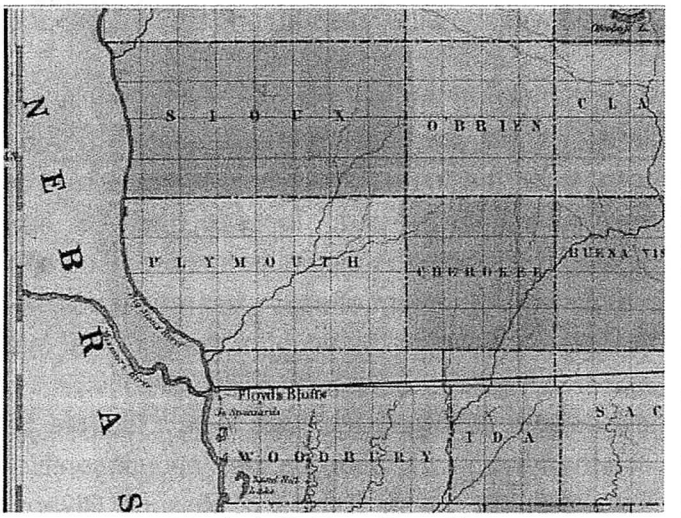
1860.[25] Among these immigrants, settlers were largely native-born Americans from points east, though the largest foreign-born group was German.[26]

Anglo-American explorers and settlers traveling through what is now northwestern Iowa during the first half of the nineteenth century encountered several native tribes including the Pottawatomie, Omaha, Oto, and Sioux nations. Their traditional lands – those on which they trapped, traded, planted, and ranged – included what is present-day Plymouth County. Treaties ceding the lands of Iowa's indigenous tribes to the United States Government forced their relocation to points west, with most Indians removed to what is present-day Kansas and all being relocated outside Iowa by 1862.[27] Once Indian removal was complete, land could be surveyed and sold to newly arrived settlers.

The last of Iowa's regions to be settled were the lands in the northwest part of the state, which were largely isolated until the arrival of the railroad to the area in the mid- to late nineteenth century.[28]

Formation of Plymouth County

With settlement continuing to push west across the state, in 1851 the Iowa Legislature authorized the establishment of counties across the remaining west half of the state, including Plymouth County. Though not yet officially organized as a separate unit of government, Plymouth County's boundaries were delineated, outlining 840 square miles; the second largest county in Iowa.[29] At this time, Plymouth County, as well as neighboring Cherokee County, was managed as part of Woodbury County.[30]



Mendenhall's Map of Iowa 1855
Library of Congress Online Map Collection

[25] Ibid.
[26] Suzanne, Winckler, *The Smithsonian Guide to Historic America – The Plains States* (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 1990), 304. By 1920, more than half of farmers in Iowa were of German descent.
[27] Winckler 300-307, and "Iowa Pathways Timelines." Iowa Public Television, accessed June 24, 2011, http://www.iptv.org/iowapathways/timeline.cfm. Winckler states all indigenous tribes were removed by 1851, while Iowa Pathways indicates all were relocated by 1862. Of note are the Mesquakie and Sauk tribes, whom after being relocated to Kansas returned to Iowa in 1856 and gained permission from the Iowa General Assembly to purchase land in Tama County, Iowa. Today, they are the only federally recognized Indian Tribe in Iowa.
[28] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa.
[29] Edward, Mendenhall, *Map of Iowa* (Cincinnati: E. Mendenhall, 1855), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division, http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?gmd:23:./temp/~ammem_EkXG (accessed June 24, 2011), and Nathan Parker, *Parker's Sectional and Geological Map of Iowa* (New York: J.H. Colton & Company, 1856), Library of Congress Geography and Map Division , http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/map_item.pl (accessed June 24, 2011), and "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893).
[30] A. Warner & Company, *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa* (Chicago: A. Warner & Company, 1890), 74.

The first documented Euro-American settlement in Plymouth County took place in 1856, with the arrival of small groups of pioneer families to the banks along the Floyd and Big Sioux rivers. Sufficient settlement had occurred by late summer 1858 that residents petitioned the Woodbury County Court for the organization of Plymouth County as a separate government entity, which was granted later that year.

The newly organized county had only two townships – Plymouth and Westfield – and elections took place shortly thereafter establishing a county judge, sheriff, and other officials.[31] The following year, county officials designated the county seat to be the newly platted town of Melbourne (10 miles south of present-day Le Mars) near the Floyd River in the southwest quadrant of the county and a courthouse was constructed shortly thereafter.

Arrival of the Railroad

In the years leading up to and after the Civil War, "railroad mania" swept the nation. Widespread projecting, promoting, and speculating took place with towns fiercely competing for the favor of railroad companies and convenient access to new rail lines. Connection to the railroad was a matter of economic life or death for many growing rural communities.

By 1857, five of the ten railroads linking the Atlantic seaboard with the Mississippi river reached its east bank, across from Iowa's eastern border.[32] With Chicago as a major center of inland commerce, the federal government recognized that Iowa was directly in the path of any future transcontinental railroad. In 1856, the U.S. legislature granted the state of Iowa millions of acres of public land to distribute to railroad companies, often with deadlines for road completion, to entice development of east-west routes across the state. By 1860, more than 650 miles were completed, however the onset of the Civil War interrupted the momentum.[33]

Immediately following the war, Iowa's leaders focused their attention on rail construction. In less than two years following the national conflict, railroad companies completed the first trans-state line, the Cedar Rapids & Missouri River Railroad (later Chicago and Northwestern) in 1867.

The 1862 Homestead Act and the rapid growth of railroads encouraged speculators to construct towns increasingly further west. During this period, Iowa again became a destination point for settlers from the East and between 1865 and 1870 the state's population grew from 754,699 to 1,194,020. Most of these settlers established farmsteads in rural areas and the state's population began to spread into the central and western portions of the state.

Plymouth County's proximity to both Sioux City is intrinsic to its early development. At the confluence of the Big Sioux, Floyd, and Missouri rivers, Sioux City thrived after being settled in

[31] A. Warner & Company, 411-412, and Hon. I.S. Struble, "History of Plymouth County Iowa," in *Standard Historical Atlas of Plymouth County Iowa* (Anderson & Goodwin Company, 1907), Section 2, 2.
[32] William H. Thompson, *Transportation In Iowa* (Des Moines: Iowa Department of Transportation, 1989), 27.
[33] "Iowa Pathways Timeline."

the 1840s, platted in 1848, and designated county seat in 1856. It grew rapidly into a shipping hub of the surrounding grain-farming and stock-raising region and was expected to surpass Omaha and St. Joseph, Missouri, as a commercial gateway to the West, which stimulated the formation of six railroad companies, each with their western terminus at Sioux City, in a short period of time.[34] Among them, was the earliest railroad to cross northwest Iowa – the Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad – arriving to Sioux City in 1868 and fully operational by 1870.[35] This line followed the Floyd River valley and served to boost settlement to Plymouth County and stimulate the creation of new communities along the way, Le Mars among them.

Plymouth County Population[36]		
1860	**1867**	**1870**
148	214	2,199

The Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad began in 1855 as the Dubuque and Pacific Railroad, which had thirty-five miles constructed from Dubuque by 1856. Despite receiving land grants from the state of Iowa, the company went bankrupt the following year. Reorganized as the Dubuque and Sioux City Railway, construction of the line resumed, reaching Iowa Falls in 1866. Financial trouble plagued the company again, at which time John I. Blair, one of the major railroad developers of the era, particularly in the Midwest, bought the company.[37] Blair, who had been instrumental in Iowa's first trans-state line, "built roads faster and more extensively in the state than anyone else – before or since and has been described as "a human dynamo let loose on railway-mad Iowa."[38] True to his nature, Blair quickly reorganized the company as the Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad and work on the line resumed with construction moving inward from both ends.

Concurrent with development of the Iowa Falls & Sioux City railroad, construction of Blair's railroad between Sioux City and Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota was underway. With the pending arrival of both the Iowa Falls & Sioux City Road and the 'twin cities' route to the small settlement that was to become Le Mars, the hamlet was initially known as St. Paul Junction.[39] An 1868 account described the settlement of St. Paul Junction as a scattering of cabins and open prairie.[40] However, in anticipation of the railroad's arrival and the commercial boom to come, a post office, a railroad station, and a mill were established (none of these are extant) and an eyewitness account from late 1869 recalls the Depot Hotel and Foster and Blodgett's store already in operation.

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[34] Winckler, 351, and Thompson, 29.
[35] The Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad was previously known as the Dubuque & Sioux City Railroad and was subsequently absorbed into the Illinois Central system by 1870.
[36] Struble, np.
[37] Arthur Larson, *Le Mars: The Story of a Prairie Town* (Le Mars, IA: Le Mars Daily Sentinel, 1969), 3.
[38] Thompson, 27, quoting Frank Donovan "The Northwestern in Iowa," 1962.
[39] Larson, 3.
[40] Ibid., 8.

EARLY EVOLUTION OF LE MARS AS A REGIONAL COMMERCIAL HUB: 1869-1880

Formation of Le Mars

Blair had plans for the founding of a new town to be located where his Iowa Falls & Sioux City railroad and his Sioux City & Minneapolis lines would meet. Though he held vast land grants, he needed to secure title to parcels in the vicinity of his town site. Primary among the landholders of this site was Captain Betsworth, one of Le Mars' earliest settlers. As the railroad line approached Blair's chosen site from the west in September and October 1869, he secured a deal with Betsworth to trade his 160 acres where the town would be laid out for 240 acres in rural Plymouth County where Betsworth could resettle. Thus Blair acquired the land on which to lay out a town, which was to become Le Mars.[41]

The railroad line reached the town site on October 1, 1869 and was completed on July 8, 1870 when it reached the line coming east from Iowa Falls at a point about three miles east of Storm Lake.[42] Though accounts differ as to the exact date of the event (1869 or 1870), accounts are consistent that during a visit to the new town site with his business partners, the naming of Le Mars derived from the first letters of the first names of women in the party.[43]

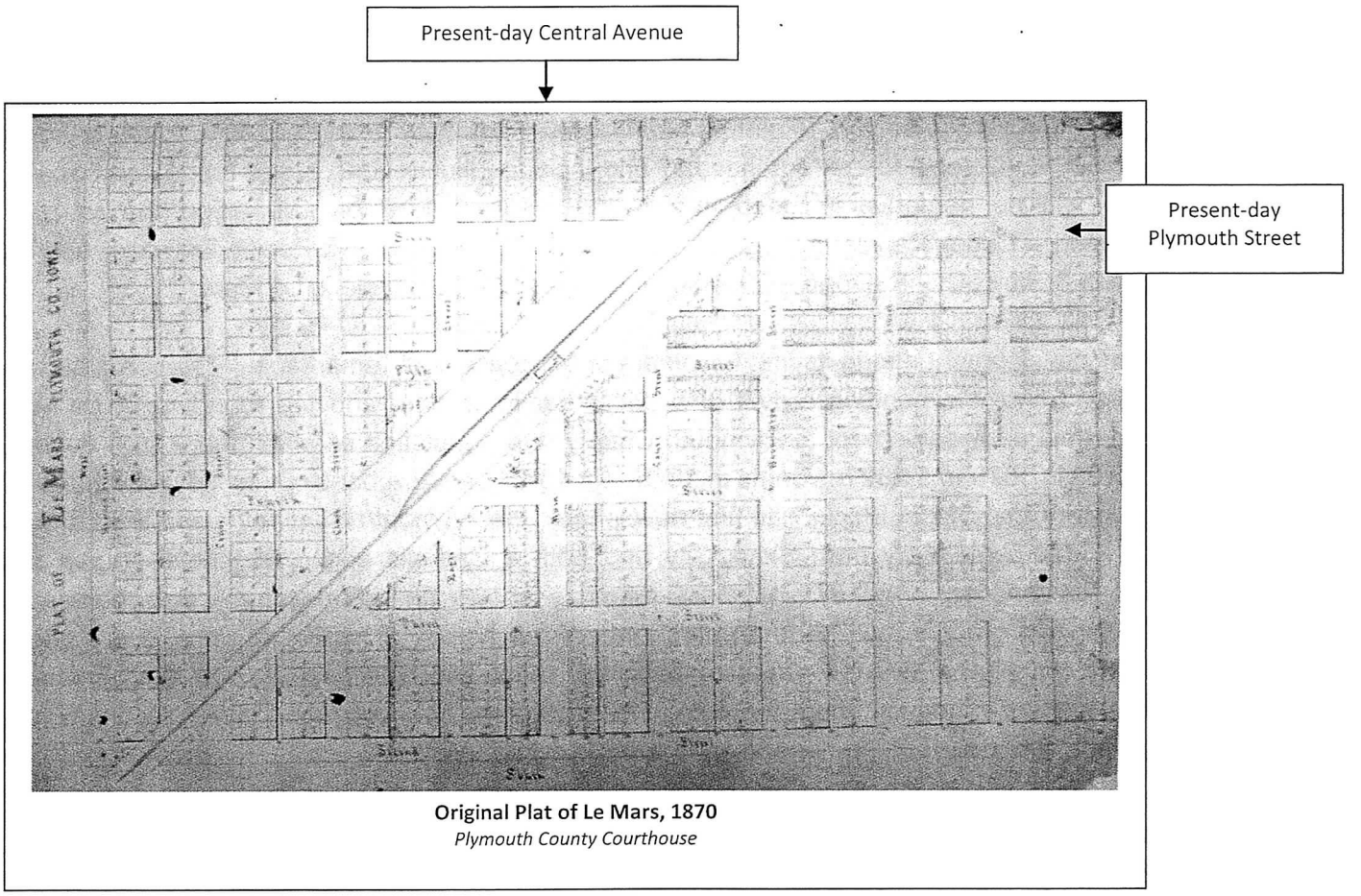
Original Town Plat

As was not uncommon in newly laid out towns, Le Mars' founding and survey took place prior to the official filing date of the plat on record at the county courthouse, June 4, 1870. Often such circumstances were due to legal formalities such as certifying the filer held clear title to the land being platted. Though still unclear why the filing date for the Original Town plat of Le Mars was delayed, consensus among local historians and secondary sources suggests town founding took place with the initial arrival of the railroad in 1869, despite the recorded plat filing date the following year.[44]

Blair's large plat of Le Mars reflects his confidence in the town's future success, comprised of forty-five blocks and sixteen streets bounded by 7th Street (1st St N) to the north, Fulton Street (5th Ave E) to the east, 2nd Street (4th St S) to the south, and Howard Street (4th Ave W) to the west. The town plan included a grid system of streets oriented with the cardinal points (N-S) and bisected diagonally by the railroad grade traveling northeast-southwest. Most of the streets were 80 feet wide, with the exception of the designated commercial corridors – Main Street (Central Avenue) and 5th Street (1st St S) – which were both 100 feet wide.

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[41] *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa*, 597.
[42] Thompson, 30.
[43] Accounts differ as to exactly who the women were, however Larson, in his 1969 history of Le Mars, *The Story of a Prairie Town*, states on page 7 that "The most common statement is that they included Lucille Underhill, Elizabeth Parson, Mary Weare, Anne Blair, Rebecca Smith, and Sara Reynolds." In addition, the reference to Le Mars in an 1870 railroad promotional pamphlet, *Choice Iowa Farming Lands,* supports the naming event taking place in 1869.
[44] Larson, 3.



Original Plat of Le Mars, 1870
Plymouth County Courthouse

Most blocks were 320-by-360 feet with a 20-foot-wide alley bisecting the block north-south and 12 evenly spaced 60-by-150 feet lots. The exception were those blocks fronting onto the designated commercial corridors, which included clusters of as many as 15 long, narrow 24-by-100 feet parcels facing onto Main (Central) and 5th Street (1st St S).[45] Other exceptions were those parcels abutting the diagonal railroad grade, resulting in irregularly shaped triangular and trapezoidal lots.

In spite of the area's robust agricultural conditions, the most significant economic stimulus to Plymouth County and the new town of Le Mars was the presence of the Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad. Prior to its arrival and the formation of Le Mars, Plymouth County had no particular commercial center except for the small villages of Melbourne and Westfield.[46] Providing connections to Chicago, and points east, the railroad brought new investors to Le Mars who filed new plats and started businesses to serve the incoming immigrants. Access to rail trade and travelers spurred rapid commercial growth and anchored Le Mars.

[45] Though Blair had designated 5th Street (1st St S) as the primary east-west commercial corridor, the natural development shifted to 6th St (Plymouth), where numerous replattings during the 1870s and 1880s realigned the parcels to fit expected commercial layouts.
[46] Larson, 3.

Railroad promotional materials enticed more immigrants to Iowa. In an effort to sell off land grant parcels abutting the railroad grades, as well as to boost ridership across the state, in 1870 the Iowa Railroad Land Company published the promotional pamphlet, *Choice Iowa Farming Lands.* To encourage settlers to central and western Iowa they advertised "low prices on credit or for cash" and "tracts to suit purchasers" and included illustrations of pre-fabricated cottages for sale.[47] The pamphlet included information on town lots for sale along the routes it represented – Cedar Rapids & Missouri River Railroad, Sioux City & Pacific Railroad, and the Iowa Falls & Sioux City Railroad – for which it advertised lots for sale in Le Mars.[48]

Le Mars' development during its first few years of existence was remarkable. The completion of the railroad line, the pending arrival of a second railroad line, and the founding of Le Mars spurred rapid early settlement to Plymouth County, the population of which more than doubled from 2,199 in 1870 to 5,282 residents in 1875. By 1871, Le Mars boasted: its first brick building, the two-story Van Sickel Block;[49] its first newspaper, the *Plymouth Sentinel;*[50] and the Le Mars Bank.[51] Mail came daily from Sioux City and both a Catholic and a Methodist church had opened for services. An 1871 business directory shows an active commercial center with listings for two grocers, two general merchants, three hotels, a hardware store, a dry goods store, two physicians, two tailor/dressmakers, two meat and hide dealers, two blacksmiths, a harness maker, a tobacco shop, two lumber/coal dealers, two boot/shoe stores, a tinsmith, a drayman, a flour mill, four land agents, and two builders.[52]

Le Mars' rapid growth and superior transportation connections, combined with the offer of town leaders to construct a new building for the county, persuaded the Plymouth County commissioners to relocate the county seat to Le Mars. The decision was ratified by a general county election in 1872, with more than 75 percent of the 587 votes in favor of the move, and the small village of Melbourne lost its position to Le Mars.[53]

Later that year, Le Mars sealed its status as a regional commercial center when it welcomed its second rail connection, the Sioux City & St. Paul Railroad[54] This connected Le Mars directly to St. Paul and Milwaukee, both gateways to the booming lumber trade of Minnesota which provided much needed building materials for the largely treeless plains.

The selection of Le Mars as the county seat in 1872, as well as its gaining of a second railroad, were momentous occurrences for the nascent community. In rural areas such as northwest Iowa, from the mid-nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century the county

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[47] Iowa Railroad Land Company, *Choice Iowa Farming Lands*, (Chicago: Horton & Leonard Printers, 1870).

[48] The reference to Le Mars in this 1870 publication indicates the town's existence prior to the 1870 publication date and supports the 1869 town founding date.

[49] This building once stood at the northwest corner of Central and 1st Street NW, but is no longer extant.

[50] This paper is now the *Le Mars Daily Sentinel.*

[51] Andreas, and *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa,* 602.

[52] W.S. Freeman, *History of Plymouth County Iowa,* Volume 1 (Indianapolis: B.F. Bowen & Company, 1917), 417-418.

[53] Larson, 9, and *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa,* 597.

[54] Freeman, 249. The Sioux City & St. Paul Railroad was later known as the Minneapolis & Omaha Railroad and subsequently the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis & Omaha Railway. Later it was absorbed into the Chicago & Northwestern system.

administered state and local governmental programs, as well as later federal programs at the county level. The status of county seat secured Le Mars' role as an important economic, social, and governmental hub in the region. Furthermore, the benefit of an additional rail connection linked Le Mars with the major shipping hubs of Chicago, Omaha, St. Paul, Milwaukee and Kansas City.

In anticipation of the expansion to come, investors filed six new additions by 1874, adding fifty blocks of platted parcels to the Original Town plat of Le Mars. In addition, developers filed three subdivisions at the intersection of 6th and Eagle streets (Plymouth Street and 1st Ave W) reflecting the redevelopment of 6th as the east-west commercial corridor, instead of 100-foot-wide 5th Street (1st Street S), which Blair's plan had designated as the primary east-west street.

LE MARS PLATS & SUBDIVISIONS, 1871 TO 1874			
Year Filed	**Plat Name**	**Number of Blocks/Lots**	**General Location From/In Downtown**
1871	South Side Addition	24	S
1872	Young & Corkery's Addition	3	SW
1873	Young & Corkery's 2nd Addition	5	SW
	Young & Corkery's 3rd Addition	4	SW
	West End Addition	4	SW
	Buchanan's Sub of Lots 16-17 Block 6	2 lots	6th (Plymouth) & Eagle (1st Ave NW), NE corner
	Bennet's Sub of Lots 6 & A-F Block 7	2 lots	6th (Plymouth) & Eagle (1st Ave NW), NW corner
1874	1st Addition	10	N
	Stanley & Clicks Sub of Lots 1-2 Block 12	2 lots	6th (Plymouth) & Eagle (1st Ave NW), SW corner

Among those filing plats were Young & Corkery, dealers in all kinds of stock including hogs, cattle, and horses. They took advantage of the conditions and anticipated the major growth of Le Mars, filing three plats southwest of the Original Town Plat, where they developed stockyards, a livery stable and sale barn, as well as a general merchandise and real estate business in wood-framed buildings.[55]

An 1875 account described Le Mars as "surrounded by a wide farming region, and... a good shipping point."[56] Such conditions enticed settlers to the area and the increase in rural settlement very soon created the need for additional goods and services. Investment in downtown buildings and business houses during 1875 reached almost $70,000.[57] By this time, among the businesses were – two merchants, two general merchandise operations, a grain elevator, a flour mill, two banks, a farm merchandise and coal dealer, a druggist, an attorney, a books and stationary business, a furniture store, a physician, a lumber dealer, a butcher, a hotel, a hardware store, and a printer. Four churches provided services for the rapidly growing population, which also enjoyed two newspapers.[58]

The following year, Le Mars saw the establishment of a new bank, a new steam flouring mill, a brewery, and a wagon factory, as well as two new churches.[59] In 1876, investment in building expansion and new construction totaled nearly $150,000, with three lumber yards providing building materials including over 3.1 million feet of lumber sold that year alone. A tally of construction and improvements completed in 1876 show sixty-six new dwellings and twenty-one new business buildings, as well as improvements/expansions on thirty-seven existing commercial structures.[60] Railroad import and export records further evidenced the boom character of the town. In 1876, almost 5,100 railroad cars imported goods and stock, of which nearly 16 percent carried building materials.[61]

Plymouth County Population [62]	
1873	**1875**
3,884	5,282

Le Mars Population[63]	
1876	**1877**
~1,200	~1,500

[55] Andreas.
[56] Ibid.
[57] "Le Mars. Sixth Annual Review of Its Progress by the Sentinel," *Le Mars Sentinel,* January 4, 1877.
[58] Andreas.
[59] "Le Mars. Sixth Annual Review of Its Progress by the Sentinel," *Le Mars Sentinel,* January 4, 1877.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Ibid.
[62] Struble, np.
[63] "Le Mars. Sixth Annual Review of Its Progress by the Sentinel," *Le Mars Sentinel,* January 4, 1877.

English Settlement and Influence

During this early period of Le Mars' adolescence it welcomed a distinctive wave of immigration from the British Isles, and England in particular, that accelerated settlement of the region and drove significant downtown development. Encouraged by land speculator, Daniel Paullin, William Close and his brother Fred began to heavily invest in undeveloped land in northwest Iowa during the late 1870s. Natives of England, they secured significant financial backing from British investors and began their operation in Crawford County, where they purchased thousands of acres of unbroken prairie, broke the sod, divided the land into farmstead parcels of about 160 acres, built dwellings and barns, established wells, and then leased to immigrant tenant farmers. Attracted by the vast tracts of fertile land with sufficient water sources, as well as excellent transportation connections to distant markets, the Closes moved their base of operations to Le Mars in 1879. That year alone they purchased more than 16,000 acres in Plymouth, Cherokee, and Woodbury counties.[64]

By spring of the following year, they reportedly owned 40,000 acres in northwestern Iowa. In 1881, they were reported to have owned 300,000 acres in five counties.[65] Their activities in 1881 consisted of the opening of 319 farms for lease, breaking of almost 26,000 acres of land, construction of 319 houses, 318 barns, 142 granaries, and 70 wells, as well as the purchase of an additional 24,211 acres of unbroken prairie.[66] A report from 1882 estimated their capitalization at $5,000,000 and 150,000 acres of land tenanted.[67]

As the trading and transportation hub of Plymouth County, Le Mars benefitted greatly from the Close brothers' efforts, which included promotion to potential immigrants back East and in England. As a result, numerous new settlers came to the region and Le Mars, in particular. Among them were not only settlers who arrived to lease farmland from the Close brothers, but merchants and businessmen, many of whom were British, who came to Le Mars to capitalize on the rapid rural settlement and the commerce it would drive in town.

An 1881 account described the British influence as such:

> "A large proportion of the settlers are Englishmen – drawn from the middle classes of the mother country- men of brawn and brains, cash and credit, of labor and life. These people are settling here by scores, hundreds and thousands. They all have money, and are all enterprising, shrewd, and full of resources... Probably no citizen or firm has done so much to open and improve this country as the house of the Close Bros... To them come all immigrants from [England] and through them are sold uncounted acres. Their land transactions are immense – this year's footings alone amounting to over one

[64] Jacob Van Der Zee, *The British in Iowa,* (Iowa City, Iowa: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1922), 68.
[65] Van Der Zee, 99.
[66] Ibid., 123.
[67] Larson, 21-22.

hundred thousand acres. Is it any wonder, with such men at the fore, that Lemars [sic] is prosperous?"[68]

Though never in the majority, British immigrants to Le Mars represented a high number of commercial activities. Among the known British-owned and/or –operated endeavors were real estate and insurance firms, various merchant businesses, livestock sales, at least one physician's office, a lumberyard, restaurants, at least one saloon, a brickyard, a surveying firm, a photography studio, and a meat packing plant.[69] Sufficient immigration occurred to support the founding of an English newspaper, the establishment of the British-patronized House of Lords and House of Commons taverns, as well as the opening of the Windsor and Albion hotels.[70] In 1881, the English-born only Prairie Club was founded, with more than 300 members joining by the end of the 1880s.[71]

English immigrants were directly associated with the early development of downtown Le Mars through the filing of plats, surveying land, construction of buildings downtown, and the forming of numerous businesses. Of the several buildings downtown that have been attributed to English-born immigrants or institutions during this period, only two have been confirmed to still be standing – the Prairie Club's second-generation building (1902) and the building that once contained the House of Lords tavern.[72]

The arrival of British settlers peaked around 1885. At this time Plymouth County boasted 605 English-born residents, ranking 8th among Iowa counties in total English-born population, having risen from 14th in just the previous five years.[73] Just as the English immigration reached its pinnacle, the Close brothers left Iowa in pursuit of business interests in St. Paul. During the 1890s, most British immigrants departed northwestern Iowa and by 1915 Plymouth County reported only one-third the number of English-born immigrants it had just thirty years earlier.[74] Despite the short-lived nature of the English settlement era, these immigrants gave Le Mars a remarkable boost and set the stage for future development.

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[68] "The Gateway," *The Le Mars Sentinel,* August 4, 1881. Originally published in the *Fondn [sic] Gazette*; likely a typographical error of the *London Gazette.*

[69] Larson, 21-23, and United State Census Bureau, Iowa, Plymouth County, http://www.ancestry.com (accessed June 30, 2011), and Van Der Zee, 48-53.

[70] Larson, 21-23. Oral history interviews with English descendent Glada Reichert Koerselman indicate the House of Lords saloon, frequented by English immigrants, was located in the building at 15 Central Avenue NW, an 1881 advertisement for the House of Lords states it was on 6th Street (Plymouth). Further, in-depth research is recommended to ascertain the exact location of the tavern and whether the original building is still extant.

[71] The Prairie Club originally met in Cobden's Block, which burned down in 1895. The club relocated temporarily and then moved into the existing building at 15 1st Ave NW in 1902.

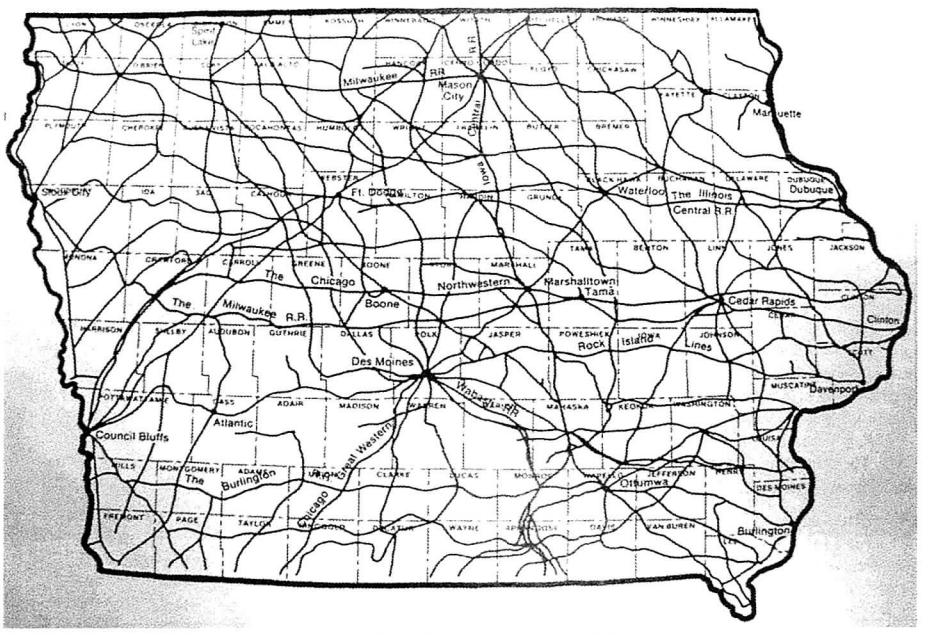
[72] English-born, Frank Cobden built the Cobden Block at the NW corner of Eagle and 6th (1st Ave NW and Plymouth), which is non-extant; English-born Fred Veal established a lumber yard on 1st Ave NE, which is no longer extant; and the English-born Dalton family is known to have been involved in the development of downtown, but no specific building can yet be associated with them.

[73] Van Der Zee, 50-51.

[74] Larson, 25.

"THE GATEWAY CITY" OF NORTHWEST IOWA: 1880-1900

By 1880, major railroad lines crisscrossed the state, with numerous lines connecting between. These links to distant markets secured Iowa's farming economy, as well as the futures of county seat towns along the routes, such as Le Mars.[75] By the late 1870s, four passenger trains stopped daily in Le Mars.[76] Due to its advantageous geographic location and ample rail connections, Le Mars was sometimes referred to as "The Gateway City" of the northwest.



Iowa's Railroad Network, 1900
Transportation In Iowa, 1989

Le Mars' swift early growth, its status as a county seat, and solid role as a regional commercial hub attracted more settlers to town, and Plymouth County as a whole. Due to the influx of immigrants during the late 1870s, by the early 1880s Plymouth County had about 10,000 residents with one quarter residing in the bustling market center of Le Mars. An 1881 account described Le Mars as surprisingly lively, "a Model Iowa Town", and "A Regular 'snorter' [sic]" of a city.[77] The report declared it a rival of Sioux City, claiming its retail trade exceeded that of the Woodbury County Seat.[78] The commentary described the downtown streetscapes as follows:

> "The business streets are a heterogeneous mass of buildings, lumber, brick, stone and lime... The buildings are an odd lot, too. Now you are opposite an old structure of eleven years ago, and next comes a palatial brick of modern construction. But all over the city the merry sound of saw and hammer, trowel and derrick makes music for the ears of those who like to see bustle and

[75] Winckler, 306.
[76] Larson, 10.
[77] "The Gateway," *The Le Mars Sentinel,* August 4, 1881.
[78] Ibid.

confusion. Probably more than one hundred thousand dollars will be expended in this year in buildings alone."[79]

Construction became a thriving business in Le Mars, reflected by the city's ability to support 12 real estate agents, 3 lumber dealers, 2 brickyards, and 5 listings for "Carpenters, Contractors, and Builders."[80] The pace was such that multiple accounts from the summer of 1881 reported as many as sixty buildings in the midst of construction causing supplies to run low to the point that "the lack of building material...greatly delayed building operations."[81] Between 1878 and 1883, developers filed seven new plats, adding fifty blocks and approximately 600 parcels to Le Mars. In addition, three subdivisions along the west edge of downtown on 6th and 7th streets further defined the future development of downtown parcels.



SW Corner Main (Central) and 6th (Plymouth), view SW, circa 1882
History of Plymouth County Iowa, 1917

The 1882 city directory recommended "eastern capitalists contemplating settlement or investment in the west should visit Le Mars before they locate" and described the city as "an excellent distributing point."[82] At this time, among the numerous business in operation were 5 agricultural implement dealers, 12 attorneys, 4 billiard halls, 9 blacksmiths, 3 book stores, 6 boot and shoe stores, 3 drugstores, 12 grocers, 4 hardware stores, 2 ice cream shops, 5 jewelers, 2 photographers, 11 physicians, 8 restaurants, 17 saloons, and no less than 14 hotels.[83] Two freight depots and a passenger depot serviced two railroad lines through town. Roberts, Frost, and Heaphy operated a pork packing plant processing up to 300 hogs a day. Four grain elevators and two flour mills hugged the railroad tracks, with the mills producing up to 250 barrels a day.[84]

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[79] "The Gateway," *The Le Mars Sentinel,* August 4, 1881.
[80] "The Gateway," *The Le Mars Sentinel,* August 4, 1881, and Glenn & Cox, *Le Mars City Directory 1882-1883* (Sioux City, IA: Daily Journal Steam Printing House, 1882).

[81] *Le Mars Sentinel,* June 16 and June 23, 1881, and *The Daily Liberal,* June 30, 1881.
[82] Glenn & Cox, 5-6.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., 6.

In the midst of this early wave of rapid growth, in June 1882 downtown Le Mars suffered a major setback when fire destroyed about ten buildings, including a new brick structure, along a block of Main Street near the intersection of 7th.[85] Losses totaled more than $33,000. Though the newspaper account described the wreckage as extending the better part of two blocks, a review of the Sanborn fire insurance map of the following year shows no evidence of the fire, as business owners quickly rebuilt and a near solid block of primarily brick buildings span the streets facing onto Main at 7th Street.

The 1883 Sanborn map, the earliest recorded in Le Mars, and historic photographs from the period confirm the 'heterogeneous' nature of downtown described in the 1881 account above. A full block of one- and two-story wood frame buildings with gable-front or false front designs spanned both sides of Main Street (Central Ave) south of 6th (Plymouth St). Elsewhere downtown, second generation one- and two-story brick buildings interspersed with first generation wood frame building formed the streetscape. At this time, light industrial businesses, such as lumber yards, liveries, and warehouses, occupied the edge of the commercial district with residential development filling the lots immediately beyond.

LE MARS PLATS & SUBDIVISIONS, 1875 TO 1890			
Year Filed	**Plat Name**	**Number of Blocks/Lots**	**General Location From/In Downtown**
1875	Bennet's Sub of Lots 14-15, Block 13	2 lots	6th (Plymouth) and Eagle (1st Ave SW), SE corner
1878	2nd Addition	9	S
	Marches Sub of Lots 20-21 Block 6	2 lots	7th (1st St NW) & Eagle (1st Ave NW), SE corner
1881	3rd Addition	9	S
	4th Addition	4	NW
	5th Addition	2	NE
	Powers & Moore's Sub of Lot 12 Block 12	1 lot	6th (Plymouth) and Clark (2nd Ave SW), SE corner
1882	6th Addition	6	N
1883	7th Addition	10	W
	8th Addition	10	SE

[85] "Wanted----A Fire Engine," *Daily Liberal,* (Le Mars), June 13, 1882. The newspaper account does not indicate the exact location of the buildings lost and damaged, but a review of the Sanborn maps and occupant information suggests it likely occurred on the east side of Main Street (Central Ave) on each side north and south of 7th (1st St N).

Increased population and commercial trade spurred Le Mars to incorporate in 1881 and soon after it became a City of the Second Class. A review of the earliest Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1883 and 1888 show the transformation of Le Mars from its initial, 'boom town' character dominated by wood-framed, false-front commercial buildings, to a mature central business district comprised primarily of masonry buildings. From the main commercial intersection at 6th Street (Plymouth) and Main Street (Central) a near-solid streetscape of commercial buildings extended a full block to the south, east, and west, as well as more than a block to the north. Retail endeavors and service businesses made up the majority of occupants in the heart of downtown, with liveries, blacksmiths, and agricultural implement dealers located on the edge of the central business district. About 40 to 50 percent of the buildings standing in 1883 were still the first-generation wood-framed buildings. By 1888, commercial businesses expanded another half-block south and west, and new brick buildings replaced a number of earlier wooden-structures.

During this era, the grain milling and livestock industries were major drivers of Le Mars' economy. In 1884, Plymouth County's nearly 2,000 farms produced 2,455,401 bushels of corn and 996,641 bushels of oats. That same year, county stock raisers shipped out more than 4,700 cattle and more than 24,000 hogs for slaughter.[86] Surrounded by a strong farming area, the two flour mills did a thriving business. The Plymouth Roller Mill grew to become the single largest mill in Iowa by 1890, with an elevator capacity of 250,000 bushels.[87] To serve regional livestock producers in the region, seven stock dealers operated in Le Mars and stockyards went up adjacent to the Illinois Central railroad tracks northeast of town by 1890. The regional dairy industry grew to support the formation of the Le Mars Creamery Association and by 1897 produced more than 107,000 pounds of butter each year.[88]

In addition to the area's robust agricultural conditions, ready access to rail trade and travelers spurred commercial growth. In 1889, the two railroad lines received a combined 2,200 freight cars and forwarded more than 3,300.[89] By 1893, Le Mars' rail connections improved further with the arrival of the Sioux City & Northern Railroad, with its grade alignment running northeast-southwest about three miles west of downtown. At the time, fourteen passenger trains stopped daily in Le Mars and the excellent transportation and communication infrastructure supported offices of both American Express and Western Union.[90]

During the 1880s and early 1890s, Plymouth County's population grew by more than 156 percent, to almost 22,000 residents in 1895. At the same time, the number of residents in Le Mars grew by more than 166 percent. Though the majority of people resided in the rural areas surrounding Le Mars, the city maintained about 22 percent of the county's population during this boom period.

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[86] Freeman, 236.
[87] Larson, 12.
[88] Ibid.
[89] *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa*, 612.
[90] "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893), 13.

Plymouth County Population[91]			
1880	1885	1890	1895
8,566	15,481	19,568	21,991

Le Mars Population[92]			
1880	1885	1890	1895
1,895	3,808	4,036	5,046

New buildings went up downtown to house new businesses and institutions including two new banks, a new lumber dealer, a new hardware store, and an additional photographer's studio.[93] Ricketts & McBride started a soap factory adjacent to the Illinois Central railroad at the northeast edge of town and the Le Mars Manufacturing Company planing mill started operation in this vicinity as well.[94] Additional signs of the community's progress in the 1890s included the opening of the new Senate Hotel and the Le Mars Opera House (later Dalton's Opera House), as well as the establishment of a third newspaper, and the construction of the Le Mars shoe factory. In 1890, the Le Mars Improvement Company formed and purchased land at the east edge of town to induce new development, and filed the plat for the Elm Hill Addition in 1894.

Public infrastructure and private utility improvements accompanied Le Mars' maturation process in the 1880s and 1890s. During this period, a fire department was organized, the city purchased a downtown building for use as the city hall and constructed a new jail,[95] and a telephone exchange formed. In addition, a new combined water works and electric light station went up (including more than four miles of water lines, 51 hydrants and 500 consumers), a gas works system was constructed (including four miles of mains, almost 40 city street lamps, and 100 consumers), the electric light plant introduced streetlights, and the City initiated plans to construct several miles of sanitary sewer.[96] Between 1888 and 1893, the city did away with its out-of-date building numbering system that ran sequentially down the street and adopted the more modern alternating numbering scheme with even building numbers on the west and odd numbers on the east.

Brisk construction activity continued and in 1893 Le Mars supported three architects, the Le Mars Brick & Tile Mfg, four hardware stores, two carpenter/builders, two land companies, three lumber yards, a marble and granite works, five house painters, and nineteen real estate agents. The Le Mars National Building and Loan Association, capitalized on the pace of growth and formed in 1892 to provide credit for new construction and homebuilding.[97]

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[91] Struble, np, and Andreas, np.
[92] "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places 1850-2000," Iowa Data Center.
[93] *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa,* 608-611.
[94] *Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Le Mars, Iowa* (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, 1888. http://proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/login?url=http://sanborn.umi.com (accessed May 2, 2011).
[95] This building stood at the southeast corner of Central and 1st St NE. It is no longer extant.
[96] *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa* and "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893), 15.
[97] "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893), 16.

Le Mars' role as county seat and shipper of agricultural products served as an engine for the area economy and drew increased settlement and investment. However, analysis of the available Sanborn fire insurance maps between 1893 and 1899 indicates limited development occurred, a likely reflection of the effects of the Panic of 1893, a serious nationwide economic depression that drove unemployment rates up to between 12 and 18 percent nationwide. In addition to the strained economic conditions, Le Mars experienced an additional setback in the form of a second major fire downtown on the west side of Main Street (Central Avenue) at 6th Street (Plymouth Street). The fire and water damage totaled $50,000 and included the destruction of a number of livery buildings and a new two-story brick commercial building, as well as significant damage to several buildings in the vicinity.[98] Among the restricted growth in Le Mars during this period were the construction of five two-story brick buildings and two one-story brick buildings along Main Street (Central Avenue), which filled vacant lots, replaced earlier wood-framed businesses, and reflected rebuilding after the 1893 fire.

By this time, near-solid street walls of one- and two-story brick commercial buildings extended about two blocks from the main intersection of Main and 6th streets (Central Avenue and Plymouth Street). Along Main Street, the street wall stretched from mid-block between 7th and 8th streets (1st and 2nd streets North) south to the railroad tracks. Along 6th Street (Plymouth) the street wall ran mid-block between Eagle and Clark streets (1st and 2nd Avenues W) east to the railroad tracks.[99] Hotels, livery stables, and industrial concerns occupied buildings at the edge of the retail center with single-family dwellings beyond.

Reflections of a Growing Community

Population growth and the diversity of Le Mars' early residents are evidenced by school, social organization, and church membership data. The 1893 city directory reported the demographics of Le Mars as "about equally divided between the American, German and Irish, with a goodly number of well-to-do Englishmen..."[100]

From a single Methodist Episcopal church in 1870, the presence of five different denominations in six church buildings by 1882 reflects the presence of diverse backgrounds of Le Mars' citizenry.[101] By the early 1890s, sixteen churches representing a broad range of denominations including German Methodist Episcopal, English Episcopal, German Evangelical, Free-Will Baptist, German Catholic, Irish Catholic, Baptist, Evangelical Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholic, Congregational.[102]

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[98] "A Big Blaze!" *Le Mars Globe,* October 25, 1893.

[99] *Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Le Mars, Iowa* (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, 1899. http://proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/login?url=http://sanborn.umi.com (accessed May 2, 2011).

[100] "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893), 13.

[101] Glenn & Cox, and *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa*, and "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893), 612-616.

[102] *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa*, and "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893), 615.

A single school house sufficed for Le Mars' children in 1870, but by the early 1880s population growth required the city to offer lessons to almost 600 pupils, 400 of which attended the new 1877 high school.[103] Growth continued and the new Third Ward School opened in 1883 and in 1887, Jacob Wernli established the Northwestern Normal & Business College at the south edge of town to educate young teachers.[104] By the early 1890s, the city supported five schools with a pupil population of 1,500 and the Normal School featured a five-building campus offering education to the growing population of young people from the surrounding region.[105]

Social organizations for the men of Le Mars grew from a Masonic lodge and an International Order of Odd Fellows (IOOF) lodge in the early 1870s to six benevolent societies by 1882, including two separate IOOF lodges, and the English-only Prairie Club. By the early 1890s, ten social organizations, three of which were women's groups, offered activities for Le Mars' growing number of residents.

Le Mars Becomes a College Town

Upon arriving in Le Mars in 1875, Jacob Wernli, a school superintendent from Wisconsin, recognized the dire need for teacher training in northwest Iowa. Having come to take the position of school principal, Wernli immediately began a program of teacher training conferences. By 1887, enrollment had increased sufficiently to support the establishment of the Northwestern Normal School and Business College. A private institution, it operated in the former Richards House hotel (downtown on North Main at 7th), with classrooms, offices, and a dormitory all under one roof.[106] By 1889, the school boasted an enrollment of 150 students. However, despite its popularity, Wernli was never able to achieve support from the Iowa legislature for designation as a state normal school and he left the institution in 1891.[107]

The following year, local businessmen recognized the advantages of retaining such an institution and formed the Le Mars Normal Association to financially support the continuation of the college. They purchased a large tract of land, set aside seven acres for the establishment of a new campus, then subdivided the remaining land into parcels to be sold with the slogan "buy a lot and build a city."[108] This endeavor generated $27,000; enough to pay off the land purchase, as well as construct a college building that year. Though still private, it opened as the Le Mars Normal School, spurred development at the south edge of town, and successfully drew students from throughout the region.

Within just a few decades, Le Mars had grown from a campsite amongst a grove of Cottonwood trees to a mature city and regional trading hub. The central business district had taken on the

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[103] Glenn & Cox, and *History of the Counties of Woodbury and Plymouth, Iowa,* 454.
[104] Larson, 12. The Northwestern Normal and Business College was later known as the Le Mars Normal School, Western Union College, and finally Westmar College.
[105] "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893).
[106] Larson 12, 13, 28-29. The institution was later known as Western Union College and subsequently as Westmar College.
[107] Larson, 29.
[108] Plymouth County Heritage, 22-23.

shape it would retain for the much of the next century. Thus established, Le Mars entered the twentieth century with a diverse economy and financial confidence.

EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY LE MARS: 1900-1929

Following the strained market conditions of the 1890s, the United States entered a period of prosperity. International demand for wheat and other crops provided farmers with expendable income to purchase tractors and automobiles, thus improving both production and market access.[109] Increased farm production created a boom economy during the first decades of the twentieth century commonly referred to as the "Golden Age of Agriculture" in Iowa. The resulting increase in real estate values and farm mortgages continued until the early 1920s. Prosperous times spurred steady immigration to Iowa and the state population increased nearly eight percent between 1900 and 1920, from 2,231,853 to 2,404,021.[110] State population increased another two percent by 1930.

A closer look at census data shows a national shift of the population from rural to urban living. While 54 percent of the American population was considered rural in 1910, only 44 percent lived rurally by 1930.[111] Iowa reflected this national trend and the percentage of the population living outside cities declined, from 69 percent in 1910 to 60 percent by 1930.[112]

Plymouth County experienced a slightly higher degree of population growth than the state during this period, with the total number of residents increasing by almost nine percent, from 22,209 to 24,159, between 1900 and 1930. The city of Le Mars grew at an even greater pace during this period, increasing in population more than 15 percent between 1900 and 1930. Though Le Mars enjoyed relatively swift population growth, the vast majority of Plymouth County residents lived in surrounding rural areas. However, of the county's population growth during the period, one third was inside the Le Mars city limits, a local reflection of the statewide rural-to-urban population trend[113]

Plymouth County Population[114]			
1900	**1910**	**1920**	**1930**
22,209	23,129	23,584	24,159

[109] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa.
[110] "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places 1850-2000," Iowa Data Center, http://data.iowadatacenter.org/datatables/PlacesAll/plpopulation18502000.pdf (accessed July 12, 2011).
[111] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa, and Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, "Fourteenth Census of the United States," 1920. http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1920/1920_General_Reports_and_Analysis.pdf (accessed July 25, 2011).
[112] "Urban and Rural Population: 1900 to 1990," US Census Bureau report, October 1995. http://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/urpop0090.txt (accessed August 25, 2011).

[113] "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places 1850-2000," Iowa Data Center.
[114] Ibid.

Le Mars Population[115]			
1900	**1910**	**1920**	**1930**
4,146	4,157	4,683	4,788

As with many Iowa communities and county seats nationwide, a relative boom period took place in the decades leading up to the Great Depression. While commercial growth was solid within Le Mars, the economy of the region remained largely dependent on agricultural production. As the shipping point for the surrounding agricultural region, most area harvests passed through Le Mars. In 1915 alone, Plymouth County's 2,296 farms produced 430,145 bushels of wheat and 5,774,161 bushels of corn, more than any other county statewide.[116]

In addition to a prosperous farm economy, a rising general economy and population growth led to the formation of the Commercial Club in 1908 (later to become the Chamber of Commerce) and to developers filing new plats, expanding the city slightly in each direction. Between 1883 and 1906, eight small additions to Le Mars added about sixteen blocks to the platted area of the city. During the subsequent decade, six small additions expanded Le Mars to the south and east, adding about ten more blocks.[117]

As a result, extensive development took place downtown, which is apparent on the 1907, 1913, and 1923 Sanborn fire insurance maps. Between 1899 and 1907, Le Mars saw the construction of a new county courthouse and eighteen new buildings downtown, including both wood-framed and brick structures. The occupants of these buildings reflect a diverse economy and included a plumbing shop, a steam laundry, a blacksmith, a jewelry shop, a wagon works, a wallpaper and paint store, a livery, a public bath house, a new library, and the Guy Roush Medicine Company. In the subsequent six years, another eleven buildings, all brick, went up downtown. These new buildings contained a general store, a barber, a tailor, a boot and shoe store, and a farm machinery dealer, as well as the earliest automobile-related businesses to open in Le Mars, among them seven new garage/auto repair businesses, five of which were in brand new buildings.

An account from the period described Le Mars as:

> "a thriving, pushing, live and growing city in which nearly every branch of trade is represented by wide-awake and progressive businessmen. Commercially speaking, Le Mars is 'on the map' conspicuously large and deserving of more than a passing notice."[118]

[115] Ibid.
[116] Freeman, 236-237.
[117] Struble, np, and *Atlas of Plymouth County Iowa,* (Le Mars, Iowa: The Le Mars Sentinel, 1914).
[118] *Le Mars, Iowa: The County Seat of Plymouth County,* (Le Mars, Iowa: The Printery, c1907), Introduction, np.

The number and character of businesses operating downtown corroborate the statement above, and included seven agricultural implement dealers, seven attorneys, four dentists, seven physicians, eleven real estate and insurance firms, four meat markets, a bowling alley, and eight liquor dealers.[119] Among the industrial concerns were a foundry, three wagon shops, a cement and sidewalk works, and a machine shop for automobiles and bicycles, as well as the Wheat Meal Company, the Green Chemical Company, and an ice plant.[120] At this time, Plymouth Milling Company employed seventy-five men and operated two large mills with a capacity of 1,500 barrels of flour each day. With excellent transportation connections and ample overnight accommodations in eight different hotels, businessmen from the surrounding region made a habit to 'Sunday' in Le Mars.[121]

Continued good agricultural production and demands for agricultural products created by the United States' entry into World War I, spurred continued immigration and improvements in Le Mars and downtown in particular. By the mid 1910s, at least one hundred new businesses operated in Le Mars.[122] Between 1905 and 1915 Le Mars gained four additional physicians, three new attorneys, three more grocers, a bottling plant, a moving picture theater, [123] and Wells Dairy.[124] Five grain elevators operated along the railroad tracks. Two hospitals and three telephone companies offered services to Le Mars' residents. The pace of new construction and expansion caused the building trades to flourish, which is reflected in the 1915 city directory where four lumber yards, three cement contractors, seven builders, and seven carpenters are listed.[125] The presence of so many contractors and building supply firms facilitated rapid development and between 1913 and 1923, the Sacred Heart Hospital was completed, the Le Mars Savings Bank (15 Central Avenue NW) was remodeled, and twenty new brick buildings went up downtown, including two lodge halls (Masonic and IOOF), a second movie theater, a second smaller hospital, a cream station, a tin shop, and six automobile-related buildings (three new garage/auto repair shops and three new filling stations).[126]

As population and development increased, so did the need for services and infrastructure improvements. In 1909, the city council pressed the water company to improve the sewer system and also instructed the mayor to contact their US Congressman regarding appropriation for a new post office.[127] Investments in utilities infrastructure followed and by 1913, the electrical distribution system in Le Mars extended along seven blocks of Main Street (Central

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[119] *R.L. Polk and Company's Directory of Woodbury and Plymouth Counties,* (Kansas City, Missouri: R.L. Polk & Company,1904).
[120] *Le Mars, Iowa: The County Seat of Plymouth County,* (Le Mars, Iowa: The Printery, c1907), Introduction, np., and Freeman, 420-432.
[121] *Le Mars, Iowa: The County Seat of Plymouth County,* (Le Mars, Iowa: The Printery, c1907), Introduction, np.
[122] Larson, 33.
[123] *Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Le Mars, Iowa* (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, 1907 and 1913. http://proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/login?url=http://sanborn.umi.com (accessed May 2, 2011). The first movie theater in Le Mars opened between 1907 and 1913 at 713 Main Street (27 Central Avenue NW.
[124] *Le Mars, Iowa: The County Seat of Plymouth County*, and Plymouth County Telephone Company, *Directory No. 30* (Le Mars, Iowa: Sentinel Print, 1915).
[125] Ibid.
[126] *Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Le Mars, Iowa* (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, 1913 and 1923. http://proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/login?url=http://sanborn.umi.com (accessed May 2, 2011), and Larson, 37-39.
[127] Larson, 36.

Ave) and six blocks of 6th Street (Plymouth Street), featuring illumination by arc lamps at each intersection, while incandescent lamps illuminated the vast majority of the rest of the city. The same year, the water distribution mains extended throughout the city with more than ninety hydrants along the way.[128] Only the outermost blocks at the edges of the city did not feature street lighting or access to water mains. By 1918, two new storm sewers were planned and the Iowa Heat, Light and Power Company opened an expanded utilities facility in Le Mars, with a network covering Le Mars, as well as several surrounding towns.[129] Negotiations by the Le Mars Commercial Club drew a branch factory of the H.A. Baker Company, a Sioux City manufacturer of men's work clothing, to Le Mars. The firm held valuable government contracts and advertised a need for at least fifty girls and women workers when they opened in July 1918.[130]

The town's role as a center of learning became even more firmly established during this period. In 1900, the United Evangelical Church purchased the Le Mars Normal School campus and renamed the institution Western Union College. The campus grew as enrollment grew and buildings went up, including the Union Hall dormitory (1904) and a new gymnasium (1908). By the onset of World War I the college was considered a well-established institution of higher learning, boasting fifteen faculty members and 150 students.

As with the rest of Le Mars, a great deal of new construction took place on campus during the 1920s. Among the new buildings and improvements were the 1920 Dubs Memorial Administration Building, the 1921 Wernli Hall girls' dormitory, and the 1921 heating plant, as well as another new dormitory and a radio station in 1926.

The Auto Arrives in Le Mars

During the first years of the twentieth century, car ownership in Iowa grew at a rapid pace as a result of improved roads and the increasing affordability of vehicles. Iowa was among the first twelve states to require vehicle registration in 1904,[131] at which time Iowans owned only 155 automobiles. By 1910, there were more than 10,412 automobiles in the state, and by 1930 that number grew to 787,133 vehicles.[132] In 1916, the State of Iowa spent more than $14,000,000 on roads and bridge improvements; the following year they spent an additional $15,000,000.[133]

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[128] Dabney H. Maury, "Statement and Inventory of the Properties of the Le Mars City Water & Light Company," (Chicago: Dabney H. Maury Consulting Engineer, 1913).

[129] Larson, 38-39.

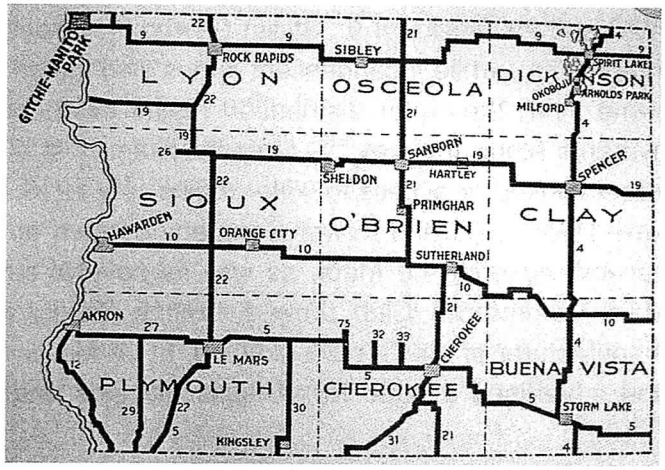
[130] Ibid., 37-39, and *Le Mars Semi-Weekly Sentinel,* June 21, 1918. They opened in the second floor of a building at the northwest corner of Central Avenue and 1st Street NW, which is no longer extant.

[131] James J. Flink, *America Adopts the Automobile, 1895-1910,* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press), c1970) http://simson.net/ref/1970/Fink_America_Adopts_the_Automobile_Car_Registrations.pdf (accessed July 12, 2011).

[132] Iowa Department of Transportation, Office of Policy Analysis, "Number of Registered Vehicles in Iowa 1904-1979," (Des Moines: Office of Vehicle and Motor Carrier Services, Iowa Department of Transportation, 1979).

[133] Larson, 37.

Between 1927 and 1932, Iowa paved more than 3,700 miles of primary roads with concrete, the second most mileage of concrete paving nationwide behind only Illinois.[134] By 1930, Iowa boasted 18,000 miles of paved roads, more than any state west of the Mississippi besides Texas and California.[135]



Auto Road Map of NW Iowa
Tour Iowa First, 1922

Paved, "all weather" roads appeared throughout Plymouth County, and though initially planned for horse-drawn traffic, they further stimulated automobile use. Among them, the first paved streets in Le Mars were of Purington brick from Illinois.[136] Le Mars was notably active in road and street improvement for a city of its size. Most noteworthy was the privately funded 1904 paving of a one-block section of Eagle Street (1st Ave SW) with concrete. Financed by the owners of the Union Hotel, Moore Lumberyard, and Kehrberg dry goods store, this short section was described as "experimental" and was remarkable because of its use of concrete instead of other more common contemporary paving materials, such as brick. The project was the first of its kind in Iowa and only the second nationwide.[137] In 1909 the City initiated the paving of downtown alleyways and by 1912 commenced a regular concrete street paving program.[138] By 1914, Plymouth County ranked third statewide in number of miles of improved wagon roads, with 1,544 miles completed.[139] Two years later, the county engineer reported the presence of seven thousand bridges and culverts along these roads.[140]

Accompanying these physical road improvements, Le Mars adopted a new naming system for its city street network. An ordinance passed in March 1922 changed the street nomenclature to a classic Cartesian coordinate based system: Main Street became Central Avenue; 6th Street

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[134] "Le Mars Street Typifies Long Service Concrete Paving Gives," *Le Mars Daily Sentinel,* July 1, 1964.

[135] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa, accessed July 12, 2011.

[136] "Concrete base used for brick paving," *Le Mars Daily Sentinel,* July 1, 1964.

[137] Iowa Department of Transportation, *Approaching the Turn of the Century: Discovering Historic Iowa Transportation Milestones,* http://www.iowadot.gov/histbook.pdf, and "Le Mars to Preserve Iowa's Oldest Concrete Street Paving," *Le Mars Daily Sentinel,* July 1, 1964. Reprinted from Sioux City Journal. The historic section of concrete pavement ran along present-day 1st Avenue SW between Plymouth and 1st Street SW. It was poured in large 6-foot diamond-shaped sections and finished with a rough-surfaced grid of 4-inch squares, resembling the finish of a cobblestone street. This historic section of concrete paving was covered with asphalt by the early 1980s. The first section of concrete street paving in the nation was completed in Bellefontaine, Ohio.

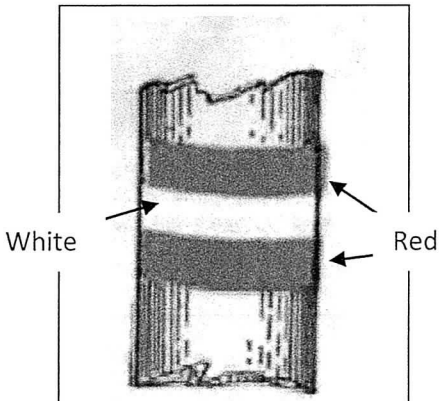
[138] Larson, 36, and "3 Le Mars Streets in every 4 now concrete pavement," *Le Mars Daily Sentinel,* July 1, 1964.

[139] Freeman, 87.

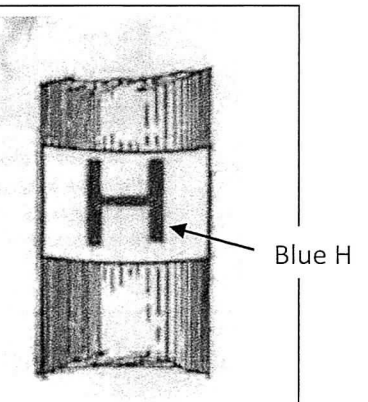
[140] Ibid. Though this number might seem very high, it should be noted that Plymouth County currently maintains the highest number of bridges in the state and is also ranked third in the state in distance of maintained road with 1,425 miles improved. To verify the veracity of the number, the consultant contacted the current Plymouth County engineer, who estimated there are currently about 3 to 4 culverts per mile of road due to the very high number of drainages present in this region of the state.

became Plymouth Street; all east-west streets were renamed 1st Street, 2nd Street, 3rd Street, etc., increasing each direction north and south from Plymouth; all north-south streets were renamed 1st Avenue, 2nd Avenue, 3rd Avenue, etc., increasing east and west from Central; and from the intersection of Plymouth and Central, the street grid was divided into quadrants and all street names received suffix corresponding to its respective quadrant – NE, SW, etc.

During this era auto tourism was becoming important and the identification of regional and transcontinental auto routes became vital. To provide tourists with a document of the growing network of roads and identified roadside necessities along the way, town boosters and national automobile clubs planned touring routes and published guidebooks directing "autoists" from state to state.[141] Among the early long distance highways in Iowa, was the Council Bluffs, Sioux City and Spirit Lake Highway, which traveled through Le Mars and appeared on maps as early as 1912.[142]



Council Bluffs, Sioux City & Spirit Lake Highway Official Pole Marker
1919 Map of Iowa, Showing Principle Automobile Routes

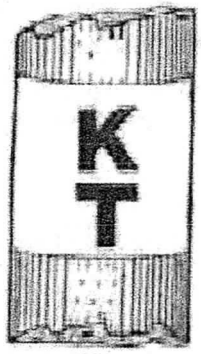


Hawkeye Highway Official Pole Marker
1919 Map of Iowa, Showing Principle Automobile Routes

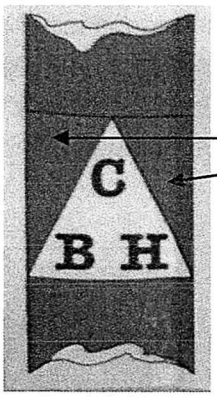
In 1917, the Iowa Department of Transportation registered the Hawkeye Highway, which linked Dubuque with Sioux City via Le Mars.[143] At the same time, the federal government planned for the consolidation of several existing auto trails into an interstate highway to travel north-south across the Midwest from the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border. During route planning, South Dakota vied for the highway to pass through the east edge of their state, however the route, to be known as the King of Trails, was finalized in 1918 and would pass through Le Mars

[141] Elizabeth Rosin and Dale Nimz, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Roadside Kansas," (Kansas City, Missouri; Rosin Preservation, 2009), E-7.
[142] Iowa Department of Transportation, "Iowa Non-registered Routes," http://www.iowadot.gov/autotrails/autoroutes.htm (accessed July 15, 2011). This traveled along present-day U.S. 75 and Iowa State Highway 60.
[143] Iowa Department of Transportation, "Iowa Registered Routes," http://www.iowadot.gov/autotrails/autoroutes_registered.htm#h (accessed July 15, 2011). This traveled along present-day U.S. 75 and Iowa State Highway 3.

and along the west edge of Minnesota.[144] The following year, the Custer Battlefield Highway was designated as an inter-state route between Des Moines and Glacier National Park, bringing yet another long distance route through Le Mars.[145] A 1919 map of Iowa showing the principle automobile routes also listed the Hawarden, Ireton, & Le Mars Road.[146] The 1922 auto touring pamphlet, "Tour Iowa First," promoted the state's auto trails and provided information on tourist camps and conveniences along the way, including a map that showed Le Mars well-connected on the established network of auto roads crisscrossing Iowa.



King of Trails
Official Pole Marker
1919 Map of Iowa, Showing Principle Automobile Routes



Custer Battlefield Highway
Official Pole Marker
Iowa Registered Highway Routes 1914-1925

Le Mars benefitted greatly from the increased traffic through town on these auto trails, which drew new automobile related businesses and commercial development along the routes through town. Horse-powered transportation gave way to automobiles during this period with the replacement of livery stables and blacksmith shops with auto garages. An analysis of the city directories from this period reflects this nationwide trend as it happened in Le Mars.

The 1904 Le Mars directory lists three liveries, three harness and saddler businesses, and two horseshoer/blacksmiths, but no listings for automobile-related businesses. However, by the 1915 city directory no blacksmiths, harness/saddler shops, or carriage/wagon works are listed, and while three liveries are still operating, the directory lists six automobile-related businesses, two filling stations, and a motorcycle dealer.[147] Among those who capitalized on this transition were Ben Nicholson, who opened his auto dealer and service business at 922 S Main (120 Central SE; non-extant) where he was reportedly the first dealer in the nation to hold a franchise

[144] Larson, 38, and *Map of Iowa Showing Principal Automobile Routes,*(Des Moines: Kenyon Company, 1919), available from Iowa Department of Transportation http://www.iowadot.gov/autotrails/images/1919mapfront.pdf (accessed July 22, 2011).
[145] This highway traveled along present-day Iowa State Highway 3 and U.S. Highway 75.
[146] Iowa Department of Transportation, "Iowa Non-registered Routes," http://www.iowadot.gov/autotrails/autoroutes.htm (accessed July 15, 2011). This route traveled along present-day U.S. 75 and Iowa State Highway 10.
[147] *R.L. Polk and Company's Directory of Woodbury and Plymouth Counties,* (Kansas City, Missouri: R.L. Polk & Company,1904), and Plymouth County Telephone Company, *Directory No. 30* (Le Mars, Iowa: Sentinel Print, 1915).

for the sale of Chevrolet cars.[148] In addition, George Pew converted his family's implement business, begun in the 1870s, into a successful auto dealership and garage occupying two large buildings downtown (115 and 117 Central Avenue NW).

Filling and service stations, as well as various automobile associated businesses sprang up to serve both the tourists and the increasing numbers of local automobile owners. By 1923, eight commercial auto garages operated in downtown Le Mars with a capacity of more than 280 cars.

New filling stations appeared on corner lots on 1st Avenue SW, Plymouth Street E, and Central Avenue S. New automobile-specific businesses went into both existing and new buildings and included general auto repair, battery service, and tire vulcanizing.[149]

Accessed by a federal highway and two state highways, Le Mars benefited from a system of "all weather" paved roads allowing shipment of goods by truck, a more efficient and less costly option for some types of produce and manufactured goods than rail transport. Le Mars continued to be a regional center for agribusiness, commercial businesses, governmental agencies, and education.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II: 1930-1945

Though the onset of the Great Depression is typically defined as the October 1929 collapse of the stock market, a major agricultural recession was already underway throughout Iowa by the beginning 1920s. While the 'Roaring Twenties' took place in the general economy, Iowa farmers did not experience this. Federal price supports during WWI caused famers nationwide to expand their production, however these supports were withdrawn and prices for farm products plummeted.[150] Despite the organizing and political efforts of the Grange, the Farmer's Union, and the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, as well as the national American Farm Bureau Federation, many farmers were forced into bankruptcy. On the other hand, the low cost of agricultural products supported the general economy, leaving more money in the general consumers' pockets for purchase of other goods, such as automobiles, radios, furniture, and so forth.[151] Additionally, food manufacturers, which comprised about 37 percent of all Iowa manufacturing concerns, benefitted from the high agricultural surpluses and low prices.[152]

The 1929 stock market crash forced nearly half of the nation's banks to insolvency and the resulting drastic reductions in spending and production led to a sharp rise in unemployment nationwide. By 1933, the value of stock on the New York Stock Exchange was less than a fifth of its peak in 1929 and approximately one fourth of Americans were unemployed. Businesses

[148] "Ben Nicholson, retired automobile dealer, is dead." *Le Mars Semi-Weekly Sentinel*, July 13, 1964.
[149] *Sanborn Fire Insurance map of Le Mars, Iowa* (New York: Sanborn Map & Publishing Company, 1913 and 1923. http://proxy.mcpl.lib.mo.us/login?url=http://sanborn.umi.com (accessed May 2, 2011).
[150] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa.
[151] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa.
[152] Ibid.

shut down, factories closed their doors, and farm income dropped by half. Little private commercial development occurred during the Great Depression and the only significant construction nationwide took place through public building projects.

In Iowa, agricultural business values dropped and farm mortgages, as well as foreclosures, increased, and by 1932, 65 percent of Iowa farms had been mortgaged for a total of $450,000,000.[153] Severe drought from 1934 through 1936, as well as a long, harsh winter in 1936 further compounded the problems created by the Great Depression, adding to the austere conditions for farm families. In 1940, the U.S. Bureau of the Census produced a special report on abandoned or idle farms, due to the alarmingly high numbers nationwide.[154] However, while many other states saw a high percentage of farm abandonment, Iowa farmers tended to stay put, reporting a comparatively smaller than national average decline of only 1,610 farms statewide between 1930 and 1940, as well as an increase of about 130,000 acres into cultivation.[155] Though Iowa farmers remained on the land, almost 60 percent of all farms were mortgaged by 1940 and the average age of the farm operator was increasing as young people moved to urban areas for work.[156]

Plymouth County reflected this statewide trend, and actually saw an increase of sixty-three farms between 1930 and 1940, with the percentage of county land in farms remaining at 98 percent.[157] Though these statistics suggest relative stability in the regional farming economy, the total value of all farmland, products, and equipment in Plymouth County had dropped 42 percent, from $74,210,901 in 1930 to a mere $43,034,398 by the end of the decade.[158]

The Iowa legislature attempted to help farmers by relieving their high property taxes with a shift in the tax code toward income taxes. However, farmers' economic frustrations had reached their limit. They violently resisted new federal cattle health inspections, particularly in Cedar County where the National Guard was called in to quell the unrest.[159] This 'Cow War' led to the organization of the Farmers Holiday Association, which intended to coordinate militant protest and a general farmers' strike. Among their actions across the state they intimidated bidders at foreclosure sales and blocked shipments of agricultural products in a desperate attempt to increase prices. In Le Mars during 1932-1933 they mobbed courtrooms and intimidated lawyers, sheriffs and judges participating in the legal proceedings of farm foreclosures.[160] As a result, the National Guard was called in to control the situation and enforce martial law, resulting

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[153] Larson, 40.

[154] US Bureau of Census, "Census of Agriculture – Abandoned or Idle Farms," http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/Historical_Publications/1940/Abandoned%20or%20idle/00359861.pdf (accessed July 25, 2011).

[155] US Bureau of Census, "Census of Agriculture – Iowa, 1940," (Washington, D.C.: US Bureau of Census, 1940), 112. Available from http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1940.html (accessed July 25, 2011).

[156] US Bureau of Census, "Census of Agriculture – Iowa, 1940," 115-118.

[157] Ibid., 130.

[158] Ibid.

[159] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa.

[160] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa, and Larson, 40-41.

in the arrest of numerous offenders, who were temporarily held at the Le Mars Armory (43 1st Avenue NE).

Due to the combination of financial depression and drought, federal relief programs focused their efforts toward the Plains states. In particular, the programs of the Works Progress Administration (WPA; renamed *Work Projects Administration in 1939*), the Public Works Administration (PWA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) significantly impacted not only the state's economic conditions, but also the Iowa landscape. These programs provided funding to state and local governments for the construction of public improvements, such as buildings, roads, bridges, and dams in order to provide jobs and to stimulate the local economy. More than 40,000 Iowans found work through the WPA and the CCC.[161] In Iowa, federal and state relief monies enabled cities and counties to build courthouses, city halls, libraries, ball fields, auditoriums, memorials, post offices, and park areas, as well as improve public facilities, upgrade municipal infrastructure, and establish soil conservation projects.

These federal and state programs spurred significant improvements in Plymouth County and Le Mars, in particular. By the end of 1938, the WPA had spent $322,796 on projects in Plymouth County.[162] Two hundred seventy-one Plymouth County individuals found employment through these programs. Public works projects in Le Mars included both construction-related and non-construction programs. Of the these projects were a citywide street improvement program that upgraded sixty blocks of Le Mars' streets and made major improvements at the city parks. Non-construction projects included: a sewing room employing fifteen women; clerical, survey, and grave registration employing three men; public building cleaning employing eleven women; and a recreational program employing nine men and two women.

Federal expenditures during this period strengthened the regional transportation network. In 1938, work began on the construction and improvement of the Farm-to-Market road system in Plymouth County, which included hundreds of miles of improved roadways, installation of more than seventy bridges and culverts, and employed one hundred eighty-four men.[163]

Like Iowa counties statewide, Plymouth County experienced job scarcity and severe financial strain during the Great Depression. Private commercial activities slowed considerably or stopped altogether. Small towns and county seat communities, such as Le Mars, suffered from economic decline in proportion to their dependence on the buying power of the surrounding agricultural community. As with many Iowa communities during this period, Le Mars' flour mills were vital to the hobbled economy and they often ran at full capacity processing surplus grain.

At the same time, the rural-to-urban migration deepened as rural residents moved to town in search of income. Between 1930 and 1940, Plymouth County outside Le Mars lost 1,222

[161] "Time Periods: Overview of Iowa History," *Prairie Voices: Iowa Heritage Overview,* State Historical Society of Iowa.
[162] "271 Persons Now Employed on 11 WPA Projects Here," *Le Mars Globe-Post,* November 3, 1938.
[163] Ibid.

residents, while Le Mars gained more than 565 people during the same period.[164] Le Mars' citizens comprised more than 22 percent of the county's residents.

Plymouth County Population[165]	
1930	**1940**
24,159	23,502

Le Mars Population[166]	
1930	**1940**
4,788	5,353

World War II

The general disruption of private construction resulting from the Great Depression continued after the United States entered World War II. As the nation refitted for wartime production, public works efforts also ceased. However, while many rural cities experienced a complete halt in public and private endeavors during the war years, upgrades and expansions continued in Le Mars, if at a restricted pace. Population declines during the war occurred nationwide, as soldiers departed and significant shifts in population drew people to jobs in industrial cities. During the war, Plymouth County lost 3,287 residents.[167]

Despite restrictions on construction materials and fuel, not all development ceased as private, local, state, and federal investment continued in Plymouth County. Between 1941 and 1945, private commercial activities included the extension of both Iowa Public Service and Plymouth County Electric Cooperative Association lines, the establishment of a milk dehydration plant in Le Mars, the opening of the Aalfs garment factory in the Le Mars Masonic Lodge (128 Central Avenue SE), the expansion of the Plymouth Co-Op Oil Company (101 1st Street NW), and the construction of new auto-related business on Highway 75 at the south edge of Le Mars.[168] During the war, the City of Le Mars joined the Chamber of Commerce to initiate a plan for the improvement of auto parking downtown. Among federal and state projects during this period were the establishment of soil conservation districts countywide and plans for a three-county flood control project along the Little Sioux River.[169]

During wartime, enrollment at Western Union College dropped by more than 50 percent to less than 200 students.[170] However, federal investment took place at the college as the U.S. Army and U.S. Navy developed an airport on campus property and initiated a training program for aviation cadets.

[164] "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places 1850-2000," Iowa Data Center.
[165] Ibid.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Larson, 47-48.
[168] Ibid., 46.
[169] Ibid.
[170] Larson, 51. By 1940, Western Union boasted as many as 450 students.

POST WORLD WAR II RECOVERY & AND THE MODERN ERA: 1945-1962

By the end of World War II, Le Mars' nineteenth- and early twentieth-century commercial areas and residential neighborhoods reflected the combined effects of the Great Depression and rationed resources of the wartime period. As in many American cities during the late 1940s through the 1950s, poorly maintained older commercial buildings in Le Mars received storefront "updates" and an immense wave of new construction significantly altered the appearance of the city's streetscapes. The amount of postwar remodeling and new construction is not surprising, as almost twenty years had passed during which the Depression and wartime restrictions had severely constrained construction, maintenance, and commercial development. Thus, there was a real and psychological need for new, clear symbols of progress and a return to normalcy.

In Le Mars, the pent-up need for new construction created a building boom, as well as widespread remodeling downtown. In the years following the war, Le Mars' central business district underwent significant changes as more than sixteen new buildings went up by 1962. A review of building permits on file with the City of Le Mars from 1950 to 1970 reflects the boom in private investment throughout Le Mars, particularly between 1956 and 1965. In addition to the buildings downtown, the City issued 244 permits for residential development.[171] The subsequent five years saw an additional 238 residential building permits issued.

Date of Construction	New Building
c1946	Grand Central Hotel warehouse/garage (19 1st Ave NE)
c1946	Plymouth County Soil Conservation Service Office (21 1st Ave NE)
c1946	Le Mars City Hall and Fire Station (127 Central NW)
c1950	Stoo's Body Shop (33 1st Ave NE)
c1950	National Food Store (28 1st Ave SW)
1952	Neisius Auto Garage (22 2nd St NE)
1953	Le Mars Federal Savings and Loan Association (37 Plymouth NE)
1954	Le Mars High School
c1954	New York Life Insurance Co. (22 1st St NW)
c1954	United Wholesalers (121 1st St NW)
c1954	Clear-Vue TV Specialists (116 Central NE)
c1954	Master Body Rebuilders (212 Central NE)
1955	Plymouth County Abstract (126 Central SE)
1956	Iowa Public Service (38 Central NE)
1958	Brauch Bowling Alley (41 1st Ave NE)
1959	Berglund-Neisius Auto addition (22 2nd St NE)
c1959	Athen's Standard Service Station (129 Plymouth NW)
1961	Addition to Le Mars High School
1962	Knights of Columbus Hall (120 1st Ave NE)

[171] City of Le Mars, building permits file. Research by local historian, Mary Lou Kestner.

In addition to new construction, numerous existing buildings underwent major improvements and/or storefront updates during this period. While post- World War II remodeling of commercial buildings was common nationwide, a notably high number occurred in downtown Le Mars, some of which were so thorough that the building's original style and/or form is unrecognizable. The majority of these buildings' redesigned façade suggest a concerted response to the Modern Movement's affinity for smooth wall faces achieved through stone, stucco, or buff brick, as well as for new materials such as Perma-Stone, a wall treatment developed in the late 1920s that became popular in the post-World War II modernizing movement.[172] At least eighteen buildings downtown experienced façade remodeling or storefront updates between 1945 and 1960.

Plymouth County historian, Arthur Larson described the postwar period as one of "rapid growth and modernization" marked by "conscious and purposeful" commercial enhancements.[173] Notable among them was the 1955 organization of the Le Mars Development Corporation (LMDC), which formed to attract new industries. By the end of their first year of existence, the LMDC had secured Albertson Company's pledge to establish an abrasive disk plant in Le Mars.[174] Additional improvements during this period included the expansions of Iowa Public Service, Wells Dairy, and two garment factories, as well as upgrades to the city's sewer system.

By the mid-1940s, US Highway 75 bypassed downtown, stimulating new construction along the west edge of the city. New commercial development began to concentrate along the improved route and national trends materialized in Le Mars as convenience stores, gas stations, drive-in restaurants, and motels, as well as light industrial endeavors, appeared along US Highway 75.[175] By the late 1960s, the stretch was described as having a "steady line of business establishments."[176]

Rural-to-Urban Migration

The rural-to-urban migration that began in the 1920s, deepened into what was to become a long-term trend. Though the population of Plymouth County as a whole rose between 1940 and 1970, this was due entirely to increased population growth in Le Mars. The city population grew by more than 52 percent during this period, while the population of the rural areas outside the city limits actually dropped 11 percent, between 1940 and 1970.[177]

Plymouth County Population[178]			
1940	**1950**	**1960**	**1970**
23,502	23,252	23,906	24,312

[172] Holly Hope, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, National Register of Historic Places, "The Thrill of a New Home Without the Cost," http://www.arkansaspreservation.com/historic-properties/national-register/siding_materials.asp (accessed August 30, 2010).
[173] Larson, 49-52.
[174] Ibid., 52.
[175] Ibid., 53.
[176] Ibid.
[177] "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places 1850-2000," Iowa Data Center.
[178] Ibid.

City of Le Mars Population[179]			
1940	1950	1960	1970
5,353	5,844	6,767	8,159

As the post-war economy stabilized around the country, consumer demand increased, fueling production growth and contributing to a period of unprecedented economic prosperity. Wartime legislation, such as the GI Bill of Rights, provided subsidies for education, housing, and business endeavors, further shifting the national economy away from its agricultural roots.[180] As the nation's standard of living rose, those who chose to continue farming found it financially difficult. By 1950, the median income of farm families was only 60 percent of the median income of American families nationwide.[181] Thus, numerous families left farming for the increasing opportunities in towns and cities, a nationwide trend reflected in Plymouth County.

During the post-World War II period, Western Union College saw increased enrollment as a direct result of the GI Bill. In 1948, the school merged with United Brethren and Evangelical churches and became known as Westmar College. Reflecting the same trend of improvement that swept the rest of Le Mars during the 1950s and 1960s, Westmar saw extensive improvements, including: accreditation with the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools; a new student union; a new dormitory; a new science building; and an increase in enrollment over 1,000 students.[182]

The Sixties

Many of the trends of the 1950s continued into the second half of the twentieth century. The schools and college continued to expand with increased enrollment. The automobile influenced settlement and commercial investment patterns as the railroad system constricted.

During the 1960s, the rural population continued to decline both statewide and in Plymouth County. Iowa's rural population declined from 47 percent to 42 percent from 1960 to 1970.[183] During the same period, Le Mars' population continued to increase, comprising more than 28 percent of Plymouth County residents in 1960 and more than 33 percent by the end of the decade.[184] Within its city limits Le Mars grew by a remarkable 20 percent to 8,159 residents by 1970, the highest number or residents of its history thus far and the fastest rate of growth in any one decade since.

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[179] "Total Population for Iowa's Incorporated Places 1850-2000," Iowa Data Center.

[180] Christy Davis and Brenda Spencer, National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "Historic Agriculture-Related Resources of Kansas," (Topeka, Kansas: Davis Preservation and Spencer Preservation, 2008), E-34.

[181] Davis and Spencer, E-35.

[182] In 1996, the City of Le mars took ownership of the campus and its buildings. The school closed in 1997.

[183] "Urban and Rural Population: 1900 to 1990," US Census Bureau report, October 1995. http://www.census.gov/population/censusdata/urpop0090.txt (accessed August 25, 2011).

[184] "Data for Decision Makers," USDA, http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Publications/DD75.pdf (accessed August 28, 2011).

Municipal improvements continued to keep pace with population growth and commercial expansion. In just three years between 1959 and 1962, the city reduced its indebtedness by 40 percent. In the following five years extensive street paving and lighting projects were completed, as well as expansions at the public schools, which were the largest single employer in Le Mars. By the late 1960s, only a single passenger train came through town each day and plans were underway for the removal of unused tracks through downtown.

Notable among the municipal actions of the postwar period was the hiring of Harland Bartholomew Associates of St. Louis to complete a comprehensive plan for Le Mars.[185] The thorough 1962 study identified current municipal conditions and made development recommendations. Among the conditions documented were the following:

- Substantial recent scattered and unplanned commercial and industrial development along US Highway 33-75, described as the "window of Le Mars" for most nonresidents;
- One thousand acres of vacant undeveloped land inside the city limits;
- An unusually high acreage of parks for a city its size;
- An aging library located too far south of the CBD;
- Insufficient parking at City Hall;
- An aging and "generally unattractive" post office;
- Most downtown buildings are "old, most are decidedly mediocre in appearance" and some should be replaced;
- The old opera house "presents excellent opportunities for remodeling" and "should be preserved;" and
- Wide streets and ample free parking.

Among Harland Bartholomew's 1962 recommendations to remedy the conditions above were:

- Abandonment of the rectangular street grid pattern encouraged where possible to alleviate traffic;
- Plan for new library located in the heart of the CBD;
- Plan for removal and replacement of post office building; and
- Removal of "many old buildings... which should be replaced" to create surface parking lots downtown.

The City partially followed Harland Bartholomew's advice regarding the inadequacy of the postal, library, and city hall facilities. Having outgrown its 1914 building, the Le Mars Post Office moved into a new modern style building at 230 1st Street NW around 1970. The city library moved from their 1904 Carnegie building into the former Red Owl grocery store in 1973 and the City vacated the circa 1946 city hall and renovated a former Ben Franklin commercial building into a new city hall during the late 1970s or early 1980s. (While the city abandoned these earlier buildings, they were not demolished and all have been adaptively reused and are currently eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.)

[185] Harland Bartholomew Associates, *The Comprehensive Plan: Le Mars Iowa,* (St. Louis, Missouri: Harland Bartholomew Associates, 1962), 3-19.

The City hired Harland Bartholomew to come back in 1968 and produce a plan addressing just the downtown area. This plan refined the earlier recommendations and advised the City to:

- Close Central Avenue, as well as portions of cross streets to automobile traffic and create a pedestrian-only mall;
- Demolish the county courthouse and relocate it closer to the CDB as part of a new civic campus to include a new library, a new city hall, a new police/fire department building, and a new courthouse, all flanked by adjacent surface parking lots;
- Close part of Plymouth Street to accommodate the new civic campus; and
- Demolish dozens of dwellings, the Opera House and the Union Hotel, as well as at least thirteen late nineteenth and early to mid-twentieth century buildings downtown to make room for parking and new commercial development.[186]

The city followed the advice of razing the Opera House (1974) and the Union Hotel (1968). However rather than drastically reorganizing downtown to accommodate the extensive pedestrian mall and civic campus, the City chose to ignore these recommendations and retain the character of its historic core.

In response to continued population growth and demand for goods and services, new businesses opened in Le Mars during this period. Among them, two new department stores – Harrison's and Spurgeon's – opened downtown. By the end of the 1960s, Le Mars supported 3 lumberyards, 5 hardware stores, 16 building contractors, 11 real estate agents, 16 cafes/restaurants, 9 taverns, 6 dentists, 6 grocers, 9 automobile dealers, and 20 auto filling/service stations.[187] New buildings went up to house these endeavors, with at least eleven dating from 1963 through circa 1970 in the heart of downtown.

Date of Construction	New Building
1964	Le Mars Savings Bank (37 1st Ave NW)
1965	Naef Building (129 1st St NW)
c1965	Athens Building (115 Plymouth St NW)
1967	Gambles Store (35 Central Ave NW)
c1967	Criswell Electric (129 Central Ave SW)
c1967	Dull Law Firm (38 1st Ave NW)
1968	Bowers Realtors & Insurance (115 Central Ave SW)
c1968	Model Cleaners (119 Central Ave SW)
1969	Le Mars Mutual Insurance Company (37 Central Ave SW)
c1970	Goodyear Service Store (100 Plymouth St SW)
c1970	NAI Electrical (75 Lincoln Street SE)

[186] Harland Bartholomew Associates, *A Plan for the Central Business District: Le Mars, Iowa,* (St. Louis, Missouri: Harland Bartholomew Associates, 1968), 23-26.
[187] *Johnson's 1972 Le Mars, Iowa City Directory,* (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, Inc., 1972).

In addition, at least seventeen buildings experienced remodels or storefront updates in the central business district during this period. Bowers Clothing and J.C. Penney both completed interior and storefront remodels, while Vander Meer Bakery and First National Bank completed drastic redesigns during this period. The Pix Theater closed and was quickly remodeled and reoccupied by a dress shop. According to Larson, the "intensity of renovation" that took place in downtown Le Mars during the 1950s and 1960s developed "an up-to-date, clean cut appearance of the area."[188]

Epilogue

Le Mars' population growth and commercial development continues today. Since 1970, the population of Le Mars has grown an additional 11 percent and the city's approximately 9,000 residents boast an intact downtown commercial area that reflects a continuum of commercial buildings spanning more than a century of development. Currently, the occupants of buildings in the survey area reflect the same variety of commercial uses that have characterized Le Mars throughout much of its history. Financial institutions, a movie theater, a bakery, business and professional offices, variety shops, taverns, and cafés continue to operate as they have throughout much of downtown Le Mars' history.

The Le Mars Historic Preservation Commission and Le Mars Chamber of Commerce recognize the importance of retaining Le Mars' historic downtown resources. It is as a result of their initiative and concern for their community that this study is undertaken.

[188] Larson, 52-53.

ARCHITECTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN DOWNTOWN LE MARS: 1870-1970

Development Patterns

The availability of water and suitable building materials influenced the location, configuration, and physical appearance of communities such as Le Mars during the state's early settlement period. A number of areas in Northwest Iowa, such as Le Mars, contained stands of timber in the river valley, as well as river clays that were suitable for brick making, providing readily accessible building materials.

The primary guiding factor in the layout of Iowa's communities was typically related to physical factors — the location of a river or the presence of a railroad line and the use of a grid system for platting streets and lots. Le Mars's founding and development followed both of these factors, with the initial settlement located on the banks of the Floyd River and the arrival of the railroad dictating the original town plat.

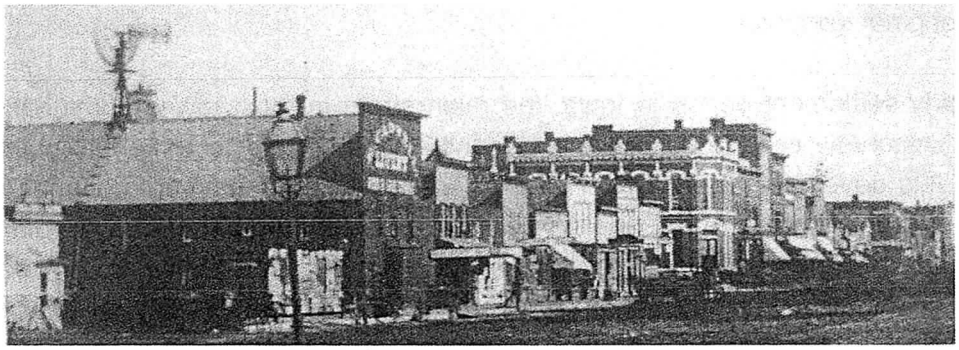
During the early settlement period in Iowa, the main street in most towns commonly faced or intersected a waterway or railroad grade and contained the major commercial buildings. Le Mars reflects this development pattern. However, unlike most county seat communities in the Midwest that followed the traditional Shelbyville courthouse square plan, Le Mars did not attain its county seat status until after it was platted and had experienced significant commercial development downtown. As a result, the county courthouse square is not adjacent to the central business district and is instead six blocks to the southeast. Le Mars' original town plan comprised forty-five blocks and sixteen streets laid out on a grid system of streets oriented with the cardinal points (N-S) and bisected diagonally by the railroad grade traveling northeast-southwest. The site and arrangement reflects the physical circumstances at the time of the city's founding, the technological development of the era, and the location of the then brand new railroad grade. Throughout Le Mars' first hundred years, industrial and freighting services remained south and east of the central business district, in proximity of and accessible to the railroad tracks. At the same time, the city's retail businesses continued to cluster along the main commercial corridors of Main (Central) and 6th Street (Plymouth) well into the twentieth century.

At the onset of the Civil War, only thirty-five urban centers in the United States had populations exceeding 25,000. By 1890, there were almost four times that number and at least twenty-four cities claimed more than 100,000 inhabitants. During this period, sharp differences emerged between the East and the West, as well as between village, town, and city. Larger commercial centers began to organize land use and relegated civic, retail, industrial, and recreational buildings to certain locations. New building types emerged for specific functions including the commercial block, office building, city hall, courthouse, schoolhouse, opera house, hotel, department store, manufacturing plant, and warehouse.[189] Le Mars' development followed this nationwide pattern of architectural sophistication at the end of the nineteenth century.

[189] Carole Rifkind, *A Field Guide to American Architecture* (New York: Times Mirror New American Library, 1980), 193.

Architectural Building Forms and Styles

Most of the first commercial buildings in Iowa were simple temporary structures housing various business functions. As soon as possible, owners replaced their first business houses with brick or stone buildings rising one or two stories. Upper floors, when present, contained offices, assembly rooms, or provided residential space for the merchant's family or tenants. Every commercial center had special services buildings, such as livery stables, with unique plans and designs to meet its specific function. Such was the case in Le Mars, where the first commercial buildings were wood-framed and often featured false-front structures concealing a pitched roof behind. Largely replaced by the end of the nineteenth century, the traditional building material was red brick, much of which was harvested and manufactured locally. The existing buildings that define the downtown streetscapes are all second or even third generation buildings on their respective parcel.



South Main (Central SW), view NW, circa 1883
Plymouth County Heritage, 1998

After the Civil War, in commercial centers throughout the Midwest there was a drive to make order from the chaos of the war and the earlier settlement period. In both rural and urban communities, elected officials commissioned the erection of bridges and paving of streets. By the 1880s, citizens approved bond issues to install gas, electricity, and telephone lines. New concerns for public health and safety resulted in the creation of water and sewer systems, as well as the development of fire and building codes. The boom years of the late nineteenth century reshaped the downtown business center as more types of businesses, banks, manufacturing plants, offices, hotels, and retail shops went up.

During the early nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century, most commercial buildings were designed to be seen from the front rather than as freestanding structures. Consequently, the façade provided the character-defining features, while the side walls were often party walls shared with the adjacent building(s). Walls at the ends of a block or facing onto alleys typically lacked design treatments and used less expensive masonry materials. Lot dimensions determined a commercial building's footprint, which typically filled most, if not all, of their respective lots. Most lots were rectangular, were deeper than they were wide, and shared standard dimensions.[190]

[190] Longstreth, 17.

The building's form, followed by its architectural style, defines commercial architecture of this period. Due to their functional nature, many commercial buildings exhibit only restrained architectural details, often limited to local adaptations or vague references to a particular popular architectural style. At other times, the design of the façade incorporated a mixture of stylistic idioms. More often than not, ornamental embellishment took the form of brickwork juxtaposed against limestone belt courses and sills, with the minimal use of molded ornamental tiles and brick or pressed metal molding.

BUILDING FORMS

No matter how intricate their details, the composition of the façades of most commercial buildings can be reduced to a few simple design elements that reveal the major divisions of the internal function. Spaces for human occupation reflected an effort to capture the greatest possible amount of natural light and air through the use of large display and transom windows, light wells, and skylights.[191] Materials, doors, windows, cornices, porticos, decorative details, and stylistic expressions were secondary characteristics that related to the basic compositional arrangement of the building.[192]

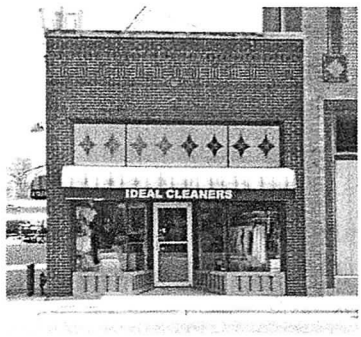
Commercial buildings erected in the United States during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries fall into two distinct design categories — those reflecting defined popular styles and those with simple utilitarian designs. Whether executed in a popular style or a simple generic design, the downtown commercial buildings found in communities like Le Mars generally took the form of the One- or Two-Part Commercial Block building types.[193] Typically of masonry construction, these buildings are between one and three stories in height and have a distinct hierarchy of architectural elements. Most have a cornice near the roofline and a horizontal band or belt course separating the first story from those above, reflecting the different uses of the floors within. Where there is a second story, the windows typically have defined lintels and sills. Below the second-story windows (or below the cornice of a One-Part Commercial Block) space is reserved for a sign. Recessed or flush entrances and display windows fill the street level facade below the transom windows. A solid bulkhead base of wood or masonry supports the display window frames, with entrance door kick plates typically corresponding to the bulkhead height. Pilasters and/or simple piers commonly frame each side of the display windows to provide vertical definition.

[191] Ibid.
[192] Ibid.
[193] Ibid., 24, 29, 31.

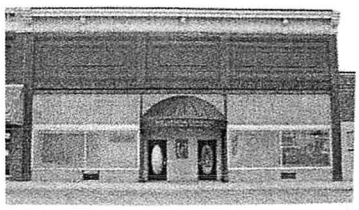
ONE-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK

The basic One-Part Commercial Block building form is one-story in height and is a simple box form generally housing a single business. In many examples, the street frontage is narrow and the façade comprises little more than plate glass windows and an entry with a parapet spanning the width of the upper façade wall, sometimes embellished with a cornice.

The circa 1918 building at **18 Plymouth Street SE** epitomizes this commercial building form, which often featured only modestly decorative brickwork on the upper façade wall. Other examples, such as the building found at **21 1st Avenue NW,** include a sizable wall area above the display windows, which makes the façade appear larger and more important and provides space for engaged brick piers and recessed panels, as well as a pressed metal cornice for additional embellishment. Even with the non-original storefront elements, this building serves as a good example of the building form.



18 Plymouth Street SE



21 1st Avenue NW

TWO-PART COMMERCIAL BLOCK

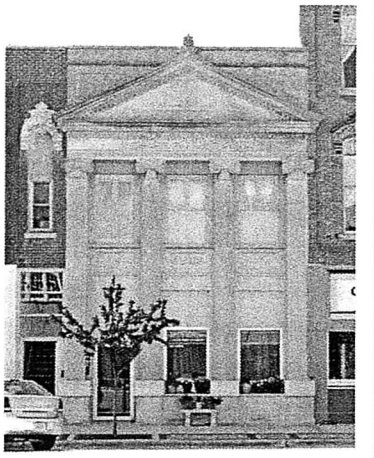
Slightly more complex than their one-story cousins, Two-Part Commercial Block buildings are typically two to four stories in height. There is a clear visual separation of internal function between the first-story customer service/retail space and the upper-story office, meeting room, and/or residential uses. The design of the upper stories identifies the building's architectural influences. Similar to One-Part Commercial Blocks, the first story focuses on the storefront glazing and entrance(s). The building at **24 Plymouth Street SW** illustrates the character-defining features of this building form, retaining the decorative pressed metal cornice and window hoods on the upper façade wall that juxtapose with the first-story storefront.



24 Plymouth Street SW

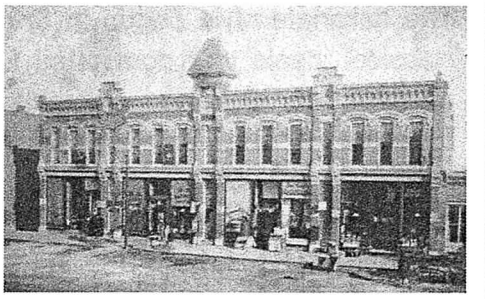
TEMPLE FRONT

Derived from ancient Greek and Roman designs, the facades of Temple Front buildings are treated as one compositional unit. Typically two or three stories in height, the building form took shape in the early nineteenth century during the popularity of the Greek Revival style. Reflecting permanence, tradition, and stability, the style became popular for institutional buildings and financial institutions in particular, with examples dating well into the twentieth century. Le Mars features two examples of this building form, both former banks. The example at **15 Central NW** dates to circa 1879 but reflects a 1913 Temple Front remodel featuring the key character-defining features of the type, which include the fluted Ionic engaged pilasters, the symmetrical arrangement of the façade, the use of ashlar stone cladding, and the full projecting pediment.



15 Central Avenue NW

Larger plans for commercial buildings emerged toward the end of the nineteenth century. The open plan department store, which created spacious display areas for a variety of goods, is an important example of the evolution of the specialty store plan. Modest 25-to-30-foot-wide buildings began to be integrated and conjoined into three- to six-unit blocks that created an impressive and modern effect along the downtown streetscape.[194] In Le Mars, the Union Block spanning **20-30 Central Avenue NE** exemplifies this arrangement.



20-30 Central Avenue NE, c1882

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Some special services buildings, such as banks, hotels, and opera houses, were among a town's most impressive structures and typically reflected popular styled architecture. In addition to the typical Midwestern city's high style train depots, banks, hotels, and county courthouse, by the late nineteenth century many successful merchants erected downtown business buildings in the latest style to advertise their prosperity. Common styles in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries included Italianate, Romanesque Revival, Classical Revival, and Colonial Revival. These buildings often exhibited elaborate ornamentation such as complex decorative brickwork and/or intricate stonework; carved and cast details on windows, piers, and cornices; bay windows and turrets enlivening the façade; and regularly spaced windows, repetitive decorative details, and common building materials creating a sense of unity.[195]

[194] Rifkind, 194.
[195] Longstreth, 17.

Late Victorian Architectural Styles

Late nineteenth century commercial buildings were more elaborate and ornate than previous or subsequent downtown structures, reflecting changing preferences in decoration. The exuberant designs of the Late Victorian architectural styles appealed to the citizens of the prosperous post-Civil War period.[196] The amount of ornamental elements and variety of materials employed increased due to technological advances allowing for the mass production of architectural ornaments and convenient access to railroad lines for delivery. Builders easily ordered standard products from catalogs or purchased stock items at the local lumberyard or iron works. Downtown buildings began to feature applied cornices with brackets and moldings carved from wood or made from cast iron or pressed metal.[197] The mass manufacture of building products allowed thousands of buildings to attain a distinctive appearance previously reserved for only the costliest edifices.[198] Downtown Le Mars once featured at least two excellent examples of the Late Victorian Romanesque style.[199] The survey identified fourteen examples of the Late Victorian Italianate style in downtown Le Mars.

ITALIANATE

The Italianate style began in England as a reaction to formal classical ideals that dominated European architecture for the previous two centuries. Originally based on the large, informal buildings of rural Italy, in the United States, architects and builders included adaptations and modifications that transformed the style into a truly indigenous American style.[200] The Schindel & Howard Building at **17 Central Avenue NW** is a classic example of the style with its projecting cornice featuring paired brackets and the tall narrow round and segmental arched windows with decorative hoods.



17 Central Avenue NW

Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals

Beginning in the 1890s and becoming well established in the early twentieth century, was a subtle shift in American architecture away from the sentimentality and ornamental excesses of the Victorian era. Consequently, there was a return to the classical architectural styles that continued until the late 1920s. Commercial and institutional buildings in these idioms tended to be larger, grander, and more elaborate than earlier nineteenth century revival styles.[201] They include civic monuments, memorial buildings, and commemorative

[196] Ibid., 31.
[197] Longstreth., 35-36.
[198] Ibid., 16.
[199] The First National Bank building at 11 Central SW and the present-day Vander Meer Bakery at 31-33 Central NW were originally exuberantly executed in the Romanesque Revival style, the character-defining features of which were removed in the 1960s. Though not classified as high-style Romanesque Revival examples, some restrained elements of the style can be found on the circa 1890 building at 15 Central Avenue SW and on the 1897 Granite Barbershop at 18 Plymouth Street SW.
[200] McAlester, 212.
[201] Ibid., 220.

sculptures; courthouses and capital buildings; libraries and university buildings; banks and hotels; and fire and police stations.

Chicago's Columbian Exposition in 1893 played a major role in popularizing these changes, particularly in the Midwest states. The Columbian Exposition introduced classical architectural forms and mass-produced building materials and products to business owners in rural and urban commercial centers nationwide. The 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St. Louis, as well as the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and the 1915-1916 Panama-California Exposition in San Diego, further stressed classical design, as well as introducing Mediterranean revival and Arts and Crafts movement styles to the general public. Consequently, the important styles that influenced commercial architecture in Iowa at the beginning of the twentieth century included Colonial Revival (1870-1920); Romanesque Revival (1890-1910); Classical Revival (1890-1920); Renaissance Revival (1890-1920); and Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival (1915-1940). Concurrently, the American Eclectic Movement drew inspiration from a number of sources, including American Colonial-era prototypes, as well as European architecture.

In downtown Le Mars, thirty-one (31) commercial buildings reflect the stylistic influence of the Late 19th and 20th Century Revival styles. Twenty-two (22) of these do not exhibit a specific architectural style, but instead incorporate restrained or loose vernacular references. Those that exhibit an identified style include examples of the Classical Revival and Colonial Revival styles.

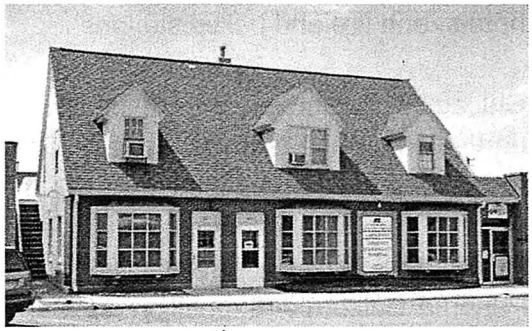
Classical Revival

This design treatment was popular from the turn of the twentieth century through the 1930s, especially for institutional and financial buildings. Columns, pilasters, and/or piers define the primary façade, which often features a portico or recessed entrance. In Le Mars, the former bank buildings at **11 and 15 Central Avenue NW** are excellent examples.



11 Central Avenue NW

COLONIAL REVIVAL



21 1st Avenue NE

Colonial Revival style buildings reflect a rebirth of interest in the styles of early English and Dutch houses on America's Atlantic seaboard. Examples from the late nineteenth century were often loose interpretations of colonial precedents, while those constructed from about 1915 to 1930 typically more closely resemble the original colonial examples. The style became distinctly more simplified with the onset of the Depression and the continued use of the style into the mid-twentieth century.[202] The high degree of popularity, as well as the long span of time within which the style was employed, results in a number of architectural variations. Typically executed in residential architecture, the survey identified an uncommon commercial example at **21 1st Avenue NE**. Reflecting the Cape Cod cottage form of Colonial New England, character-defining features include the side-gabled roof, tight eaves, gabled dormers, and projecting bay windows.

Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movements

At the same time and distinguished from the European and American Colonial-influenced designs, Modern house designs emerged representing the burgeoning impact of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Frank Lloyd Wright's Prairie School style, and European Modernism.[203] Five buildings in downtown Le Mars exhibit the influence of the Late 19th and Early 20th Century American Movement. Those that exhibit an identified style include examples of the Prairie School and Craftsman styles.

PRAIRIE SCHOOL



10 Central Avenue NE

One of the few uniquely American architectural styles, the Prairie School style developed among a creative group of Chicago architects including Frank Lloyd Wright at the turn of the twentieth century. Though a relatively short-lived style, flourishing for only two decades between about 1900 to about 1920, pattern books rapidly spread the style throughout the Midwest and beyond. Prairie School style buildings have rectangular

[202] McAlester, 234-236.
[203] Ibid., 318-19.

massing and a low-pitched roof. Bands of windows and contrasting trim details between stories underscore the horizontal emphasis of the style.[204] Typically executed in residential architecture, restrained examples of Prairie School style are present in downtown Le Mars. The contrasting stone belt course delineating the second story from the first, the series of uninterrupted corbel brick courses at cornice level, the contrasting parapet coping, the series of bands of casement windows, and the use of glazed tile window surrounds and pendants emphasizing the upper-story walls identify the Flint Block/Bower Building at **10 Central Avenue NE** as a Prairie School design.[205]

CRAFTSMAN

Craftsman Style houses enjoyed popularity nationwide from about 1905 through 1930, inspired by the early designs of Charles Sumner Greene and Henry Mather Greene. Greene and Greene practiced architecture in California from 1893 to 1914 and designed both elaborate and simple bungalow houses that incorporated elements from the English Arts and Crafts movement and Central Asian architecture. Architectural magazines and builders' pattern books popularized the style and the one-story Craftsman house became extensively popular as the most fashionable smaller house in the country. Overwhelmingly a residential style, commercial examples such as the Knoop Veterinary Hospital at **26 2nd Street NW** are rare. Character-defining features include: low-pitched roofs; wide overhanging eaves, often with exposed roof rafter ends; and decorative beams or braces under gable eaves.[206]



26 2nd Street NW

Modern Movement Style

The types and styles of commercial buildings and structures built in Le Mars after World War I and before the Great Depression reflected national trends. Most new commercial buildings had minimal architectural embellishment. When it occurred, it often consisted of decorative brickwork and sparse pastel-colored terra-cotta details creating a rich tapestry-like effect. By the 1930s, poured concrete construction and cast concrete ornament became common. Compressed air tools, as well as, electric welding and cutting tools utilizing cemented tungsten carbide and tantalum carbide provided the ability to employ new building materials and processes. The use of welded rigid-frame trusses and the cantilever accelerated the use of steel construction during the 1920s and the Great Depression. The greater strength created by

[204] Ibid., 439-441.
[205] This circa 1879 building was originally executed in the Italianate style. The current appearance dates to a circa 1915 wholesale remodel.
[206] Ibid., 453-454.

the use of steel welding and synthetic adhesives created lighter frame construction. These innovations led to streamlined, standardized construction techniques and further expanded mass production and prefabrication.[207]

The prosperity enjoyed by Iowans in the 1920s led to widespread new construction and brought the Modern Movement's Art Deco style to many Iowa communities by the end of the decade. While some storefronts in downtown Le Mars were remodeled during this period and exhibited elements influenced by the Art Deco aesthetic, the survey identified no examples of building in this style in downtown Le Mars.

State and federal relief programs played an important role in introducing the country to the simplified design and ornament that evolved from the Modernist aesthetic during this period. As part of the employment programs initiated during the Great Depression, the Works Progress Administration (WPA) and Public Works Administration (PWA) stimulated the introduction of these modern architectural aesthetics throughout the country. During this period, architects worked almost exclusively on government-funded projects such as dams, bridges, parks, schools, armories, stadiums, post offices, city halls, and courthouses. The federal programs' use of simple and low-cost designs, based initially on the new Moderne style, spread the idiom nationwide. In the Midwest, the targeted funding for construction programs introduced Modern Movement design throughout the region.


37 Plymouth Street NE

In downtown Le Mars, the sixteen commercial examples of Modern Movement design date from circa 1946 to circa 1973. Of note, three of these buildings date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, yet reflect 1960s wholesale remodeling in the Modern Movement style, a common occurrence nationwide after World War II. During this period, architects began applying the streamlined forms popular in industrial design to buildings.[208] Beginning in the 1920s, the vertical and rectilinear Art Deco style brought structural glass and marble, bronze, and terra cotta into common usage in commercial and institutional buildings. Cast concrete, buff-colored brick, glass, and steel replaced dark red brick and stone. During the 1950s and through the 1970s a second wave of Modernism took place when architects explored the aesthetic boundaries of advances in building technology, which can be seen at the 1953 Le Mars Federal Savings and Loan Association building at **37 Plymouth Street NE.**[209]

[207] Rifkind, 218 and 294.
[208] McAlester, 468.
[209] General Services Administration, *Growth Efficiency, and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005), 6.



28 1st Avenue SW

Commercial buildings dating from the immediate post-World War II era were typically simpler and more restrained in appearance than their predecessors. Lacking the vibrant elements associated with the Modern Movement's earlier Art Deco or Streamlined Moderne designs, the exterior no longer "[conveyed] a slick package so much as it resembles an open container for the salesroom beyond."[210] Instead, these buildings incorporate extensive arrangements of display windows, prominent freestanding signage, and an aesthetically subservient facade wall.[211] The circa 1950 National Food Store building at **28 1st Avenue SW** exemplifies this trend through its blonde brick walls, broad span of display windows, and complete lack of architectural embellishment.

The post-World War II era brought a number of factors that contributed to a shift in building design and the structure of communities in general. The increasingly widespread use of the personal automobile was a major influence, as were the large amounts of relatively inexpensive land surrounding population centers that were anxious for new development after nearly two decades of limited growth. The design tenets of European modernism continued to influence mainstream American architecture and a rejection of historic references continued. Modern Movement commercial design in the second half of the twentieth century spread new concepts of form and space (volume); architectural design was no longer viewed as the arrangement of masses or blocks enclosing interior space, but rather as the employment of abstract planes to define space. The ideas of a façade wall and floor plan as the basis for design were considered outdated ideas. Proponents of the new design philosophy saw buildings as three-dimensional objects that differentiated exterior and interior space while retaining a flow between the two.[212]

Among the tenets of post-World War II Modern Movement design was that the previous aesthetics in use for over a century were antiquated. The dense assemblage of buildings oriented to the street on small blocks forming a grid became outmoded. The most obvious change in exterior spatial order was the new incorporation of a large parking lot as part of building design. Off-street parking, which had begun in the 1920s, now appeared in front of and then around commercial and institutional buildings. By the 1950s, parking lots, particularly for shopping centers, became a primary design factor and the building became a visual backdrop. This design element soon appeared in large shopping centers, as well as many smaller stores and office complexes.[213]

[210] Longstreth, 65.
[211] Ibid.
[212] Ibid., 126.
[213] Ibid., 126-129.

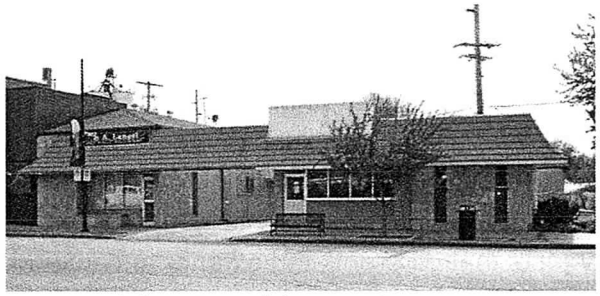
This site arrangement for new commercial development divided land into much larger segments, now defined by major arterial streets and accessed by limited entry points. This pattern allowed for freestanding buildings or clusters of buildings surrounded by abundant open space for automobile parking. This model became common not only in newly developing suburban areas, but as a preferred design for post-World War II redevelopment of traditional urban commercial cores nationwide. Harland and Bartholomew's 1968 plan for downtown Le Mars recommended such redevelopment downtown through the removal of older "mediocre" buildings to create surface parking lots downtown.[214]

Neoeclectic Styles

By the 1960s, references to historic architectural styles returned as builders and architects adapted and incorporated restrained elements of Colonial, Tudor, French, Mediterranean, and Classical architecture into modern building forms. Unlike the highly embellished or exaggerated early twentieth century examples, late-twentieth-century interpretations of historic idioms were highly restrained and stylized.[215] Though most commonly executed in residential architecture, five Neoeclectic Style commercial buildings were identified in the survey area. The most common being the Mansard subtype.

MANSARD STYLE

Striving for an inexpensive yet dramatic effect, the late 1960s and 1970s Mansard style incorporates a sloping upper wall surface, typically covered with shingles. The survey identified three commercial buildings, such as circa 1968 **115 and 119 Central Avenue SW** that exhibit this late-twentieth century development.



115 (R) and 119 (L) Central Avenue SW

[214] Harland Bartholomew Associates, 1968, 3-15.

[215] Because these styles are typically less than fifty years of age, the National Register program does, not classify them by style and the following terminology is based on McAlester's *A Field Guide to American Houses*.

ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS

As was typical of other Iowa towns, many of Le Mars' early buildings were not architect designed. With the exception of important civic buildings, master carpenters and masons contracted by property owners designed the majority of buildings in small cities like Le Mars. However, during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, professionalism in the practice of architecture became firmly established in Iowa. Prosperous times dramatically changed the appearance of the state's cities, leading to increased architectural sophistication.

In Le Mars, a variety of builders and contractors constructed buildings downtown over time, with the earliest listed in 1871. That year, Hentges Brothers and the partnership of Jackson, Betsworth, Walrath, and Johnson are listed as building contractors.[216] The earliest directory to contain listings for architects was in 1893 when the directory included no less than three resident architects in Le Mars -- Round & Burkhead, Elam Miller, B.H. Huelsmann.[217]

Le Mars has benefitted from several designs of architects and master builders. Unfortunately, of the many builders and architects listed in the directories over time, the historic record does not make clear which buildings they designed/built. It is expected that future survey efforts will identify additional architects and builders that influenced the built environment of the city. Of those builders/architects that can be attributed to specific buildings downtown, are the following:

William Beuttler, architect

A native of Missouri (born c1884) and the son of German immigrants, William Beuttler was in a partnership with Ralph Arnold in **Beuttler & Arnold** from at least 1913 through 1937. Based in Sioux City, the firm completed buildings throughout the region, including the following known structures:[218]

Florence Crittenden Home and Maternity Hospital, Sioux City (1913) NR
1st Methodist Episcopal Church, Sioux City (1916)
1st Trust & Savings Bank, Moville (1919)
Sioux City Masonic Temple (1922) NR
YWCA Building, Sioux City (1923)
First Baptist Church of Vermillion, SD (1925) NR
Reynolds Elementary School, Spencer (1926)
Woodcock Building, Spencer (1931) NR
First Methodist Episcopal Church, Nevada (1931)
United State Post Office and Courthouse, Sioux City (1932)
Eagles Lodge, Le Mars (1932)
Kirchner-French Memorial Library, Peterson (1937)

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[216] Freeman, 418.
[217] "Le Mars City Directory," (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893).
[218] Iowa SHPO survey records, received via email from SHPO staff person, Berry Bennett, on July 25, 2011.

By 1950, Beuttler was operating on his own when he designed the 1950 YWCA Building in Sioux City, as well as the 1953 Le Mars Federal Savings and Loan Association at 37 Plymouth Street NE.

Willis G. Bolser, developer

A native of Wisconsin, Bolser (1863-1928) came to Iowa in the late 1870s to work for the Illinois Central Railroad. He became president of Le Mars' German American Savings Bank in 1893 (when it was originally located at 12 Central Avenue SE) and remained so until his death in 1928. He was president of the bank when it moved to 11 Central Avenue NW and he was instrumental in the construction of the existing bank building in 1915. Bolser was known to have also been behind the construction and development of: the Central High School (now Plymouth County Museum), the 1925 Bolser Building at 20 Plymouth Street SW, the 1926 Armory at 43 1st Avenue NE, Bolser Park, and a number of dwellings in Le Mars. In addition, local sources suggest he had a significant role in the development of the Plymouth Milling Company Office (200 1st Avenue SW). Though he was a developer in practice, the census always shows his occupation as banker.

Bunjes Brothers, based in Le Mars, constructed the circa 1965 Athens Building at 115 Plymouth Street NW.

Design Engineering Co. was based in Sioux City and was responsible for the design of the 1965 Naef Building at 129 1st Street NW.

Geiger Construction Company of Sheldon, Iowa, was active in northwestern Iowa from the 1910s through at least the 1930s. They are known to have constructed several buildings in Sheldon, including the 1935 Sheldon Post Office, the 1912 St. Patrick's Catholic Church, and the 1929 remodel of the Lyric Theater in Sheldon.[219] The company also received the contract for the 1926 Armory at 43 1st Avenue NE in Le Mars. During the 1930s, Geiger Construction was also responsible for the construction of buildings in Matlock and Spencer, Iowa, as well as concrete culverts in the Hawarden area.[220]

Hemen Construction of St. Louis received the contract for building the 1914 Le Mars Post Office at 105 1st Street NE.

Huntington, Ewing & McKinney Architects, a Storm Lake firm, designed the 1964 Le Mars Savings Bank at 37 1st Ave NW.

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[219] "Sheldon – St. Patrick," *Catholic Globe*, http://www.catholicglobe.net/parhist/NW/sheldon.htm (accessed September 8, 2011), and *Hawarden Independent,* August 22, 1935, and *Alton Democrat,* July 5, 1929. Available from http://www.newspaperarchive.com (accessed September 8, 2011).

[220] The buildings in Spencer are within the National Register-listed Grand Avenue Historic Commercial District. *Hawarden Independent,* April 12, 1934, and *Sheldon Mail,* July 10, 1915. Available from http://www.newspaperarchive.com (accessed September 8, 2011).

J.A. Huxtable, builder

A native of Wisconsin and the son of English immigrants, Huxtable (1858-1935) came to Le Mars in 1880 where he found construction work for the Close Brothers and on the Moreton ranch. He appears in the Le Mars city directories and census as a builder and contractor from 1885 through 1930. Huxtable completed many buildings in the region, including structures in Kingsley, Akron, Cleghorn, Anthon, Lawton, Pierson, and Battle Creek. In addition, he completed numerous dwellings in Le Mars; he recalled that he'd built at least eighty-one in Le Mars during his career.[221] The 1923 Masonic Temple at 128 Central Avenue SE, as well as the 1924 Le Mars High School building are attributed to him.

Elam Miller, builder/architect

A native of Wisconsin or Illinois[222] (born 1860), Miller came to Le Mars between 1880 and 1890. In the spring of 1890, he advertised his services in the *Le Mars Sentinel* as a contractor and builder of public buildings and "fine residences a specialty" which included an illustration of a Stick Style house.[223] The 1893 Le Mars city directory lists him as both an architect and a builder.

Buildings in Le Mars for which he is known to have served as contractor include the Le Mars National Bank at 11 Central SW (1892), the Koenig Building at 18 Plymouth SW (1897), and the Plymouth County Courthouse (1902).[224] By 1920, the census showed Miller had moved to Amery, Wisconsin, where he worked as a building contractor.

Nemmers Construction Company & Nemmers Brothers Construction, builders

John G. Nemmers (born 1881), a native of Iowa, was the son of German immigrants and the son of a carpenter. He worked as a carpenter under his father and then on his own as a builder through the 1910s and 1920s. He and Joe Nemmers (relation undetermined) both appear in the city directories as local builders throughout the 1910s. They completed the construction of Saint Anthony's School in Hospers; and in Le Mars, the construction of the 1932 Eagles Lodge (104 1st Avenue SW) and the 1952 Neisius Motor Company building (22 2nd Street NE) are attributed to them.

John's son Elmer (born 1911) took over the family construction business after attaining his civil engineering degree from the University of Iowa and working for several years on construction projects for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and Standard Oil. He returned to Le Mars in 1939 and the following year formed Nemmers Brothers Construction with his brother, Orville. The firm completed commercial construction throughout northwest Iowa. In downtown Le Mars, the construction of the 1962 Knights of Columbus Hall (120 1st Avenue NE) and the 1971 Red Owl Super Market (46 1st Street SW) are attributed to the firm.

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[221] "John A. Huxtable Pioneer Citizen Taken by Death," *Le Mars Semi-Weekly Sentinel*, August 16, 1935.
[222] The 1900 federal census shows his place of birth as Wisconsin, however the 1920 census shows his place of birth as Illinois.
[223] *Le Mars Sentinel*, April 1, 1890.
[224] "New Court House," *Le Mars Sentinel*, May 6, 1902. Available from http://www.iowaoldpress.com/IA/Plymouth/1902/MAY.html (accessed July 24, 2011).

Neubrand Construction Co. of Le Mars served as the building contractor for the 1965 Naef Building at 129 1st Street NW. William Joseph. Neubrand (1914-1979), the son of a building carpenter, operated his construction business with his wife, Madeline, for many years after their marriage in 1937.[225] The business is still in operation under the direction of their son, Bill Neubrand, Jr.

Olin H. Round, architect/builder

A native of Michigan (born 1868) and the son of a carpenter, Olin H. Round arrived as a young man with his family to Le Mars between 1878 and 1885.[226] Round's formal education record is as yet unknown, but by 1893 he was listed in the Le Mars city directory as a builder, as well as a partner with George W. Burkhead in the architectural firm of Round & Burkhead. The partnership advertised their skills not only in building design, but with construction estimates and project management.[227]

The firm designed homes throughout Le Mars during a major building boom, but dissolved in November 1893. At this time Burkhead moved to Sioux City to partner with J.S. Reese and Round formed Round & Sons, which went on to design homes and buildings in Le Mars.[228] Among the few known buildings attributed to Round is the 1895 east part of the Kluckhohn Block at 26 Plymouth SW. Round stayed in Le Mars only a few more years and by 1904 he was living and working in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he worked as an architect in his own private practice.[229]

William LaBarthe Steele

Steele (1875-1949), a native of Springfield, Illinois, graduated from the University of Illinois' architecture program in 1896. Upon graduation, he immediately set out for Chicago, where he worked under Louis Sullivan from 1896-1900. He subsequently moved to Pittsburgh, where he worked in the firms of architect Thomas Rodd, architect for the Westinghouse Company, Adlen & Harlow, prolific designers in the Richardsonian Romanesque and Beaux Arts styles, and then Sidney F. Heckert, who specialized in educational buildings and churches.[230] After marrying Mariane Greene in 1901, the couple moved to Sioux City where Steele accepted a position with Wilfried W. Beach in 1904. He joined Beach as a partner of the following year and by 1906, at age 31, he opened his own office in Sioux City.[231]

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[225] United State Census Bureau, Iowa, Plymouth County, 1930, http://www.ancestry.com (accessed October 20, 2011).
[226] *Iowa State Census Collection 1836-1925*, [database on-line], http://www.ancestry.com (accessed July 24, 2011).
[227] *Le Mars City Directory* (Omaha, Nebraska: Ed. Smith & Company, 1893), cover.
[228] *The Sentinel* (Le Mars), April 3, 1893 and May 10, 1894.
[229] United State Census Bureau, Iowa, Plymouth County, 1920, http://www.ancestry.com (accessed June 30, 2011).
[230] Brian Charles Hughes, "Sermons in Stone: The Ecclesiastical Designs of William LaBarthe Steele 1907-1928," (master's thesis, UVA, School of Architecture, 1994), and *Promoting the Prairie School in the Heartland*; "William L. Steele of Sioux City, Iowa," blog entry by Richard Guy Wilson, 2009 http://historyculturebybicycle.blogspot.com/2009_04_01_archive.html (accessed June 24, 2011), and *Prairie School Traveler*, http://www.prairieschooltraveler.com/html/ia/siouxcity/siouxcity.html (accessed June 24, 2011).
[231] Shank, Wesley I., *Iowa's Historic Architects* (Iowa City, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 156-157.

Between 1907 and 1928 Steele designed approximately thirty church buildings and became one of the most influential architects in the tri-state region. Not only did he design the National Historic Landmark Woodbury County Courthouse in Sioux City, the largest Prairie School style civic building, but he designed numerous institutional buildings throughout the region. These city halls, libraries, courthouses, and hospitals are all landmark buildings in their respective communities. At least five buildings in Le Mars, as well as two churches outside the city in Plymouth County, are documented as his designs.

During this period, Steele was active not only locally but statewide and nationally. He became president of Iowa Chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1914, as well as wrote a series of articles in the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects, Architectural Record, The American Architect, and House Beautiful.* He then went on to be a vice president of the national AIA, in 1925.[232]

With the completion of the Woodbury County Courthouse and the widespread praise it received, Steele found the Prairie School style more readily accepted by new clients, and much of his work thereafter was in this style. However, of the many works he completed for the Roman Catholic Dioceses, in particular those outside Sioux City, exhibit more traditional designs. After designing more than 300 projects in the tri-state region, among them approx twenty-four churches and several homes in Le Mars, Steele moved to Omaha in 1928.[233]

In Omaha, Steele worked for another eighteen years, becoming a partner in the prolific firm of Thomas R. Kimball and Josiah Sandham. His son joined him in the firm in 1946, as his health began to fail, and the firm became known as Steele, Sandham, and Steele. Shortly after the partnership formed, Steele retired to his daughter's home in Wisconsin where he died in 1949.[234] (A selected list of buildings attributed to Steele can be found in Appendix C.)

Steele & Hilgers Architects (Sioux City)
George B. Hilgers (1894-1979) began as a draftsman in Steele's firm in 1913 and became partner in 1926. Though Steele left for Omaha in 1928, the partnership's designs were executed until 1930.

Known works include:

Armory, Le Mars (1926)
St. Joseph Church, near Neptune (1925-26)
Kappa Sigma Fraternity House, Iowa City (1926)
Knights of Columbus Hall, Sioux City (1925)
Smith Villa Branch Library, Sioux City (1927) NR
Alberson House, Sioux City (1927)

[232] "William L. Steele of Sioux City, Iowa," blog entry by Richard Guy Wilson.
[233] Hughes, 7-24.
[234] Hughes, 24, and Wilson, "William L. Steele of Sioux City, Iowa."

Fairmount Park Branch Library, Sioux City (1927)
Jacobsen House, Sioux City (1928)
Redeemer Lutheran Church, Sioux City (1928)
Johnson House, Pocahontas (1929)
Williges Building, Sioux City (1929) NR
Fire Station No. 3, Sioux City (1929) NR
Sioux City Public Library, North Side Branch (1929) NR
Heelen Hall, Sioux City (1930)
Sioux City Public Library, Riverside Branch (1929-30)

Oscar Wenderoth, architect

Born in Philadelphia (1871-1938) and the son of a portrait painter, Wenderoth attended the Franklin Institute Drawing School 1888/89 before apprenticing with several leading Philadelphia architecture firms, including T.P. Chandler, Cope & Stewardson, W.L. Price, F.M. Day, Lindley Johnson, and Kennedy, Hays & Kelsey. By 1897 he was a draftsman in the U.S. Office of the Supervising Architect and by August 1904 had become head draftsman for the Superintendant of the U. S. Capitol. He resigned in 1909 to work for the New York firm of Carrere & Hastings, however only three years later he returned to Washington, D. C. to succeed James Knox Taylor as Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury.[235]

Wenderoth served as the Supervising Architect for the U.S. Department of the Treasury from 1912 to 1915. Though only holding this position for a short time, he oversaw the design of hundreds of buildings nationwide, including dozens that are now listed in the National Register of Historic Places. In Le Mars he oversaw the design of the 1914 Le Mars Post Office at 105 1st Street NE. In 1915, Wenderoth left the public sector for good, joining the firm of Weary & Alford Company of Chicago.

John Werling, architect/builder

A native of Ohio and the son of French and German immigrants, Werling (1848-1921) came to Iowa in 1866 where he learned the carpentry trade in Tipton. He came to Le Mars in 1882. The census and directory listings from 1885 through 1920 consistently show him listed as a carpenter and/or architect.[236] Werling is known to have designed "some of the finest residences in the city," as well as the 1903 Carnegie Library at 200 Central Avenue SE.[237]

Wiltgen Construction

N.W. Wiltgen was a prominent local builder in Le Mars before World War II and appears listed as a carpenter in the city directories throughout the 1910s. In 1945 he formed a partnership with his two sons and engaged in residential, farm, and light commercial construction. In the

[235] *American Architects and Buildings,* http://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21542 (accessed July 24, 2011).
[236] United State Census Bureau, Iowa, Plymouth County, 1885, 1910, 1920, http://www.ancestry.com (accessed June 30, 2011), and *Le Mars, Iowa: The County Seat of Plymouth County,* and Plymouth County Telephone Company, *Directory No. 30* (Le Mars, Iowa: Sentinel Print, 1915).
[237] *Le Mars Semi-weekly Sentinel,* May 22, 1903.

late 1940s, their work comprised primarily of commercial and highway construction. In 1950, Albert left the partnership and developed his own ready-mix concrete business, which continued well into the 1960s. Wiltgen Construction is still in operation and among the many buildings they constructed are the 1960 Captain Jake Koenig Memorial National Guard Armory, and two downtown buildings -- the 1967 Gambles Store (35 Central Avenue NW), 1967 Dull Law Building (38 1st Avenue NW), and the 1964 Le Mars Savings Bank (37 1st Avenue NW).

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

DESCRIPTION, SIGNIFICANCE, AND REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

I. PROPERTY TYPE: Commercial Buildings

COMMERCIAL BUILDING SUBTYPES[238]

A. One-Part Commercial Block Buildings
B. Two-Part Commercial Block Buildings

DESCRIPTION: This property type includes buildings designed and constructed specifically to function as commercial buildings. They are constructed primarily of brick and stone at a height of one to three stories. Traditional nineteenth and early twentieth century building materials for commercial buildings were red or brown brick, while buff brick and concrete block appear in some buildings erected during the early to mid-twentieth century. Small commercial buildings were often of wood construction during the initial settlement period of the late nineteenth century and concrete masonry units dominated after World War II. Only commercial buildings of substantial size executed in a particular popular style appear to be the work of architects; the remainder are popular utilitarian buildings erected by contractors, master carpenters, and brick masons. Generally, they have flat roofs with parapets.

Retail / Professional / Service Commercial Buildings

Usually sited on one or two lots, these buildings have a rectangular plan with the narrow side facing the street. They are typically one or two stories in height. The multi-story designs incorporate public sales/service spaces on the first floor and professional office space, meeting rooms, residential quarters and/or storage space on the upper floors. A characteristic feature of the property type is a well-defined ground floor 'storefront' that is distinctly separate from the upper stories and reflects the difference in uses of these levels. Storefronts offered retail or wholesale vending areas, lobby space, showrooms, and/or office space. Upper-floor uses included professional services such as offices for physicians, dentists, lawyers, real estate brokers, and/or government agencies, as well as residential units or meeting rooms for private clubs and fraternal organizations

A number of buildings of the commercial functional property type in Le Mars do not exhibit a distinct architectural style; instead their design features loose reflections of commercial styles popular in the era in which they were built. These buildings are typically of brick, hollow ceramic tile, or concrete block masonry construction with a flat roof. Depending on the date of construction, structural elements include the use of load-bearing brick, reinforced hollow ceramic tile or concrete block, or poured-in-place reinforced concrete.

[238] Due to the restricted nature of the survey area, the survey identified only three distinct subtypes for which at least two examples were present. It is expected that future surveys will identify additional commercial subtypes.

Commercial sales and service buildings that line Le Mars' downtown commercial streets incorporate storefronts and, if more than one story in height, have residential and office space on the upper floors. They generally feature symmetrical façades that are two to four bays wide and are either stand-alone buildings sharing party walls or similar conjoined buildings with separate street-level entrances. These buildings are distinguished first by building form and second by architectural style. Due to their functional nature, many commercial buildings only exhibit restrained architectural details. The first-story storefront is the most prominent and distinctive feature of a commercial sales or service building and is an important marketing element. The rest of the commercial building's key design elements visually relate to the storefront. Important character-defining elements of the storefront are a sign frieze over the transom and/or display windows, a storefront lintel/cornice, transom windows above the display windows, and a bulkhead below the windows and entrances. Defining the upper façade are the roof/parapet, cornice, and windows. These buildings occupy deep, narrow, rectangular lots extending back to an alley with the façade abutting the sidewalk. Most are simple buildings of one or two stories, but a significant percentage feature high style designs or creative fronts. Their design, materials, and architectural treatments reflect the period of their construction. These buildings occupy Le Mars' major commercial streets. They share the following common characteristics.

- Masonry walls
- Multiple bay facades
- Symmetrical or balanced fenestration
- Located along commercial corridors
- Constructed primarily between the years 1870 and 1962
- Retain sufficient historic architectural integrity to enable identification with the property type. This includes the primary façade appearance and preferably, although not necessarily, the basic configurations of the original interior plan delineating public and private spaces.

SIGNIFICANCE: Commercial Buildings found in downtown Le Mars are significant for their associations with the historic contexts identified and documented above in the Historic Contexts section (beginning on page 24). In particular, they impart information about Le Mars' role as a regional commercial and railroad center and the City's patterns of development in the late nineteenth century through the mid-twentieth century. They also reflect the types of commercial supporting resources that served the citizens of Le Mars during this period. The extant historic commercial buildings represent the continuum of late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century commercial functional types and styles. As a group, they derive their architectural significance from the number and variety of building types and styles that collectively represent an important facet in the evolution of the city's commercial architecture from the 1870s through the early 1960s.

This property type has significance primarily in the area of ARCHITECTURE, COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, and COMMERCE.

Buildings of this Property Type may be listed under National Register Criteria A and C. The significance of this property type is for its contribution to the history of Le Mars, Iowa, and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

A-1 Commercial Buildings that illustrate the initial and subsequent evolution of Le Mars into a regional commercial and railroad center in the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries.

A-2 Commercial Buildings that, through historic events and associations, are part of and have direct associations with the cohesive assemblage of the property types that are historically interrelated by design, planning, and/or historic associations.

A-3 Commercial Buildings that are part of neighborhoods that developed along major thoroughfares that illustrate the patterns of development of the city.

A-4 Commercial Buildings that reflect economic forces that contributed to the development of Le Mars.

B-1 Commercial Buildings that have primary associations with individuals whose success, talent, and/or ingenuity contributed to the economic development of Le Mars.

C-1 Commercial Buildings that introduced or illustrate technological changes in the design and materials associated with the period of development.

C-2 Commercial Buildings whose size and stylistic treatment reflects definite periods in the development of the property type.

C-5 Commercial Buildings that illustrate expressions of architectural styles and vernacular adaptations thereof that are rare, notable, or influential to the aesthetic development of the city's architecture.

C-6 Commercial Buildings that are the work of skilled architects, builders, and/or developers, particularly those noted for their work associations with commercial properties.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS: To be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the characteristics and qualities described above must be sufficiently illustrated and the degree of integrity required must be sufficient to support the significance of the building's specific contribution to one or more historic contexts identified above (pages 24-79).

Aspects of integrity to be considered include location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, associations with established historic contexts and ability to convey feelings relating to its associative and/or information value. The construction of the building or structure must date from between 1869 and 1962. In addition, the property types must be located within the City of Le Mars.

Generally, this requires that these commercial buildings retain the architectural composition, ornamental details, and materials of their original primary exterior elevation(s). Because the arrangement of the ground floor, in relation to upper stories (where present), wall material, symmetrical façades, and roof treatments generally define the property type, the retention of these defining elements and their component parts is important. Nevertheless, due to the age of these buildings and their continued use, a certain degree of deterioration and loss is to be expected. Alterations such as the loss or removal of minor ornamental detailing and/or the replacement of door and window units (while retaining the original openings) is acceptable when this infill can be removed without damaging or altering the original opening and framing elements. The installation of awnings or coverings over the transom area is reversible and when the original is intact does not compromise the integrity of the building.

Because the exterior materials are important character-defining elements, the use of non-original wall covering impacts the historic integrity of the buildings. The use of irreversible wall claddings, such as synthetic stone, when coupled with other integrity losses should not exceed impacting 30 percent of the primary façade(s). The use of reversible non-historic siding also hinders the integrity, unless the defining elements of the upper stories are visible and it can be ascertained that the majority of the original storefront openings are intact beneath the non-historic siding. Additions and changes that are historic alterations and that retain sufficient integrity from their period of construction have gained significance in their own right.

Interior changes, including the loss of ornamental detailing and trim, specific architectural elements, and even the wholesale rearrangement of floor plans, may not be significant to the building's perceived association to certain historic contexts if the defining exterior design elements, location, setting, or contribution to the streetscape remains intact. Buildings that are identified for their contribution to the understanding of interior spatial arrangements should retain significant defining architectural features. Nevertheless, the retention of historic public and private spaces in certain subtypes (i.e., retail stores) and specialty commercial buildings (i.e., movie theaters) is important when considering the integrity of the building in relation to its historic function and associations.

For a building to be eligible for **individual** significance the property must meet the following criteria.

- The majority of the building's openings on the primary façade should be unaltered or altered in a sensitive and appropriate manner, using similar materials, profiles, and sizes as the original building elements.

- The exterior masonry or original wall cladding should remain intact and exposed.
- Significant character-defining decorative elements should be intact.
- Design elements intrinsic to the building's style and plan should be intact.
- The overall feeling or character of the building for the time period in which it was erected should be intact.

To be eligible as a **contributing** element to a district a property must meet the following criteria. Buildings and structures in this property type that are not individually eligible but contribute to the integrity of a larger collection of historic buildings typically have some alteration of original building fenestration using replacement elements composed of new materials and profiles that do not cause irreversible damage to the original fenestration openings.

- The building should retain significant portions of the original exterior materials, in particular on the primary façade.
- Significant character-defining elements should remain intact.
- Alterations to the building should be reversible and the historic character of the property could be easily restored.
- Additions are confined to the rear elevation and should be executed in an appropriate manner, respecting the materials, scale, and character of the original building design and, if removed, the essential form of the building remains intact.
- Change or lack of maintenance should only slightly weaken the historic feeling or character of the building.

Historic Commercial Buildings that reflect a serious loss of integrity are not eligible for listing in the National Register if:

- the majority of the building's openings were altered in an irreversible manner using different materials, profiles, and sizes than the original;
- the exterior wall material has been altered, covered, or is missing on the primary façade and on major portions of secondary elevations;
- non-historic cladding has been added on the primary façade and on major portions of secondary elevations unless there is sufficient indication upon visual inspection that, if removed, enough of the original wall materials remain to restore the original appearance;
- exterior alterations are irreversible or would be extremely difficult, costly, and possibly damaging to the building to reverse; and
- non-historic additions do not respect the materials, scale, or architectural character of the original building design.

In addition to the above requirements, each subtype must be evaluated individually to ensure that the physical characteristics that contribute to the historic context are sufficiently intact to merit listing in the National Register and that no building is rejected inappropriately.

COMMERCIAL BUILDING SUBTYPES

IA. PROPERTY SUBTYPE: One-Part Commercial Block Buildings

DESCRIPTION: The basic One-Part Commercial Block building form is one story in height and generally housed a single business. Simple architectural styling, often through patterned brickwork on the upper façade wall, emphasizes the storefront. Other stylistic applications included shaped parapets or applied cornices. Those found in Le Mars reflect the use of primarily brick construction materials and appear along major arterial and connector streets.

SIGNIFICANCE: In addition to the significance documented for the general property type, this subtype is an important building for sales and services commercial businesses found downtown and along adjacent commercial corridors.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS: In addition to those specified for the general property type, because of the small size and simple design, the retention of a high percentage of the character-defining elements of the cornice, sign frieze, window system, entrance, and storefront footprint is required. New storefront glazing and entrance door replacement are not considered significant alterations.

EXAMPLES IN SURVEY AREA: Selected examples of One-Part Commercial Block buildings within the survey area that retain sufficient integrity to contribute to a district and are associated with at least one of the historic contexts outlined above include the following: (see Appendix B for a list of all surveyed properties and their National Register eligibility status.)

17 1st Avenue NW (75-00608), built c1903
21 1st Avenue NW (75-00609), built c1910
23 1st Avenue SW (75-00613), built c1928
28 1st Avenue SW (75-00615), built c1950
15 2nd Street NE (75-00630), built c1918
38 Central Avenue NE (75-00645), built 1956

I.B PROPERTY SUBTYPE: Two-Part Commercial Block Buildings

DESCRIPTION: Slightly more complex than their one-story cousins are Two-Part Commercial Block buildings. These are typically two to three stories in height and feature a clear visual separation of interior use between the first-story customer sales/services function and the upper-story office/meeting room/residential uses. Styling on the first story focuses on the storefront glazing and entrance(s). Design of the upper stories identifies the building's architectural influences. Those found in Le Mars are of masonry construction and reflect the popular stylistic influences of the period of their construction.

SIGNIFICANCE: In addition to the significance documented for the general property type, this subtype is an important building form used for sales and services downtown and is the dominant commercial subtype. They can be further classified by their architectural treatment and the arrangement of their storefronts.[239]

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS: Because of the variety of architectural treatments and size, the integrity thresholds established for the general property type apply to this subtype.

EXAMPLES IN SURVEY AREA: Selected examples of Two-Part Commercial Block Buildings within the survey area that retain sufficient integrity to contribute to a district and are associated with at least one of the historic contexts outlined above include the following: (see Appendix B for a list of all surveyed properties and their National Register eligibility status.)

13 1st Avenue NW (75-00607), built 1902
15 1st Street NE (75-00620), built c1879
10 Central NE (75-00634), built c1879
34 Central NE (75-00643), built c1879
102 Central NE (75-00646), built c1890
13 Central NW (75-00656), built c1879
21 Central NW (75-00660), built c1879

II. PROPERTY TYPE: Institutional Buildings

SUBTYPES
A. Government & Educational Facilities
B. Social Halls

DESCRIPTION: A very important component driving community development patterns are the institutional resources that supported and enhanced the lives of residents, including schools, libraries, churches, and civic buildings. These buildings are found in the CBD, as well as along major arterial and collector streets bounding residential neighborhoods and often do not conform in size, scale, or massing to the adjacent residential buildings found within the neighborhood. Those buildings and structures of substantial size and executed in a particular popular style were the work of architects. Their function determines their design and they appear in distinct subtypes as referenced above.

This property type includes buildings and associated landscape features designed and constructed specifically to enhance the health and welfare, as well as meet the social, cultural and recreational needs and preferences of the residents of Le Mars. The buildings erected for these purposes in the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries are found along major

[239] See Longstreth for additional sub-classifications of commercial buildings.

arterial and collector streets, often near the transition from the CBD to the surrounding residential neighborhoods. They often do not conform in size, scale, or massing to the adjacent buildings found within the adjacent neighborhood. The traditional building material during the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries was brick, which was typically combined with stone embellishment. During the early to mid-twentieth century, buff brick and smooth stone appears on some of the institutional buildings erected during this time. Those buildings and structures of substantial size and executed in a particular popular style were the work of architects. Their function determines their design and they appear in distinct subtypes as referenced above. They share most or all of the following common characteristics.

- Brick and/or stone walls
- Executed in an identified architectural style
- Located at or near the edge of the CBD
- Retain sufficient historic architectural integrity to enable identification with the property type. This includes the primary façade appearance and preferably, although not necessarily, the basic configurations of the original interior plan delineating public and private spaces.

SIGNIFICANCE: These non-residential and non-commercial properties have direct associations with Le Mars' social history and development patterns and are significant for their associations with the historic contexts identified and documented above (pages 24-79). They impart information about the patterns of development and supporting resources established in the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries.

This property type has significance primarily in the area of ARCHITECTURE, COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, EDUCATION, SOCIAL HISTORY, and ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION.

The Institutional Property Type resource may be listed under National Register Criteria A, B. and/or C. The significance of this property type is for its contribution to the history of Le Mars and includes, but is not limited to, the following criteria.

A-1 Institutional resources that illustrate the initial and subsequent evolution of Le Mars in the late nineteenth through mid-twentieth centuries.

A-2 Institutional resources that, through historic events and associations, are part of and have direct associations with the cohesive assemblage of groups of contiguous buildings that are historically interrelated by design, planning, and/or historic associations.

A-3 Institutional resources that are part of areas that developed along major thoroughfares that illustrate the patterns of development of the city.

B-1 Institutional resources having primary associations with individuals whose success, talent, and/or ingenuity contributed to the historic development of Le Mars.

C-1 Institutional resources that introduced or illustrate technological changes in the design and materials associated with the period of development.

C-3 Institutional resources that illustrate the variety of architectural styles associated with the development of Le Mars.

C-4 Institutional resources whose size and stylistic treatment reflects definite periods in the development of the property type.

C-5 Institutional resources that illustrate expressions of architectural styles and vernacular adaptations thereof that are either rare, notable, or influential to the aesthetic development of the city's architecture.

C-6 Institutional resources that are the work of skilled architects, builders, developers, landscape architects, and/or engineers, particularly those noted for their work associations with institutional properties.

C-7 Open spaces and built environments that reflect vernacular patterns of land use and division, architecture, circulation, and social order. These patterns may indicate regional trends or unique aspects of a community's development.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS: To be eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the character-defining elements and qualities associated with the property type must be sufficiently illustrated and the degree of integrity required must be sufficient to support the significance of the resource's specific contribution to one or more historic contexts identified above (pages 24-79). Aspects of integrity to be considered include location, setting, design, workmanship, materials, associations with established historic contexts and ability to convey feelings relating to its associative and/or information value. The construction of the property, landscape element, building, or structure must date from between 1869 and 1962. In addition, the property types must be located within the City of Le Mars.

Generally, this requires that buildings and structures retain the architectural composition, ornamental details, and materials of their original primary exterior elevation(s). Alterations such as the loss or removal of minor ornamental detailing and/or the replacement of door and window units (while retaining the original openings) are acceptable when this infill can be removed without damaging or altering the original opening and framing elements. Because the exterior materials are important character-defining elements, the use of non-original wall covering impacts the integrity of the buildings. The use of irreversible wall claddings, such as synthetic stone, when coupled with other integrity losses should not exceed impacting 30 percent of the primary façade(s). The use of reversible non-historic siding also hinders the integrity, unless the

defining elements of the upper stories are visible and it can be ascertained that the majority of the original storefront openings are intact beneath the non-historic siding. Additions and changes that are historic alterations and that retain sufficient integrity from their period of construction have gained significance in their own right

Interior changes, including the loss of ornamental detailing and trim, specific architectural elements, and even the wholesale rearrangement of floor plans may not be significant to the building's perceived association to certain historic contexts if the defining exterior design elements, location, setting, or contribution to the streetscape remain intact. Buildings that are identified for their contribution to the understanding of interior spatial arrangements should retain significant defining architectural features. Nevertheless, the retention of historic public and private spaces in certain subtypes such as public buildings and social halls is important in consideration of the integrity of the building in relation to its historic function and associations.

For a building to be eligible for individual significance the property must meet the following criteria.

- The majority of the building's openings on the primary façade should be unaltered or altered in a sensitive and appropriate manner, using similar materials, profiles, and sizes as the original building elements.
- The exterior brick masonry or original wall cladding should remain intact and exposed.
- Significant character-defining decorative elements should be intact.
- Design elements intrinsic to the building's style and plan should be intact.
- The overall feeling or character of the building for the time period in which it was erected should be intact.

For a building to be eligible as a contributing element to a district, a property must meet the following criteria.

- The building should retain significant portions of the original exterior materials, in particular on the primary façade.
- Significant character-defining elements should remain intact.
- Alterations to the building should be reversible and the historic character of the property could be easily restored.
- Additions are confined to the rear elevation and should be executed in an appropriate manner, respecting the materials, scale, and character of the original building design and, if removed, the essential form of the building remains intact.
- A change or lack of maintenance should only slightly weaken the historic feeling or character of the building.

Buildings that reflect a serious loss of integrity are not eligible for listing in the National Register if the following conditions exist.

- The majority of the building's openings were altered in an irreversible manner using different materials, profiles, and sizes than the original.
- The exterior wall material has been altered, covered, or is missing on the primary façade and on major portions of secondary elevations.
- Non-historic cladding has been added on the primary façade and on major portions of secondary elevations unless there is sufficient indication upon visual inspection that, if removed, enough of the original brick walls remains to restore the original appearance.
- Exterior alterations are irreversible or would be extremely difficult, costly, and possibly damaging to the building to reverse.
- Non-historic additions do not respect the materials, scale, or architectural character of the original building design.

INSTITUTIONAL BUILDING SUBTYPES

II.A PROPERTY SUBTYPE: Government & Educational Facilities

DESCRIPTION: Located along major collector and arterial streets are government, civic, and library buildings, which are commonly located on corner lots. These large one- and two-story brick buildings have a horizontal orientation to the street and are often surrounded by open space. They typically are architect-designed buildings exhibiting a high degree of stylistic features and ornamentation. Many are executed in popular revival styles of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, often combining different revival idioms. The public entrance in the primary façade is highly articulated in earlier examples; after World War II, Modern Movement examples downplay the entrance. Most are free-standing buildings with elevations featuring a symmetrical arrangement of large windows, as well as side and rear entrances.

SIGNIFICANCE: In addition to the significance documented for the general property type, this property subtype is an important example of the variety of public and civic buildings that supported and enhanced Le Mars' community life. As part of a continuum they provide insight into changing governmental and educational practices in the community.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS: The integrity thresholds established for the general property type apply to this subtype. Because the size and design of the windows and entrances are an important functional design element, they should retain their original openings and replacement window units should match the original. Public interior spaces of should be included in the assessment of the overall integrity of the building.

EXAMPLES IN SURVEY AREA: Selected examples of Government and Educational Facilities within the survey area that retain sufficient integrity to contribute to a district and are associated with at least one of the historic contexts outlined above include the following: (see Appendix B for a list of all surveyed properties and their National Register eligibility status.)

43 1st Avenue NE (75-00605), built 1926
105 1st Street NE (75-00623), built 1914
127 Central Avenue NW(75-00670), built c1946

II.B PROPERTY SUBTYPE: Social Halls

DESCRIPTION: Erected to house private social activities, these buildings often incorporated meeting rooms, theaters, gymnasiums, and other function-specific spaces. They were usually two- to three-story masonry buildings that reflected popular architectural styles or restrained vernacular treatments. They often featured club rooms on the upper floors, and an auditorium and/or gymnasium on the main floor.

SIGNIFICANCE: In addition to the significance documented for the general property type, social halls were an important component of the late nineteenth century through mid-twentieth century culture of Le Mars. These buildings, erected by private groups, housed a variety of ethnic, social, fraternal, professional, political, and cultural functions, including benevolent associations and craft unions, while some emphasized fellowship and political activities. As such, this property subtype is important for its associations with Le Mars' cultural diversity and social history.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS: The integrity thresholds established for the general property type applies to this property subtype. Public interior spaces should be included in the assessment of the overall integrity of the building.

EXAMPLES IN SURVEY AREA: Selected examples of Social Halls within the survey area that retain sufficient integrity to contribute to a district and are associated with at least one of the historic contexts outlined above include the following: (see Appendix B for a list of all surveyed properties and their National Register eligibility status.)

112 Central Avenue NE (75-00650), built 1920
128 Central Avenue SE (75-00683), built 1923

RECOMMENDATIONS

OVERVIEW

The City of Le Mars has, over the years, initiated a number of programs and initiatives to preserve, rehabilitate, and enhance the appearance of its downtown, as well as the surrounding neighborhoods. These efforts recognize that the conservation of historic buildings and neighborhoods is one of the best tools for recovering the worth of past investments while fueling a new economic activity.

Development of a preservation program within the context of revitalization of the older commercial centers and residential areas of Le Mars can provide a level of stability that is necessary to attract investment. Preserved neighborhoods that accommodate appropriate new construction create stability of population, an expanded tax base, job retention, and less drain on City services.

To aid the city's development and transformation in the future, Le Mars should continue to implement public policy that promotes historic preservation in targeted areas, while integrating it into the City's planning and land use processes. As indicated in this survey effort and as evidenced by the successes of the Le Mars Main Street Program, a variety of historic and cultural resources contribute to defined areas and have the potential to form a marketable identity for the downtown area.

Today, as in the past, there is a heterogeneous mix of property uses and historic types in the Survey Area, all with varying degrees of physical and architectural integrity. While individual buildings may have the potential to attract new businesses or residential investment, if the area as a whole is to become viable, it must compete with other local and regional development. Experience demonstrates that areas that create and/or retain a unique visual character that combines both the historic and the new, enhancing an existing sense of place, are the most successful competitors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

NATIONAL REGISTER DESIGNATION

Concurrent with identification of historic resources is the need to target specific resources for protection through proactive measures such as nominating eligible properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places and thus qualifying them for voluntary participation in federal and state incentive programs. The list below itemizes NRHP listings the City should sponsor and/or support.

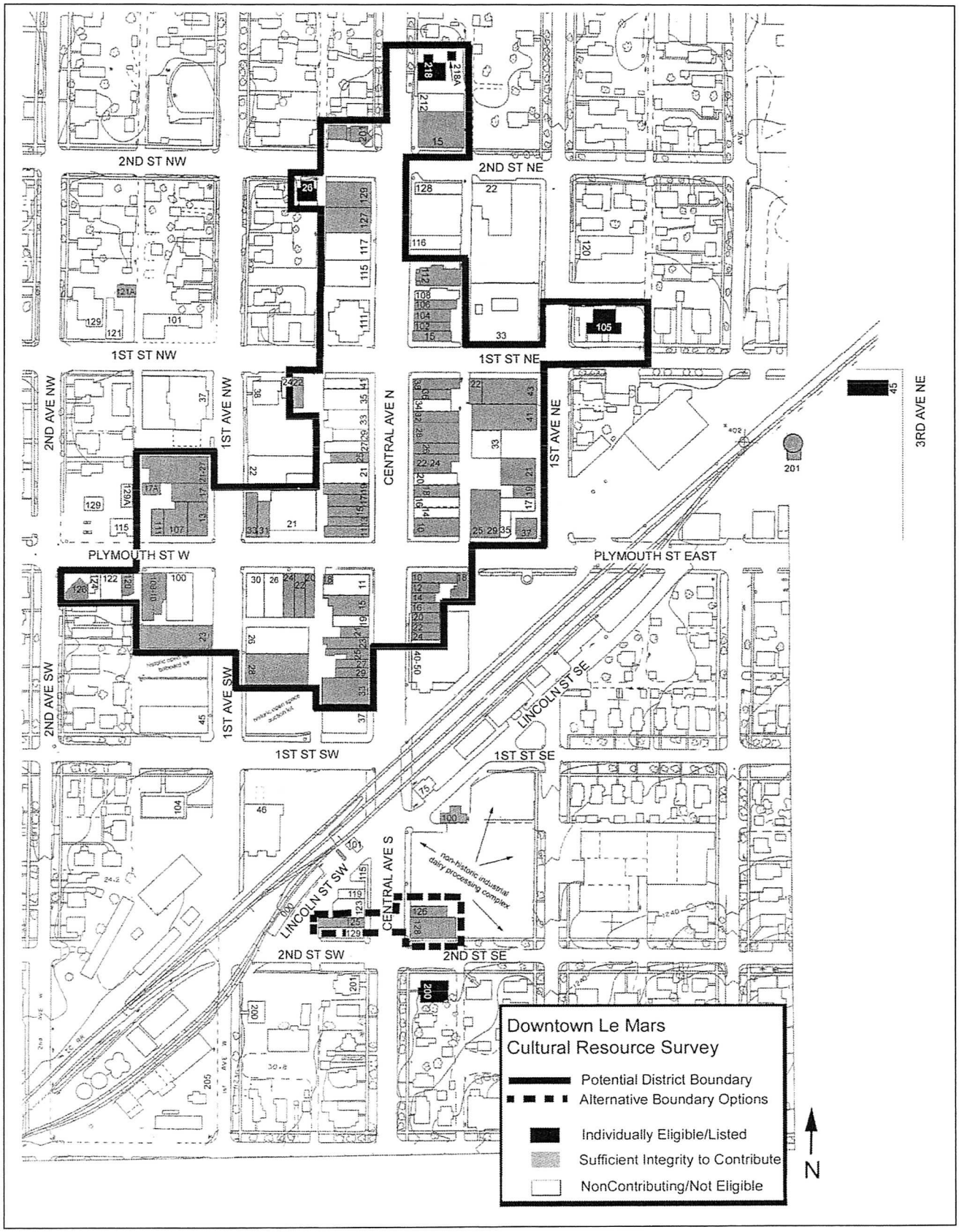
The National Register program provides several ways to nominate properties based on their level of significance, architectural integrity, and proximity to other historically significant resources. Properties can be nominated individually, as part of a thematically linked Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF), or as contributing elements to a historic district.

1. Downtown Historic District Nomination

As part of this combined survey and National Register nomination project, the City of Le Mars Historic Preservation Commission (LMHPC) should continue to sponsor the nomination of the largest possible NRHP district downtown to benefit the highest number of constituents.

The current survey of downtown Le Mars identified a sufficient contiguous grouping of late nineteenth through mid-twentieth century commercial and institutional resources to warrant listing as a National Register Historic District. These resources as a group meet the National Register architectural integrity criteria and have significant associations with the patterns of commercial development of Le Mars, as well as the evolution of commercial architecture in the city. The area contains both high style commercial architectural styles and vernacular designs that are uniformly applied to One-Part Commercial Block and Two-Part Commercial Block building types/forms. The variety of styles and design treatments convey information about the unique continuum of commercial architecture found in Le Mars. Additionally, their historic uses provided an understanding of the commercial development of the city. As a group, their setting, design, materials, and workmanship convey feelings and provide associations with the evolution of the city's commercial and institutional centers.

The area indicated by the solid boundary line on the proposed district map surrounds the highest density of properties that more than minimally meet National Register boundary criteria. The dashed lines indicate alternative boundary options including properties with some historic architectural integrity issues. Further research as to contexts specific to the commercial associations of these buildings, as well as consultation with Iowa SHPO staff, will be necessary before final boundaries are determined.


2ND ST NW
2ND ST NE
1ST ST NW
1ST ST NE
2ND AVE NW
1ST AVE NW
CENTRAL AVE N
1ST AVE NE
3RD AVE NE
PLYMOUTH ST W
PLYMOUTH ST EAST
2ND AVE SW
1ST AVE SW
1ST ST SW
1ST ST SE
LINCOLN ST SE
LINCOLN ST SW
CENTRAL AVE S
2ND ST SW
2ND ST SE
non-historic industrial dairy processing complex
Downtown Le Mars
Cultural Resource Survey
Potential District Boundary
Alternative Boundary Options
Individually Eligible/Listed
Sufficient Integrity to Contribute
NonContributing/Not Eligible
N

2. Multiple Property Documentation Form Nomination

The LMHPC should sponsor the preparation of the NRHP Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Historic Resources of Le Mars, Iowa."

Among the various types of nomination vehicles, the MPDF approach is best suited for Le Mars. It matches the scope and scale of the city, as well as the presence of scattered individual and small groupings of potentially eligible buildings with shared contexts. Throughout Le Mars, integrity is the primary limiting factor for eligibility and this manner of documentation allows for the comparison of these discontiguous resources, linking them with common themes and associations. Using professionally accepted standards, development of a MPDF can provide city government with a complete picture of the community's historic resources so decisions to recognize specific buildings or areas will not be arbitrary. With a MPDF cover document in place, property owners or the City can initiate NRHP nominations that require significantly less time and effort to prepare.

A MPDF for the "Historic Resources of Le Mars" will treat the entire city as the subject area, with a variety of historic contexts and associated property types serving as the organization. The document might include contexts such as "Commercial Resources of Le Mars, Iowa," and/or "Late Nineteenth through Mid-Twentieth Century Residential Resources of Le Mars, Iowa." The MPDF then identifies property types that have shared physical characteristics and/or historic contexts and provides integrity thresholds based on comparisons with similar resources located elsewhere in town. Subsequent nominations need only provide the physical description and history of the resource(s) being nominated and reference the contexts, property types, and registration requirements outlined in the MPDF, making the nomination process significantly easier, quicker, and more cost-effective.

The MPDF format provides an economy of scale by allowing similar resources to be nominated under one cover document, thus avoiding redundancy. Furthermore, the ability to nominate similar properties over a period of time provides flexibility to a nomination process that is dependent on owner support. The MPDF format also assists in preservation planning and cultural resource management because it establishes registration requirements for similar properties that may be nominated in the future, thus providing the advantage of predetermining the shared physical and thematic characteristics of particular functional or architectural property types to facilitate future identification and evaluation.

Many communities nationwide and across Iowa now employ the MPDF nomination approach, which emphasizes the use of historic contexts as a streamlined way to organize research information and to evaluate potentially significant individual properties and districts as they are identified. With thousands of properties to survey throughout Le Mars, the MPDF approach will yield significant benefits in survey and evaluation consistency, quality, and efficiency. The standards for preparing a MPDF are presented in detail in the National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form,* which can be found at http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16b/.

4. **Individually Eligible Properties**

The City should support property owners toward nominating individually eligible properties for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The City can support registration by maintaining a list of potentially individually eligible properties and notifying owners of the benefits of listing, such as rehabilitation tax credit incentives, as well as the procedures for nominating properties. The survey identified four properties that retain sufficient historic integrity to be eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places, listed below.[240]

- Le Mars Post Office, 105 1st Street NE (75-00623), built 1914
- White House Bathing Palace, 218 Central Avenue NE (75-00654), built c1903
- Knoop Veterinary Clinic, 26 2nd Street NW (75-00632), built c1923
- Railroad Eating House, 45 3rd Avenue NE (75-00633), built c1876

[240] The National Register criteria also serve as the basis for local designation of historic properties. Additional research, evaluation, consultation with the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office's National Register program staff will be necessary to pursue preparation of individual nominations for these properties.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PRESERVATION PLAN – IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION, PROTECTION

1. Preservation Plan

Prior to embarking upon further survey, the LMHPC should develop a preservation plan that prioritizes future survey work and identifies and refines as many of the community's historic contexts and property types as possible.

The recommendation to develop a preservation plan is important if the City of Le Mars desires to use preservation strategies as part of their planning and land use/development processes. Preservation planning is a process that organizes preservation activities (identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties) in a systematic, as well as a strategic manner. The inventory and evaluation of community resources is the first step to developing local private and public programs that not only preserve important historic properties, but that also utilize preservation as a tool for economic development and the revitalization of older neighborhoods and commercial centers.

2. Survey Plan

This LMHPC should develop a phased survey plan to conduct a Reconnaissance-level survey of the historic residential, roadside commercial, and industrial/railroad-related areas of Le Mars to identify properties potentially eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

The field survey and development of historic contexts relating to Le Mars' historic evolution identified areas beyond the Survey Area that retain a high degree of historical architectural integrity. Due to the limited scope of this survey effort, architectural property types and development patterns have yet to be identified for concentrations of residential, roadside commercial, industrial/rail-related resources. Because of their significant associations with the development of Le Mars and the availability of federal and state rehabilitation tax credits, they merit priority in the City's survey plan for continued identification and documentation. This will facilitate property owners' nomination of qualifying properties to the National Register and utilization of rehabilitation tax credits to assist in maintaining their historical integrity.

To be effective, future survey efforts must be carefully planned, taking into account Le Mars' planning needs, its legal obligations, the interests of its citizens, available funding, and the nature of its historic resources. At the outset, the survey plan should identify research sources, broad historical contexts, expected property types, and geographic areas from research and field inspection that appear to contain a high concentration of historic resources. In addition, the survey plan should prioritize survey efforts and recommend levels of survey activity. All recommendations should result from a public participation process and consideration of the City of Le Mars' planning needs, the Le Mars Historic Preservation Commission's planning goals, staff resources, legal parameters, and public funding sources.

As defined by the National Park Service,[241] historic resources fall into five basic categories — buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts. A wide range of resources that can be found through survey efforts in Le Mars fit into these categories and include the following:

- Notable examples of architectural styles and periods or methods of construction, particularly local or regional types. Sole or rare survivors of an important architectural style or type. Architectural curiosities and one-of-a-kind buildings.
- Buildings by important architects or master builders.
- Buildings or groups of buildings showing the history and development of such diverse areas as communications, community planning, government, conservation, economics, education, literature, music, and landscape architecture.
- Institutions that provide evidence of the cultural history of the community, including churches, colleges, art centers, theaters, and entertainment halls.
- Stores and business buildings and other buildings and groups of buildings that provide a physical record of the experience of particular ethnic or social groups.
- Complexes of buildings, such as grain elevators and mill complexes, which comprise a functionally and historically interrelated whole.
- Buildings or groups of buildings where significant technological advances occurred, including agricultural experiment stations, laboratories, and so forth.
- Archaeological sites that may provide information answering scientific research questions or information relating to local, state, or national history.
- Sites of cultural importance to local social or ethnic groups, such as the location of important events in history or prehistory.
- Ruins of historically or archaeologically important buildings or structures.
- Constructed landscapes that exemplify principles, trends, or schools of thought in landscape architecture.
- Industrial, engineering, transportation, and agricultural structures and groups of structures, including dams, utility or pumping stations, railroads, bridges, tunnels, granaries, silos, and corncribs.
- Objects important to historical or art-historical research or the cultural life of a community and related to a specific location, including statuary, rock carvings, fountains, outdoor sculpture, monuments, etcetera.
- Farmlands and related farm structures that possess an identity of time and place.

The National Park Service criteria for identification of cultural resources outline the information that should be documented as the result of survey activities. When such surveys are supported by grants-in-aid funds from the Department of the Interior's Historic Preservation Fund through the Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, such information must be recorded as a condition of the grant. Such documentation is basic to professional practice in the conduct of any survey regardless of its source of funding.

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[241] Anne Perry, H. Ward Jandl, Carol D. Shull, Jan Thorman, *National Register Bulletin Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning* (Washington, D.C.: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1985), 9-11.

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The City of Le Mars, in cooperation with the Le Mars Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Le Mars, should be commended for their accomplishments as a Certified Local Government (CLG). Having received CLG status just sixteen years ago, the Le Mars Historic Preservation Commission has clearly been active in their efforts; successfully documenting and/or NRHP listing more than three hundred resources citywide and increasing community appreciation of the value of historic preservation.

In order to continue this momentum and best utilize the benefits of all available preservation programs, the following recommendations should be considered.

Pending Demolition Survey

It is recommended that the City initiate a protocol of surveying any building more than fifty years of age prior to its demolition. Though sometimes necessary, demolition is irreversible. As such, reconnaissance-level survey should occur prior to a historic building's removal in order to at least minimally document the building.

Coordination of Downtown Projects with SHPO

It is recommended that the LMHPC, Main Street Le Mars, the Chamber, and any other group active in projects affecting downtown buildings incorporate consultation with the Iowa SHPO into all program processes. In order to protect the investment of the City in this Downtown Survey and NRHP listing project, it will be important to ensure all building projects – renovation, storefront improvements, window replacements, demolition, new construction – meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and do not inadvertently disqualify buildings or negatively impact the historic integrity of the district as a whole.

Preservation Training

With the ever-evolving state and federal programs available to historic resources, it is recommended that the LMHPC prioritize continued training with the Iowa SHPO. As more buildings are surveyed and NRHP listed, preservation education, as well as a full understanding of the benefits and ramifications of available programs, will become increasingly important for commission members. The SHPO provides regular workshops and annual conference sessions to inform local commission members about program changes, explain the sometimes complicated preservation processes, and educate as to how to best utilize the often overlapping programs. It is recommended that LMHPC members attend as many training sessions as possible and contact the SHPO regarding incorporating information into commission member training manuals. In addition to commission members, city staff, as well as Chamber and Main Street staff should be notified of training opportunities should be encouraged to attend and expand their understanding of preservation methodology.

Certified Local Government (CLG) Duties

As a Certified Local Government, the City of Le Mars agrees to be a partner with the Iowa SHPO in the preservation of Iowa's historic resources. In order to continue to qualify for participation in the CLG program, the City of Le Mars must meet, or actively work toward meeting, the following requirements. The City has achieved many of the required duties of a CLG. However a handful have yet to be accomplished. It is recommended that the LMHPC pursue a plan to achieve completion of the required CLG duties[242] listed below:

- ☐ Establishment and operation under a historic preservation ordinance.
- ✓ Maintain a historic preservation commission to oversee the program.
- ✓ Preservation commissioners must meet certain criteria to be appointed to commission.
- ✓ There is a commitment to preserve the full range of properties from archaeological sites to districts.
- ✓ Preservation activities include identifying, evaluating and registering historic properties.
- ☐ Local government will maintain a file/inventory of properties.
- ✓ Preservation program encourages nominations to the National Register of Historic Places.
- ✓ Will conduct public review and comment on National Register of Historic places nominations of properties within jurisdiction.
- ✓ Public is encouraged to participate in all aspects of the preservation program.
- ☐ Local government will enforce all appropriate state and local ordinances for designating and protecting historic properties.

Management of Survey Data

The LMHPC should work with City staff to establish a computer database for all surveyed historic resources. This database should not only meet federal and state requirements for inventory of historic resources, but also present the type of information which would be useful to the citizens and staff of the City of Le Mars, as well as be compatible with the City/County GIS system.

Property owners, developers, real estate professionals, educators, and public agencies frequently use historic resource data. It is recommended that an expanded information management system be developed to make survey information accessible to the public. Standardization of survey methods and procedures, along with improved sharing of information and resources, will expand dissemination of historic resource data.

It is essential to ensure that survey results and information can be easily transmitted in a usable form to those responsible for other planning activities. For example, the plans of agencies such as the Le Mars School District and the Iowa Department of Transportation could affect historic

[242] This list of requirements is taken directly from the Iowa SHPO's Certified Local Government Program web page, http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/local-preservation/certified-local-government-program/index.html (accessed August 30, 2011).

resources; the availability of historic resource survey data within the project area can streamline the planning process, as well as serve to protect significant properties.

Regular updating and maintenance of historic resource data will be extremely important to ensure that the city's records remain reliable. The city should develop standards for its historic resource data to be maintained and routinely updated. Simple methods to maintain results and add to the city's historic resource inventory could include the following:

- A mechanism could be developed for the Planning and Zoning Department to flag historic resources when a building permit has been issued, so that its existing historic resource status can be evaluated and updated if necessary.

- When resources are identified and new surveys are conducted by other agencies (e.g., Iowa DOT, SHPO), current results could be integrated into the Le Mars database.

- Resources of a recent age or of a type not yet considered to be significant at the time of survey could still be surveyed to document their physical characteristics until their significance is recognized.

- Within the Le Mars community, the Plymouth County Historical Museum, Le Mars Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Le Mars, and other knowledgeable groups and individuals could report to the City of Le Mars and LMPHC when their research and work identify previously undocumented historic resources or changes to those already documented.

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Though approximately two hundred buildings in Le Mars have been surveyed and/or listed in the NRHP, the vast majority are outside the central business district in the surrounding historic residential neighborhoods. Consultations with the Iowa SHPO revealed only four buildings in the downtown survey area known to have been previously surveyed and/or listed in the NRHP.

- **National Register listing:**
  - 75-00119 - Le Mars Public Library, 200 Central Avenue SE (listed 1979)

- **Cultural Resource Survey:**
  - 75-00105 – First National Bank, 11 Central Avenue SW
  - 75-00379 – Community Hospital, 31 1st Street NW (non-extant)
  - 75-00595 – Royal T III Theater, 33 Central Avenue SW

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
017	1st	Ave	NE	75-00600	Grand Central Hotel (East Wing)	c1879	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
019	1st	Ave	NE	75-00601	Grand Central Hotel warehouse/garage	c1946	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
021	1st	Ave	NE	75-00602	Plymouth County Soil Conservation Service Office	c1946	06B Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival	OTHER: Commercial	EID Eligible in District
033	1st	Ave	NE	75-00603	Stoo's Body Shop	c1950	01 No Style	OTHER: Commercial	NEID Not Eligible in District
041	1st	Ave	NE	75-00604	Brauch Bowling Alley	1958	08 Modern Movement	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
043	1st	Ave	NE	75-00605	Armory	1926	01 No Style	INSTUTIONAL: Defense	EID Eligible in District
120	1st	Ave	NE	75-00606	Knights of Columbus Hall	1962	01 No Style	INSTITUTIONAL: Social	NE Not Eligible
013	1st	Ave	NW	75-00607	The Market	1902	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
017 (17-19)	1st	Ave	NW	75-00608	Stebbins Paints	c1903	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
021 (21-27)	1st	Ave	NW	75-00609	Le Mars Auto & Supply Co.	c1910	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
022	1st	Ave	NW	75-00610	Plymouth County Telephone Co.	c1910	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
037	1st	Ave	NW	75-00611	Le Mars Savings Bank	1964	06C Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival (Neo-Classical Revival)	OTHER COMMERCIAL: Central Block with Wings	NE Not Eligible
038	1st	Ave	NW	75-00612	Dull Law Firm	c1967	06B Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
023	1st	Ave	SW	75-00613	Le Mars Motor Co.	c1928	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
026	1st	Ave	SW	75-00614		c1973	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
028	1st	Ave	SW	75-00615	National Food Store	c1950	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
045	1st	Ave	SW	75-00616	Miller Implement	c1928	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
104	1st	Ave	SW	75-00617	Eagles Lodge	1932	06B Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Colonial Revival	INSTITUTIONAL: Social	NE Not Eligible
200	1st	Ave	SW	75-00618	Plymouth Milling Company Office	c1918	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	OTHER: Commercial	NE Not Eligible
205	1st	Ave	SW	75-00619	Plymouth Milling Company	c1916	01 No Style	OTHER: Commercial/ Industrial	MRR More Research Recommended
015	1st	St	NE	75-00620	Commercial Block	c1879	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
022	1st	St	NE	75-00621	Poecke's Paint Store	c1918	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
033	1st	St	NE	75-00622		2003	01 No Style	INSTITUTIONAL: Recreational	NE Not Eligible

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
105	1st	St	NE	75-00623	Le Mars Post Office	1914	06C Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival (Neo-Classical Revival)	INSTUTIONAL: Government	OOE Opinion of Eligibility
022	1st	St	NW	75-00624	New York Life Insurance Co.	c1954	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
024	1st	St	NW	75-00625	Rozeboom Building	c1945	01 No Style	OTHER: Commercial	NE Not Eligible
101	1st	St	NW	75-00626	Plymouth Co-Op Oil Co.	c1929	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
121	1st	St	NW	75-00627	United Wholesalers	c1954	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
129	1st	St	NW	75-00628	Naef Building	1965	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	MRR More Research Recommended
046	1st	St	SW	75-00629	Red Owl Super Market	1971	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
015	2nd	St	NE	75-00630	Mammen Building	c1918	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
022	2nd	St	NE	75-00631	Neisius Motor Company	1952	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
026	2nd	St	NW	75-00632	Knoop Veterinary Hospital	c1923	07E02 Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Craftsman	OTHER: Commercial	OOE Opinion of Eligibility
45	3rd	Ave	NE	75-00633	Railroad Eating House	c1876	01 No Style	RESIDENTIAL: Hotel	OOE Opinion of Eligibility"
010	Central	Ave	NE	75-00634	Flint Block	c1879	07A Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Prairie School	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
014	Central	Ave	NE	75-00635	Spotts & Post Drugstore	c1879	08 Modern Movement	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
016	Central	Ave	NE	75-00636	The People's Market	c1890	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
018	Central	Ave	NE	75-00637	Dietrich Block	c1890	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
020	Central	Ave	NE	75-00638	Union Block-Evans Dry Goods	c1882	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
022-24	Central	Ave	NE	75-00639	Union Block-Dabb Photography	1882	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
026	Central	Ave	NE	75-00640	Union Block-Le Mars Post Office	1882	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
028 (28-30)	Central	Ave	NE	75-00641	J.C. Penney Co.	c1882	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
032	Central	Ave	NE	75-00642	Union Restaurant	c1882	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
034	Central	Ave	NE	75-00643	Black's Saloon	c1879	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
036	Central	Ave	NE	75-00644	Lukens Furniture	c1903	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
038	Central	Ave	NE	75-00645	Iowa Public Service	1956	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
102	Central	Ave	NE	75-00646	Le Mars Globe-Der Le Mars Herold	c1890	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
104	Central	Ave	NE	75-00647	Le Mars Tire Hospital	c1915	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
106	Central	Ave	NE	75-00648	Sanders Department Store	c1895	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
108	Central	Ave	NE	75-00649		2010	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
112	Central	Ave	NE	75-00650	IOOF Hall	1920	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	INSTITUTIONAL: Social	EID Eligible in District
116	Central	Ave	NE	75-00651	Clear-Vue TV	c1954	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
128	Central	Ave	NE	75-00652	Harkers Butcher Shop & Lockers	c1929	09 Other: Neoeclectic - Mansard Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
212	Central	Ave	NE	75-00653	Master Body Rebuilders	c1954	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NEIPD Not Eligible in Potential District
218	Central	Ave	NE	75-00654	White House Bathing Palace	c1903	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	INSTITUTIONAL: Health Care	OOE Opinion of Eligibility
011	Central	Ave	NW	75-00655	German American Savings Bank (Bolser's)	1915	06C Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival (Neo-Classical Revival)	Temple Front	EID Eligible in District
013	Central	Ave	NW	75-00656	Rogers Drugs	c1879	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
015	Central	Ave	NW	75-00657	German State Bank	c1879	06C Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival (Neo-Classical Revival)	Temple Front	EID Eligible in District
017	Central	Ave	NW	75-00658	Schindel & Howard Clothing	c1879	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
019	Central	Ave	NW	75-00659	Treat & Son Hardware	c1879	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
021	Central	Ave	NW	75-00660	Dow Clothing Co.	c1879	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
025	Central	Ave	NW	75-00661	Wards Catalog Store	c1885	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
027	Central	Ave	NW	75-00662	Steiner's Block	c1879	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
029	Central	Ave	NW	75-00663	Henn Electric Co.	c1916	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
033 (31-33)	Central	Ave	NW	75-00664	Schmidt's Harness Shop-Moore Hardware	c1896	05G Late Victorian: Romanesque	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
035	Central	Ave	NW	75-00665	Gambles Store	1967	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
041	Central	Ave	NW	75-00666	Western Auto	c1930	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
111	Central	Ave	NW	75-00667		1973	09 Other: Post Modern	OTHER COMMERCIAL: Vault	NEID Not Eligible in District
115	Central	Ave	NW	75-00668	Geo. E. Pew Company Building (1917)	1917	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
117	Central	Ave	NW	75-00669	Geo. E. Pew Company Building (c1910)	c1910	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
127	Central	Ave	NW	75-00670	Le Mars City Hall and Fire Station	c1946	08 Modern Movement	INSTUTIONAL: Government	EID Eligible in District

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
129	Central	Ave	NW	75-00671	Moir & McMullen Garage	c1910	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
201	Central	Ave	NW	75-00672	Hanford Produce	c1920	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
010	Central	Ave	SE	75-00673	Reichman Building	c1885	07A Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Prairie School	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
012	Central	Ave	SE	75-00674	German-American Savings Bank (Myers')	1889	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
014	Central	Ave	SE	75-00675	Nalls Fashion Parlors	c1903	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
016	Central	Ave	SE	75-00676	State Farm Insurance	c1910	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
020	Central	Ave	SE	75-00677	Write Radio & Washing Machine Sales & Repair	c1910	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
022 (24)	Central	Ave	SE	75-00678	Dunkin Inn	c1910	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
024	Central	Ave	SE	75-00679	Claussen Plymouth Cleaners	c1910	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
040-50	Central	Ave	SE	75-00680	Ben Franklin	c1971	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
100	Central	Ave	SE	75-00681	Atwood Greenhouse	c1918	07 Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
126	Central	Ave	SE	75-00682	Plymouth County Abstract	1955	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	EIPD Eligible in Potential District

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
128	Central	Ave	SE	75-00683	Masonic Temple	1923	06C Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival (Neo-Classical Revival)	INSTITUTIONAL: Social	EIPD Eligible in Potential District
200	Central	Ave	SE	75-00119	Le Mars Public Library	1904	06C Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals: Classical Revival (Neo-Classical Revival)	INSTITUTIONAL: Educational	LI Listed
011	Central	Ave	SW	75-00105	First National Bank	1892	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
015	Central	Ave	SW	75-00684	Haas & Huebsch Hardware-Aupperle & Freeman Grocery	c1890	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
019	Central	Ave	SW	75-00685	Koenig Drugstore	c1890	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
021	Central	Ave	SW	75-00686	Kale's Confectionary	c1895	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
023	Central	Ave	SW	75-00687	Norris & Son Meat Market	c1895	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
025	Central	Ave	SW	75-00688	Conner & Wilkenson Meat Market	c1895	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
027	Central	Ave	SW	75-00689	Long Grocery	c1910	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
029	Central	Ave	SW	75-00690	Hentges Millinery	c1910	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
033	Central	Ave	SW	75-00595	Royal Theatre	1914	07A Late 19th & Early 20th Century American Movements: Prairie School	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
037	Central	Ave	SW	75-00691	Le Mars Mutual Insurance Company	1969	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
101	Central	Ave	SW	75-00692	Remer Filling Station	c1925	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
115	Central	Ave	SW	75-00693	Bowers Realtors & Insurance	1968	09 Other: Neoeclectic - Mansard Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
119	Central	Ave	SW	75-00694	Model Cleaners	c1968	09 Other: Neoeclectic - Mansard Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
123	Central	Ave	SW	75-00695	Laux & Lucke Building	c1910	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
125	Central	Ave	SW	75-00696	Laux Block	c1890	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EIPD Eligible in Potential District
129	Central	Ave	SW	75-00697	Criswell Electric	c1967	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
201	Central	Ave	SW	75-00698	duplex	c1903	01 No Style	RESIDENTIAL: Multi-Family	NE Not Eligible
075	Lincoln	St	SE	75-00699		c1970	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
000	Lincoln	St	SW	75-00700	coal shed	c1925	01 No Style	OTHER: Commercial/Industrial	NE Not Eligible
025	Plymouth	St	NE	75-00701	Krull Furniture	c1910	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
029	Plymouth	St	NE	75-00702	Nuebel Brothers Grocery	c1903	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
035	Plymouth	St	NE	75-00703	Grand Central Hotel	c1879	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
037	Plymouth	St	NE	75-00704	Le Mars Federal Savings and Loan Association	1953	08 Modern Movement	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
201	Plymouth	St	NE	75-00705	round sale barn	c1918	01 No Style	OTHER: Commercial	MRR More Research Recommended
021	Plymouth	St	NW	75-00706		c1974	09 Other: Neoeclectic - NeoClassical Revival	One-Part Commercial Block	NEIPD Not Eligible in Potential District
031	Plymouth	St	NW	75-00707	Coddington Bros Saloon	c1880	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
033	Plymouth	St	NW	75-00708	Prust Hardware	c1910	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
107 (107-109)	Plymouth	St	NW	75-00709	Grand Rapids Furniture	1902	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
111	Plymouth	St	NW	75-00710	Bennett Auto	c1909	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
115	Plymouth	St	NW	75-00711	Athens Building	c1965	09 Other: Neoeclectic	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
129	Plymouth	St	NW	75-00712	Athen's Standard Service Station	c1959	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NE Not Eligible
018	Plymouth	St	SE	75-00713	Ideal Cleaners	c1918	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
018	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00714	Granite Barber Shop	1897	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
020	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00715	Bolser Building	1925	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District

Street No.	Street Name	Street Type	Street Suffix	Inventory Number	Historic Name	Construction Date	Architectural Style	Property Type	NRHP Eligibility
022	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00716	Sauer & Prust	c1879	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
024	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00717	Heinemann's Dry Goods	1887	05B Late Victorian: Italianate	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
026 (26-28)	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00718	Kluckhohn Block-Denslow Drugstore	1887	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
030	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00719	Kluckhohn Block-Kehrberg-Schneider Co	1887	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
100	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00720	Goodyear Service Store	c1970	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
108	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00721	Symms Plumbing	c1903	06 Late 19th and 20th Century Revivals	Two-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
120	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00722	Adler Auto Repair	c1928	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District
122	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00723	Adler Auto Repair	c1928	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
124	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00724	Brownie's Café	c1900	01 No Style	Two-Part Commercial Block	NEID Not Eligible in District
126	Plymouth	St	SW	75-00725	Marathon Service Station	c1925	01 No Style	One-Part Commercial Block	EID Eligible in District

APPENDIX C

BUILDINGS ATTRIBUTED TO WILLIAM LABARTHE STEELE

The following list represents in incomplete catalog of known works attributed to William LaBarthe Steele. The locations of buildings are in the state of Iowa unless otherwise stated.

Blessed Sacrament School, Sioux City (nd)
Crittenden Home & Maternity Hospital, Sioux City [Beach & Steele] (1906) NR
First National Bank & Masonic Hall, Hawarden (1907)
Immaculate Conception Church, Cherokee (1907)
St. Michael Church, Sioux City (1907)
Newton House, Sioux City (1909) NR
SS Peter & Paul Catholic School, Butte, NE (1909) NR
Moore House, Sioux City (1909-10)
O.J. Moore Warehouse, Sioux City (1910)
Palmer House, Sioux City (1910)
Sacred Heart Church, Sioux City (1911)
First Congregational Church, Sioux City (1912)
St. Joseph Church, Anthon (1912)
Paul and Augusta Lucke House, Le Mars (c1912) NR
Davidson Building, Sioux City (1912-13) NR
Picotte Memorial Hospital, Walthill, NE (1912) NR
Schulein House, Sioux City (1913) NR
St. Joseph Church, Schaller (1913)
Davidson Building, Sioux City (1913) NR
Sioux City Free Library, Sioux City (1913) NR
Crane Company Warehouse, Sioux City (1910-14)
Livestock National Bank Addition, Sioux City (1914)
Carnegie Library, unknown location, SD (1914)
Journal Building, Sioux City (1914-15)
Carnegie Library, Armour, SD (1915)
Annunciation Church, Sioux City (1915)
St. Patrick's Catholic Church, near Churdan (1915) NR
St. Casimir Church, Sioux City (1915-16)
Holy Name Church, Marcus (1915-16)
Fire Station No. 6, Sioux City (1917)
Woodbury County Courthouse, Sioux City (1917) NHL
Kresge Store, Sioux City (1917)
Everist House, Sioux City (1917) NR
St. Vincent's Hospital, Sioux City (c1915)
Good Shepherd Sisters Orphanage, Sioux City (1917)
Hawarden City Hall, Hawarden (1918) NR
Woodbury County Poor Farm complex, Sioux City (1918)
Cooper House, Le Mars (1918) NR
Gillespie House, Le Mars (1923) NR
Sergeant Bluff High School, Sergeant Bluff (1918)
Sioux City Baptist Church (1918) NR

First Congregational Church, Sioux City (1918)
Charles Mix County Courthouse, Lake Andes, SD (1918) NR
United Orthodox Synagogue, Sioux City (1920)
St. Joseph Church, Milford (1920-21)
Sacred Heart Church, Fort Dodge (1921)
Hood House, Sioux City (1921)
Sacred Heart School, Yankton, SD (1921)
Hartington Municipal Building, Hartington, NE (1922) NR
Sve House, Sioux City (1922)
Mount Sinai Temple, Sioux City (1901; 1922) NR
Leffel House, Sioux City (1922)
Sacred Heart Hospital, Le Mars (1923)
Valley Drive House, Sioux City (1924)
Doyle House, Yankton, SD (1924) NR
Steele House, Sioux City (nd)
Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, Sioux City (1925-26) NR
St. Joseph Church, Salix (1925-26)

Nationwide, a variety of federal and state laws, as well as incentive programs protect many historic properties. In general, local preservation laws provide the most substantive protection for historic properties.

Federal Framework

A number of federal laws affect historic preservation in various ways:

- by establishing preservation programs for federal, state, and local government agencies;
- by establishing procedures for different kinds of preservation activities; and
- by creating opportunities for the preservation of different types of resources.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, is the centerpiece of the national historic preservation program. The primary mandates of the act of 1966 are as follows:

- Authorization for the Department of the Interior, National Park Service to expand and maintain the National Register of Historic Places;
- Provision for the establishment of State Historic Preservation Officers to administer federal preservation programs;
- Specification of how local governments can be certified for participation in federal programs;
- Authorization for preservation grants-in-aid to states and local governments;
- Provision of a process for federal agencies to consider and mitigate adverse impacts on historic properties that are within their control; and
- Establishment of a rehabilitation tax credit program for private property owners that is also part of the Internal Revenue Code. The tax codes also allow charitable contributions through façade and scenic easements.

National Park Service

All preservation programs are administered by the National Park Service (NPS), Department of the Interior. One component of this charge is the development of programs and standards to direct federal undertakings and guide other federal agencies, states, and local governments in developing preservation planning and protection activities on a local level.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards (http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/)

The centerpiece of this effort is the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Historic Preservation. These standards provide all federal agencies, state historic preservation officers, and other organizations with methodologies and guidelines for the preservation of historic and archaeological resources. These standards and guidelines address issues relating to preservation planning, which includes the identification, evaluation, and protection of historic/cultural resources. They serve as the standards for all projects undertaken with federal funding, incentives, loans, or action by the

federal government that impact significant historic resources. They have been upheld in federal and state court decisions. Perhaps most importantly, the standards serve as the base for design guidelines in the majority of designated districts and sites throughout the United States. In the three decades the standards have been used, they have proven to stabilize and increase property values.

National Register of Historic Places (http://www.nps.gov/nr/)
The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of properties important in the history, architectural history, archaeology, engineering, and culture of the United States. The National Park Service oversees the National Register program. In Iowa, the State Historical Society, Historic Preservation Division administers the National Register program. Properties of local, regional, state, and national significance may be nominated to the National Register. Resources listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects. Listing a property in the National Register has a number of advantages, including:

- Recognition of the property's value to the community, state, and nation;
- Eligibility for grants and loan programs that encourage preservation;
- Qualification for participation in federal and state rehabilitation tax credit programs; and
- Consideration in planning for federal or federally assisted projects.

Section 106
Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation act of 1966, as amended, requires federal agencies to consider the effect of federally assisted projects on properties listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If a project threatens to harm such properties, the federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation may be consulted in a process designed to promote consideration of ways to avoid or minimize such harm. The federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) provides a detailed summary at http://www.achp.gov/106summary.html.

Federal Law
Other federal laws protecting cultural resources include:

- National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
- Housing and Community Development Act of 1974
- Surplus Real Property Act of 1972
- Public Buildings Cooperative Use Act of 1976
- AMTRAC Improvement Act of 1974
- Emergency Home Purchase Assistance Act of 1974
- The Department of Transportation Act of 1966
- Archaeological and Historic preservation Act of 1974
- Archaeological Resources Protection act of 1979
- Antiquities Act of 1906
- Historic Sites Act of 1935
- Executive Order 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment

Certified Local Government Program (http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/clg/)
The federal government established the Certified Local Government (CLG) program in 1980 to promote the preservation of prehistoric and historic resources and allow local communities to participate in the national historic preservation program to a greater degree. Prior to this time, preservation programs developed within a decentralized partnership between the federal and state governments, with the states carrying out the primary responsibility for identification, evaluation, and protection of historic properties. Through the CLG program, Congress extended this partnership to the local government level to allow local participation in the preservation planning process. Communities that meet Certified Local Government qualifications have a formal role in the National Register nomination process, establishment of state historic preservation objectives, and participation in designated CLG grant fund.

Grants-in-Aid Programs
The National Park Service provides grants-in-aid to states to promote preservation activities on the state and local level. In Missouri, grants are awarded for identification, evaluation, and protection of historic and archaeological resources according to federal and state guidelines.

Federal Preservation Incentives (http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/)
Tax incentives for the preservation and rehabilitation of historic properties are among the most useful tools for a local government to encourage the protection of historic resources. The most widely used federal incentives are the historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits and the charitable contribution deduction. Since the passage of the Tax Reform Act of 1986, the most widely used federal tax incentives allowed under the Internal Revenue Code are the Rehabilitation Tax Credits, the Charitable Contribution Deduction (Tax Treatment Extension Act of 1980), and the Low Income Housing Credit.

State Framework

Each state has a State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) appointed by the Governor to administer federal preservation programs. The Iowa Historic Preservation Program is a division of the Iowa State Historical Society and the Director serves as the Iowa SHPO. The program's responsibilities include:

- conducting ongoing surveys to identify and evaluate cultural resources;
- preparing comprehensive statewide preservation plans;
- nominating properties to the National Register of Historic Places;
- reviewing federal projects for effects on cultural resources;
- administering the rehabilitation state and federal tax credit program;
- administering a range of assistance programs;
- providing public information, education, and training programs; and
- providing technical assistance to counties and local governments in developing local preservation programs.

Local Framework

As noted above in the discussion of federal programs, local governments strengthen their local historic preservation efforts by achieving Certified Local Government (CLG) status from the National Park Service (NPS). The NPS and state governments, through their State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), provide valuable technical assistance and small matching grants to hundreds of diverse communities whose local governments endeavor to retain what is significant from their community's past for the benefit of future generations. In turn, the NPS and state governments gain the benefit of having a local government partnership in the national historic preservation program. Another incentive for participating

in the CLG program is the pool of matching grant funds SHPOs set aside to fund CLG historic preservation sub-grant projects, which is at least 10 percent of a state's annual Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant allocation. Grant funds are distributed through the HPF grant program, administered by the NPS and SHPOs.

Jointly administered by the NPS in partnership with SHPOs, the CLG Program is a model and cost-effective local, state, and federal partnership that promotes historic preservation at the grassroots level across the nation. Working closely with such national organizations as the National Association of Preservation Commissions, the CLG program seeks: (1) to develop and maintain local historic preservation programs that will influence the zoning and permitting decisions critical to preserving historic properties and (2) to ensure the broadest possible participation of local governments in the national historic preservation program while maintaining preservation standards established by the Secretary of the Interior.

PRESERVATION NETWORK	PUBLIC	PRIVATE
FEDERAL / NATIONAL	National Park Service (NPS) Advisory Council on Historic Preservation	National Trust for Historic Preservation Preservation Action National Alliance of Statewide Organizations American Association of State and Local History Association for Preservation Technology Society for American Archaeology
STATE	State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) Regional Offices for the National Park Service (NPS)	Preservation Iowa Regional Offices for the National Trust for Historic Preservation
LOCAL GOVERNMENT	City of Le Mars Historic Preservation commission	Plymouth County Historical Museum Other Local Preservation and History Organizations

APPENDIX E

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

- McAlester, Virginia & Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1984.
- Longstreth, Richard. *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture.* Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1987.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

- National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places http://www.nps.gov/nr/
- National Register Instructional Bulletins http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/
- Iowa State Historic Preservation Office, National Register Program http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/national-register-of-historic-places/index.html

ADVOCACY SOURCES

- National Trust for Historic Preservation http://www.preservationnation.org/
- Preservation Iowa http://www.preservationiowa.org/

TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

- National Park Service, Historic Preservation Tax Incentives http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/
- Iowa State Historic Preservation Tax Incentives http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/tax-incentives-for-rehabilitation/index.html