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Northeast
corner 4th
and Iowa
Streets

Tacoma Block, c.1890

Sioux City businessman and real estate developer Gordon R. Badgerow constructed the Tacoma Block in 1888. Its name probably had something to do with the fact that Mr. Badgerow spent several years in business in Tacoma, Washington before coming to Sioux City in 1876. Of the building's many occupants, the most notable was the Scherling and Arnold Drug Store (1889-1938). The Tacoma Block was razed in 1958.

Take *a small side trip to another historic building of note when crossing Fourth and Court Streets on way back to where you started.*

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Northeast
corner 2nd
and Court
Street

American Linseed Oil Company, 1923

Thomas P. Gere of Sioux City and Rensselaer D. Hubbard of Mankato, Minnesota founded the American Linseed Oil Company at this location in 1883. At that time, flax oil was used primarily in the production of paint and varnishes. The original mill burned in 1890. Later that year, a new mill (pictured above) was designed by Sioux City architect William McLaughlin and constructed on the foundation of the original structure. By the early 1890s, it was the largest linseed oil mill in the world, processing 800,000 bushels of flaxseed annually. It continued to operate as a linseed oil mill until 1928. Since that time, it has been used as a warehouse by Kay Dee Feed Company, the Bekins Company and Grant Tire.

The Historic Fourth Street Walking Tour brochure is one in a series of walking tour brochures funded by Missouri River Historical Development (MRHD).

For more information about these buildings or Sioux City history, please contact the Sioux City Public Museum's Pearl Street Research Center

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*Take a
step back
in time...*

**Walking
Tour of
Historic
Fourth
Street**

**(Virginia Street to
Iowa Street)**



**Looking west on 4th Street from Iowa Street,
c. 1898**

The Story of Historic Fourth Street

“Historic” or “Lower” Fourth Street refers to the two city blocks between Virginia and Iowa Streets in downtown Sioux City that contain fifteen structures dating from 1889 to 1915. Several of these are notable for their distinctive Richardsonian Romanesque style of architecture. Popular in the late 1890s, Richardsonian Romanesque is characterized by heavy, rough-cut stone walls, round arches, squat columns, and deeply recessed windows.

The “boom years” of the late 1880s and early 1890s

As Sioux City emerged as one of the Midwest’s leading livestock markets and industrial centers, investment from local developers and East Coast speculators followed. The city’s main business avenue since the 1870s, Fourth Street was a natural target for this intensive real estate development. Between 1888 and 1890, five new buildings were constructed by local interests, while three new buildings were financed by a Massachusetts firm in 1890. The good times did not last, however. The Floyd River Flood of May 1892 halted most new construction, while the April 1893 stock market crash caused real estate values to plummet. Sioux City’s boom had ended. The ripple effects of the severe national economic depression that persisted for the rest of the decade were evident in Sioux City as only one new building was erected on Lower Fourth Street between 1893 and 1900.

Sioux City’s new beginning in the new century

Following several years of business reorganization, the city re-emerged as a leading livestock market and meatpacking center. In fact, Sioux City grew to become Iowa’s second largest city and its leading industrial center by 1915. Meanwhile, development on Lower Fourth Street resumed in earnest. Between 1900 and 1920, five new buildings were constructed in the area. Though they were not as large or as ornate as their 1880s and 1890s counterparts, this new wave of construction signaled that Sioux City had survived to enter a new era of growth and development.

Lower Fourth Street goes from bad to worse

Lower Fourth Street remained an important business district well into the 1960s. Unfortunately, by then most of the buildings on Lower Fourth Street had fallen into various states of disrepair contributing to the area’s reputation as one of the more unsavory sections of the city. In the late 1960s, a major urban renewal project turned much of Fourth Street west of Jones Street into a walking mall, effectively cutting the area off from the rest of downtown. At the same time, retail stores began to leave downtown for suburban shopping centers and malls, greatly diminishing the economic vitality of the area. This sad state of affairs persisted until the mid-1990s.

“Historic” Fourth Street emerges

Aalfs Manufacturing Company started a major restoration of the Boston Block in 1984, uncovering the structure’s original façade. The project sparked Fourth Street’s revitalization as people began rediscovering its unique architecture. In fact, this long-neglected area boasts the most extensive concentration of late 19th century Richardsonian Romanesque buildings in Iowa. In 1995, the two city blocks on Fourth Street between Virginia and Iowa Streets were placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Since then, the majority of the buildings in the district have undergone extensive renovation. Now known as the Fourth Street Historic District, the area is one Sioux City’s most popular entertainment spots featuring a variety of restaurants, pubs, nightclubs and specialty shops.

Start *the tour at the northwest corner of 4th and Virginia streets walking east along 4th Street to Iowa Street.*



Northwest side of the street

Boston Block, c.1890

The Boston Block was constructed in 1890 by the Boston Investment Company, a Massachusetts firm that financed the construction of several major Sioux City buildings during the early 1890s. Designed by local architects Edward W. Loft and William McLaughlin, the Boston Block is an excellent example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture, featuring heavy stone construction and numerous arches. The Sioux City Upholstering Company was the building’s first occupant. Other notable occupants have been the Hicks-Fuller-Pierson Dry Goods Company (1908-1922) and the Aalf’s Manufacturing Company (1924-Present).



Southwest side of the street

Levich Building, 1976

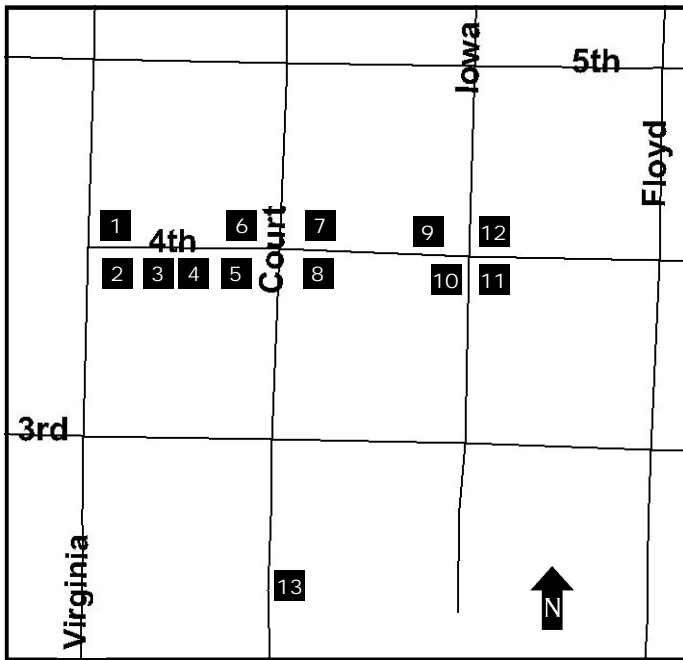
This building was constructed around 1905 as a two-story structure. A third story was added sometime after 1919. Morris Levich operated a furniture store at this location from 1908 to 1924. Later it housed a radio store, an auction house, a series of used furniture dealers and the Freight Sales Company. Local artist Paul Chelstad painted the mural on the west side of the building in 2003.



Middle of the south side of the street

Commercial Building, 1976

The small two-story commercial building pictured at center between the Major Block (left) and the Levich Building (right), dates from around 1905. It has been occupied almost exclusively by restaurants and saloons, although Sioux City Mattress Works operated out of the building for a short time during the early 1930s.



Map of Downtown Sioux City

Buildings listed in *italics>* are no longer in existence.



Middle of the south side of the street

Major Block, c.1890

Sioux City businessman Robert Ortel Major built the Major Block in 1889 as an investment. Architect Edward W. Loft designed the Romanesque structure. The Major Block has had numerous occupants over the years including a hardware store and a hotel. During the early 1890s it served as the University of the Northwest's (later Morningside College) College of Commerce.



Southwest corner of 4th and Court Streets

Lee Block, 1949

Designed by Sioux City architect Wilfred W. Beach, the Lee Block was constructed in 1911 as a multi-use commercial building. From the beginning it was home to a wide range of commercial enterprises including billiard halls, saloons, drug stores, furniture dealers, clothing shops and hardware stores. Notable occupants have been the O.P. Skaggs grocery store (1931-1951), the Scandinavian Bakery (1933-1973) and Cooper's Market (1955-1992).



Northwest corner 4th and Court Streets

John Stevenson's Saloon, 1976

This Romanesque building was constructed around 1895, but it is unclear who was its architect or builder. One of its earliest occupants was Minneapolis Brewing Company agent John Stevenson. He operated a saloon and a distribution business at this location from the mid-1890s until 1900. An assortment of saloons, billiard halls, restaurants and soda fountains have occupied the western third of the building over the years, while the eastern two-thirds have been devoted to a host of dry goods businesses. The building's most notable occupant was People's Department Store, which operated here from 1937 to 1994.



Northeast corner 4th and Court Streets

Krummann Block and Bay State Block, c.1890

The Krummann Block (left) was designed by Sioux City architect Charles P. Brown in the Romanesque style. It was constructed in 1889 by Sioux City grocer Samuel Krummann to house his grocery store. Later it was the home of O.E. Jacobsen's *Svenski Monitorer* Swedish newspaper and the Toller Drug Store. The Bay State Block (right) was another Boston Investment Company building constructed in 1890. Like the Boston Block, it was the work of architects Edward W. Loft and William McLaughlin and is another good example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture. Among its many occupants, Larsen and Anderson Grocery Store (1919-1954) is the most notable.



Southeast corner 4th and Court Streets

Plymouth Block (Call Terminal Building), 1908

The Boston Investment Company financed the construction of the Plymouth Block in 1890. Architects Edward W. Loft and William McLaughlin designed the Romanesque structure to house both commercial and light manufacturing interests. It has been home to interests as diverse as saddle companies, clothing manufacturers, printers, hardware stores, the Sioux City College of Medicine and the Metropolitan Business College. It was renamed the Call Terminal Building in 1930 when it was purchased by local financier and real estate developer George C. Call.

Flooding on Fourth Street

While Historic 4th Street avoided several of Sioux City's worst floods, the floods of 1892 and 1953 precipitated the economic decline the district faced in years to follow.

Three perspectives of the Floyd River Flood of May 18, 1892 looking east on 4th Street toward Iowa Street.

Top:
The view from street level on the north side of the street.



Middle:
The view from street level on the south side of the street.



Bottom:
The same scene from the top of a building.



This view of Fourth Street looking toward Court Street shows that flooding again impacted Fourth Street during the June 8, 1953 flood.



Spanning the north-side of 4th Street to Iowa Streets

Egralharve Building, and Perasso Building, c.1940

The three sons of Gordon R. Badgerow financed the construction of the building pictured at left center in 1910. Its name, Egralharve is a conglomeration of their names (Egbert, Ralph and Harvey). It was designed by Sioux City architect Wilfred W. Beach who also designed the similarly styled Lee Block at the southwest corner of 4th and Court Street. Over the years, it has functioned as both a hotel and a multipurpose commercial building. The small building pictured at center was constructed around 1920. The Antonio Perasso family operated a confectionery, a saloon and a cigar store at this location between 1897 and 1930. The Perassos probably built this building to replace an earlier wood frame structure.



Southwest corner 4th and Iowa Streets

Evans' (Stephens') Block, 1976

Sioux City businessman Fred T. Evans constructed the building that bears his name in 1890. The Richardsonian Romanesque structure was designed by architect Charles P. Brown and originally housed the Northwestern National Bank. After 1897 its primary occupant was the William Stephens Drug Store and for many years it was known as the Stephens' Block. In 1919 the building became a hotel and it functioned in that capacity until 1954. More recent occupants have included Robe's Furniture and a motorcycle club.



Southeast corner 4th and Iowa Streets

Hotel Gordon (Rutland), c.1890

The Hotel Gordon was constructed by Sioux City real estate developer William Gordon in 1888. With 123 rooms, it was Sioux City's largest hotel for many years. Gordon relinquished control of the hotel in the early 1890s and it was know variously as the Hotel Fowler and Great Northern Hotel prior to becoming the Rutland Hotel in 1901. The Rutland continued to operate until the early 1960s when it was declared unsafe for human occupancy. It was demolished in 1962.