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# HISTORIC TOURS 1 & 2

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DES MOINES: CONFLUENCE OF PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

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## DES MOINES: CONFLUENCE OF PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

**T**his historic tour of the city of Des Moines, Iowa was prepared to demonstrate the growth of Des Moines from pioneer roots to mercantile city and show its growth into a metropolis which played a major role in the development of Iowa agriculture, through support industries and financial development.

This program covers the area developed from 1843 to 1932 and includes those major early sites located entirely in downtown Des Moines, which was the city center to early settlers.

### Your kit should include:

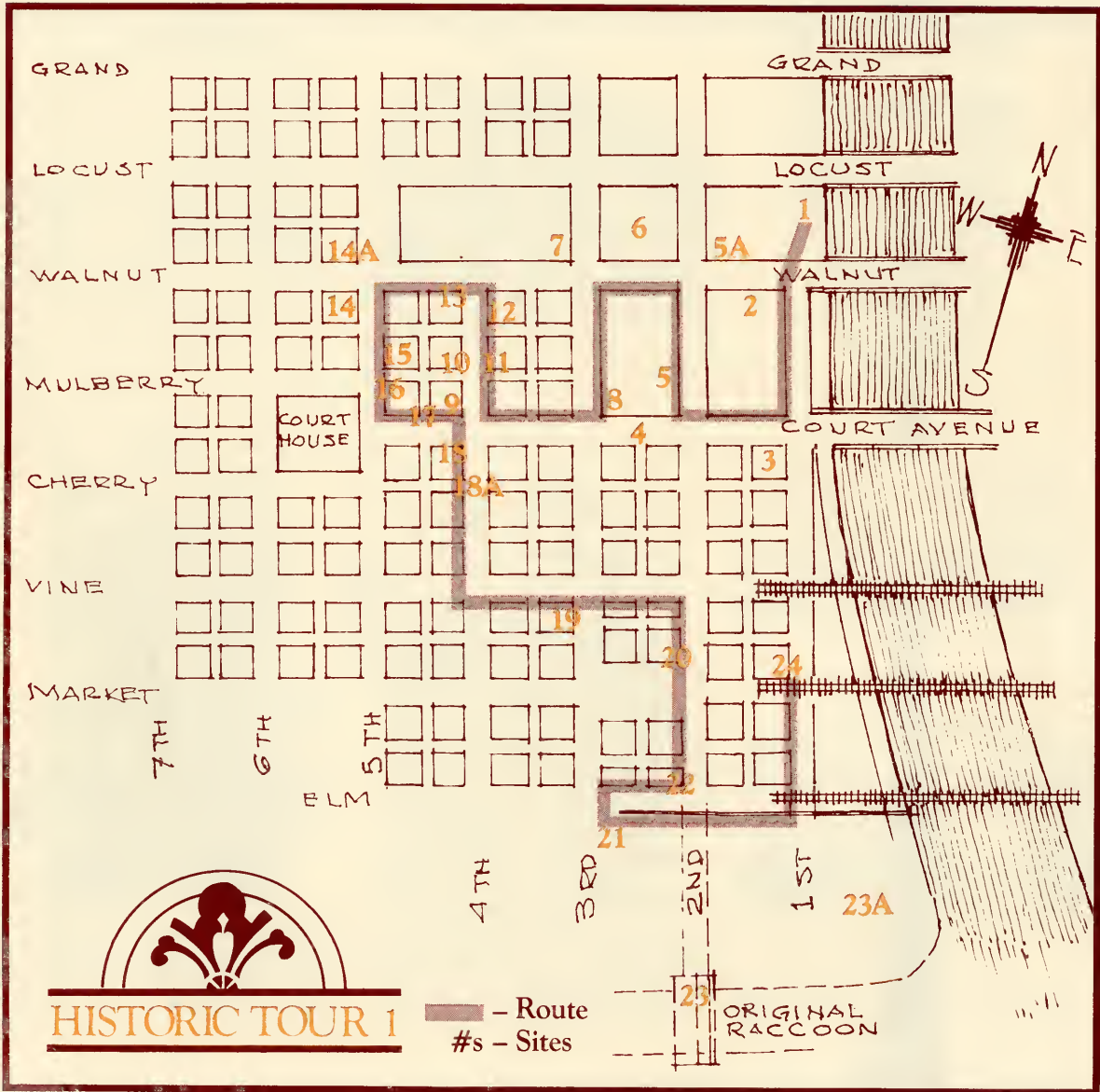
- This brochure
- An early map of Des Moines
- A brochure, "Something for Everyone"
- The written text for the cassette of Tour No. 1 or 2
- A cassette tape for Tour No. 1 or 2
- An evaluation sheet (please complete and return)

### Instructions:

1. In the Library or at home look at and listen to the slide-tape Introduction for Tour No. 1 and/or Tour No. 2.
2. Check out a kit.
3. Walk, ride or look at the total program at home.
4. For home use, check out slides and cassette kit. Slides of early and present sites are available.
5. All of the photographs in the slide presentations are available in book form at the Main Library.

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## HISTORIC TOUR 1

*(Site numbers relate to numbers on the map. These are early sites; only a few buildings stand as originally built).*



### 1. Dr. Whitman's House

Occupied the site of the present Public Library prior to 1899. The Iowa State Arsenal, complete with shot tower, was on the North half of this lot.



### 2. Des Moine House

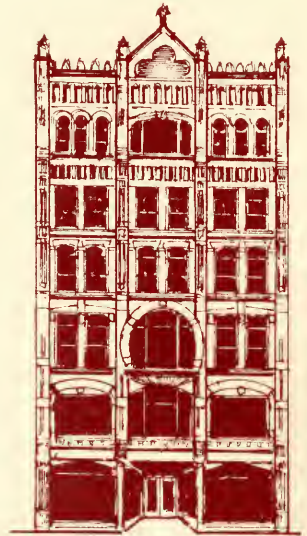
Built 1854-55. Is on site of present Polk County Building (the old post office) In 1886 it became the location of George Conradi's Tavern.

### 3. Kurtz Hardware Building

S.W. corner of First and Court Avenue. The original business on this site was Dickerson Agricultural Implement Company in the 1860's. Dickerson was an immigrant from Prussia.

### 4. General view

Court Avenue between Second and Third Streets. This area was the mercantile center of Des Moines in the 1850's through mid-1870's. Here were Kuhn Brothers Men's Clothing and Jacob's Millinery (later known as Wolf's; Jacob Mandelbaum was a partner in this firm and in the 1920's he merged with Younkers; the family is represented in that store by Duchon and Friedman).



### 5. Harbach Furniture Store

1873 view, located west side of Second street, at #'s 223 and 225. Harbach was a leading furniture merchant; also operated an undertaking parlor.





### 5A. The Hewitt Building

Built in 1880 on the Northeast corner of 2nd and Walnut by the Hewitt family for a Retail and Wholesale Grocery Store; occupied subsequently by several businesses, it was in use until 1978 when it burned to the ground. Site now occupied by Library Plaza.

### 6. Library Plaza and Civic Center

Corner of 2nd and Walnut; Library to the East, Civic Center to the West. On the Northwest corner of this intersection stood the Joseph Hierb Saloon.



### 7. Exchange Block

Northwest corner of Third and Walnut. This busy commercial block was built in 1850 and housed the city council and offices of doctors, lawyers and other professionals including the Green and Weare Banking House of 1855 which was under the supervision of Hoyt Sherman.



### 8. Sherman Block

Built by Hoyt Sherman in 1855 at N. E. corner of Third and Court. This was one of the most famous office complexes of early Des Moines. B. F. Allen began his banking operations in this building and when he vacated, the corner room became the first home office of the Equitable of Iowa.



### 9. Valley Bank

Northwest Fourth and Court. This was, in the 1850's, an office for Benjamin Saylor and later the Baker Drug Store; after that, Valley Bank built its second home there.



### 10. Arts Block

West Side of Fourth between Court & Walnut (the three story structure). Built in 1876 by the brother of Conrad Youngerman; designed by Mr. Bartlett. This was the second home of the Public Library of Des Moines.

### 11. Elliott Hotel and Brinsmaids

219 4th Street. The Elliott Hotel was built in 1879 by State Fire Insurance and was the first home of the Bankers Life Company. The parking lot to the south was occupied in 1881 by the Perkins & Gray Queensware Store (later to become Brinsmaids.)



### 12. Moore's Opera House

Located at the Southeast corner of 4th and Walnut. Currently an oil station, this was a lot occupied by a small opera house built in

1865 by Billy Moore who had been a druggist and drygoods merchant. In 1873 he convinced an eastern investor to add on to the building so that it covered the whole lot; the House then could hold 900 people and was the entertainment center of Des Moines. Later a family by the name of Frankle took over the building and renamed it "Wonderland". The corner room was B. F. Allen's State National Bank.



### 13. Harbach Furniture Store

412-414 West Walnut. By 1890 Harbach had prospered and moved the furniture business to this location; when he retired from the business, S. Davidson & Sons, also in retail furniture, moved into the location. Area now a parking ramp.

### 14. Clapp Block

Located on the Southwest corner of Fifth and Walnut, a three story building built by Edwin Clapp in 1872. It was the finest office and retail building in the city and two of the tenants were the Citizens National Bank and W. S. Dart, known as "The Glory Merchant", who ran a popular drygoods store and later was the chief organizer of the Exposition Building, now called the "Shops Building."



### 14A. The Good Block

Was on the Northwest corner of the intersection, directly opposite the Clapp Block. Built in 1881, the block housed the Iowa Loan & Trust Company, Rogg Drug Store and Mandelbaum's Dry Goods Store (later merged with Younkers in 1928).



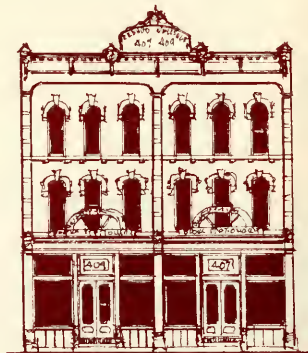
### 15. Fifth Ave. Methodist Church

The church (seen in the background) was built in 1850 on Fifth Street between Walnut and Court. In 1865 the congregation needed money and built commercial buildings in front of the church for rentals; Phineas Casady used part of the space for his Des Moines Savings Bank. Much later, part of this building was the second home office of the Bankers Life Company.



### 16. The Old Federal Building

At the Northeast corner of Fifth and Court; construction started in 1868. In the 1960's this building was removed to make room for the 5th and Walnut Parking Ramp.



### 17. Redhead and Wellslager Bldg.

At 407 and 409 Court Avenue, Redhead & Wellslager, wholesale dealers in stationery supplies, built a two story building in 1871; business increased so fast that they built a three story building in 1876 and rented the smaller one to tenants such as J. Mandelbaum and Wallace's Farmer.





### 18. B. F. Allen House

At the Southwest corner of 4th and Court, B. F. Allen built a fine brick home for his bride in the 1860's and lived there until 1869 when Terrace Hill (a much grander home) was completed. This spot was later (1872) the location of the Aborn Hotel, a 99 room showplace.



### 20. First Post Office

The first post office in Des Moines was located on Second Street in the Second and Market industrial area where such companies as Mennig-Slater Pickle Works (on the corner of 2nd and Vine), Emerson Electric, Skinner Plow Works and Musgrave Fence Company were built in the early 1870's.



### 22. Dr. Campbell's Building

Northwest corner of 2nd and Elm. The building in the left of this sketch is Dr. Campbell's "first brick building in Des Moines", a three story tavern built in 1850, coyly referred to by people at the time as a "grocery store operation." On the right side of the picture is the cabin.



### 21. Aulmann Brewery

226 Elm Street. Now the location of the Blue Line Towers Transfer, this was originally the building occupied by the A. Aulmann Brewery which contained an apartment for the brewmaster in addition to the main building. Part of the Aulmann family became owners of the Eagle Iron Works which is still in operation near North High School.



### 23. Covered Bridge and Birthplace of Des Moines

Second and Elm. From here can be seen the early location of the covered bridge which was built (where the Raccoon and Des Moines Rivers met) to make it easier to get from the South to the North side of town. Flooding was a continual problem here and straightening of the Raccoon River channel in 1916 changed the appearance of the area greatly.

### 18A. Scenic Spot

The view northwest from this spot is one of the best of the Des Moines' skyline.

### 19. Rock Island Line

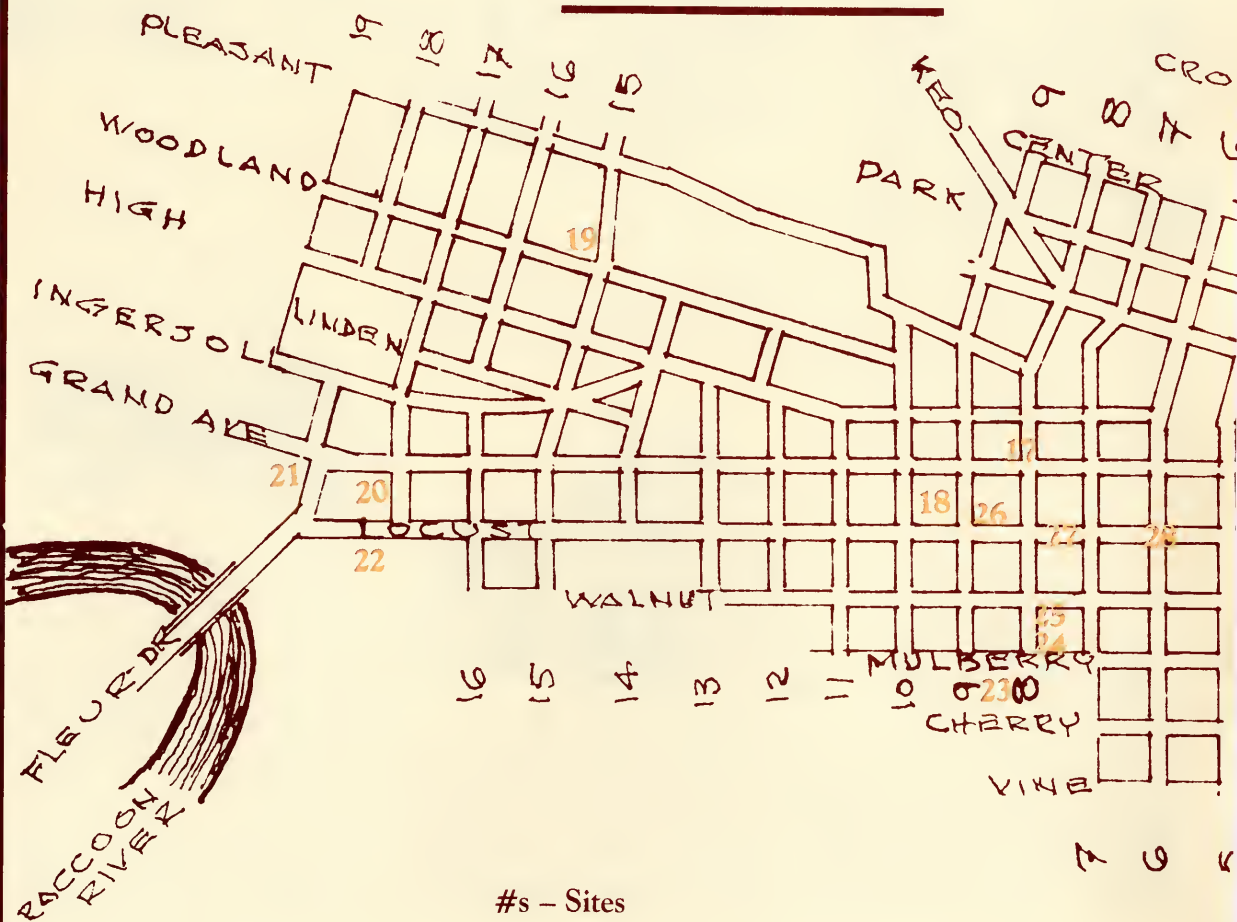
S.W. Corner of 3rd. and Vine. On this corner stood the Monitor House Hotel, built during the Civil War and across the street from it, the famous Given House (later named the Windsor House). The Northwest corner was the site of the first Rock Island Depot built in 1868.

### 24. Baker Barbed Wire Company

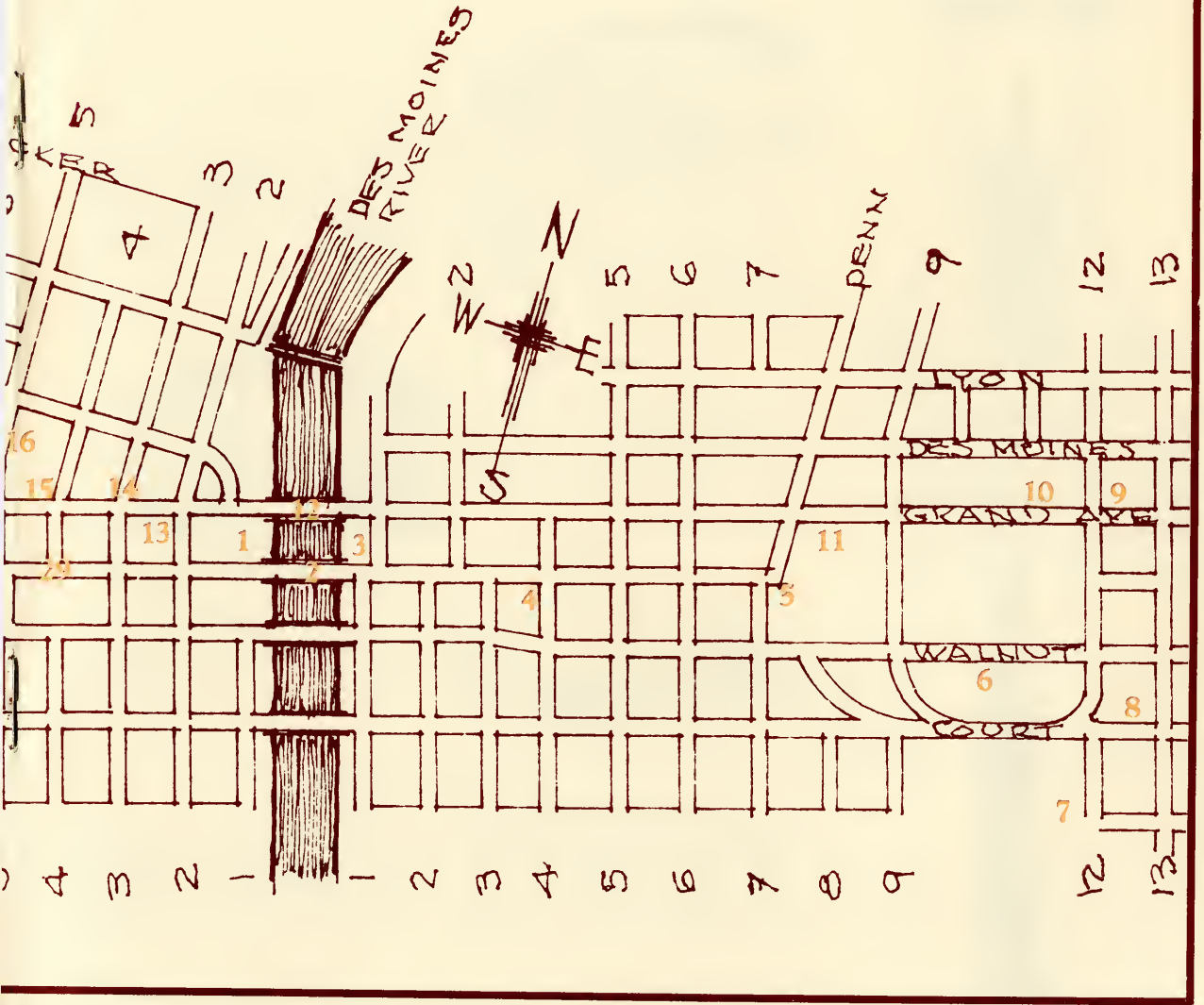
First and Market.

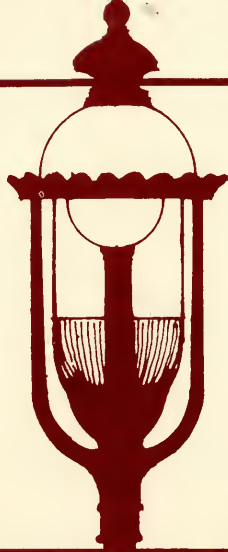


## HISTORIC TOUR 2









## HISTORIC TOUR 2

*(Site numbers relate to numbers on the map. These are early sites; only a few buildings stand as originally built.)*



### 1. Coliseum

101 Locust, now the YMCA. The Coliseum was built in 1909 and was the second Convention Center in Des Moines. It burned down in 1949.

### 2. Locust Street Bridge over the Des Moines River

From YMCA to East 1st Street. This bridge was built in 1909 and rebuilt in the 1960's. The Bird's Run Sewer outlet is just east of the YMCA and drains surface water from as far west as 25th Street.

### 3. City Hall

East First and Locust. Original structure on this site was the Dean Sawmill built in 1850. City Hall was built in 1909-10.

### 4. Cimino Distributing Company

E. 4th and Locust. The Northwestern Railroad Station was at this location up until the 1950's. The building on the S.E. corner of E. 4th dates back to 1869 and was known as the Jones Block and later the Capitol Hotel.

### 5. East Locust Street

From E. 4th to the Capitol. The older buildings here were constructed in the 1870's and were the beginning of the East Des Moines business district. In 1854 East Des Moines was platted and Hoyt Sherman was appointed administrator. Construction on the present Capitol building began in 1871.



### 6. Soldiers and Sailors Monument

South of the Capitol building. This monument is on the site of the first Capitol building in Des Moines (1857 to late 1880's). Many fine homes stood in this area at that time.

### 7. Gravesite of Willson Alexander Scott.

At end of 12th St. South of Court Avenue. Scott was one of the first white men to claim land legally in this area. He and his brother claimed all the land from the river on the east and south; Walnut on the north and East 14th on the east.

### 8. The first East High School

Corner of E 12th and Court, currently the location of the Hoover Office Building. The first East High School was built there in 1890; the building was used later for an elementary school and then Amos Hiatt Junior High.



### 11. Former location of Bryant School

South Side of Grand Ave. between East Ninth and Pennsylvania Avenue. Bryant was the first real school building on the East Side; it was built in 1866.



### 9. Cherry Place

Northeast Corner of East 12th and Grand. Early mercantile and political figure, Isaac Brandt, built his home here in 1856 and planted fifty cherry trees. Acquired by the Starzinger family in 1900.



### 12. Hall's Mill and the Center Street Dam

On Grand Avenue to the bridge over the Des Moines River. Crossing of the river here was by ferry for many years. Current bridge (1919) is the second at this point. Center Street Dam to the North was built by the Hall brothers in 1854. The power plant was originally the site of Hall's Mill.

### 10. State Historical Building

Northwest corner of East 12th and Grand. Was built in 1899, but included only one third of the present structure; the balance was constructed in 1904.



### 13. First City Hall (1882)

The Southwest corner of Second and Grand. Early fire station stood here until 1935 when a new station was built at 9th and Mulberry. 2nd and Grand location was the site of the City Market from 1912 until the 1940's. Now the location of the New Civic Center Court apartment complex.

### 14. North of Grand on Third Street

were some of Des Moines finest homes.



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### 15. First real YMCA in Des Moines, 1890-1910

Northwest corner of Fourth and Grand. North of the YMCA was the first Auditorium of Des Moines (now part of the Brown garage).

### 16. Original Western League Ball park, 1886-1908

Covered the area between Keo and Grand from 4th to 6th Street. Bird Run Sewer was underneath part of this area; circuses and tent meetings also were held in the Ball Park area.

### 17. Church area of the seven spires

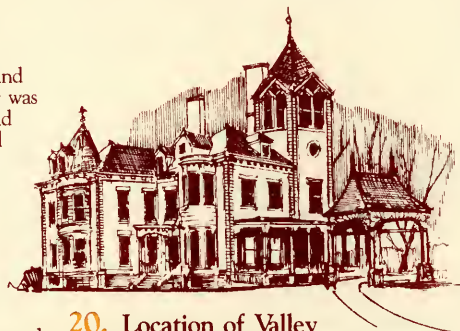
Along Grand and to the north from 8th and High. This was mostly residential but Bankers Life site was occupied by Plymouth Congregational, Central Presbyterian and also visible were the Baptists, B'Nai Beshurun (1878), St. Paul's Episcopal (1883), First Methodist and Central Christian churches.

### 18. Ewing and Jewett Lumber Yard

The square block from 9th to 10th and Grand to Locust. Property split in 1904; Ewing Block on South half and Jewett Building on north.

### 19. Hoyt Sherman Place

15th and Woodland. Hoyt Sherman built here in 1876 and the family lived here until 1903. Property given to the city and leased to the Des Moines Women's Club in 1907.



### 20. Location of Valley Regency Bank from 1966 to 1980

Southwest corner of 17th and Grand. This area was the homesite of Tallmadge E. Brown from 1867 to 1890's. Later the Catholics used the building as St. Catherine's working girls' home.

### 21. Des Moines Technical High School

1800 Grand Avenue. Was built originally as a Ford Motor Co. assembly plant. During World War II was sold to Solar Aircraft Company.

### 22. Meredith Corporation

1716 Locust. Original Meredith plant built here in 1912. Directly south of the parking ramp was the original Des Moines Waterworks.

### 23. Central Fire Station (#1)

9th and Mulberry. On this S. W. corner stood the famous Lincoln School, the first large public school built by the West Des Moines School District (in 1871). Current Central Fire Station built in 1935.

### 24. Pitt Carriage Company in 1890's

8th and Mulberry. The Carriage Company was on the land west of the viaduct, an area later taken over by the Claiborne and Leachman families whose mechanics, Fred and August Duesenberg, developed the Duesenberg Racing Motor. To the north on 8th St., the Majestic Theater opened in 1910; later the Orpheum was at that location for a time.

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### 25. Foster Opera House and the Shops Building

Intersection of Eighth Street and Walnut. The building on the Southeast corner was built in 1883 for the Foster Opera House and Hotel.

West at 800-810 Walnut is the Shops Building, erected in 1876 as an Exposition Building.



### 27. The "Theater Street"

Locust from 8th to 7th Street. The Rialto occupied the current Register and Tribune location after 1910 and across the street was the Royal. About 1907 the Nickeldom (later the Unique) Theater was in the current Frankel site, replaced in 1930 by the Strand. Also on the North side of the street were the Casino and the Palace theaters. Plymouth Congregational Church was here (1860-1903) and replaced the original Tabernacle at 4th and Court.



### 29. The Observatory Building

At 4th and Locust. On the NW corner of the intersection stands the Savery Hotel, the third one in Des Moines, utilizing the magic Savery name, synonymous with a good hostelry.

On the SW corner was the Observatory Building, a "skyscraper" of early Des Moines, built in 1895 by Gerrit Van Ginkel with nine stories and a three-story observation tower.



### 26. First Public School Building, 1855

At 9th and Locust. The first public school building in Des Moines opened on the NE corner (now the location of the Goodyear Service Store, 817 Locust.) A DAR plaque is on the front of the building.

### 28. The Famous Clock Corner

At Sixth and Locust. On the NE corner was the famous four-faced clock, by the Schlamp Jewelry Store, a local meeting place. On the SE corner was the St. Ambrose Cathedral from 1855 to 1890.



The north half of what is currently Nollen Plaza was originally the property of Wesley Redhead; he lived on Third Street, had his coal office on the SE corner of 4th and Locust and in 1894 erected a building for the Des Moines Fire Insurance Company on the 4th Street corner.

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## Source of materials

The basic source of information for Des Moines and Iowa history is the Public Library of Des Moines "Iowa Collection", available for further reading in the Main Library's Reference Department. Some materials used are listed below.

### Bibliography used in preparing grant

#### Books

*The Art Work of Des Moines, Iowa*  
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*Beginnings: Reminiscences of Early  
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the Des Moines Public Schools 1846-  
1976.* Robert R. Denny.

*Book of Des Moines*  
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*Des Moines City Directory 1866-7*

*Des Moines Illustrated Souvenir*

*From Cabin to Capital*  
Leroy Pratt

*Greater Des Moines*  
*Have A Look At Our City 1928*

*Historical Polk County, the Site of Old  
Fort Des Moines*  
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*Illustrated D.M. Souvenir*

*Old Fort Des Moines by  
Harry Herndon Polk*

*Sketches of Early Des Moines*

*Souvenir of Des Moines  
By the Mail and Times*

*Souvenir of Des Moines*

*Views of Des Moines, Iowa*

#### Early maps

1875 Andreas Atlas

Commercial Exchange Map of Des Moines. A.D. 1889

Hawkeye Insurance Co. - City of Des Moines From  
South Park Hill

Map Case - Historical Bldg.

Oil and Gas Lamp Map

Plan of Des Moines Polk County. 1882 by Mills & Co.

Various Maps of D.M. (early and current)

#### Other

Private Photograph and Slide Collections

Private Post Card Collections

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**Special thanks** to these committee members for their roles in this Iowa Humanities Board Grant

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