

North Platte
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
COMMISSION

WALKING TOUR OF
**HISTORIC
DOWNTOWN
NORTH PLATTE**



Lincoln County Courthouse

301 N Jeffers St



Construction started in 1921 with the driving of 150 cedar wood pilings pulled from the first/original South Platte River Bridge to support the foundation of the building. However the project began running above the bond issue with costs completely out of control. The problem was so severe that work was halted on January 27, 1923. The voters had demanded an audit of the books. On April 30, 1923 at 1:00 a.m., the day the auditors were to begin their work, a fire broke out in the old courthouse, which sat next to the new one being built. After an investigation, arrests, and convictions of the persons involved, it took Lincoln County another ten years to finish the new courthouse.

The building was designed by George Berlingh of Lincoln in the Beaux Arts Style. The final architects on the project were the McMichael brothers.

An addition was added on the east side in 1967. The building was put on the National Register of Historic Places on January 10, 1990.





Carnegie Library

314 N Jeffers St

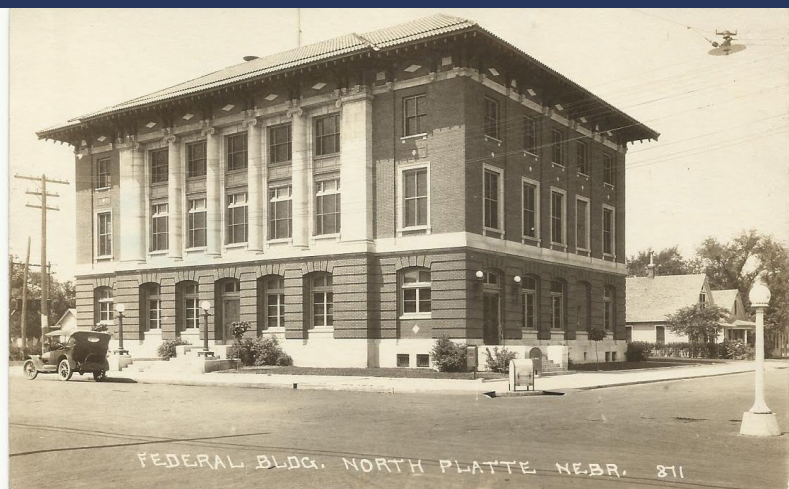


On April 8, 1910 a letter was received by Mayor Patterson stating, "If the city agree by resolution of the council to maintain a free public library at a cost of not less than twelve thousand dollars a year, and provides a suitable site for the building, Mr. Carnegie will be glad to give twelve thousand dollars to erect a free public library building for North Platte." At the next council meeting, a Library Board of Directors was established to oversee the building of the library.

The lot was bought for \$2,070 from the Knights of Columbus in May of 1910. The project was given to Howard McMichael in August of 1911. The building contract was \$8,676. On April 10, 1912 it opened to the public. Restrooms were added to the building in 1925 and in 1940 and addition was built on the west side.

1913 Federal Building

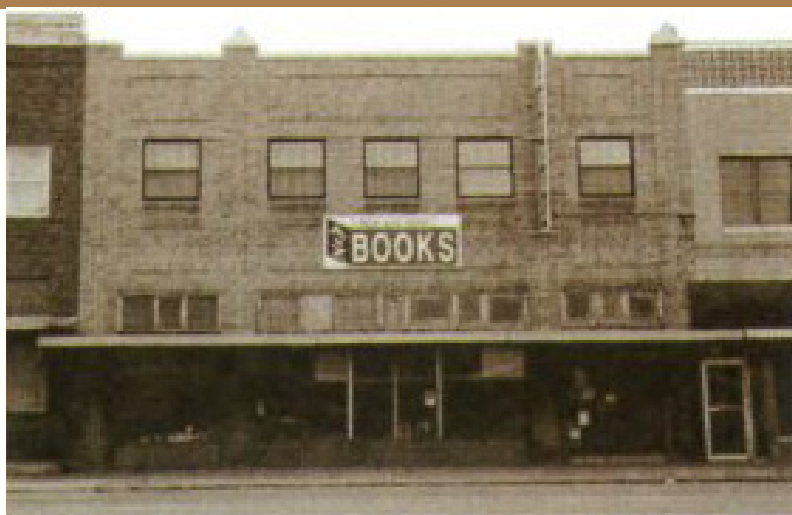
416 North Jeffers St



In 1908 Congress appropriated \$110,000 for the establishment of a Federal Building in North Platte. The United States Government purchased the Woodhurst lot for \$9,000 in November of 1908. Construction began on May 13, 1911 and was completed on July 26, 1913. The cost to construct the building was \$88,475. It is an example of the Renaissance Revival architectural style. Major character-defining features include wide overhanging eaves supported by brackets, clay tile roofing, and impressive second story pilasters. In June of 1964 a new Federal Building was completed and this one was turned over to the North Platte Junior College. In 2009, the Creativity Unlimited Arts Council purchased the building and turned it into the Prairie Arts Center. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on March 4, 2009.

Kunkel Supply Building

505-507 N Jeffers St



Kunkel Auto Supply was organized in 1926 by John Kunkel. In May of 1930 Kunkel bought a lot and started plans for construction of a new building which was completed on November 28, 1933. The architect, C. C. Coursey, designed the brick modernistic one-story building. It measures 44 X 120 feet and cost \$15,000. In March of 1937 a second story was added for storage space and a salesroom. The construction cost for the second story was \$11,000 and included a large freight elevator. When John Kunkel retired in 1962, his sons Donald and Ernest continued the business until 1994 when they retired. In 1996, both sons passed away one month apart.

Morsch/Klenk Building

506-508 N Jeffers St



Built in 1915 for \$25,000, the building measures 28 X 90 feet and includes a basement. On April 13, 1916 the North Platte General Hospital moved to the second floor. The hospital moved out in 1922 and the second floor was divided into two sections. One section became the Lily Rooming House and the other section became offices. In 1925 the Platte Valley Hospital moved in and stayed until 1929. Then the second floor became the Capital Hotel until 1980 when it turned into the Capital Apartments.



S & R Service Station

520 N Jeffers St



This old mission style building (original with red tile roof and wide eaves) was purchased by Arthur Salisbury and Oscar Ray Robinson and the business opened its doors on May 25, 1919 as the S & R Service Station.

In July, 1921, a second building was built that connected to the original structure. The Vesta Battery Station then moved into the new addition from their previous room on the north side of the building.



McCabe Building

400-402 N Dewey St



Looking north on the corner of 4th & Dewey Streets on the west side of the street you will see the progression of buildings by year starting with the corner McCabe Building.

Dr. McCabe laid the cornerstone of this building in 1913. The lower floor was used exclusively by the Hendy & Ogier Ford garage. The building was 44 X 126 feet with a pressed brick front and heated rooms. B. M. Reynolds was the architect and the contractor was J. M. Gray. The building, complete with concrete floors, was considered almost entirely fireproof. The top floor was used for offices.



Hotel McCabe

404-406 N Dewey St



Dr. Nicholas McCabe built his hotel right north of the McCabe Building in 1915. The estimated cost was \$30,000 and Howard McMichael got the contract. The second floor had 50 guest rooms, of which, 28 were equipped with baths. The lobby was built on the north half of the first floor and a drug store occupied the south half. The dining room took up the entire rear of the building from north to south and the kitchen was in the

extreme rear of the hotel. It opened to the public on March 23, 1916 at a final cost of \$55,000. The hotel had a central vacuum system which allowed a vacuum hose to be plugged into each room for cleaning. In 1917, Dr. McCabe began plans to enlarge his hotel by adding a third floor and remodeling the second floor. In January of 1918 construction began. Architect Victor Beck drew up the plans. He went to Omaha to make sure that there would be enough of the matching supplies to use so that the building had a uniform pattern and color in appearance to the original building. The third floor brought the total rooms to 100, all with complete shower bath and toilet. All the floors were covered with the new noiseless, waterproof, acid proof "Rezelite." A large elevator was constructed at the rear of the hotel for handling guest's trunks.

Elks Building

401-409 N Dewey St



The North Platte Lodge No. 985, Benevolent and protective Order of Elks purchased the corner lot on Dewey and 4th Street on May 28, 1910 from the Presbyterian Church for \$3,000. The lot measured 66 X 132 Feet. On September 2, 1910 bonds were approved and issued for \$15,000 for construction.

Architect Carl Shaffer was employed to draw the plans and the contract was awarded on June 4, 1910. Active building began on July 1, 1910. The building was to be three stories, pressed brick with Bedford stone trimmings in the Romanesque style.

The main entrance for the second and third floor was located on Fourth Street. Both floors were used exclusively for the club. They were furnished elaborately with leather furniture made of mahogany wood and several other types of wood were used on both floors.

In May of 1917, McMichael Brothers was awarded a contract for a 3-story addition to the building going north. The measurements would be 44 X 80 feet using the same style and brick as the original building. The final cost was estimated at \$12,000.



Knights of Columbus

408-410 N Dewey St



In October of 1915, the Catholic Church announced plans to build a Knights of Columbus lodge north of the Hotel McCabe building. By August 23, 1917, the plans, developed by architect Beck were completed and the estimated cost was \$32,000. McMichael Brothers was awarded the contract for construction on September 6, 1917 for \$30,300. The three story building measured 44 X 126 feet. The first and second floor were WJ O'Connor Department Store. The second floor also contained offices and the third floor was the lodge.

Morsch Building

409 N Dewey St



Built in 1912 by Huntington & Howard for Joseph Morsch, the two story building is 44 X 80 feet with a pressed brick front. It was originally occupied by the Doolittle Bakery. According to The North Platte Semi-Weekly Tribune, the Doolittle Bakery, which will take possession of the Morsch Building October 1st, has installed a bake oven with a capacity of 350 loaves of bread at one baking, and one heating of the oven will serve three bakings. The oven, which is lined with sand, weighs 18 tons.

Keith Theater

412-414 N Dewey St



The Keith Theater, also called the Keith Opera House, was built in 1908 as a wedding present to Mary Virginia Neill from her husband Keith Neville.

The theater opened on September 23, 1908. It sported an asbestos curtain, full equipment drops, and scenery. It opened with 650 seats, a fire escape and numerous exits and was considered completely fireproof. The grand opening live performance for the theatre "The Burgo-Master," a comic opera described in the Daily Telegraph as, "a decided success from every standpoint."

Howe/Maloney Building

413-415 N Dewey St



The plans for the Howe/Maloney building were drawn up in March of 1913 by architect B. M. Reynolds. Shortly after the building was completed, Howe passed away in 1914. In 1918 Maloney built a larger building around the corner at 214 E 5th Street and evidently sold this building to the McDonald family. The McDonalds leased the building to the F. W. Woolworth Company in 1933.

In 1936 a second story was added to the building. The cost was \$15,000. Sadly, in 1990, Woolworth's closed the store and the famous lunch counter that had been a prominent establishment in downtown for 57 years.



Masonic Temple Building

417-423 N Dewey St

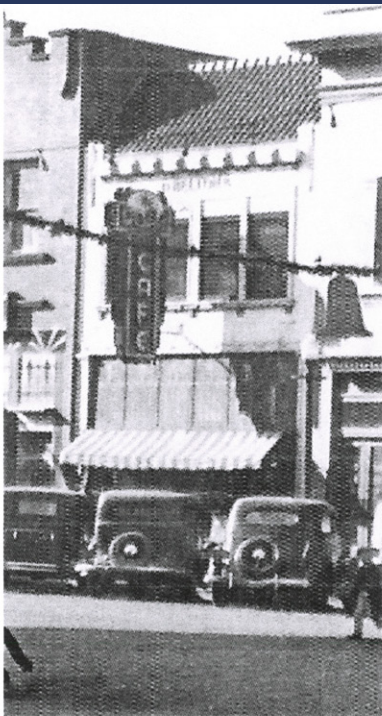


The Platte Valley Lodge No. 32 of the Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons began as a room above Charles McDonald's store in Cottonwood Springs near Fort McPherson. Having trouble with a commander stationed at the fort who punished soldiers wanting to join, the Masons decided to move the lodge away from the fort. In 1872, they built a two-story frame building on the corner of Dewey and Fifth Street. This lodge soon was too small for a growing membership. In January 1900 plans started coming together for a larger building. The second temple was started in 1907 and completed on February 22, 1908 at this location. In 1929 there was a need for more space so in February 1930 a third floor was added, along with two elevators.



W.H. McDonald/C.I. Belton Building

418 N Dewey St



In 1916, when construction started on the Brodbeck building at 104-110 E 5th St, plans were made for the demolition of the existing building Brodbecks had originally occupied. In its place William McDonald and Carolyn Belton built a structure, measuring 22 x 128 feet. The plans called for a two-story pressed brick building with terracotta trim. Construction started on July 1, 1916 and the architect was B. M. Reynolds. The first floor

had a beamed ceiling with a terrazzo floor. The balcony had a mezzanine floor with a kitchen underneath.

I.O.O.F. Hall

420-422 N Dewey St



This building is the replacement for the original I.O.O.F. building that was built in 1881. When the original building was being removed the corner stone with a box in it was removed on May 16, 1907. The contents included a pocket knife, a 25 cent script, 54 cents in coins issued in 1873 and 1877, a copy of the North Platte Republican, three copies of the Western Nebraskan, two copies of the North Platte Telegraph issued on April 14, 1881 and the constitution and by-laws of the lodge. The article stated that many of the items and newer copies of the local newspapers would be put in the box when the new corner stone was laid.

The estimated cost of the new lodge was \$37,000. The building measures 24 X 100 feet. The second floor was used as the lodge with the first floor used primarily for businesses.

Hinman Building

505 N Dewey



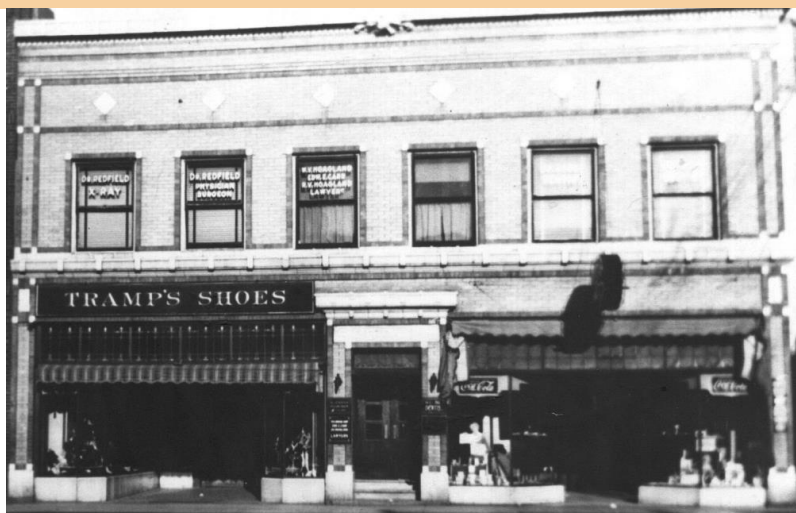
Built in 1885 by John Hinman for his brother Miner Hinman. Miner Hinman located his Chambers & Hudson auto business here. The second floor was home to a wide variety of businesses. It was used as a fireman's hall from 1915-1917.

In 1928 Hinman leased the second floor to be used as one of the many "rooming" houses in North Platte. It started as the Helen Slade Rooms and then changed to the Rex Rooms in 1929. In February of 1931 the "rooming" house was raided and ordered to close.



Reynolds/Tramp Building

508-510 N Dewey St



Built in 1886 by William Grady to be used as a general merchandise store. Grady sold the building in 1899 to W. C. Reynolds. He owned the building until 1919 when Ernest T. Tramp and sons, Arthur and Herbert, purchased it for a shoe store. In 1927 Tramp upgraded the west side of the second floor to be used for offices. Today if you look upstairs at the second floor you can still see the gold-lettered sign advertising the practice of Dr. Josiah B. Redfield, Physician and Surgeon.

Hahler Building

511 N Dewey St



This building was built in 1900 by Sam K. Richards. He passed away in 1923 and his son John became owner of the building. In 1927 John gutted the building and did a complete remodel of the whole building. The second floor was remodeled to be used as office spaces. It had been used as a bordello for many years before that. The first floor became home to Clinton Jewelers. Dr. Wurtele opened his office on the second floor and Dr. Snavelly, a dentist also opened an office on the second floor.

Dixon Building

514-518 N Dewey St



In June of 1879 Louis Thoelecke bought the two lots that comprise the Dixon Building site. He built two brick buildings right away and opened up his jewelry store. He leased the second store to various businesses. In 1883 the building sold to Dr. Nelson F. Donaldson and then in 1886 the building was bought by Harry Dixon.

Today the Dixon Building is the oldest standing building downtown in the Canteen District.



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|------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Lincoln County Courthouse | 15. W.H. McDonald/C |
| 2. Carnegie Library | Building |
| 3. 1913 Federal Building | 16. I. O. O. F. Hall |
| 4. Kunkel Supply Building | 17. Hinman Building |
| 5. Morsch/Klenk Building | 18. Reynolds/Tramp |
| 6. S & R Service Station | 19. Hahler Building |
| 7. McCabe Building | 20. Dixon Building |
| 8. Hotel McCabe | 21. Dickey Building |
| 9. Elks Building | 22. Sixth Street Mark |
| 10. Knights of Columbus | 23. Mutual Building a |
| 11. Morsch Building | 24. Youngs Sporting |
| 12. Keith Theater | 25. Brodbeck Building |
| 13. Howe/Maloney Building | 26. Twinem Building |
| 14. Masonic Temple Building | 27. Union State Bank |



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- 28. Maloney Building
- 29. Paramount Theater
- 30. Hotel Yancy aka Hotel Pawnee
- 31. Fox Theater
- 32. Sears Building
- 33. Old North Platte Telegraph Building
- 34. Paul J Thomsen International
Harvester Farm Implement Store
- 35. Hendy-Ogier Building
- 36. Wilcox/Hinman Service Station
Building
- 37. Higgins Chevrolet Building
- 38. Rasmussen Oil Company
- 39. Sidles Building

Dickey Building

520-522 N Dewey St



The Dickey Building was built in 1889 by Joseph Schatz and the North Platte National Bank. The building was designed in the Richardsonian Romanesque architectural style popular in the late 1880's. The building sported three chimneys and the second floor offices were divided by a long hallway lit by three skylights.

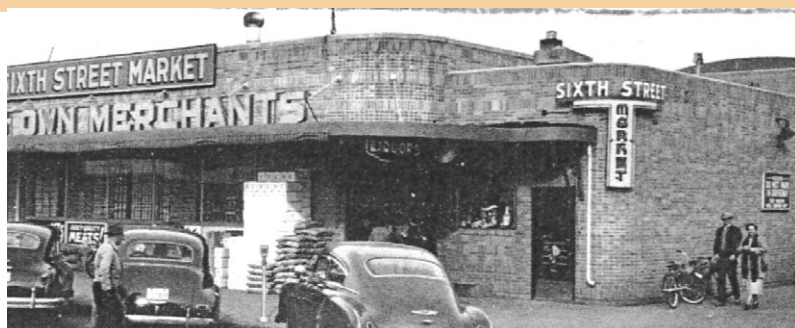
Large arches over the doorways, large stone blocks with contrasting red brick, carved columns, and three domed silver turrets combine to make this building a true historic treasure and one of a kind for the city of North Platte

The stone column was removed in 1928 during a big remodel and relocated to Cody Park to serve as a fountain.



Sixth Street Market

521 N Bailey Ave



On September 6, 1941, John Hanson and Cleve Milroy, announced that they were formally opening their new "Spacious" supermarket on the corner of 6th and Bailey Street.

They had been in business on 207 East Sixth Street, next to the First National Bank since 1935 and needed to expand.

The new building measured 132 feet along Sixth Street and 60 feet wide along Bailey Street. A liquor store was added to the south side of the building measuring 14 X 70 feet. The parking lot would run along the south side of the store.

The building was built without any pillars and was finished with buff brown brick and tile for the exterior. It was considered one of the largest food stores in Nebraska at the time.

On March 16, 1949 the store announced their formal opening after a major remodel.

Mr. Hanson and Mr. Milroy built a two-story warehouse measuring 132 X 132 feet just east of the original building, connection the two buildings together. This new building made the supermarket the size of a half block.

The retail floor space increased to 132 X 60 feet and the parking lot extended east along the south side of the two buildings giving them much more needed parking.

Many other improvements were made in each department inside the store also.

Mutual Building and Loan

100-102 E 5th St



The lot on the corner of Fifth and Jeffers, measuring 54 X 132 feet, was sold to the Mutual Building and Loan in July of 1913. The plans were to build a 2-story structure with a 41 X 80 foot basement.

As part of the construction three vaults were installed. The largest one was located on the ground floor and two smaller ones were located on the second floor right above the large one. The building was fireproof and several suites were finished in fir and oak. Slate stairways led to the second floor and the basement. The telephone wiring was placed in grooves in the molding at the top of the walls to be kept out of sight, and the front and back of the building included entrances to both floors. On June 16, 1914, the new building was accepted.

Young's Sporting Goods

101 E 5th St



This two story brick building was built by T. O. Swenson for Young's Sporting Good. Verne and Raymond Young had their business at 716-718 North Jeffers Street and needed a larger location. Young's Sporting Goods was the largest sporting goods store between Omaha and Denver at that time. This was the third location for the Young brothers.

The grand opening was held on October 1, 1969.

Brodbeck Building

104-106 E 5th St

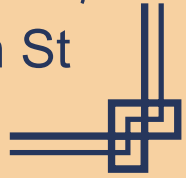


Christian Brodbeck signed a contract on February 5, 1916 to build a two-story building to house the Christian Brodbeck & Sons Meat Market. The market would be on the first floor and the second floor would be offices. The building cost \$10,000 and measured 128 X 22 feet. In 1922, the Brodbecks expanded their business to include groceries. Interestingly, in 1923, the city directory showed the Glendale Rooms, one of North Platte's many brothels, as the occupant of the second floor. In 1938, the building was remodeled for a cost of \$800. Finally, the Brodbeck Meat Market closed its doors after 78 years of continuous operation.



Twinem Building

108-110 East 5th St



Dr. J. S. Twinem advertised in the North Platte Telegraph on November 28, 1916 that he was erecting a two-story building 44 X 132 feet on his vacant lots just east of the Brodbeck Building. On February 24, 1917, a Party Wall agreement was signed between John Twinem and Christian Brodbeck. This allowed for a common wall to be built with the cost split between the two owners. The store front was made of pressed brick. The second floor was used for offices and apartments, including Dr. Twinem's.

Union State Bank Building

109-111 E 5th St



This building was built by T. O. Swenson in 1924. The building has four store fronts and opened in March. It opened with a confectionery, drug store with a soda fountain and the Golden Eagle Café owned by Harry Chinn. T. O. Swenson was the founder and president of the bank and this new building replaced the one he had previously had his bank in at this same location.

Maloney Building

214 E 5th St



In 1918, William Maloney, who had been in business with C. A. Howe at 413-415 North Dewey until the latter's death in 1914, saw the need for a larger store to expand his business. He purchased a lot at 214 East 5th Street measuring 44 x 132 feet and constructed the major part of the building you see today. It consisted of two stories and an elevator. Both levels have pressed metal ceilings and hardwood floors. The windows on the second floor indicate the location of a chapel and helped display his casket selection. Two years later he added another 22 feet to the west side of the building, connecting it to the Masonic Building and his old building on Dewey Street. A common wall agreement was signed connecting the buildings.

In 1938 Maloney constructed another building and leased this building to the F. W. Woolworth Company to expand their store. The wall between his previous building at 413-415 North Dewey and this building was torn down giving Woolworths an L-shaped store with openings on both Dewey and East Fifth.

Paramount Theater

220-224 E 5th St



In 1931, Keith Neville opened the Paramount Theater. The Hotel Yancey opened in October of 1929 to the north and the Fox Theater on the northeast corner of the intersection in November of 1929. This made that corner what people called the Neville Corner for many years. The theater was built in the Art Deco style with a stepped up parapet above the main entrance. Brick and limestone were used to create an interesting facade. The grand opening was held on April 5, 1931.

A major draw was the Barton organ which was installed in the orchestra pit. The organ was entirely electric with thousands of organ pipes of various sizes.

In April of 1956 the theater went through a major renovation costing \$50,000. New seats, lounge rooms, front doors were added. The wall murals were cleaned and retouched and new draperies and a new snack bar were added. The stage was also renovated. A new cinemascope and stereophonic sound systems were installed.

Unfortunately the theater had a short life and the curtain fell for the last time on February 6, 1963.



Hotel Yancy aka Hotel Pawnee

221 E 5th St



Hotel Yancy was built by Keith Neville and Alex Beck in 1929. It was described as having 143 rooms with bath, and was Georgian architecture. The cost, including land and furnishings, was reported to be \$500,000. Over 200 guests attended the grand opening dinner on October 16, 1929. The name of the hotel changed to Hotel Pawnee in April of 1932. The hotel continued to operate successfully for many years with the Crystal Ballroom boasting beautiful crystal chandeliers. Several small shops came and went over the years next to the lobby of the hotel. The Neville family sold the hotel in 1970. It was named to the National register of Historic Places in 1985.

Fox Theater

301-305 E 5th St



In 1928, a McCook company entered into a contract with the North Platte Realty Company, owned by Keith Neville and Alex Beck of Omaha, to build a theater on the corner of Pine (Bailey) and 5th Street. The building was designed by F. A. Henniger of Omaha and was built in the "Picture Palace" style.

The sides of the interior are lined with finely woven fabric panels and columns with gold cornices embossed with intricate plaster patterns. Atop the columns are plaster gargoyles of various designs.

The exterior is richly accented with terracotta moldings, bas relief, and sculptor and geometric patterns. The moldings are interlaced with floral and vine patterns and accented by silent faces.

The theatre opened on November 22, 1929 with seating for 1,100. The interior of the building was designed in the Renaissance style with elaborate decorations. In 1956 the theater was remodeled reducing the seats to 900, providing more legroom.

In 1963 the Paramount closed and the Fox became the only movie theater in North Platte.

The theater closed in December of 1980. The Neville sisters gave the theater to the North Platte Community Playhouse for use as the Neville Center for the Performing Arts.

A major remodeling was done costing \$250,000 and the building re-opened on December 9, 1983.

The Fox Theater is on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sears Building

304 E 5th St



Construction on this large building began on August 28, 1948 with the removing of trees. All of the six houses that set on this location had already been moved off the lot. The building was built by the Walker-Rhoads Corporation. When the building was finished on March 10th, 1949 it was one of the largest retail stores in Western Nebraska. The building was built using all local workers.

The floor has 26,136 square feet and has 14-foot ceilings. It took 101,556 feet of lumber and 165,274 bricks to build it. The frame of the building is made from 120,000 pounds of structural steel. The store grand opening was announced in the North Platte Telegraph on March 17, 1949 and took up almost the whole paper.

Old North Platte Telegraph Building

315 E 5th St



This building was built in 1941 by John Hansen and Cleve Milroy. It was built and used only as a warehouse for the Sixth Street Market which the two men owned. The building is 132 feet long with a 66-foot front frontage. On January 28, 1948 when the Telegraph-Bulletin took over the building it was just like a newly built building.



Paul J Thomsen International Harvester Farm Implement Store

321 E 5th St



This building was built in 1945 by Paul J. Thomsen for his farm equipment store. At that time Thomsen was also using the building at 408 North Chestnut for some of his farm implements. When Thomsen had this building constructed it gave him the space to move all of his equipment under one roof. Not only did they have implements at the Chestnut address, he had equipment on East Sixth Street.

This building measures 66 X 132 feet which allowed Thomsen office space, parts department and a display floor all in one place.

Hendy-Ogier Building

207-227 E 4th St



In July 1917, the Hendy-Ogier Auto Company bought a lot east of the Elks Building, with the intentions of putting up a two-story building. This was an excellent location as the Lincoln Highway passed right in front of their new lot. They also took out an option for an additional 44 feet to the east of their new lot. The construction cost totaled \$11,000.

In 1925, the east side of the building was constructed by Raymond Ogier to match the older two-story building of canary brick. The second floor of this addition was a machine shop.

In October of 1929, Victor Beck remodeled and added a total of 70,000 square feet to the building. Included was a warehouse and parking space on the roof. Shortly after the renovations and remodeling were done a wall was put up to make the east side the Pontiac Dealership while the west side remained a Ford dealership.

The building was sold in 1963 to W. J. O'Connor, Inc., for a Five and Dime Store.

Wilcox/Hinman Service Station

301 E 4th St



In 1928, Allison Wilcox announced his plans to build a four-story hotel with 120 rooms. Over the next two years plans changed and on April 22, 1930, Wilcox had the grand opening of his new Wilcox Garage building. The L-shaped brick and steel structure was modeled after the latest in garage convenience and could store 150 cars, but it was also home to the Schierbrock Motor Co. dealership for Willys-Overland cars and the Hinman Service Station ran by York Hinman, Jr.

Higgins Chevrolet Building

317 E 4th St

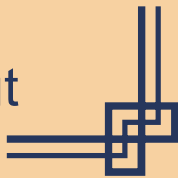


Work began on this building in August of 1928 with plans for a 66 by 132 foot garage. The building was built by owner William Hupfer. A ten-year lease was signed by Higgins Chevrolet Company, making them the first occupants of the building. The Lincoln Highway was a major factor in where Hupfer decided to build his building.



Rasmussen Oil Company

408 N Chestnut



(BULLETIN Photo: Brown Engraving)

On June 28, 1921, the North Platte Semi-Weekly Tribune announced that a new service station opened on the corner of East Fourth and Chestnut Streets.

The station was built by L. F. Simon and was leased by O. R. & W. A. Robinson. This was the second station that the Robinson brothers had. The other station was on the corner of Jeffers and 6th street. The new station on Fourth and Chestnut was built to take advantage of the Lincoln Highway traffic.

The building was stucco with light colored wood.

In 1922 the building was sold to J. R. Robinson.

In 1925 Simon built what is the North building. The building was leased by the new motor firm Craig-Heist Motor Firm. The address of that building was 418 N Chestnut.

By 1938 Harold F Rasmussen was running the Rasmussen Oil Company and in 1940 he opened Ras's Grill on one end of the building. By this time, the 418 North Chestnut address was no longer listed in the city directories.

Sidles Building

418 N Chestnut

This building was built in 1949 by John Hanson and Cleve Milroy. It was built as a warehouse for the 6th Street Market building just west of this building. The men had it built and attached to the supermarket, increasing their floor space. The second floor was just used as a warehouse.

In 1950 R. W. Gaddis opened up the Sidles Company in this building. The building had 5588 square feet of store space on the street floor and 3840 square feet of warehouse space on the second floor with a two ton elevator to move between the two levels.

Their old location at 409 Jeffers had half the amount of space as this new building gave them.

The Fascinating Yesteryear of North Platte, Nebraska

The city of North Platte, the county seat of Lincoln County, was laid out in the autumn of 1866 near the center of the county on a peninsula about three miles from the forks of the North and South Platte Rivers under the direction of General Grenville Dodge of the Union Pacific Railroad.

Building on the railroad ceased during the winter of 1866-1867 and North Platte became home to "Hell on Wheels" as every kind of vice moved in almost overnight with the construction crews and those that followed them; the gamblers, saloon keepers, and their hangers on. It was said to have had a population of over 3,000 living primarily in tents and shacks, with only a few real buildings. The town had its quota of murders, lynchings, and drunken "broils" that went on around the clock. This era was short-lived and, as the railhead moved west the next summer, the majority of the town moved on to the next end-of-the-tracks town.

The town's population plummeted to 300 residents, but by

the fall of 1867, the railroad had established North Platte as a division point and constructed a roundhouse and other supportive structures. With good jobs available, the town put down roots and began to take on a permanent appearance. The first school opened in the summer of 1868. Law and order came in the fall when Peniston was awarded a contract to build the county jail. By 1869, there was a courthouse, a bank, four churches, numerous stores and shops, a land office, and three newspapers. During its first decade, North Platte was also the end of the Texas cattle trail. It was said that during the summer and fall there were so many longhorns trampling through town to the railroad stockyards that it was unsafe to be afoot on the streets.

As a division point on the railroad, as well as being located in the rich Platte River valley, the town grew steadily. It incorporated as a village in 1873, became a second class city in 1875, and a first class city in 1910 when its population reached 4,793. by 1920, the population had more than doubled to 10,466, reached 17,180 by 1960, and was officially recorded at 23,878 in 2000.

With the arrival of the 1920's, North Platte soon found itself the home of more than just farmers, ranchers, and railroaders. Bolstered by Prohibition, an illegal underground network of gambling, prostitution, and bootlegging took root in this little city. Run largely by a man named Al Hastings, it is said that when Chicago got too hot for hit men, they came to North Platte while things cooled down. Thus, the name "Little Chicago" became synonymous with North Platte. The extent of the illegal trades is seen in the number of brothels located on the upper floors of building in the downtown district, 17 to be exact, and the story Anne Cook epitomized in the Nellie Snyder Yost's book *Evil Obsession*. Only after a new group of city leaders took control th the election of 1951 were these illegal activities shut down.

The railroad, always a large influence on North Platte, soon gained native-born William Jeffers. After "quitting" school (he hit his teacher) he became a call boy for the Union Pacific. (Before telephones, the dispatcher sent a boy to tell the crewmen when to report to take their trains out.) During the next 47 years, Jeffers rose from the company's lowest paid jobs to its top position, President of the Union Pacific Railroad.

Once president, Jeffers chose his home town of North Platte to build a "retarder" rail yard. This huge complex on the western edge of town now has a receiving capacity of 1,400 cars. Completed in 1948, it required 51 additional miles of trackage and cost \$3.5 million.

Constantly updated and expanded, North Platte's "Bailey Yard" is now the largest such facility in the world; covering 2,850 acres, reaching a total length of eight miles and containing more than 315 miles of track. As many as 15,000 cars can be sorted per day with an average of 150 trains passing through the yard for destination east, west, and south.

Now overlooking the yard is the Golden Spike Tower & Visitor Center which is an eight-story observation tower that visitors can ascend and take in the massive operation. As if to solidify the relationship between the town and the railroad, the United States Congress named North Platte "Rail Town USA" through the efforts of the Original Town Association

North Platte also has the distinction of having the first lighted airfield in the country. In 1921, a representative of the United

States Post Office asked the town to open an airfield for the use of pilots carrying transcontinental air mail. The Post Office had no money for leasing land or building hangars, but promised that if the city would oblige them, it would be reimbursed as soon as Congress appropriated funds.

Accordingly, North Platte subscribed \$45,000 in capital stock and obtained land east of the city. Wooden hangars were built and the field (only a hay meadow) was leveled by hauling in dirt to fill the old buffalo wallows on its surface. The landing strip was then outlined by 100 kerosene lanterns hung on stakes driven into the ground. These lanterns had to be cleaned and filled daily and lit each night.

In February 1921, Jack Knight made his famous airmail night flight landing successfully on the "lighted airstrip in the middle of Nebraska." Although the field remained a hay meadow for the next 20 years, some improvements were made and it continued to serve the county as a major link in aviation. In 1941, a concrete runway and electric lights were added. A terminal building was erected in 1952. Today, its longest runway measures 8,000 feet. (Incidentally, Congress never appropriated the money to pay the original stockholders.)

During World War II, North Platte became famous as the home of the "North Platte Canteen." With its headquarters in the large, unused dining room of the Union Pacific depot, thousands of volunteers from 125 towns, some as far away as 200 miles, served countless sandwiches, cakes, coffee, candy bars, and magazines to 6 million members of the armed forces. The Canteen was open day and night for 51 months, frequently serving as many as 23 trains and up to 8,000 service men in 24 hours. The story is preserved at the Lincoln County Historical Museum in its "North Platte Canteen" Exhibit, documented in the book, *Once Upon a Town*, by Bob Greene, and immortalized in the Nebraska Education Television documentary, *The Canteen Spirit*.

Of course, no history would be complete without mentioning William F. "Buffalo Bill" Cody. Beginning as a bison hunter for the Kansas Pacific Railroad and then scouting for the United States Army, he finally gained fame with his "Wild West Show", which traveled all over the United States and Europe entertaining audiences with tales of the West. Possibly more important was Cody's responsibility for creating the first organized rodeo in the world. Held on July 4, 1882, it was called the "Old Glory Blowout" and was held in North Platte's Cody Park. Cash prizes were awarded to the winners of the bucking bronco, buffalo riding, steer roping, and horse racing events. Its legacy can still be found in Nebraska's official celebration, NEBRASKALand Days, PRCA Buffalo Bill Rodeo.

Today, North Platte is a modern city with thriving businesses and community organizations. However, the visitor can still get a glimpse of its former wild side by visiting and taking in its attractions and historic places.



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