



MOUNT VERNON HISTORIC COMMERCIAL DISTRICT WALKING TOUR

WELCOME TO MOUNT VERNON. THIS IS A SHORT WALKING TOUR OF THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT AS RECOGNIZED BY NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES, AND SOME OTHER BUILDINGS OF INTEREST ON MAIN STREET. IT DESCRIBES THESE HISTORIC BUILDINGS IN THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE GROWTH OF THE AREA.

TO BEGIN THIS TOUR YOU NEED TO BE STANDING IN FRONT OF THE BIG CREEK MARKET BUILDING, NEXT TO THE SIGNAL LIGHT ON THE CORNER OF FIRST AVENUE (HIGHWAY 1) AND FIRST STREET (THE MAIN STREET OF TOWN).

INTRODUCTION: THE ORIGINS OF MT. VERNON AND THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

IF YOU LOOK TO YOUR RIGHT (SOUTH), YOU'LL SEE HOW THE HILL SHARPLY DROPS. IT IS INTERESTING TO NOTE THAT THE HILL HAS BEEN SHAVED THREE TIMES TO REDUCE THE GRADE. IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE THE TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF ENERGY REQUIRED FROM A TEAM OF HORSES OR OXEN TO PULL A HEAVY WAGON UP TO THE TOP OF THIS HILL WHEN IT WAS DRY, LET ALONE IN WET CONDITIONS.

MOUNT VERNON OWES ITS EXISTENCE TO IOWA'S FIRST STATE ROAD AND TO ITS TOPOGRAPHY. A FURROW DUG WITH A PLOW AND OXEN FROM IOWA CITY TO DUBUQUE TODAY MARKED AS IOWA HIGHWAY 1. LYMAN DILLON WAS AWARDED A CONTRACT FROM A CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION OF 1840 TO CREATE THE TRAIL, 100 MILES LONG. THE PATH HAD BEEN LAID OUT BY ARMY ENGINEERS. THEY CALLED IT MILITARY ROAD BECAUSE IT WAS TO MARK THE WAY FOR TROOPS TO COME FROM DUBUQUE TO PROTECT THE TERRITORIAL CAPITAL

IN IOWA CITY, AS THERE WERE A NUMBER OF INDIAN NATIONS TO THE WEST OF IOWA CITY. WHERE THE MILITARY ROAD CROSSED THE CREST OF THE MODERATE HILL OR "PAHA," BUSINESSES QUICKLY DEVELOPED. WHEN TRAVELERS REACHED THE TOP, THEY WOULD CERTAINLY WANT TO STOP, WATER HORSES OR OXEN, AND TAKE A BREAK BEFORE GOING DOWN THE HILL TOWARDS ANAMOSA OR IOWA CITY. HIGHWAY 1, THE FIRST MARKED HIGHWAY IN THE STATE OF IOWA, WAS AS SO THE FIRST MAJOR NORTH-SOUTH LINK IN THE STATE. BECAUSE OF THIS, ALMOST ALL OF THE TRAFFIC GOING TOWARD THE STATE CAPITAL HAD TO GO BOTH UP AND DOWN THIS HILL REGARDLESS OF THE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL. REMEMBER, DUBUQUE WAS THE LARGEST TOWN IN THE TERRITORY AND THE EARLY POPULATION WAS ON THIS EASTERN EDGE.

AS A RESULT OF THE BLACK HAWK WAR OF 1832, THE LAND IN THIS AREA WAS TAKEN FROM THE SAC AND FOX TRIBES, AND MOUNT VERNON'S FIRST RESIDENTS BEGAN SETTLING HERE SOON AFTER. THE FARMERS TOOK THE FLAT LANDS OR LOWER LANDS. WITHIN MONTHS OF EACH OTHER, WILLIAM ABBE BEGAN FARMING THE LAND TO THE EAST OF TOWN IN 1836 AND DANIEL S. HAHN BEGAN FARMING THE LAND TO THE WEST. BECAUSE NO FARMERS WANTED TO PLANT AND PLOW ON THE LARGE HILL, THIS UPTOWN AREA ALONG THE CREST OF THE HILL WAS AN ECONOMICALLY AS WELL AS A STRATEGICALLY ATTRACTIVE LOCATION FOR MERCHANTS.

WE ARE STANDING ON THE CORNER THAT HISTORICALLY SEPARATED THE DRY GOODS AND GENERAL BUSINESS FROM THE EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE AREAS FOR WAGONS AND LATER, CARS. THE MECHANICAL SERVICES HAVE TRADITIONALLY BEEN LOCATED TO THE EAST AND THE DRY GOODS AND GENERAL MERCHANTS TO THE WEST OF THIS CORNER. THIS INTERSECTION AT THE TOP OF THE HILL HAS, AND CONTINUES TO BE, THE HISTORIC HEART OF THE TOWN. THROUGH THE YEARS WE HAVE PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE THAT THERE WAS A WATERING TROUGH RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS INTERSECTION, WHICH AGAIN TESTIFIES TO THE FACT THAT THE HORSES, MULES, AND OXEN WOULD WATER AT THE TOP OF THE HILL BEFORE GOING ON.

ANOTHER INTERESTING POINT TO NOTE IS THAT THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE HILL CLEARLY DEMONSTRATES THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT. MT. VERNON DEVELOPED PRIMARILY ALONG THE HILL WITH THE SOUTH SIDE, WITH ITS MORE GENTLE SLOPE DEVELOPING FIRST. THE GRADE OF THE HILL FALLS MORE SHARPLY TO THE NORTH THAN THE SOUTH, WHICH MAY ACCOUNT FOR THE SLOWER DEVELOPMENT ON THE NORTH SIDE. JUST TWO BLOCKS EAST OF THIS CORNER IS A STEEP STREAMBED THAT MUST BE CROSSED TO REACH THE CEMETERY, WHICH ACTED AS A BARRIER TO MT. VERNON'S DEVELOPMENT TO THE EAST.

THE DOWNTOWN AREA, THE ONE BLOCK THAT WE WILL BE WALKING ALONG, WAS ORIGINALLY FILLED WITH SMALL WOODEN STRUCTURES INTERSPERSED WITH SOME OF LOCALLY MADE BRICK. WHAT WE SEE TODAY IS THE REBUILDING AFTER A SERIES OF DISASTROUS FIRES IN THE 1890S AND GENERALLY CONSTRUCTED LOCAL BRICK BETWEEN 1888 AND 1904. THE ECONOMY WAS RATHER GOOD AND THE FIRES OF 1893-94 CREATED THE OPPORTUNITY FOR NEW BUILDINGS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN BRICK (FIREPROOF).

BEGINNING THE TOUR:

**100 1ST STREET EAST –
HISTORIC OLIVER DAY
BUILDING
CURRENTLY: UNOCCUPIED**



THE OLDEST BUILDING IN THE COMMERCIAL AREA IS THE PAINTED BRICK BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET FROM WHERE YOU ARE STANDING (SOUTHEAST CORNER OF FIRST AND FIRST). IT WAS ORIGINALLY A THREE STORY BUILDING CONSTRUCTED IN 1856. IN 1957, THERE WAS A DISASTROUS FIRE IN WHICH THE THIRD FLOOR WAS REMOVED. THROUGHOUT ITS HISTORY, IT HAS BEEN A HOTEL, A COMMUNITY-MEETING PLACE, AND THE HOME OF SOME FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND RETAIL SPACE. WE KNOW IT WAS REMODELED IN 1891. WHEN IOWA ELECTRIC OPENED THE INTER-URBAN STREET RAILROAD (WHICH RAN UP AND DOWN THE MIDDLE OF FIRST STREET) AROUND 1914, IT BOUGHT THE BUILDING AS ITS OFFICE FOR BOTH TICKETS AND ELECTRICAL NEEDS. THE BUILDING IS CONSTRUCTED OF LOCALLY MADE BRICK. THIS CAN BE OBSERVED BECAUSE IT IS MADE FROM LOCAL CLAY WITH ROUNDER EDGES. NOTE THE LARGE ROUND DISKS ON THE WEST WALL. THESE "TIE RODS" ARE AT THE END OF IRON RODS THAT HELP STRENGTHEN THE BUILDING BY HOLDING THE EXTERIOR WALLS TO THE INTERIOR STRUCTURE, WHICH PREVENTS THE WEIGHT FROM CAUSING THE WALLS TO BOW. TIE RODS WERE USUALLY FOUND BETWEEN THE FLOORS.

**113 1ST AVENUE S., BRICK HOUSE HALF WAY DOWN THE HILL TO THE SOUTH
CURRENTLY: RESIDENCE, JAMES MOORE**

NOTICE THE SMALL GRAY HOUSE (EAST SIDE OF THE STREET) TO THE SOUTH, ABOUT A HALF A BLOCK DOWN THE HILL. IT IS ONE OF THE EARLY BRICK HOMES, CHARACTERISTICALLY RECTANGULAR IN SHAPE WITH VIRTUALLY NO ORNAMENTATION ON IT AT ALL. IT IS ALSO ONE OF THE EARLIEST BRICK HOMES IN THE COMMUNITY, IDEALLY LOCATED HERE ON THE ORIGINAL HIGHWAY. BEHIND THE CURRENT INSULATING COVERING IS A HOME OF LOCALLY MADE BRICK IN THE GREEK REVIVAL STYLE, WHICH DOMINATES THE TOWN UNTIL WELL AFTER THE CIVIL WAR. THERE IS ANOTHER EARLY HOME ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY JUST A BLOCK TO THE NORTH.



NOTICE THE HEAVY LIMESTONE FOUNDATIONS ON ALL THESE MAJOR BUILDINGS FACING HIGHWAY 1. THE STONE CAME FROM THE LOCAL QUARRY, AND THAT SAME QUARRY PROVIDED ALL THE STONE FOR THE BUILDING OF CORNELL COLLEGE'S KING CHAPEL IN 1876.

**101-103 1ST STREET EAST, HISTORIC WOLFE-ELLISON BLOCK,
CURRENTLY: SKILLET CAFE AND FUEL**

NOW LOOK AT THE BUILDING ACROSS THE STREET, KITTY-CORNER FROM BIG CREEK. THIS BUILDING WAS DESIGNED AND BUILT BY A CEDAR RAPIDS ARCHITECTURE FIRM, THE RATHER WELL KNOWN FIRM OF JOSELYN & TAYLOR. ALL OF THE STYLISTIC FEATURES YOU



SEE IN THIS BUILDING ARE REPEATED SOME PLACE OR ANOTHER UP AND DOWN THE STREET HERE. THIS WAS BUILT IN 1894 FOLLOWING THE SERIOUS 1893 FIRE THAT DESTROYED SEVERAL BUILDINGS IN THIS AREA. THE DRS. WOLFE AND MR. ELLISON FUNDED THIS MERCHANT BLOCK. THE FORMER WOOD STRUCTURE THAT BURNED WAS KNOWN AS THE SMITH-HOGEL BLOCK. FOLLOWING THE GREAT FIRE, SMITH AND HOGEL WENT UP THE STREET WESTWARD AND BUILT A SIMILAR BRICK BUILDING AT 109.

NOTICE HOW THE BRICK IS LAID SO IT CREATES ARCHES THAT ACCENTUATE THE TOP OF THE BUILDING AND DECORATE THE LARGE BRICK WALL. ALSO, WE SEE SOME OF THE CAPSTONES THAT WERE ORIGINALLY ON THESE BUILDINGS, EVEN THOUGH MOST HAVE BEEN REMOVED.

NOTE THE LARGE PLATE GLASS WINDOWS. IF YOU LOOK AT THE DOORWAY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STRUCTURE, YOU'LL NOTICE STEEL FOOT PLATES. THESE ARE FOUND ON A NUMBER OF HISTORIC DOWNTOWN STOREFRONTS. YOU CAN SEE PRESSED TIN WORK ABOVE THE WINDOW LINE WITH THE DECORATIVE PIECES PAINTED ON THE RIGHT. THE STEEL BEAM THEY ARE

**MEANT TO HIDE IS VISIBLE AT THE END OF THOSE
PRESSED TIN PIECES. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN FOR THE
ROD ENDS AS WE GO THROUGH THIS TOUR, AS YOU WILL
ENCOUNTER AT LEAST FOUR OR FIVE DIFFERENT
PATTERNS OF THEM IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA.**

**101-103 1ST STREET EAST – HISTORIC E. D. WALN BUILDING
CURRENTLY: MT. VERNON TOWN CENTER OFFICE SUITES**

**ON THE NORTH-WEST
CORNER, WE SEE THE
HISTORIC E.D. WALN
BUILDING. WALN WAS ONE
OF THE EARLIEST SETTLERS
AND FOUNDING FATHERS
OF THE TOWN AND
CORNELL COLLEGE. OUR
RESEARCH INDICATES THAT
THE STRUCTURE YOU SEE
TODAY WAS CONSTRUCTED
IN 1881. IT IS PROBABLY
THE SECOND BUILDING ON
THE SITE KNOWN AS THE WALN CORNER. LIKE THE LAST,
IT IS CONSTRUCTED OF SOFT, LOCAL BRICK. SHEET METAL
SIDING COVERING THE FACADE, SIMILAR TO THAT ON THE
EAST SIDE, WAS REMOVED FAIRLY RECENTLY TO REVEAL
THE ORIGINAL BRICK.**



**WE HAVE A TREE HIDING A LOT OF THE CHARM OF THE
BUILDING, BUT AS YOU LOOK AT THE CORNER BUILDING,
YOU'LL NOTICE A GREAT DEAL OF PRESSED-TIN THAT
REACHES ACROSS THE TWO BUILDINGS WHICH REALLY
INDICATES THAT IT WAS BUILT AS ONE. THE PRESSED TIN
ON THE LEFT HAS BEEN PAINTED TO ACCENTUATE ITS
VICTORIAN DETAILING. THE HOODS OVER THE WINDOWS
ARE LIKE THE HOODS OF THE WINDOWS OF THE BUILDING
THAT YOU ARE STANDING IN FRONT OF--THE BIG CREEK
MARKET BUILDING. THOSE ARE ALSO PRESSED TIN WITH**

LIMESTONE SILLS ON THE WINDOWS. NOTICE A LINE OF BRICKS USED AS DENTILS (SMALL TEETH-LIKE BRACKETS) ACROSS THE FRONT.

WE ARE LOOKING AT ANOTHER MERCHANT BLOCK HERE. A MERCHANT BLOCK CONSISTS OF TWO OR MORE STORES UNDER ONE ROOF AND DECORATED ON THE UPPER FLOORS AS ONE STRUCTURE.

THE BUILDING TO THE WEST (103) IS IDENTICAL TO THE ONE ON THE EAST (101), EXCEPT WITH THREE OPENINGS INSTEAD OF FOUR. TOGETHER, OR AS A WHOLE STRUCTURE, IT IS A VERY IMPOSING AND LOVELY BUILDING. YOU'LL SEE MORE OF THESE "MERCHANT BLOCKS" JUST UP THE STREET. THIS IS A WONDERFUL EXAMPLE OF THE 19TH-CENTURY MERCHANDISING AND BUILDING SENSIBILITY.

**100 1ST STREET WEST, HISTORIC W. E. PLATNER HARDWARE STORE AND TIN SHOP
CURRENTLY: BIG CREEK MARKET**

RETURNING TO OUR STARTING PLACE, WE SEE THE BIG CREEK MARKET BUILDING. THE ORIGINAL BUILDING HERE, A WOOD FRAMED HOTEL, WAS BUILT IN 1849, ALSO BY E.D. WALN. IT WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST COMMERCIAL HOTEL IN MOUNT VERNON. IT BURNED IN 1868. A YEAR AFTER THE FIRE, HENRY GILLETTE BUILT ANOTHER HOTEL HERE WHICH IS PROBABLY



THE SHELL OF THIS CURRENT BUILDING. W. E. PLATNER OWNED THE BUILDING IN THE LATE 1870'S AND THEN USED IT TO OPERATE HIS HARDWARE STORE UNTIL 1878 (PLATNER HARDWARE AND TIN SHOP). IT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN PLATNER WHO "MODERNIZED" THE BUILDING BY ADDING THE CORNICE AND WINDOW HOODS, BOTH OF WHICH ARE MADE OF PRESSED TIN. THESE ADDITIONS WERE RATHER CHARACTERISTIC OF SMALL TOWN STORE STYLES IN THE 1880'S. (REMEMBER, PLATNER WAS IN THE TIN BUSINESS.)

THE WINDOWS ABOVE AND THE CORNICE AT THE VERY TOP OF THE BUILDING ARE TRIMMED IN PRESSED TIN. THEY MAY LOOK LIKE LIMESTONE, BUT IF YOU NOTICE CAREFULLY WHERE THEY BEGIN TO WEATHER AND WHERE THE PAINT PEELS, YOU CAN TELL THEY ARE REALLY TIN. THE PRESSED TIN WAS A COMMONLY USED MATERIAL BECAUSE IT WAS LIGHT AND COULD BE TACKED TO THE FRAMEWORK AROUND THE WINDOWS. IT ALSO COULD DRAMATICALLY UPDATE AND CHANGE THE BUILDING FROM A VERY PLAIN BRICK BUILDING, SUCH AS THE ONES ACROSS THE STREET, INTO A VERY LOVELY MODERN BUILDING FOR THE 1890'S AND TURN OF THE CENTURY. WE WILL SEE MORE PRESSED TIN AS WE GO ALONG.

THIS BUILDING TOO DEMONSTRATES THE WONDERFUL 19TH-CENTURY CONCEPT OF MERCHANDISING. AT THE TIME, PEOPLE DID NOT RELY ON NEWSPAPERS, RADIO OR TELEVISION. INSTEAD, THEY RELIED ON WINDOW-SHOPPING. NOTE THE DOOR IS RECESSED CONSIDERABLY FROM THE OUTSIDE OF THE BUILDING, PROVIDING SOME PROTECTION ON A RAINY DAY. THIS WAS A GREAT MERCHANDISING TECHNIQUE, BECAUSE AS YOU WINDOW-SHOP YOU ARE GRADUALLY WELL INSIDE THE SPACE OF THE STORE BEFORE YOU GET TO THE DOOR.

BEFORE WE MOVE ON LOOK AGAIN AT THE EAST WALL OF THE BIG CREEK MARKET BUILDING. NOTICE ANOTHER PATTERN OF TIE ROD ENDS. HERE WAS HAVE A STAR. THE TOP OF THE BIG CREEK MARKET BUILDING IS MUCH MORE FINISHED. LOOK JUST BELOW THE ROOF LINE AT THE TOP AND YOU'LL SEE THE LITTLE BRICK DENTILS THAT GIVE THE BUILDING A SENSE OF COMPLETION. SUCH DECORATION IS NOT ON THE TOP OF THE BUILDING

ACROSS THE STREET BECAUSE THE THIRD FLOOR WAS REMOVED. YOU'LL ALSO NOTICE A LARGE AREA FILLED IN WITH NEW BRICK AND GLASS BLOCK THAT WAS ONCE A BAY WINDOW OVERLOOKING THE STREET. THE WINDOW WOULD HAVE PROVIDED LIGHT INTO WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A HOTEL SITTING ROOM OR APARTMENT. IT ALSO WOULD HAVE SERVED AS A WONDERFUL PLACE TO WATCH THE TRAFFIC ON THE MILITARY ROAD.

**102 1ST STREET WEST, HISTORIC HENRY GILLETTE BUILDING
CURRENTLY: THE PURPLE ELEPHANT**

THE LITTLE BUILDING TO THE WEST WAS KNOWN FOR YEARS AS DALE SERGEANTS ACCOUNTING PRACTICE AND HAD A VERY MODERN FACADE. BEHIND THIS FACADE MAY WELL BE PART OF THE ORIGINAL GILLETTE HOTEL FROM 1869. WE KNOW GILLETTE'S NAME APPEARS ON THE ABSTRACT BY THAT YEAR. WHAT YOU SEE TODAY IS



MUCH CLOSER TO THE ORIGINAL THAN THE PREVIOUS FAÇADE. IT RESEMBLES A MUCH EARLIER BUILDING DOCUMENTED IN SOME PHOTOGRAPHS. THE PREVIOUS OWNER, MICHAEL ALAN, ACCEPTED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE PRESERVATION COMMISSION AND CREATED THIS FAÇADE APPROPRIATE TO A 19TH CENTURY STOREFRONT IN IOWA. IT HAS GREATLY IMPROVED THE SOUTH SIDE OF THIS DISTRICT.

**104 1ST STREET WEST, HISTORIC CHARLES KEPLER
BUILDING
CURRENTLY: HANDS IN HARMONY**

THE NEXT BUILDING IS A RED BRICK STRUCTURE MADE NOT OF SOFT LOCAL BRICK, BUT MODERN HARD BRICK INDICATING IT COULD HAVE COME BY TRAIN. THE RAILROAD CAME THROUGH THE TOWN IN ABOUT 1858, AND BY THE 1880'S, A BRIDGE OVER THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER IN CLINTON, LINKED MOUNT VERNON WITH THE REST OF THE COUNTRY, SPECIFICALLY NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO. THIS HARD BRICK CAN BE MOLDED AND BAKED IN SHAPES OTHER THAN RECTANGLES. BRICK OF THIS MOLDED TYPE IS OFTEN CALLED TERRA COTTA BRICK. THE BRICK IS SET IN VERY NARROW MORTAR AND YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THE MORTAR IS ALSO COLORED, WHICH IS ANOTHER PHENOMENA OF THE 1890'S. FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT, NOTABLY IN HIS ROBIE HOUSE IN CHICAGO, USED THE THIN COLORED MORTAR EXTENSIVELY.



THE “SHOPPING WINDOWS” ARE LARGE AND INVITING WITH A RECESSED DOOR. IF YOU LOOK ABOVE THEM YOU CAN SEE WOODEN PANELS HIDING UPPER SMALLER GLASS WINDOWS. ABOVE THE PANELS IS A PRESSED TIN PIECE THAT COVERS A STEEL BEAM. THE GARLANDS WITH THE DESIGN PIECES ON EACH END HAVE BEEN PAINTED IN A COPPER COLOR TO ACCENTUATE THIS VERY IMPORTANT PART OF THE BUILDING. LOOKING JUST ABOVE THE

COPPER BANDED PRESSED METAL PIECE, YOU CAN SEE THE USE OF MOLDED BRICK IN THE SHAPE OF EGGS ALL ACROSS THE BUILDING, UNDERNEATH THE LIMESTONE. WHEN THE EGG PATTERN IS USED WITH AN EXTRA PIECE OF MOLDING, IT IS CALLED EGG AND DART. THIS PATTERN IS FOUND EXTENSIVELY AS A DECORATION INSIDE AND OUT. THE LIMESTONE PIECES USED ABOVE AND BELOW THE WINDOWS ARE CALLED LENTILS.

A LOCAL CIVIL WAR HERO AND ATTORNEY NAMED CAPTAIN CHARLES KEPLER BUILT THIS STRUCTURE IN 1892. HE RENTED THE FIRST FLOOR TO MERCHANTS, THE FIRST BEING H. D. BUTTERFIELD DRY GOODS AND HAD HIS LAW OFFICE WAS ON THE SECOND FLOOR. NOW AS YOU LOOK ABOVE YOU CAN SEE THE LARGE OPENING HAS BEEN REDUCED IN SIZE BY METALLIC SIDING AND SMALL WINDOWS. THOSE WERE ORIGINALLY FULL GLASS WINDOWS LETTING IN CONSIDERABLE NATURAL LIGHT AND HEAT ON THE SECOND FLOOR. THE LARGE GLASS AREA WAS NEEDED TO PROVIDE LIGHT FOR READING LAW BOOKS IN THIS PRE-ELECTRIC ERA. ABOVE THE LIMESTONE WE SEE MORE RED TERRA COTTA-STYLE FLORAL PATTERNS AND ON THE FRIEZE THERE IS MORE DELICATE TERRA COTTA WORK. THERE ARE ABOUT 4 OR 5 DIFFERENT BRICK DESIGNS ON THIS FACADE, AND WHEN COMBINED WITH THE MASSIVE LIMESTONE, THEY GIVE THIS BUILDING A UNIQUE CHARACTER.

NOTICE THAT UNDER THE LARGE FIRST FLOOR WINDOWS THERE IS A CEMENT SILL. ON THE CORNERS, THE BRICK IS LAID TO ACCOMMODATE THIS INTERESTING ANGLE OF THE ENTRY. NOW WHILE YOU ARE LOOKING DOWN, LOOK AT THE WONDERFUL CAST IRON GRATE PIECE (OR DOOR PLATE) IN FRONT OF THE DOORWAY ON THE RIGHT SIDE, 104. THESE WERE VERY POPULAR AMONG MERCHANTS AS THEY SERVED AS MUD SCRAPERS. WHEN WALKING ACROSS THE MUD SCRAPERS SOME OF THE MUD AND MANURE FROM THE BARNYARD FELL OFF THE BOOTS OF CUSTOMERS AND KEPT THE STORE CLEANER. SOME OF THE FIRST STORE FLOORS ALSO HAD OILED FLOORS THAT MADE CLEANING UP EASIER. THE ENTRANCE INTO THE SECOND FLOOR OF THIS BUILDING IS THROUGH THE DOOR MARKED 104. THE HALLWAY ORIGINALLY HAD A MUCH BIGGER WINDOW IN ORDER TO PERMIT SUNLIGHT TO BRIGHTEN THE DARK HALL IN THE ERA BEFORE ELECTRICITY. YOU WILL NOTICE THAT AT THE WEST EDGE

OF THE BUILDING THE BRICKS ARE ROUNDED. THIS IS A VERY UNUSUAL PATTERN FOR THIS TOWN. NOT ONLY IS THERE THE PINK MORTAR, BUT ALSO THE ROUNDED CORNER BRICKS. MOLDED CLAY BAKED UNDER HIGH TEMPERATURES COULD BE MADE INTO MANY DIFFERENT SHAPES.

106-108 1ST STREET WEST, HUMBOLT BLOCK/BOCKSTALLER BLOCK

CURRENTLY: PIZZA PALACE AND SUN NEWSPAPER

THE ORIGINAL STORE THAT WAS HERE WAS CALLED THE HUMBOLT BLOCK, BUILT AROUND 1860. THIS STORE AND THE NEXT (106 AND 108) BURNED IN DECEMBER 1996. AT THE TIME OF THE FIRE, THE FACADE WAS COVERED WITH METAL SIDING WHICH OBSCURED THE SIMPLE BRICK WORK. IN THE REPAIR, THIS METAL



COVERING WAS REMOVED. THE FACADE OF THIS BUILDING WAS RECONSTRUCTED FROM ARCHIVAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE AND NOW LOOKS HISTORICALLY APPROPRIATE. IN THE PROCESS OF RESTORING AND IMPROVING THE BUILDING, IT WAS MADE TALLER BY ABOUT 8 FEET TO STABILIZE THE WALLS OF THE BUILDINGS ON EITHER SIDE. BY CONTINUING THE BRICK PATTERN OF THE LOWER ORIGINAL SECTION ON THE ADDED FEET, A RATHER NICE INTEGRATION WAS ACHIEVED AND THE HISTORICAL CHARACTER REMAINED. THE FRONT WINDOWS WERE LARGER IN THE ORIGINAL BUILDING (LIKE THOSE TO THE EAST), AND WHERE YOU SEE WOODEN PANELS UNDER THE FRONT WINDOWS YOU WOULD HAVE SEEN MORE GLASS TO LET LIGHT INTO THE BASEMENT.

110 1ST STREET WEST, KOPF BROTHERS BUILDING AND HAWKEYE BUILDING

CURRENTLY: SCARLETT BOUTIQUE

WE MOVE ON TO THE WEST TO 110. WE KNOW THAT THE FIRST MT VERNON NEWSPAPER, PUBLISHED BY S.N. BAUMAN, WAS PRINTED IN THIS BUILDING FOR MANY YEARS. THE BUILDING YOU SEE HERE COMES FROM 1904, ABOUT THE SAME TIME AS THE BAUMAN CLOTHING STORE ON THE CORNER OF THIS BLOCK TO THE WEST. HOWEVER, WHILE A DISTINCTIVE RED BRICK IS USED ON THE KEPLER AND BAUMAN BUILDINGS, HERE THERE IS AN UNUSUAL (FOR MT. VERNON) BROWN OR SAND COLORED BRICK. THIS IS A CLUE TO THE EXTENSIVE INFLUENCE OF THE RAILROAD, BRINGING A NEW AWARENESS OF BUILDING MATERIALS AND STYLES.



NOTICE AGAIN THE THIN MORTAR USED HERE (ON THE EDGES AND ABOVE) AND THE STEEL BEAM ABOVE THE LARGE PLATE GLASS WINDOWS. HERE, INSTEAD OF BEING COVERED BY A COPPER OR PRESSED METAL PIECE, THE BEAM IS EXPOSED. FLORAL MEDALLIONS ARE THEN BOLTED ONTO THE BEAM. IF YOU LOOK ON UP YOU'LL NOTICE ROUND ARCHED OR ROMANESQUE WINDOWS. THIS TYPE OF WINDOW IS USED OFTEN IN THIS DISTRICT. IN THE CENTER OF THE BUILDING IS A BRICK COLUMN THAT ENDS JUST BELOW THE WINDOWS. BY RECESSING THREE BRICKS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE "COLUMN" BACK WE HAVE A DECORATIVE ARRANGEMENT. AT THE TOP, THE OVERHANGING BRICK FORMS AN EXTENSION THAT GIVES THIS BUILDING A VERY DISTINCTIVE ELABORATION. NOTICE THE BRICKS SET ON EDGE JUST BELOW THE CORNERS OR DENTALS ALL ACROSS THE TOP. WHILE BRICK MAY SEEM MONOTONOUS AT TIMES, BY RAISING BRICK FORWARD OR BACKWARDS OVER A STRAIGHT WALL YOU CAN CREATE A SENSE OF DECORATION, TEXTURE AND

DEPTH. HERE WE HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF IMAGINATION USED IN A BRICK PATTERN.

**114-116 1ST STREET WEST, HISTORIC CLARK & HAYZLETT BUILDING
CURRENTLY: VIDEO VILLAGE**

WE CROSS THE ALLEY (MOVING WEST). LOOK AT THE EAST WALL DOWN THE ALLEY. NOTICE THE TIE-ROD ENDS ON THIS BUILDING – YET ANOTHER PATTERN. THIS NEXT BUILDING, HOUSING VIDEO VILLAGE AT 114 ON THE FIRST FLOOR, IS HISTORICALLY KNOWN AS THE CLARK & HAYZLETT BUILDING. (KEEP MOVING)



IT WAS BUILT IN 1869 AND HAS BEEN MODIFIED MANY TIMES. AT ONE TIME, THIS AREA OF THE STREET WAS CALLED A MAMMOTH BLOCK, BUT WHATEVER WAS HERE BURNED IN 1867. HAYZLETT AND CLARK BUILT THE STRUCTURE HERE IN 1869 BUT THE BRICK FACADE WAS ADDED LATER AFTER A FIRE, PERHAPS AS LATE AS THE EARLY 1900'S. IT WAS IN THE STYLE OF THE MERCHANT BLOCK WITH AN ENTRY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BUILDING AND A RECESSED DOORWAY MUCH LIKE THE KEPLER BUILDING (FARM & HOME REALTY). THE CURRENT FIRST FLOOR APPEARANCE IS FROM THE 1970'S AND EARLY 1980'S. ONE OF THE OWNERS BOUGHT THE TWO STORES TO THE WEST, AND TRIED TO TIE THE APPEARANCE OF THE THREE STRUCTURES TOGETHER AT THE FIRST FLOOR BY USING THIS NEW BRICK FAÇADE. THE SECOND FLOOR OF THIS BUILDING (NOW OCCUPIED BY IMA) SERVED AS A COMMUNITY AUDITORIUM AND WAS THE HOME OF THE MASONIC ORDER FROM 1915 UNTIL RECENTLY. THIS WAS

REALLY A VERY GORGEOUS BUILDING AND USED TO HAVE A LARGE BEAUTIFUL OVERHANG WITH BRACKETS AND A LARGE CORNICE WHICH HAVE BEEN REMOVED (SEE CENTENNIAL BOOK BETWEEN PAGES 104 & 105 - WILCOX HALL). ONE OF THE IMPORTANT DETAILS LEFT CONCERNS THE VERTICAL ROW OF COINS AT THE CORNER OF THE FRONT AND SIDE FACADES. THIS IS A VERY LARGE STRUCTURE AND THE LOSS OF SOME OF ITS HISTORIC DETAILS IS REALLY A TRAGEDY.

NOW WE MOVE ON TO THE OTHER PART OF THIS BUILDING (116). IF YOU LET YOUR EYE TRAVEL UP THE BUILDING YOU WILL NOTICE THAT THERE ARE REALLY TWO BRICK STYLES HERE. THIS WAS ANOTHER STORE BUILT BY THE WOLFE BROTHERS. THIS ORIGINAL BUILDING COMES FROM 1894. IT HAD A BEAUTIFUL LIMESTONE CAPPING ON THE TOP. IT HAS HAD MANY USES HISTORICALLY, INCLUDING A POST OFFICE.

**120 1ST STREET WEST, DEAN/KEPLER BUILDING
CURRENTLY: UNOCCUPIED**

LET'S GO ON TO 120. YOU WILL SEE AN OLDER BRICK STRUCTURE NEAR THE TOP. THIS COULD BE FROM THE ORIGINAL BUILDING WHICH WAS BUILT AROUND 1870. THE BUILDING TO YOUR LEFT IS A MUCH MORE MODERN STRUCTURE WITH TEXTURED BRICK. THE BUILDING USES THE RECESSED DOOR WITH THE LARGE "SHOPPING WINDOWS" WHICH WERE UNDOUBTEDLY PART OF THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE. THE BUILDING HAS OBVIOUSLY UNDERGONE MANY



MODIFICATIONS. OUR RESEARCH INDICATES IT WAS FUNDED BY C.W. KEPLER AND BUILT BY W.W. DEAN IN 1870. IT HOUSED MT. VERNON'S FIRST BANK.

122-122 ½ 1ST STREET, COMMERCIAL BUILDING/OLD WILCOX

CURRENTLY: ART GALLERY AND SUPPLIES, FARM BUREAU FINANCIAL SERVICES

THE KUDART OFFICE WAS BUILT IN 1871 AS A STOREROOM FOR ISAAC WILCOX, A GROCER NEXT DOOR. T. S. BROKAW, WHO SERVED AS POSTMASTER, OCCUPIED THE BUILDING AND USED IT AS A POST OFFICE FOR SOME YEARS. THE BRICK APPEARS TO BE RATHER HIGH-TEMPERATURE, PERHAPS MADE LOCALLY. NOTE THE RELATIVE LACK OF DECORATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE BRICK. THERE ARE THREE ONE STORY BUILDINGS LINKED TOGETHER HERE, OUT OF FOUR ON THE SOUTH SIDE AND ONLY TWO ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE BLOCK.



**124 1ST STREET WEST, ODD FELLOWS BLOCK
CURRENTLY: BAUMAN'S CLOTHING**

THE NEXT BUILDING HAS A CORNERSTONE FROM 1904. THIS IS THE



BAUMAN'S CLOTHING STORE BUILDING BUILT BY THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS. IF YOU STAND IN FRONT OF THE DOOR AND LOOK TO YOUR LEFT, YOU'LL SEE THE DOOR THAT LEADS TO A LARGE STAIRWAY. THIS STAIRWAY GOES UP TO THE LODGE MEETING ROOM ON THE SECOND FLOOR. AGAIN, WE HAVE THE EXPOSED STEEL BEAM THAT IS SUPPORTING THE UPPER STORIES IN THE AREA BELOW WITH THE LARGE GLASS WINDOWS. ITS FUNCTIONALITY IS DISGUISED BY DECORATED MEDALLIONS IN FLORAL PATTERN. AT ONE POINT BETWEEN EACH OF THESE FLORAL MEDALLIONS WAS A LETTER TO SPELL OUT BAUMAN'S IN GOLD LEAF. THIS BUILDING IS TRULY A TREASURE BECAUSE IT IS PRACTICALLY UNTOUCHED FROM 1904. IT BEARS THE NAME OF THE ODD FELLOWS ORGANIZATION ON THE CORNER NEAR THE TOP. THE FIRST FLOOR OCCUPANTS OF THIS BUILDING, ROOD AND YOUNG, WENT INTO BANKRUPTCY IN 1909. THE PRESENT CLOTHING STORE, BAUMAN'S, TOOK OVER IN 1910. THIS IS THE OLDEST CONTINUOUS MERCHANT BUSINESS IN THE COMMUNITY. THE POSTS HOLDING UP THE BEAM ARE CAST IRON. THESE ARE THE ORIGINAL SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF THE WINDOWS. NOTICE THE ENORMOUS TRANSOM WINDOW OVER THE DOOR. THIS IS ALL ORIGINAL. IF YOU CAN TAKE THE TIME, I SUGGEST THAT YOU GO INSIDE WHERE YOU CAN SEE THE CLOTHES RACKS THAT PULL OUT FROM THE WALL, ALL THE CASES OF A BYGONE ERA ON DISPLAY, AND IN THE BACK, THE HIGH BALCONY WHERE THE MANAGER COULD SIT AND WATCH THE FRONT DOOR OR OBSERVE HIS EMPLOYEES AT WORK. THE BUILDING ALSO HAS A FULL BASEMENT THAT HAS HOUSED BARBERS, TAILORS AND CRAFTSMEN THROUGH THE YEARS. NOW, IT IS NOW SIMPLY A PLACE TO COME AND HAVE COFFEE EVERY WORKDAY WITH RETIRED PEOPLE OF THE TOWN, AS WELL AS THE YOUNG MERCHANTS.

AS YOU WALK PAST THE BUILDING AND LOOK SOUTH DOWN THE 2ND AVENUE, YOU'LL NOTICE THAT THE BAUMAN BUILDING ALSO HAS A WONDERFUL LIMESTONE FOUNDATION. YOU WILL ALSO SEE THE OUTLINES OF LARGE WINDOWS THAT WERE ONCE THERE TO LET LIGHT INTO THE RATHER DARK BASEMENT. TOWARDS THE BACK OF THE WALL ARE GLASS BLOCKS AND BRICK WHERE A DOOR TO THE LOWER LEVEL ONCE STOOD. THE ARCHES ON THE UPPER PORTION OF THIS BUILDING AND THE RECESSED BRICK ARE ALL FEATURES REMINISCENT OF

THE SKILLET/ FUEL BUILDING. MORE RESEARCH MIGHT REVEAL THE SAME CEDAR RAPIDS ARCHITECTS WORKING IN A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT STYLE IN MANY AREAS OF IOWA.

**125-123 1ST STREET THE S. N. BAUMAN CORNER
CURRENTLY: LINCOLN WINE BAR AND FRENCH ACCENT**

CROSSING MAIN STREET AND TURNING TO WALK BACK EAST (ALTHOUGH TO THE WEST ALONG MAIN STREET ARE SOME OTHER BUILDINGS OF INTEREST – PLEASE REFER TO THE LAST FEW PAGES OF THIS TOUR IF YOU’D LIKE TO EXTEND YOUR WALK BY A FEW BLOCKS AND SEE THEM), WE SEE A LARGE BUILDING THAT SHOWS HOW STRUCTURES ARE MODIFIED AND CHANGED OVER TIME (125-123). THIS BUILDING IS ALMOST COMPLETELY RECONSTRUCTED, AND IS CONSIDERED A NON-CONFORMING STRUCTURE IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT. THE ORIGINAL BUILDING

ON THE CORNER WAS A LOVELY BUILDING WITH A HIGH PARAPET WITH LOVELY PRESSED TIN DESIGNS AND FINIALS ACROSS THE TOP. ABOUT THE ONLY PIECE THAT REMAINS FROM THAT ORIGINAL STRUCTURE IS THE OVERHANGING BAY WINDOW. IT BEARS VERY LITTLE RESEMBLANCE TO THE ORIGINAL. PERHAPS THE ELEVATED ENTRANCE AND BAY WINDOW ARE ALL OF THE FRONT FACADE THAT REMAIN. THE CENTENNIAL BOOK HAS A GOOD PICTURE OF BOTH THE ORIGINAL BAUMAN HOME SET BACK A GOOD DISTANCE FROM THE STREET. YOU WILL ALSO SEE A LARGE STORE ADDITION TO THE FRONT WITH ITS VERTICAL LINES (SEE PICTURES P.210, BETWEEN PP. 96 & 97, AND BETWEEN 105 & 106). WHAT APPEARS TO BE



STONE IS A MODERN IMITATION COVERING. LOOK AT THE WEST WALL AND SEE IF YOU CAN TRACE THE ADDITIONS AND MODIFICATIONS.

**119-121 1ST STREET WEST, MORRISSEY BUILDING
CURRENTLY: MAYA CONTEMPORARY CLOTHING,
CHAMELEON'S PUB AND GRUB**

THE NEXT BUILDING TO THE EAST SHOWS THE EFFORT BY A PROPERTY OWNER TO CREATE A 19TH CENTURY STOREFRONT. THE EAST PORTION OF THE BUILDING IS ORIGINAL AND MAY REFLECT THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE FROM 1894. HOWEVER, THE BRICK ON THE WEST PORTION WAS SO BADLY DETERIORATED THAT THIS



NEW FACADE WAS NECESSARY. IT WAS DESIGNED BY A LOCAL ARCHITECT, ED SAUTER. HE RECREATED THIS AFTER A GREAT DEAL OF RESEARCH ON IOWA SMALL TOWN MERCHANT BUILDINGS. FEATURES AND DESIGNS WERE SELECTED TO REFLECT THE LOOK AND HISTORIC CHARACTER OF THE SMALL TOWN AND APPROPRIATE TO THE MT. VERNON STREETScape. THIS WAS A MERCHANT BLOCK--TWO STORES WITH A SECOND FLOOR ENTRY UP THE MIDDLE. METAL SIDING WAS RECENTLY REMOVED FROM THE UPPER PART OF THE EAST PORTION, WHICH IS NOW CHAMELEON'S PUB AND GRUB, AND WE ARE PLEASED

THAT THE ORIGINAL STYLE OF THE BUILDING CAN NOW BE SEEN.

**115-117 1ST STREET WEST, WOLFE BROTHERS BUILDING
CURRENTLY: SILVER SPIDER, LINCOLN CAFE**

NOW AS WE MOVE TO THE EAST WE COME TO THE ONLY ONE-STORY BUILDING IN THE NORTH SIDE OF THE DISTRICT. IT IS AGAIN A MERCHANT BLOCK--TWO JOINED STORES. THE WOLFE BROTHERS, CONSISTING OF A DOCTOR AND DENTIST, BUILT THIS BUILDING, AS WELL AS THE SKILLET/ FUEL BUILDING AND THE



ONE ACROSS THE STREET. IT DATES FROM 1894 AND FIRST HOUSED A BARBER SHOP AND RESTAURANT. AS FAR AS WE CAN TELL, THE BUILDING IS UNTOUCHED. IF YOU LOOK AT THE UPPER PARTS, YOU WILL NOTICE THAT MOST OF IT IS PRESSED TIN.

**113 1ST STREET WEST, H. A. COLLINS BANK/BRACKETT BUILDING
CURRENTLY: SAUTER-BATY ASSOCIATES**

THE NEXT BUILDING IS ONE OF OUR BEST EXAMPLES OF 19TH CENTURY COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE. AT THE TOP WE SEE "BANK 1891." IT WAS BUILT IN 1891 AND WAS ORIGINALLY THE



COLLINS BANK. COLLINS DIED IN 1892 AND BRACKETT, WHO WAS A PROMINENT BUILDER OF MANY HOMES IN TOWN BOUGHT, THE BUILDING. QUICKLY, IT BECAME THE CHARLES BRACKETT STORE. THE FORMER EDITOR AND OWNER OF THE SUN NEWSPAPER PURCHASED THIS BUILDING, AND FROM PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE WE ARE LED TO BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE ESSENTIALLY SEEING THE ORIGINAL BUILDING. FORTUNATELY, IN THE BASEMENT OF THIS BUILDING, HE FOUND LARGE COLORED GLASS TRANSOM WINDOWS THAT HAD BEEN ABOVE EACH OF THE DOORS ON THE FIRST FLOOR AND THE ORIGINAL ARCH-COLORED GLASS THAT WAS DISCOVERED STILL IN THE FRAME BUT COVERED BY A WOOD PANEL. YOU WILL NOTICE A VERY SMOOTH BRICK, A LARGE ARCH OVER THE FRONT WINDOW, AND THE NARROW MORTAR. THIS BUILDING IS BANDED WITH LIMESTONE AND ALONG THE TOP ARE LOVELY LITTLE ARCHES THAT DECORATE THE TOP. THIS BUILDING HAD A STAIR STEP SERIES OF LIMESTONE BLOCKS UP TO A SINGLE CAPSTONE ON THE TOP. MOST OF THE BUILDINGS IN THIS HISTORIC DISTRICT HAD THE SAME STYLE OF CAPS THAT GIVE A SENSE OF VERTICALITY. TODAY THE STREETScape IS MUCH MORE HORIZONTAL BECAUSE THESE CAPS ARE GONE. MOST WERE REMOVED BECAUSE THEY WERE NOT MAINTAINED AND THERE WAS FEAR THEY WOULD FALL. WHEN THE BUILDING IS OPEN, PLEASE GO IN AND SEE WHAT A LOVELY JOB HAS BEEN DONE ON THE INTERIOR. THERE ARE APARTMENTS ON THE SECOND FLOOR.

LOOKING IN TO THE ALLEY, THERE ARE A FEW HISTORICALLY NOTEWORTHY ITEMS. YOU WILL NOTICE LONG NARROW WINDOWS ON THE SAUTER BUILDING THAT ARE MOSTLY ALL IN THEIR ORIGINAL SHAPE, PRESERVING HISTORICAL INTEGRITY. NOTICE, JUST ABOVE THE LIMESTONE FOOTINGS, THE ROD ENDS IN THE SHAPE OF AN S – THIS IS ANOTHER PRACTICAL YET DECORATIVE DESIGN.

**109 1ST STREET WEST, SMITH-HOGLE BUILDING.
CURRENTLY: SCORZ BAR AND GRILL**

NOW WE ARE IN THE FRONT OF 109, WHICH WAS ONCE THE SMITH-HOGLE BUILDING OF 1894. IT WAS PART OF A REBUILDING AFTER THE DISASTROUS FIRES IN THE DOWNTOWN AREA IN 1893-94. IT BURNED AGAIN RECENTLY, AND BOTH THE STRUCTURE AND FACADE HAVE BEEN SKILLFULLY RESTORED. IT ALSO IS A MERCHANT BLOCK AND YOU WILL NOTICE THE ENTRANCE IN THE MIDDLE AGAIN WHERE YOU ARE UNDER A ROOF AND CAN WINDOW SHOP. THIS IS ALL NOW ONE STORE AND IS MUCH LIKE THE SKILLET/ FUEL BUILDING. IT ALSO HAS A DOOR IN ONE CORNER AT A 45-DEGREE ANGLE SO THAT YOU ENTER THE BUILDING NOT FROM THE FRONT DIRECTLY, BUT FROM THE ANGLED CORNER WHICH IS A FEATURE USED HERE AND ON SKILLET. THIS BUILDING BEARS A GREAT DEAL OF SIMILARITY TO THE OTHER BUILDINGS ALONG THE STREET IN THE WAY IT USES BRICK AND THE USE OF THE BRICK COLUMN THAT SEEMS TO GO NOWHERE.



NOTICE THAT THE STORES UP AND DOWN THE NORTH SIDE OF THE STREET HAVE AWNINGS, BECAUSE OF THE LATE SUMMER SUN. THEY PROTECT MERCHANDISE FROM FADING, PROVIDE SHADE FOR PEOPLE, AND ADD A GREAT DEAL OF COLOR AND CHARM TO THE COMMUNITY.

**107 1ST STREET WEST MT.VERNON BANK BUILDING
CURRENTLY: MOUNT VERNON
INSURANCE**

THE NEXT BUILDING BEARS SOME RESEMBLANCE TO THE ONE ACROSS THE STREET - THE KEPLER BUILDING. UNDERNEATH THE LARGE WINDOW ON THE SECOND FLOOR ARE ROUNDED BRICKS. IF YOU GO ACROSS THE STREET AND LOOK AT THIS YOU WILL SEE THE USE OF VERY LARGE AMOUNTS OF LIMESTONE, VARIETIES OF THE ARCH



SHAPE, AND TUBULAR-SHAPED TERRA COTTA BRICKS. THE TOP OF THIS BUILDING WOULD HAVE HAD THREE OR MORE LIMESTONE BLOCKS LEADING TO A CAP. THIS BUILDING WAS VERY MUCH INTACT WHEN RECENTLY PURCHASED, AND RESTORED TO BE VERY CLOSE TO THE ORIGINAL. IT IS A BUILDING OF GREAT INTEGRITY, A REMARKABLE REFLECTION OF THE SPIRIT OF 1891. IT WAS BUILT IN THAT YEAR FOR THE MT. VERNON BANK, LARGELY OWNED BY WILLIAM SMITH AND DR. CHARLES CARSON WHO FIRST OCCUPIED IT. I REGARD IT AS ONE OF OUR FINEST LANDMARKS.

105 1ST STREET WEST, OLD POST OFFICE BUILDING,
CURRENTLY: RIGHT FRAME OF MIND

105 WAS BUILT AS A POST OFFICE FOR T. S. BROKAW IN 1888 BY ROOD AND YOUNG, ALSO MERCHANTS ON MAIN STREET. THIS BUILDING IS BEST SEEN IN THE FALL WHEN THE LEAVES ARE NOT HIDING ITS DETAIL. THERE IS AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF BRICK DETAILING AS WELL AS TERRA COTTA AND A PRESSED TIN PIECE THAT



LOOKS LIKE A SCROLL AT ONE END. YOU WILL NOTICE OTHER PLACES THAT LOOK LIKE STONE, BUT MAY BE BRICK. JUST ABOVE THE METAL FLASHING WE HAVE WOOD CORNICES THAT DUPLICATE PRESSED-TIN PIECES. A 1950S FACADE FEATURING METAL SIDING WAS RECENTLY REMOVED, REVEALING THE ORIGINAL.

ENDING THE TOUR:

WE ARE BACK TO THE MOST HISTORIC SPOT IN MOUNT VERNON--THE JUNCTION OF THE FIRST HIGHWAY IN THE

STATE OF IOWA AND MAIN STREET MOUNT VERNON. WHEN THE ORIGINAL TOWN WAS PLOTTED THIS WAS ALMOST EXACTLY IN THE MIDDLE. THE ORIGINAL TOWN WAS ABOUT A BLOCK AND A HALF TO THE EAST AND WEST AND A BLOCK NORTH AND SOUTH FROM THIS VERY SPOT. IT WAS PLOTTED IN 1847. THE LAND AT THE BOTTOM OF THE HILL MAY HAVE BEEN LOW AND SWAMPY WHICH ONLY ADDED TO THE PIONEER'S PROBLEMS WITH THE HORSE AND WAGON. MOUNT VERNON WAS INDEED A STOP ON THE STAGECOACH RUN FROM DUBUQUE TO IOWA CITY. THE TOP OF THE HILL BECAME A SMALL TRADING CENTER FOR ALL THE FARMERS IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA AND IT IS STILL A STREET OF SMALL LOCAL MERCHANTS WHO CONTINUE TO TRY TO KEEP THE TOWN VIABLE AMIDST ALL OF THE TENSIONS AND ECONOMIC STRENGTHS THAT COME WITH BECOMING A SUBURB OF CEDAR RAPIDS. ANCHORED BY EXCELLENT TRANSPORTATION AND A STRONG PRIVATE LIBERAL ARTS COLLEGE, MOUNT VERNON IS A TOWN WITH A PROUD HERITAGE AND WE ARE GLAD WE WERE ABLE TO SHARE IT WITH YOU. THANK YOU FOR JOINING US.

OTHER BUILDINGS OF INTEREST:

MT. VERNON HIGH SCHOOL, RECENTLY THE MIDDLE SCHOOL, NOW COMMUNITY BUILDING --ORIGINAL FIRST SITE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH

ONE BLOCK EAST OF HIGHWAY 1 ON FIRST STREET IS THE OLD HIGH SCHOOL, THEN MIDDLE SCHOOL AND NOW SCHOLL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING. THE "OLD" HIGH SCHOOL WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1927. THE CORNER WAS THE SITE OF THE FIRST METHODIST CHURCH BUILT IN ABOUT 1852. THE CHURCH WAS LATER SOLD TO THE CONTRACTOR WILLIAM BRACKETT



WHO, IN TURN, SOLD IT TO THE CITY AND IT WAS REMODELED AS A SCHOOL. THE FIRST BRICK SCHOOL WAS CONSTRUCTED IN 1867 AND, WITH MODIFICATIONS IN 1891 AND 1902, SERVED THE CITY UNTIL 1927 WHEN THE BUILDING NOW STANDING WAS COMPLETED. THE METHODISTS MOVED FROM THAT SITE TO THEIR PRESENT LOCATION IN 1864. THE SECOND, OR "BRICK" CHURCH SERVED UNTIL 1899 WHEN IT WAS TORN DOWN AND REPLACED BY THE PRESENT STONE BUILDING.

THE ORIGINAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH WAS ON THE SOUTHWEST CORNER, DIAGONALLY ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE FIRST METHODIST. BEHIND THE FACADE OF THE LARGE HOUSE WITH A RED ROOF IS PROBABLY A LARGE PART OF THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE OF THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH. THE METHODIST AND PRESBYTERIANS HAVE BEEN NEIGHBORS ALMOST FROM THE BEGINNING OF THEIR EXISTENCE HERE. THE PRESBYTERIANS BUILT THE CURRENT CHURCH IN 1895.

THE MOUNT VERNON BANK

THE BANK DIRECTORS MADE A CONSCIOUS EFFORT TO TRY TO MAKE THE BUILDING FIT INTO THE ARCHITECTURAL FLAVOR AND AMBIANCE OF THE TOWN. THEY DID SO AT A CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE, FOR WHICH THE TOWN IS VERY GRATEFUL. THE USE OF LIMESTONE BANDS AND THE HINT OF A MANSARD ROOF ARE EXAMPLES OF THIS. UP THE STREET ONE BLOCK ARE TWO MANSARD ROOFS. THERE IS ONE ON GUILD HALL AND ONE ACROSS THE STREET ON THE LARGE RESIDENCE. A MANSARD ROOF IS CHARACTERIZED BY THE ENTIRE TOP FLOOR OF A BUILDING BEING ENCOMPASSED BY A ROOF EXTENDED DOWNWARDS TO SERVE AS ITS WALLS. WINDOWS WOULD ALSO BE PRESENT IN THE SLOPE OF A REAL MANSARD ROOF. THUS, THE BANK SERVES AS A SMALL TRANSITION FROM THE USUAL TWO- STORY, MINIMAL-DECORATION MERCHANT STRUCTURES, TO THE MORE ELEGANT DOMESTIC STRUCTURES. GUILD HALL WAS BUILT AS A HOTEL AND THE LARGE BRICK RESIDENCE AS A DOCTOR'S OFFICE AND HOSPITAL--AGAIN COMMERCIAL STRUCTURES.

BEHIND THE BANK ON THE SAME SIDE OF THE STREET (DOWN 2ND AVENUE), THERE USED TO BE A VERY SMALL BRICK BUILDING THAT WAS THE FIRST TOWN TELEPHONE OFFICE. IT IS WHERE THE OPERATOR SAT AND CONNECTED THE CALLER WITH ANOTHER PERSON BY PLUGGING A LINE INTO A SWITCHING BOARD. IT WAS PROBABLY BUILT AROUND 1914 AND WAS DEMOLISHED IN 2012 BY THE BANK. FOR MANY YEARS, IT WAS RENTED OUT AS A PRIVATE HOME OR SMALL BUSINESS.

224 1ST STREET W, HENRY ALBRIGHT/ DR. F.F. EBERSOLE HOUSE
CURRENTLY: BREWCASSO, BOOTH LAW OFFICE, ART GALLERY

CONTINUE DOWN 1ST STREET PAST THE MOUNT VERNON BANK AND STOP IN FRONT OF THE BRICK HOUSE. THIS WAS BUILT AROUND 1853 AND IS REPORTEDLY ONE OF THE FIRST BRICK RESIDENCES IN THE TOWN. THE HOUSE HAS GREEK REVIVAL INFLUENCES, ESPECIALLY EVIDENT IN THE PEDIMENTED ENTRY PORCH WITH THE FANLIGHT. THE WING OF THE HOUSE HAS ROUND-ARCHED OPENINGS AND THE BRICK PATTERN IS ALL STRETCHERS. THERE ARE SMALL SEMI-CIRCULAR WINDOWS IN THE GABLE ENDS. THE EAST WING IS A LATER ADDITION.

304 1ST STREET W
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

THIS CHURCH, ALONG WITH THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH ACROSS THE STREET, ESTABLISHES THE EASTERN ENTRANCE TO THE CORNELL COLLEGE DISTRICT, AND ACTS AS A TRANSITIONAL ELEMENT BETWEEN THE COMMERCIAL AREA AND THE COLLEGE.

THIS CHURCH WAS BUILT IN 1900 AND IS A KEY STRUCTURE IN THE CORNELL COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT. IT WAS BUILT BECAUSE THE FORMER CHURCH WAS TOO SMALL FOR THE METHODIST CONGREGATION, AT THAT TIME NUMBERING 570. THE STONE FOR THE WALLS, FROM THE FOUNDATION TO THE WATER TABLE, CAME FROM THE MOUNT VERNON QUARRY. SOME BRICK WAS SALVAGED FROM THE ORIGINAL STRUCTURE, AND WAS USED IN FOUR PILLARS INSIDE THE CHURCH AND FOR

SOME OF THE INNER WALLS. THE STRUCTURE IS BUILT IN THE GOTHIC REVIVAL STYLE. NOTICE HOW THE CORNERS OF THE TOWER ARE BUTTRESSED. THERE ARE GOTHIC ARCHED STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS AT THE GABLE ENDS AND ARCHES OVER THE OPENINGS TO THE UPPER PORTION OF THE BELL TOWER. THE COMPLETED CHURCH COST \$36,588.10. THERE WAS A FIRE STARTED BY A FURNACE IN THE CHURCH IN 1924, DAMAGING THE INTERIOR. THERE WAS A LARGE ADDITION MADE IN 2009 TO IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY.

**312 1ST STREET W
METHODIST PARSONAGE**

IN 1915, THE OLD PARSONAGE WAS MOVED AND THIS LOT WAS PURCHASED. THE NEW PARSONAGE WAS BUILT IN 1916 AT A COST OF OVER \$8,000. THE FIRST OCCUPANT WAS DR. W.C. KEELER. HERE IS A GOTHIC ARCH IN THE DOORWAY, INTEGRATING REPETITION OF A PROMINENT FEATURE OF THE CHURCH WITH THE “MODERN” (AT THE TIME) DESIGN ELEMENTS OF THE BUILDING.

**328 1ST STREET W
GUILD HALL**

GUILD HALL WAS BUILT IN 1853 AND SERVED AS THE TOWN’S FIRST HOTEL. PRIOR TO THE RAILROAD, IT HOUSED CIVIC AND ARTISTIC DIGNITARIES INCLUDING WILLIAM TAFT AND LILLIAN RUSSELL. ACCORDING TO THE CENTENNIAL HISTORY OF MOUNT VERNON, GUILD HALL SERVED AS A DORMITORY.

THIS IS A RECTANGULAR BUILDING WITH A MANSARD ROOF AND FOUR FLOORS. THE WINDOWS HAVE LINTELS OF RAISED BRICK. THERE ARE SIXTEEN DORMERS IN THE MANSARD THAT WAS ADDED IN 1874. A PORCH WAS REMOVED, AND THE MAIN ENTRANCE WAS LOWERED IN 1916. THIS BUILDING IS IN THE CORNELL COLLEGE HISTORIC DISTRICT.

**400 1ST STREET W, HISTORIC DRS. HOGEL HOME AND CLINIC
CURRENTLY: RESIDENCE, APARTMENTS**

THIS BUILDING WAS THE HOME, OFFICE, AND CLINIC OF DR. KATE MASON HOGEL (CORNELL COLLEGE 1882, AND

THE FIRST WOMAN PHYSICIAN IN THE AREA) AND HER HUSBAND DR. GEORGE HOGEL.

IT IS A THREE-STORY BUILDING WITH A MANSARD ROOF, BRICK WALLS, BRACKETS, AND RAISED BRICK HOODS OVER THE WINDOWS. THE BRICK HAS BEEN PAINTED AND THE ORIGINAL PORCH REMOVED.

MEMORIAL PARK AND VISITORS' CENTER.

THE BUILDING HOUSING THE VISITORS' CENTER WAS THE OFFICE OF THE DRS. WOLFE. IT WAS DONATED TO THE CITY AND MOVED HERE TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE MOUNT VERNON BANK. PREVIOUSLY, THE ALTOONA HOTEL WAS ON THIS SITE (OPENED 1909, BOUGHT BY THE COLLEGE IN 1911, AND RAZED BY THE CITY IN 1985).

INTERESTING FEATURES OF THE VISITORS' CENTER BUILDING INCLUDE THE FLARING ROOFLINE AND CORINTHIAN-STYLE COLUMNS, UNIQUE IN MOUNT VERNON. THE INSPIRATION FOR THE CHOICE OF COLUMN CAME FROM DR. WOLFE'S VISIT TO A PLANTATION IN THE SOUTH.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THIS STRUCTURE WAS BUILT IN 1894, UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF REV. ANDREW K KNOX. IT IS ROMANESQUE IN STYLE, WITH SEMI-CIRCULAR ARCHED OPENINGS ON THE WINDOWS AND IN THE BELL TOWER. THE WALLS ARE UNDRESSED LIMESTONE WITH DRESSED STONE AROUND THE WINDOWS AND DOORS. ALL OF THE GLASS IS STAINED. THE STAIRS ARE A RECENT ADDITION TO MAKE THE BUILDING MORE INVITING.

THE STRUCTURE ON THE WEST SIDE, AT 309, IS RECENT. A PARSONAGE WAS DEMOLISHED AND THIS WAS BUILT ON ITS SITE.

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(LAST REVISED 7/12)**