Iowa Site Inventory Form State Inventory Number: 44-00372 ☐ New ☐ Supplemental 9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number: _____ **State Historic Preservation Office** (January 2016) □ Non-extant Year: Read the lowa Site Inventory Form Instructions carefully, to ensure accuracy and completeness before completing this form. The instructions are available on our website. **Property Name** A) Historic name: Becker's Jewelry B) Other names: 2023 downtown survey # DT-066 Location A) Street address: 123 W. Monroe St B) City or town: Mount Pleasant (Vicinity) County: Henry C) Legal description: Rural: Township Name: ___ Township No.:___ Range No.:___ Section: Quarter: of Quarter: Urban: Subdivision: Original Block(s): 7 Lot(s): Lot 4 - E 35' of W 75' - also same of S 5' of Lot 3 Classification A) Property category: Check only one B) Number of resources (within property): If eligible property, enter number of: □ Building(s) If non-eligible property. ☐ District Contributing Noncontributing enter number of: ☐ Site 1 Buildings Buildinas ☐ Structure Sites Sites ☐ Object Structures Structures Objects Objects Total **Total** C) For properties listed in the National Register: National Register status: Listed De-listed NHL NPS DOE D) For properties within a historic district: Property contributes to a National Register or local certified historic district. Property contributes to a potential historic district, based on professional historic/architectural survey and evaluation. Property *does not* contribute to the historic district in which it is located. Historic district name: Mt Pleasant Downtown Historic District Historic district site inventory number: 44-02280 E) Name of related project report or multiple property study, if applicable: MPD title Historical Architectural Data Base # Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of Downtown Mt Pleasant, Iowa HADB-02986 Function or Use Enter categories (codes and terms) from the lowa Site Inventory Form Instructions A) Historic functions **B)** Current functions 02E06: COMMERCE/TRADE / jewelry store 02E03: COMMERCE/TRADE / clothing store 02E08: COMMERCE/TRADE / barber 04F: GOVERNMENT / post office **Description** Enter categories (codes and terms) from the lowa Site Inventory Form Instructions A) Architectural classification **B) Materials** 05B: Italianate Foundation (visible exterior): <u>04C: Limestone</u> 09F05: Commercial / brick front Walls (visible exterior): 03: Brick Roof: 15C: Rubber

Other:

Site Number: 44-00372 Address: 123 W. Monroe St	City: Mt Pleasant County: IA District Number: 44-02280
Statement of Significance	
A) Applicable National Register Criteria: Mark your of Criterion A: Property is associated with significant events. Criterion B: Property is associated with the lives of significant Criterion C: Property has distinctive architectural characterist Criterion D: Property yields significant information in archaeo	ics.
B) Special criteria considerations: Mark any special column ☐ A: Owned by a religious institution or used for religious ☐ B: Removed from its original location. ☐ C: A birthplace or grave. ☐ D: A cemetery	
C) Areas of significance Enter categories from instructions	D) Period(s) of significance
05: Commerce	
02: Architecture	E) O'military to a second
E) Significant dates Construction date 1872	F) Significant person Complete if Criterion B is marked above
1981	
G) Cultural affiliation Complete if Criterion D is marked above	H) Architect/Builder Architect
	Builder/contractor
<u> </u>	
1 2 2 4	
Form Preparation	
Name and Title: Rebecca Lawin McCarley / resear Organization/firm: SPARK Consulting / Mt Pleasant Street address: 1630 Park Ave SE	Telephone: <u>319-200-9767</u>
City or Town: Cedar Rapids	State: IA Zip code: 52403
unique photo number.	ied in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions:
number to indicate the location and directional	view of each photograph. ing boundaries, public roads, and building/structure footprints. in historic districts and farmsteads, and barns:
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only	*
The SHPO has reviewed the Site Inventory and concurs with Yes No More research recom This is a locally designated property or part of a	n above survey opinion on National Register eligibility: mended
Comments:	
SHPO authorized signature:	Date:

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7. Narrative Description

This two-story building retains elements of its original construction in 1872, storefront remodel in 1959, and removal of the third story in 1981. The building was originally a three-story Italianate building, with the cornice / top of the building damaged in the 1882 tornado and rebuilt. The storefront was remodeled in 1959, installing permastone on the first story walls and large aluminum windows and doors. The storefront was then remodeled again in 1981 for Becker's Jewelry, with new windows and door installed but the permastone retained. A large awning was installed on the building with a projected arch entry section, which covers most of the permastone on the upper portion of the storefront. It remains most visible on the storefront columns/pilasters. The second story retains its original (1872) two-over-two-light double-hung wood windows with stone sills. The windows have segmental arch stone hoods with keystone and shoulder detail. Historic photographs show the third story originally had full arch windows with similar hoods. The third story was removed in 1981, creating the current brick gable on the façade. A gable roof was installed on the building.

8. Narrative Statement of Significance

Becker's Jewelry appears to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building within the potential Mount Pleasant Downtown Historic District. The building contributes to the historic commercial character of the downtown, reflecting downtown development and business history over several periods. This building is one of few buildings constructed in the early 1870s, with the post office located in this building for several years. The storefront remodel in 1959 reflects this period of downtown improvements. The removal of the third story in 1981 and addition of the gable roof line was one of the "Operation Pride" projects that sought to enhance the historic appearance of the downtown. This latter work falls within the preliminary period of significance for the potential historic district. Thus, this work is part of the historic development of the downtown, and the building retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a historic commercial building in a historic district.

Based on research and evaluation conducted to date, this building does not appear to likely be individually eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at this time. Further evaluation of the building is recommended after the 1981 remodel is at least 50 years old, as it was a significant update for this building reflecting this period of improvement in the downtown for a long-time business in Mt Pleasant.

Developmental history of property

This brick commercial building was built as a three-story building in 1872. The third story was removed in 1981.

P.C. Tiffany owned and operated the first hotel, the Tiffany House, to the west at the corner of Jefferson and Monroe. It was destroyed by a fire in 1857 that burned this half block to the alley to the east, including the post office, book store, and jewelry store (MPS 1985: 10). By the original number system, this location would have been No. 19 and No. 20 Monroe (numbered west to east). The 1867 Mount Pleasant City Directory lists J.W. Powell operating a grocery and provisions store at 20 W Monroe. By 1870, A.G. Davis has a boots and shoe store at 20 W Monroe, per the 1870 Mount Pleasant City Directory.

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On 15 February 1872, P.C. Tiffany and wife sell the E 35' of the W 75' of lot 4 block 7 and the S 5' of the E 35' of the W 75' of lot 3 block 7 to George B. Corkhill. On 22 April 1876, George B. Corkhill transfers the lots to H.B. Phillips. A memo reads "now H.B. Corkhill" (Transfer Book "A", page 49). Note: George B. Corkhill (1838-1886) married Mrs. Helen B. Phillips on April 23, 1876, in Washington, DC, where she died in May of 1882. Col. George B. Corkhill was a prominent resident of Mount Pleasant in this period, who was a graduate of lowa Wesleyan in 1859, lawyer in partnership with Judge Palmer, private secretary for Senator James Harlan, and served in the Civil War. He returned to the practice of law after the Civil War and became District Attorney in southeast lowa. He then moved to Washington D.C. in 1872 ("Obituary," *Frees Press,* July 8, 1886, 3).

George B. Corkhill then appears to have built this large three-story brick building in 1872, with the post office on the first story. Historic photographs show entries to the basement level from Monroe Street. Tiffany's Book and Music Store, located at the corner to the west, was then noted one door from the post office in November 1872 (*Henry County Press*, November 8, 1872, 2). An ordinance in June 1872 for right of way for the Western Union Telegraph Company extended along streets selected from the Burlington railroad depot to Corkhill's new building on the square (*Henry County Press*, June 28, 1872, 2). In August 1872, C. Davis & Co advertised their Excelsior Barber Shop and Bath Room under the post office (*Henry County Press*, August 30, 1872, 3). Charles Davis was one of the first African American barbers in Mt Pleasant, previously located in a room in the Brazelton Block before relocating to this space. He operated here for a few years before moving to Minnesota. A.J. Royce moved his gun store and sewing machine office to Corkhill's new building under the post office in September 1872 (*Henry County Press*, September 27, 1872, 3). In December 1873, the *Henry County Press* notes that Corkhill is putting in a large cistern in the rear of the post office building, perhaps that would furnish enough water to wash the front windows of the building (*Henry County Press*, December 26, 1873, 2).

The post office building is a point of discussion in town in May 1877 as cracks in the brick walls brought up concerns for safety. George B. Corkhill noted at the time that he had built the building at expense to himself, without expectation of compensation, but rather due to interest and pride in the development of the town. It had been built on plans and specifications of one of the best and most reliable architects in the country, with masonry work completed by Homer Stough. Additional iron braces had been added at this suggestion. The original architect visited town and noted that it had been unusually well constructed, and it was sound ("Letter from Washington," *Mount Pleasant Journal*, May 24, 1877, 2).

A fire in February 1882 then destroyed the frame building of Tiffany to the west, stopped before spreading to the three-story building that housed the post office to the east and city hall to the north (Naumann 1991: E12; *Journal*, February 26, 1882).

The newspaper reported in September 1885 that one of the rooms under the post office had been neatly refitted for a barber shop. S.H. McCracken had moved from his old stand west of the First National Bank to occupy it. It was a pleasant room – warm in winter and cool in summer – perfect for a barber shop (*Mount Pleasant Journal*, September 10, 1885, 2). Samuel H. McCracken was a prominent African American barber who moved to town in 1866 after the Civil War, initially working for Charles Davis and then opening his own barber shop in the west room of the old First National Bank.

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The 1886 Sanborn fire insurance map shows a 3-story, brick building, with a stairway at the east, front wall, leading to the 3rd floor and the basement level. The Post Office is on the 1st floor/main level; a barber shop is in the basement. The 2nd floor is used for printing. The 3rd floor is a hall. The address is 109 Monroe (related to the earlier number of No. 19 here).

The post office then moved further east on the block to the east room of the building at 103-105 W. Monroe in the late 1880s.

On 4 May 1892, H.D. Walbridge, et al, transfer the lots to Chapin Brown, Trustee (Transfer Book "B", page 9). Note: H.D. Walbridge was the uncle of Mrs. George B. Corkhill. On 30 November 1895, Chapin Brown, Trustee, sold the property to J.J. Fitzgerald (Transfer Book "B", page 12).

The 1892 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for the building as the previous map. The 1st floor is now a restaurant. The basement houses a paint shop and a barbershop. The 2nd floor is used for printing. The 3rd floor is a hall. The address for the building on the map is 109 W Monroe.

The 1893 Mount Pleasant City Directory lists the barber shop of S.H. McCracken in this building at 135 W. Monroe Street. These businesses are listed at 133 W Monroe, which also appears to be this building: Sheets & Runnion (billiard and pool hall); Journal Publishing Company (book binding and job printing); and Mt. Pleasant Journal (newspaper).

Samuel H. McCracken moved his barber shop from the basement room into the first story space in April 1895, separated from the billiard hall. He advertises himself as "The Barber" in May 1895, now located at 133, first floor, old post office building, north side of the square. He notes that he was the best in his line (*Free Press*, April 4, 1895, 3; *Mt Pleasant Journal*, April 11, 1895, 3; "To The Public," *Mt Pleasant Journal*, May 30, 1895, 1). He then moved back to the west/rear room of the First National Bank building by November 1896, noted as being located there for the last 24 years in March 1920 as well as for the 18 years prior to 1885 (*Free Press*, November 26, 1896, 2; "Dean of Local Barbers," *Mt Pleasant Daily News*, March 2, 1920, 3). While he was located in the west room of the bank building for the majority of his career, the old bank building demolished for the new bank in 1923, leaving this location on the north side of the square is the only extant building associated with the barber shop of Samuel H. McCracken.

The 1899 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for the building as the previous maps. The 3-story, brick building with a basement is 45' in height, with 12' ceilings on the first two floors and 16' ceilings on the 3rd floor. The first story is depicted as one space, not two separate rooms. The basement, 1st and 2nd floors are used for printing, with gasoline engines and motors shown on all floors. The 3rd floor is a hall. The address for the building is 109 W Monroe.

On 2 September 1905, via warranty deed, John J. Fitzgerald sold to Lester T. Jackson, who on 18 October 1905, with his wife, transferred the property to R.S. Galer (Transfer Book "C", page 12). The newspaper noted in January 1906 that the plate glass windows for the new front in Galer's building on the north side arrived yesterday. The room will soon be ready for occupancy by Jones & Lauger (*Mt. Pleasant Journal,* January 9, 1906, 4). W.A. Jones and John A. Lauger started their business firm in 1901, located one door to the west in the east half of the Davis building at the corner (*Mount Pleasant Daily News*, November 15, 1901). They then moved to this larger location in 1906, remaining here for several decades.

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The 1909 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for the building as the previous maps. The building is 45' in height with 4 iron posts positioned in the center of the 1st floor (in 1920). The building is used for gentlemen's furnishings. The address remains the old numbering of 109 W. Monroe

On 26 August 1910, R.S. Galer sold the E 35' of the W 75' of lot 4 and the S 5' of the E 35' of the W 75' of lot 3 to Jones & Lauger (Transfer Book "C", page 12). The 1911-12 county directory lists John & Lauger as a men's clothing store. In 1912, John A. Lauger purchased the interest of Jones ("Several Merchants in Business Here Over Fifty Years," *Mt Pleasant News*, September 25, 1934, 5). The 1913 telephone directory then lists the partnership dissolved with the store in the hands of John A. Lauger. He is listed with the men's clothing and furnishings store in the 1913 to 1919 telephone directories at 109 W. Monroe St.

On 16 February 1917, Adla M. Lauger and husband (Carl Lauger), via warranty deed, sell the lots to John A. Lauger (Transfer Book "1", page 8). Note: Adla M. Lauger was the daughter of William A. Jones (1859-1912) and it is assumed she inherited the property from her father's estate.

The 1920 and 1942 Sanborn fire insurance maps show the same footprint for the building as the previous maps. The building is 45' in height with 4 iron posts positioned in the center of the 1st floor (in 1920). The building is used for gentlemen's furnishings on both maps. The address has changed to 133 W Monroe.

The telephone directories in the 1920s list both Carl S. Lauger and John A. Lauger as associated with the men's clothing and furnishings store. They advertise good clothes and styles from Kuppenheimer. John A. Lauger is the only one then listed as associated with the store in the 1930s city and telephone directories, with his location simply noted as the north side of the square. The 1938 city directory lists his store under clothing, men's furnishings, and athletic goods. The store of John A. Lauger continues to be listed at this location through the 1952 telephone directory.

In 1954, the clothing store of John A. Lauger on the north side was sold to Leland Robertson, who remodeled the interior (Jaynes 1976: 151). The Lauger Clothing Store is then listed at the revised address of 133 W. Monroe St in the 1955 directory, with the address then changed to 123 W. Monroe by the 1957 directory.

The clothing store was then sold in 1959 to E.L. Roederer (Jaynes 1976: 151). An article in the *Mount Pleasant News*, February 26, 1959, announces: "Roederer's New Store Now Ready." Major remodeling of the clothing store in the former Lauger location had been finished. New spacious windows and limestone trim were installed, with an electric sign. An open house was held February 28th. Roederer's or Roederer's Clothing Store is then listed here in city directories through the 1960s.

John A. Lauger died on October 19, 1962. After a series of transfers to his wife (Harriet W. Lauger) and title changes to his daughters (Jessie Lauger Kiger and Gladys Lauger Estes) the lots were sold to Milton A. and Ruth J. Roederer on 8 December 1970 (Transfer Book "2", page 8).

Roederer's continues to be listed here in city directories in 1970, 1973, and 1976. Dad and Lad (James Pogemiller & Rodger Gillaspie owners) is then listed here in 1978. Emerson's Clothing was then listed here in 1979, until May 1981.

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On 3 May 1979, Milton A. and Ruth J. Roederer sold the property to J. Milton and Bernice M. Becker.

In June 1981, the third story was removed from this building: "An elaborate chute system has been built at the front of the building in preparation for the removal of the third story of the Emerson's Clothing building... owned by Mr. and Mrs. Milton Becker... When the remodeling work is done, it will be Becker's Jewelry (now located at the corner of Main and Monroe). Jean Wiley is the general contractor for the exterior remodeling" ("Down the Chute," *Mt. Pleasant News*, June 25, 1981). This project was completed as one of the "Operation Pride" projects from 1977 to 1981 in downtown Mt Pleasant, reflecting a period of significant investment in enhancing the appearance of the downtown.

The city directories in the 1980s and 1990s then list Becker's Jewelry at 123 W. Monroe St.

In November 1993, the Estate of James Milton Becker, Sr., transferred title of the property to Becker's wife and children: Bernice M. Becker, James M., Jr., Bonita and William D. The building has been owned since April 2015, by William D. Becker, who acquired the building from other Becker family members.

This commercial building is currently occupied in 2024, by Becker's Jewelers, a retail jewelry store owned by William Becker.

9. Major Bibliographical References

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Annewalt, E.H., compiler. *Mount Pleasant City Directory*. Burlington: Daily Gazette, 1870.

Mount Pleasant City Directory for 1893. Mt. Pleasant, IA: Francis D. Craig, 1893.

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Johnson Publishing Co. *Mt Pleasant, Iowa*. City directories issued in 1955, 1957, 1960, 1964, 1966, 1968, 1970, 1873, 1976, 1981, 1986, 1993, 2001, 2011. Manitowoc, WI: Johnson Publishing Co.

Cornerstones. Mt Pleasant: Mt. Pleasant Beautiful Committee, 1991.

Henry County Bicentennial Commission (HCBC). *The History of Henry County.* Dallas, TX: National ShareGraphics, Inc., 1982.

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Henry County Heritage Trust. Collection of historic images, in files and posted in Facebook albums. Collection in former Saunders School, Mount Pleasant, Iowa.

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Jaynes, Peter H., ed. *Highlights of Henry County History 1833-1976.* Burlington, IA: Doran & Ward Lithographing Co., 1977.

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Naumann, Molly Myers. *Architectural and Historical Resources of Mount Pleasant, IA.* National Register of Historic Places Multiple Documentation Form, May 1991. On file with the State Historic Preservation Office, Des Moines, IA.

Portrait and Biographical Album of Henry County, Iowa. Chicago: Acme Publishing Co., 1888.

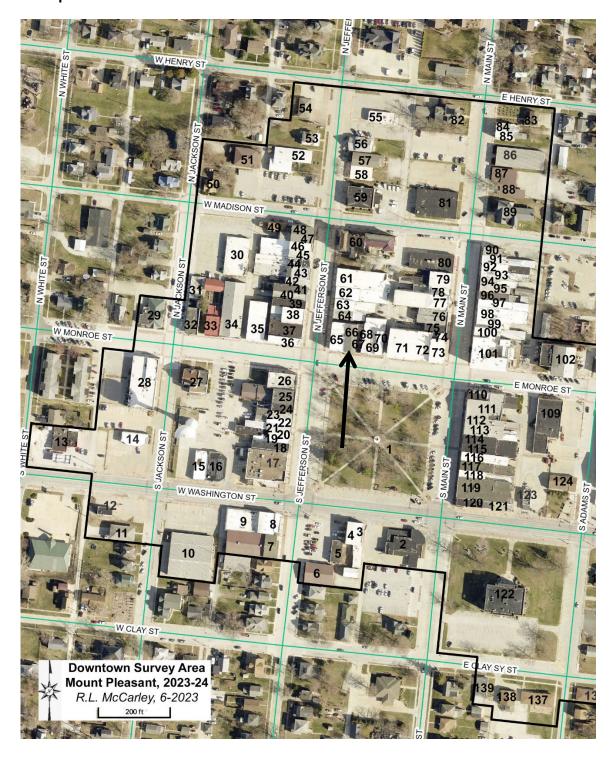
Sanborn Map Company. *Mount Pleasant, Iowa.* Fire insurance maps for 1886, 1892, 1899, 1909, 1920, 1942. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division, Sanborn Maps Collection.

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Location map

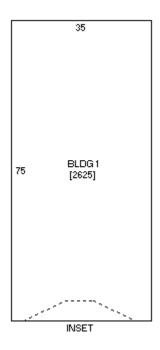


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Building footprint



Sketch by www.camavision.com

Henry County Assessor (https://beacon.schneidercorp.com)

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Historic images

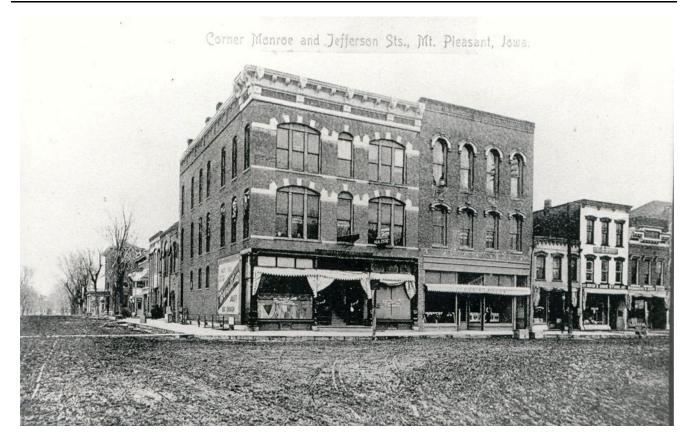


100 block of W. Monroe after June 1882 tornado (HCHT Facebook album)

top of building damaged

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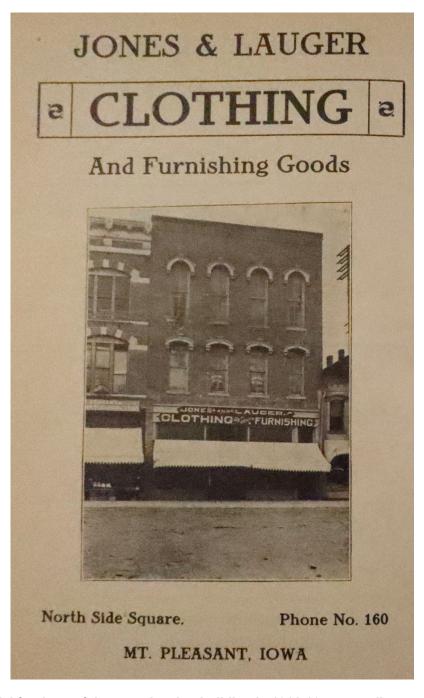
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West end of 100 block of W. Monroe Street in early 1900s (HCHT Facebook album)

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Ad for Jones & Lauger showing building in 1911-12 county directory

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100 block of W. Monroe Street in the late 1910s (HCHT Facebook album) store is now John A. Lauger

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West end of 100 block of W. Monroe Street in 1956 (HCHT Facebook album)

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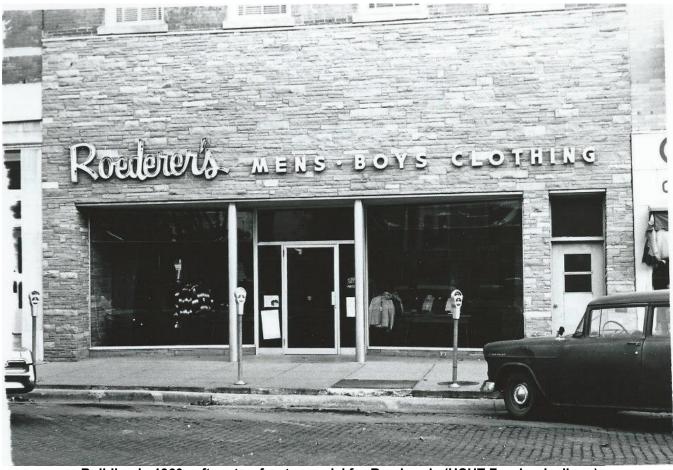
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100 block of W. Monroe Street in 1957 (HCHT Facebook album)

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Building in 1960s after storefront remodel for Roederer's (HCHT Facebook album)

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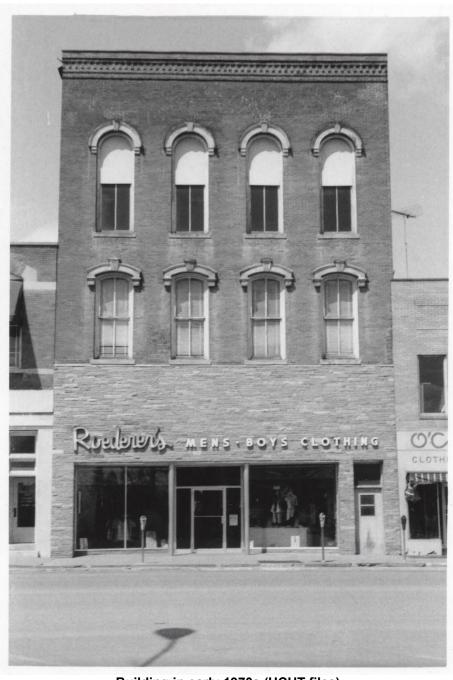
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100 block of W. Monroe Street in 1965 (HCHT Facebook album)

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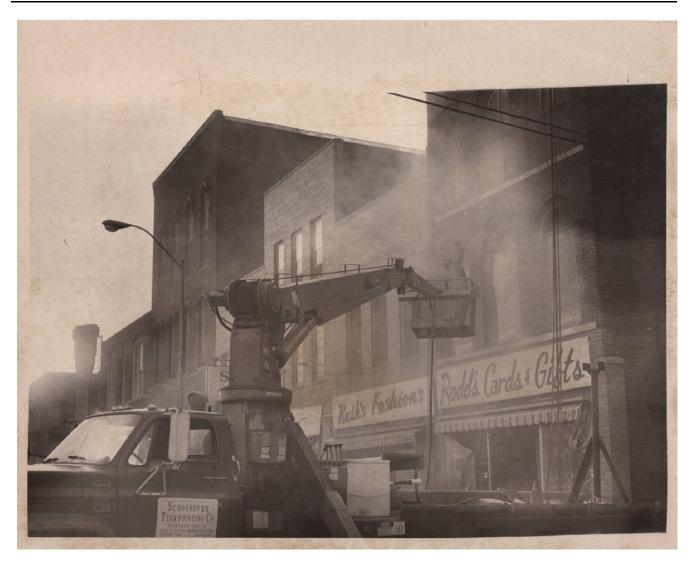
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Building in early 1970s (HCHT files)

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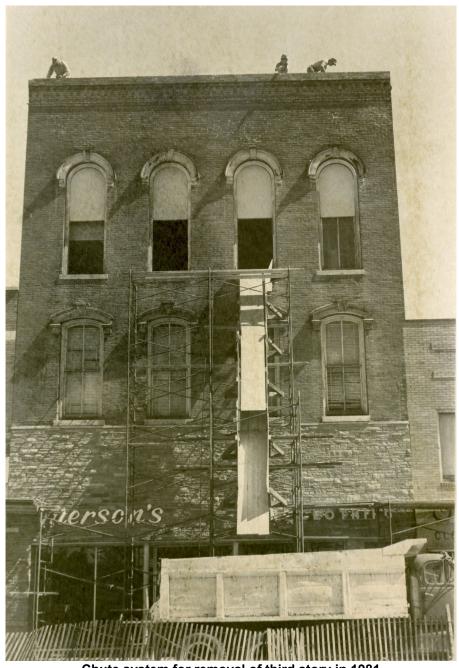
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North side of W. Monroe St on May 2, 1981 (HCHT files)

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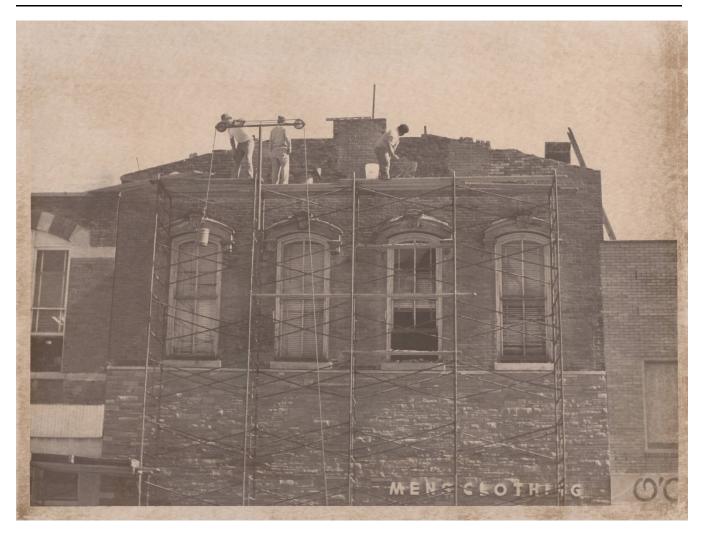
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Chute system for removal of third story in 1981 (photo from HCHT Facebook album, also published in *Mt Pleasant Journal,* June 25, 1981)

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Third story removed from building, July 21, 1981, newspaper clipping (HCHT clippings)

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100 block of W. Monroe Street in December 1981 (Mt Pleasant News, December 2, 1981, 30, HCHT Facebook album / clippings)

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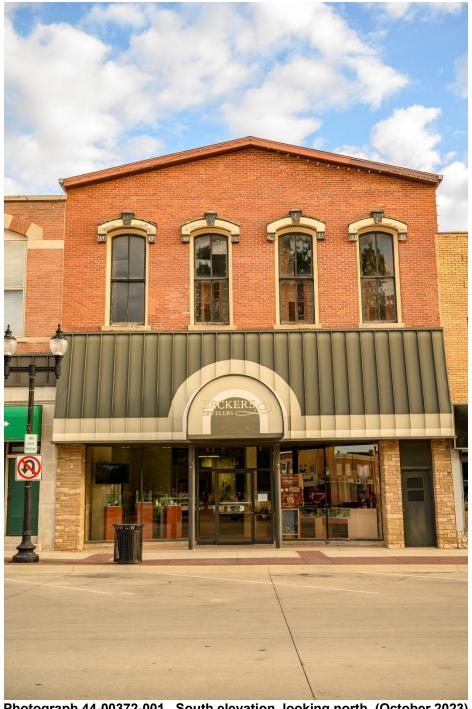


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Digital photographs



Photograph 44-00372-001. South elevation, looking north (October 2023)