

# Iowa Site Inventory Form

State Historic Preservation Office

(January 2016)

State Inventory Number: 44-00368  New  Supplemental

9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Non-extant Year: \_\_\_\_\_

**Read the Iowa 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: Union Block

B) Other names: 2023 downtown survey # DT-071

## • Location

A) Street address: 111 W. Monroe St (historically 107-109-111-113 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 8 - W 1/2

## • Classification

**A) Property category:** *Check only one*

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

**B) Number of resources (within property):**

<i>If eligible property, enter number of:</i>		<i>If non-eligible property, enter number of:</i>	
Contributing	Noncontributing		
<u>1</u>	Buildings	<u>—</u>	Buildings
<u>—</u>	Sites	<u>—</u>	Sites
<u>—</u>	Structures	<u>—</u>	Structures
<u>—</u>	Objects	<u>—</u>	Objects
<u>1</u>	<b>Total</b>	<u>—</u>	<b>Total</b>

**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 Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

**A) Historic functions**

02E03: COMMERCE/TRADE / dry goods

02E11: COMMERCE/TRADE / grocery

02E08: COMMERCE/TRADE / barber

**B) Current functions**

02E: COMMERCE/TRADE / specialty store

02G01: COMMERCE/TRADE / cafe

02A01: COMMERCE/TRADE / offices

• **Description** *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

**A) Architectural classification**

05B: LATE VICTORIAN / Italianate

**B) Materials**

Foundation (visible exterior): 04C: Limestone

Walls (visible exterior): 03: Brick

Roof: 15C: Rubber

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**C) Narrative description**  **SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED**

Site Number: 44-00368 Address: 111 W. Monroe City: Mt Pleasant County: IA District Number: 44-02280

• **Statement of Significance**

**A) Applicable National Register Criteria:** *Mark your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria*

- Criterion A: Property is associated with significant events.  Yes  No  More research recommended  
Criterion B: Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.  Yes  No  More research recommended  
Criterion C: Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.  Yes  No  More research recommended  
Criterion D: Property yields significant information in archaeology/history.  Yes  No  More research recommended

**B) Special criteria considerations:** *Mark any special considerations; leave blank if none*

- A: Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.  E: A reconstructed building, object, or structure.  
 B: Removed from its original location.  F: A commemorative property.  
 C: A birthplace or grave.  G: Property less than 50 years of age or  
 D: A cemetery. achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**C) Areas of significance**

*Enter categories from instructions*

05: Commerce

02: Architecture

**D) Period(s) of significance**

**E) Significant dates**

*Construction date*

1861  *check if circa or estimated date*

*Other dates, including renovations*

2014

**F) Significant person**

*Complete if Criterion B is marked above*

**G) Cultural affiliation**

*Complete if Criterion D is marked above*

**H) Architect/Builder**

*Architect*

*Builder/contractor*

**I) Narrative statement of significance**  **SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED**

• **Bibliography**  *See continuation sheets for the list research sources used in preparing this form*

• **Geographic Data** *Optional UTM references*  *See continuation sheet for additional UTM or comments*

Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD	Zone	Easting	Northing	NAD
1				2			
3				4			

• **Form Preparation**

Name and Title: Rebecca Lawin McCarley / research by Lisa Oekten, Tina, & Pat Date: March 15, 2024

Organization/firm: SPARK Consulting / Mt Pleasant HPC E-mail: sparkconsulting@octaspark.com

Street address: 1630 Park Ave SE Telephone: 319-200-9767

City or Town: Cedar Rapids State: IA Zip code: 52403

• **ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION** *Submit the following items with the completed form*

**A) For all properties, attach the following, as specified in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions:**

- 1. Map** of property's location within the community.
- 2. Glossy color 4x6 photos labeled** on back with property/building name, address, date taken, view shown, and unique photo number.
- 3. Photo key showing each photo number on a map and/or floor plan, using arrows next to each photo number to indicate the location and directional view of each photograph.**
- 4. Site plan** of buildings/structures on site, identifying boundaries, public roads, and building/structure footprints.

**B) For State Historic Tax Credit Part 1 Applications, historic districts and farmsteads, and barns:**

*See lists of special requirements and attachments in the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions.*

**State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Use Only Below This Line**

*The SHPO has reviewed the Site Inventory and concurs with above survey opinion on National Register eligibility:*

- Yes  No  More research recommended  
 This is a locally designated property or part of a locally designated district.

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

SHPO authorized signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 1

---

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

---

**7. Narrative Description**

Union Block was constructed in 1861, completed shortly after the start of the Civil War and named accordingly. The building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991 under Criterion C for its architecture. The narrative description of the nomination written by Molly Myer Naumann states:

This three story brick building (1861), measuring 70'X75', is located on the north side of the Square, immediately east of the alley, at 109-113 W. Monroe. Unlike other buildings around the Square, it features a gable roof, with ridge parallel to the street. The walls are of the locally produced rosy red brick found on other buildings of the period in the business district. The building has a double storefront with a symmetrical eleven bay facade. A central doorway leads to a four foot wide stairway to the second and third floors. Windows on the second and third floors have round arched tops with brick patterned hoodmolds, the corbeling meeting in such a way as to suggest an arcade at the third floor level. Second floor windows appear to be set between brick pilasters. Simple metal brackets are found at the cornice. Although panels cover the third floor windows (original windows are intact on the inside), those in the east half of the second floor show the original trefoil design that was used in the tops of all the windows. Both storefronts have been altered at street level, but this appears to be the only major alteration to this building. These alterations are not intrusive because the overall integrity of the building has been maintained.

Since the listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 1991, the building underwent a significant rehabilitation project in 2014. The storefronts were rebuilt in a design that reflects the original four storefronts though maintains the current two double-storefront. Wood doors with tall transoms, wood windows, and wood bulkheads are included in the modern design of a historic storefront. The center entry to the upper stories was maintained, with a wood doors with window, sidelights, and large transom that has "Union Block 111" in lettering. The building maintains its 11 windows on the second and third stories, with decorative brick arches with bases that end in brick corbels/brackets on brick pilasters that separate each window. The center bay is slightly wider than the five bays to either side. "Union Block" remains in the stone arch above the middle window on the third story. The original wood windows were restored on the third story and replicated for the second story. The building retains its cornice with alternating single and paired brackets. The west side of the building facing the alley reveals the gable roof of the building. This side elevation has full arch windows with simple brick arch lintels and brackets/corbels on the second and third stories. These windows also have stone sills and historic or replica windows. The first story windows are high segmental arch windows on the front/south half and two-over-two-light windows in a square opening on the rear/north half. The rear elevation of the building has three rear entries on the first story, nine one-over-one-light double-hung windows on the second story, and eight six-over-six-light double-hung windows on the third story. These openings are simple square openings, suggesting that they might have been rebuilt at some point.

**8. Narrative Statement of Significance**

Union Block 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, and it reflects the period of downtown development in the late 1850s and early 1860s. A number of significant businesses have operated in this building over the years. The building has been a landmark on the north side of the square for over 150 years, and the

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 2

---

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

---

rehabilitation project in 2014 restored many original features. Union Block retains sufficient integrity to convey its significance as a historic commercial building in a historic district.

Union Block was listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C in 1991. The nomination written by Molly Myers Naumann states:

This building is significant under Criterion C as an outstanding example of a Type II building, an early Italianate design as seen in Mount Pleasant between 1855 and 1870, built by William McCandless. The Union Block represents one of the best examples of early Italianate commercial design in the community. This style became locally popular following the construction of the Brazelton House Hotel (NRHP) in 1856. The local version of the style featured round arched windows with brick patterned hoodmolds, and a simple bracketed cornice. The brick used in the construction of these buildings was locally manufactured, rosy red in color, and soft due to low temperature firing. The Union Block shares these characteristics with the other examples found in Mount Pleasant. The use of a gable roof on the Union Block is unusual. While it reflects the design of the earliest brick buildings along the south side of the Square, the gable roof was probably used for the practical purpose of providing attic space above the meeting hall.

*Developmental history of property*

This 3-story, brick commercial building, located at 111 West Monroe Street was built in 1861 for Henry Ambler and E.L. Penn. William A. McCandless was the contractor. Per Transfer Book "A", page 8, Henry Ambler (1821-1904) owned the E ½ of the W ½ of lot 8 block 7 (east half of the building) and E.L. Penn (1814-1901) owned the W ¼ of lot 8 block 7 (west half of the building) in the 1860s. The 1991 nomination states:

Henry Ambler and Edward Penn announced in April 1861 that they were going to have a building constructed on the north side of the Square. It would be three stories high, with space for four businesses on the first floor, offices on the second, and a third floor that would be leased to the county for a courtroom, and also be available for community use (suppers, lectures, etc.). It replaced an earlier wood frame building on the same lot. William McCandless is identified as the builder of what was named the Union Block in August of that year. It is not known exactly when the building was completed, but a supper was held there on Christmas Eve 1861. Although it was not actually built as an Opera House, the Union Block served that purpose for a number of years. Presley Saunders had included a hall (sometimes referred to as an opera house) as part of his large brick building on the west side of the Square [to the west of the First National Bank building on W. Monroe St] by 1858, and by 1886, the Bon Ton Opera House (a wood frame structure) was located on N. Main, next door to the Baptist Church. The Union Block however, appears to have been the center of the social and cultural gatherings in the community. It must be remembered that this was an intelligent, well educated community, and many of the affairs of Iowa Wesleyan University took place at the Union Block. Further research may establish significance under Criterion A as well. It is interesting that there were two owners at the time this building was constructed: one owned the east half, one owned the west half, and they shared ownership and use of the central stairway. This ownership pattern continues today [in 1991].

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 3

---

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

---

Excerpts taken from the *Mount Pleasant Home Journal*:

- April 13, 1861 - Ambler and Penn, new building, north side, 75 feet square, 3 stories high, 4 businesses first floor, second story into office rooms, third story leased to county for court purposes for ten years, work to commence immediately, needed by November term.
- April 29, 1861 - Penn and Ambler announce that they are going to build a structure on the north side of the square. It is announced that William McCandless will be charge of the building.
- May 11, 1861 - Mr. McCandless, removal of wooden building and excavating of cellar...
- June 8, 1861 - There are 40 men working on the building, the basement has been excavated and the masonry work has been commenced.
- August 5, 1861 – UNION BLOCK. – Messrs. Ambler & Penn have given their fine new building on the north side the above name. The Hall will be known as “Union Hall”. The walls are nearly up, and the structure will present a very fine appearance – a credit to the city and the enterprise of the proprietors.
- December 7, 1861 – The Home Journal office has been removed to the Second Story of Union Block, East room.
- December 28, 1861 – Supper at Union Hall on Christmas Eve was a deserved success.

During 1862, businesses begin to occupy the Union Block building. Excerpts from the *Mount Pleasant Home Journal*: E.L. Penn, dry goods, “in a few weeks will remove to our new store rooms on the west end of the Union Block” (December 7, 1861). Eshelman & Wise, clothing, “have removed to the Union Block...one door east of E.L. Penn” (March 18, 1862). Woods & Templin’s, dry goods, No. 27 North Side (June 7, 1862). Hatch & Strang, City Book Store, “East Room of Union Block” (January 18, 1862).

By the original numbering system, the four storefronts in this building would have been No. 25 (now 113), No. 26 (now 111), No. 27 (now 109), and No. 28 (now 107) Monroe – numbered from west to east on this block. The clothing store of Eshelman & Wise is listed at No. 26 in 1861. John Eshelman is then listed at No. 26 in newspaper ads from 1863 and 1865, with the dry goods store of E.L. Penn then expanding into this storefront as well as No. 25. Newspaper ads in 1863 list the dry goods store of Woods & Templin at No. 27 Union Block. The dry goods store of W.W. Pennington is listed at No. 27 in 1865 newspaper ads, followed by Pennington & Son in 1867 and 1869. In 1867, they are noted as one door west of the post office. City Book Store, operated by W.H. Hatch, is located on the north side of the square in ads in 1863 to 1871. The 1865 ad notes that they are in the post office building. The office of H. & R. Ambler (Henry & Richard), attorneys, is located on the 2<sup>nd</sup> story of Union Block in the 1860s and 1870s, as well as the law office of Ambler & Babb.

The *1867 Mount Pleasant City Directory* shows E.L. Penn (boots, shoes, dry goods and notions) at 25 and 26 W Monroe, Pennington & Son (boots, shoes, dry goods and notions) at 27 W Monroe, and W.H. Hatch (bookseller) at 28 W Monroe.

An image of the Union Block building (*Combination Atlas Map of Henry County, Iowa, 1870*, page 18) clearly shows this 3-story, brick structure, with a central, open doorway leading to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor law office of H. Ambler, R. Ambler & Babb. The top floor is named Union Hall. The 1<sup>st</sup> floor stores are (west to east): E.L. Penn, dry goods; Boston, boot & shoe store; Pennington & Son, dry goods, and W.H. Hatch, pianos, organs, books & wallpaper.

The *1870 Mount Pleasant City Directory* shows E.L. Penn at 25 and 26 W Monroe, George H. Spahr at 27 W Monroe and W.H. Hatch at 28 W Monroe.

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 4

---

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

---

On 31 January 1879, Henry Ambler and wife sell their portion of the lot (E ½ of the W ½ of lot 8 block 7) to George H. Spahr (Transfer Book "A", page 49).

The *1884-1885 Iowa Gazetteer* advertises Penn & Holwick (E.L. Penn & Charles A. Holwick), dry goods, Edward Penn & Co., shoes and George H. Spahr, clothing. No addresses are given.

The 1886 Sanborn fire insurance map shows a large, 3-story, brick building, with a gable roof. There is a central stairway leading to the upper floors. The building faces south and is situated with a 16' wide alleyway to the west and windows overlooking the alley. A 3-story, brick building is to the east. Four storefronts make up the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the building, with 1-story walls separating the businesses. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is used for offices. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is a Hall. From west to east the building is used for a dry goods store (#113), boots and shoes store (#114), clothing store (#115) and dry goods store (#116). There appears to be an opening in the wall between #113 and #114.

The 1892 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for the building as the previous map. From west to east the first floor of the building is used for a dry goods store (#113/#119), boots and shoes store (#114/#117), clothing store (#115/#111) and jewelry store (#116). The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is used for offices. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is a Hall. There is still an opening in the wall between the two storefronts on the west: the dry goods store and the boots and shoes store.

The law office of Amblers & Campbell is located in Union Block in newspaper ads in 1881, 1883, and 1885. The law office of R. Ambler & Son is then listed in Union Block by 1887, continuing through 1895, per newspaper advertisements.

The 1893 Mount Pleasant City Directory advertises Robert Baxter (boots and shoes) at 117 W Monroe (west end), with Ambler & Son listed at 115 W. Monroe. Spahr & Son (clothiers, Geo H. and WW Spahr) are at 111 W Monroe, and H.N. Crane (jewelry, books and stationery, newsdealer) is at 109 W Monroe (east end).

The 1899 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for the building as the previous maps. The building is 36' in height, with 12' ceilings on the first 2 floors, and 16' ceilings on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor, which is still used for a Hall. The 2<sup>nd</sup> floor is used for offices. From west to east the first floor of the building is used for a dry goods store (#119), general store (#117), clothing store (#111) and jewelry store (#116).

The 1909 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for the building as the previous maps. There is a notation that the opening between the two storefronts on the west has now been boarded up. From west to east the first floor of the building is used for a dry goods store (#119), a grocery store (#117), a gentlemen's furnishings store (#111) and a jewelry store (#116). No usage is given for the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors.

The *1911-1912 Henry County Directory* appears to list these four businesses in this building, west to east: The Model Barber Shop (Turkington & Smith), Stiles Brothers Grocers (E.M. & T.H.), G.H. Spahr & Son, Clothing and F.B. Crane, Jeweler.

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 5

---

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

---

Telephone directories from 1913 to 1919 list Stiles Brothers on W. Monroe, George H. Spahr & Sons at 111 W. Monroe, and F.B. Crane at 110 W. Monroe. Model Barber is not listed in the telephone directories.

On 24 March 1916, the W 37 ½' of lot 8 was transferred "by will" from Edward L. Penn, deceased, to Amelia W. and Ella A. Penn (Transfer Book "1", page 9). This lot was owned by the Penn family and descendants until December 1956.

The 1920 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for the building as the previous maps. There are fire escapes on the north/back of the building and also on the west/alley side of the building. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is used for a Hall. There is no usage given for the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor. From west to east the first floor of the building is used for a barber shop (#119), a grocery store (#117), a gentlemen's furnishings store (#111). #116 is vacant.

The Model Barber Shop is listed on the north side of the square in the 1925 and 1927 city directories (west storefront). Nifti-Thrift, a grocery store, is listed on the north side or at 117 W. Monroe in the 1921 to 1927 telephone directories (second to west storefront). Preliminary plans were announced in April 1937 for a news storefront for the west half of Union Block, which was owned by the Penn family. The two storefronts were occupied by Nifti Thrift store and Model barber shop ("Plan New Front for Penn Building," *Mt Pleasant News*, April 9, 1937, 1).

The east half of the building was owned by Mrs. Leisenring in the early 1930s, a Spahr family member. The east storefront in the building was occupied by the A & P Food Store in the early 1930s. In May 1934, announcement was made that a Gamble store agency would open on June 9 on the north side of the square in the space formerly occupied by the A&P Store. Harold Livix and Austin Froom initially operated the store, which offered a full line of auto equipment, oils, home appliances, and similar items ("Livix and Froom Will Open Store," *Mt Pleasant News*, May 12, 1934, 1). The store agency was sold to W.R. Montgomery and his son Lawrence in September 1936 (*Mt Pleasant News*, September 3, 1936, 3), and then to Floyd Nelson in October 1937 ("Nelson Takes Over Gamble Agency," *Mt Pleasant News*, October 20, 1937, 1).

On 15 November 1937, Sam Spahr, et al, sell the E ½ of the W ½ of lot 8 block 7 to Frank M. Edwards for \$11,000 (Transfer Book "1", page 8). At the time of the sale, the east half of Union Block was noted as belonging to the Lille Leisenring estate. It was occupied by the Lamm barber shop and Gamble store ("Sale of Business Building Reported," *Mt Pleasant News*, November 29, 1937, 1). Delbert Lamm was associated with a barber shop in Salem prior to opening in the storefront in Union Block. Lamm's Modern Barber Shop advertised in June 1937 (*Mt Pleasant News*, June 17, 1937, 8).

The 1938 *Mount Pleasant City Directory* lists the Model Barber Shop at 119 W Monroe, the Nifty-Thrift Grocery at 117 W Monroe, Lamm's Barber Shop at 111 W Monroe, and Gamble Store at 109 W Monroe. Dr. J.T. McConnaughy moved to his new office in the Dr. Edwards building over the Gamble store in January 1939 (*Mt Pleasant News*, January 18, 1939, 6). A new sidewalk was installed in August 1940 in front of the east half of Union Block, owned by Dr. F.M. Edwards ("New Front for West Side Building," *Mt Pleasant News*, September 5, 1940, 1).

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 6

---

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

---

A store front in the former Nifti Thrift location on the north side of square had been torn out and new front to be installed in January 1941. The store had not yet been leased by Penn interests ("Remodeling Front at Former Nifti Store," *Mt Pleasant News*, January 3, 1941, 1)

The 1941 *Mount Pleasant City Directory* shows the following listings for this building: Brau Pharmacy (119 W Monroe), Vacant (117 W Monroe), Lamm's Barber Shop (111 W Monroe) and Gamble Store (109 W Monroe).

The 1942 Sanborn fire insurance map shows the same footprint for the building as the previous maps. The fire escape is not shown by the alleyway. The 3<sup>rd</sup> floor is used for a Hall; the second floor is used for offices. There is no specific use given for the stores on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, which from west to east have addresses of 119, 117, 111 and 109 W Monroe.

In the 1942 MPHS Target yearbook, the following businesses are pictured: Brau Drugs, Bittle's Bakery, Lamm's Barber Shop, and Gamble's. P.C. Brau Drug Store, a Walgreen Agency, is listed on the north side of the square in the 1944, 1948, 1950, and 1952 telephone directories. Bittle's Pastry Shop is listed on the north side of the square in the 1944 telephone directory. Lamm's Barber Shop is listed in newspaper ads but not telephone directories in the 1940s and early 1950s. Gamble Store Agency is listed on the north side of the square in the 1944, 1948, 1950, and 1952 telephone directories.

The 1955 *Mount Pleasant City Directory* shows the following listings for this building: Brau Pharmacy (119 W Monroe), Conner's Pastry & Candy Shop (117 W Monroe), Lamm's Barber Shop (111 W Monroe) and Gamble Store (109 W Monroe).

The west half of Union Block was owned by the Penn family and descendants until 3 December 1956, when Ullena I. Beal, et al, sold the W 37 1/2' of lot 8 block 7 to Leo C. Brau (Transfer Book "2", page 8).

Building improvements were made throughout downtown in the late 1950s and early 1960s, including for this building. Lamm's Barbershop on the north side was remodeled and redecorated in 1961 ("Mt Pleasant Makes Many Gains and Changes in Year of Great Progress," *Mt Pleasant News*, November 13, 1961, 1). Brau Pharmacy then expanded from the west storefront to include the one to its east, the former location of Connor Pastry shop. Thus, the dividing wall in the west half of the building was removed and a new storefront installed across both spaces. The store was also remodeled and a self-service check out system installed ("Remodeling at Brau's Pharmacy," *Mt Pleasant News*, October 15, 1962, 1; "New Front at Brau's," *Mt Pleasant News*, January 30, 1963, 1). Starting in the 1964 city directory, Brau Pharmacy is listed at 111-113 W. Monroe.

The 1968 city directory lists Brau Pharmacy (111-113 W Monroe), Lamm's Barber Shop (109 W Monroe) and Gambles (Hardware & Implements, Paint & Wallpaper) (107 W Monroe).

The Frank M. Edwards Estate changes the title of the property for the east half of Union Block to Frances Purdy on 21 January 1969, and on 24 January 1969, Frances and R.R. Purdy sell the lot to Wendell T. Smith and Henry M. Biggs (Transfer Book "2", page 8).

In February 1969, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Leuellen announced that they would move their store from N. Main St to the former Dr. F.M. Edwards building at 107 W. Monroe on north side of square building, which



**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 7

---

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

---

was recently purchased by Wendell T. Smith and Henry Biggs from Mrs. R.R. Purdy (daughter of late Dr. Edwards). Leuellen's would occupy the entire first story of the building, recently vacated by Gamble Store and Lamm's Barber Shop. A new storefront would be installed across both spaces of a colonial appearance with an antique brick design and shake roof overhang. The entry with white colonial doors would open into the foyer ("Leuellens to Move; North Side Location Will Be Remodeled," *Mt Pleasant News*, February 5, 1969, 1).

City directories in the 1970s then list Brau Pharmacy in the west half of the building at 113 W. Monroe and Leuellen's in the east half of the building at 107 W. Monroe. The building was sandblasted to remove the paint as part of the "Operation Pride" projects in 1977-1981. Hutch's Sporting Goods, owned by Dennis and Mary Hutchinson, moved to the west storefront in the east half of the building in August 1983, with a children's shop, The Kids' Klostet opening in the former Leuellen's children shop in the east storefront ("Business changes downtown announced," *Mt Pleasant News*, August 3, 1983, 1). Brau Pharmacy continues to be listed in the west half of the building through the 1986 city directory, with Hutch's Sporting Goods listed in the east half. The 1991 city directory lists Tober's Clothing in the west half and Hutch's Sporting Goods in the east half.

Dennis Hutchinson, in an email dated March 2012, states that he purchased the property from Wendell T. Smith and Henry M. Biggs in 1983, though no record was found for this transaction. On 17 February 1987, Robert and Sandra Hutchinson transfer the E 1/2 of the W 1/2 of lot 8 block 7 to Dennis J. and Mary J. Hutchinson (Transfer Book "3", page 8). Dennis Hutchinson then sold it to Nhon Thi Le in 2002. In 2008, Bamboo House was located on the west half, and Magic Nails was in one storefront on the east half.

After general neglect and a fire in January 2011, Union Block was listed on the Most Endangered Properties list in Iowa in 2011. Funds were raised for Main Street Mount Pleasant to purchase the building from Nhon Thi Le in August 2011. Additional fundraising and leverage of funds resulting in significant rehabilitation of the building in 2014 by Main Street Mount Pleasant to restore historic features of the building. The organization was awarded the Preservation at its Best in Iowa honor in 2015 from Preservation Iowa.

This three-story, brick commercial building, located at 111 West Monroe Street, is currently occupied in 2023/2024 by Verizon Russell Cellular (west half) and Central Park Coffee Company, a coffee shop and restaurant bakery (east half). Offices are located on the second story. The third story is used as community meeting rooms, with a large space, smaller space, kitchen, and restrooms.

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**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historic Preservation Office**  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 8

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Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

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**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 9

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

**Location map**



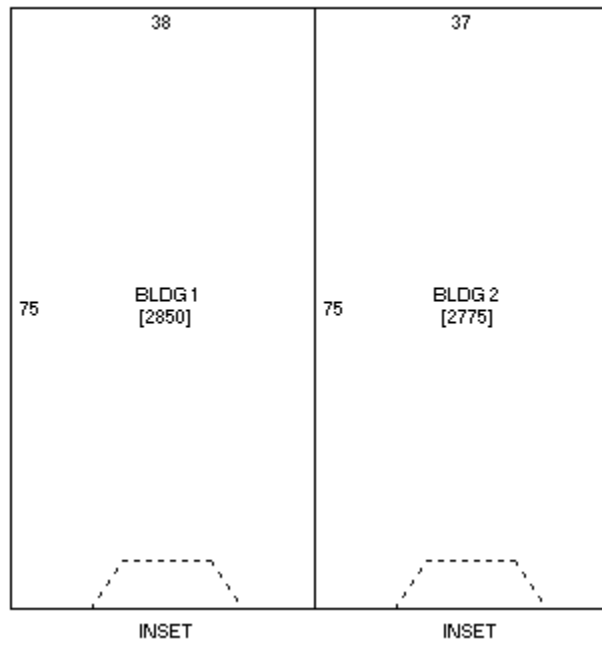
**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 10

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

**Building footprint**



Sketch by [www.camavision.com](http://www.camavision.com)

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

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 11

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City

**Historic images**



**Union Block in 1870 Atlas of Henry County**

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 12

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



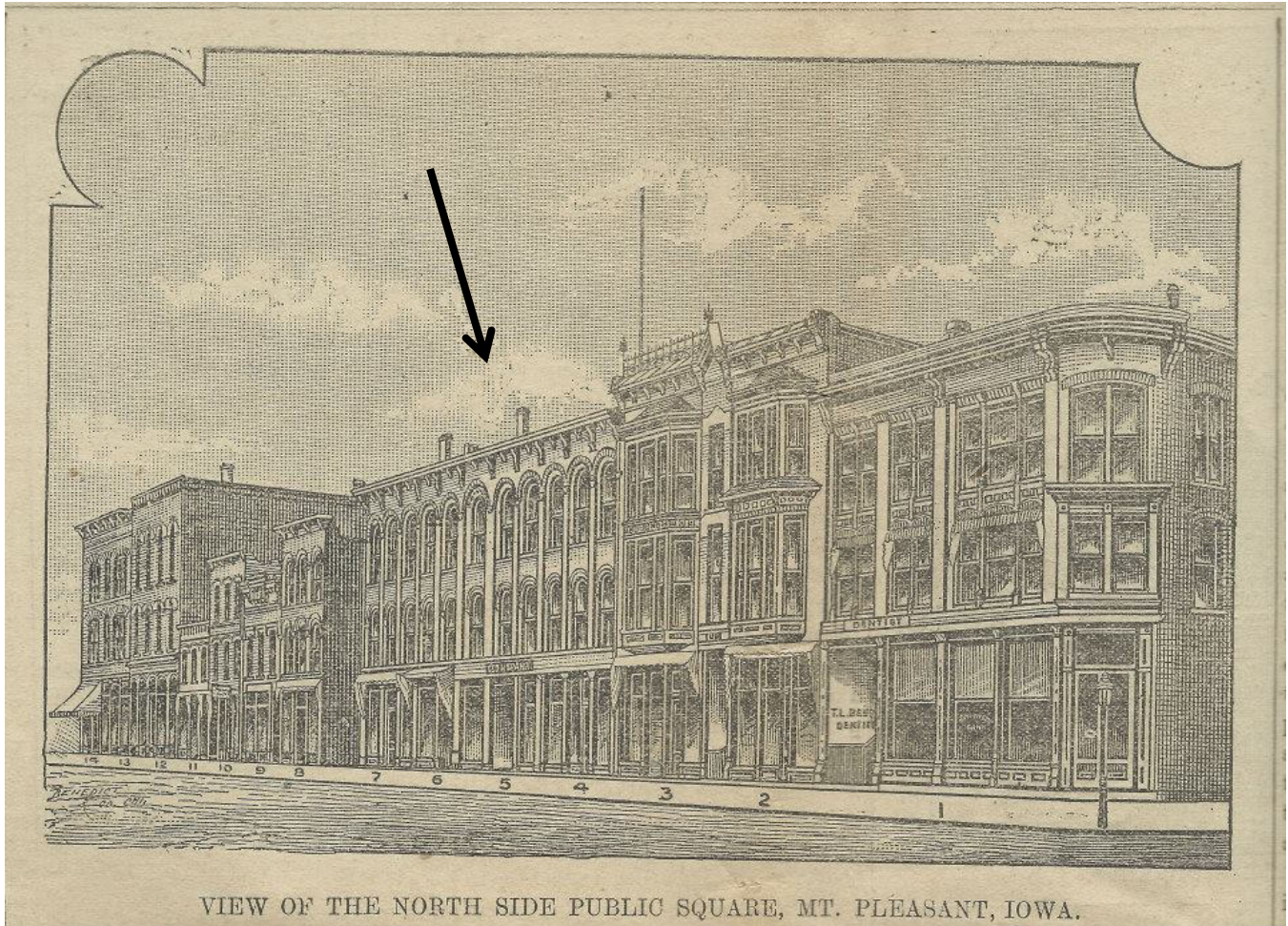
**100 block of W. Monroe after June 1882 tornado (HCHT Facebook album)**

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 13

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



100 block of W. Monroe St in 1890 (*Free Press*, May 1, 1890, scanned by HCHT)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 14

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



100 block of W. Monroe Street in the 1900s (HCHT Facebook album)



**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 15

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



Postcard from c.1912 of 100 block of W. Monroe (HCHT Facebook album)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 16

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



100 block of W. Monroe Street in 1936

(Will Dyall photo from Maisie Green, HCHT Facebook album)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 17

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



100 block of W. Monroe Street in the 1940s (HCHT Facebook album)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 18

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



**100 block of W. Monroe Street in early 1952 (Don Lamm, HCHT Facebook album)**

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 19

Union Block  
Name of Property

Henry  
County

111 W. Monroe St  
Address

Mount Pleasant  
City



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

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 20

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



MAY 25 1965

**Union Block in 1965 (HCHT Facebook album)**

*1962 storefront remodel for Brau on west half*

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 21

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



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

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 22

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



**Building in early 1980s with Brau Pharmacy and Leuellen's  
(City of Mt Pleasant building permits)**

*1962 storefront remodel for Brau on west half; 1969 storefront remodel for Leuellen's on east half*



**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 23

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



1990 survey photograph (Naumann 1991)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 24

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



1990 survey photograph (Naumann 1991)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 25

Union Block	Henry
Name of Property	County
111 W. Monroe St	Mount Pleasant
Address	City



Union Block in 2008 (HCHT Facebook album)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 26

Union Block  
Name of Property

Henry  
County

111 W. Monroe St  
Address

Mount Pleasant  
City



Union Block in 2014 (HCHT Facebook album)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 27

Union Block  
Name of Property

Henry  
County

111 W. Monroe St  
Address

Mount Pleasant  
City

**Digital photographs**



Photograph 44-00368-001. South elevation, looking north (October 2023)

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 28

Union Block  
Name of Property

Henry  
County

111 W. Monroe St  
Address

Mount Pleasant  
City



**Photograph 44-00368-002. West elevation, looking northeast (October 2023)**

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 29

Union Block  
Name of Property

Henry  
County

111 W. Monroe St  
Address

Mount Pleasant  
City



**Photograph 44-00368-003. West elevation, looking southeast (October 2023)**

**Iowa Site Inventory Form**  
State Historic Preservation Office  
**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 44-00368  
Related District Number: 44-02280

Page 30

Union Block  
Name of Property

Henry  
County

111 W. Monroe St  
Address

Mount Pleasant  
City



**Photograph 44-00368-004. North elevation, looking south (October 2023)**