

# Iowa Site Inventory Form

State Historic Preservation Office

(July 2014)

State Inventory Number: 38-00327 ☒ 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: <http://www.iowahistory.org/historic-preservation/statewide-inventory-and-collections/iowa-site-inventory-form.html>**

## • Property Name

A) Historic name: Kerr Block

B) Other names: City Bakery; Cash & Carry; Grundy Cafe

## • Location

A) Street address: 622 G Avenue

B) City or town: Grundy Center (☐ Vicinity) County: Grundy

C) Legal description:

Rural: Township Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Township No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Range No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Qtr: \_\_\_\_\_ of Qtr: \_\_\_\_\_

Urban: Subdivision: Original Plat Block(s): 17 Lot(s): part of 4

## • Classification

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

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

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

*If eligible property, enter number of:*

Contributing Noncontributing

<u>1</u>	Buildings	—
—	Sites	—
—	Structures	—
—	Objects	—
<u>1</u>	<b>Total</b>	—

*If non-eligible property, enter number of:*

—	Buildings
—	Sites
—	Structures
—	Objects
—	<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: \_\_\_\_\_ Historic district site inventory number: \_\_\_\_\_

**E) Name of related project report or multiple property study, if applicable:**

MPD title

See Iowa Site Inventory Form No. 38-00318

Historical Architectural Data Base #

## • Function or Use *Enter categories (codes and terms) from the Iowa Site Inventory Form Instructions*

**A) Historic functions**

02E02 COMMERCE/specialty store/bakery

02E11 COMMERCE/specialty store/grocery

02G01 COMMERCE/restaurant/cafe

**B) Current functions**

02E08 COMMERCE/specialty store/beauty shop

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

**A) Architectural classification**

09F05 Commercial/Brick Front

05B LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**B) Materials**

Foundation (visible exterior): 10A CONCRETE/Block

Walls (visible exterior): 03 BRICK

Roof: 08A ASPHALT/Composition Tile

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

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

Site Number: 38-00327 Address: 622 G Avenue City: Grundy Center County: Grundy

• **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  
achieved significance within the past 50 years.

☐ D: A cemetery

**C) Areas of significance**

*Enter categories from instructions*

02 ARCHITECTURE

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

1900-1963

05 COMMERCE

**E) Significant dates**

*Construction date*

1900 ☐ *check if circa or estimated date*

*Other dates, including renovations*

**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: Jennifer A. Price/Consultant Date: June 2018

Organization/firm: EarthView Environmental, Inc./Impact7G E-mail: jprice@impact7G.com

Street address: 310 2nd Street Telephone: 319.594.9513

City or Town: Coralville State: IA Zip code: 52241

• **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: 38-00327  
Related District Number:

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Kerr Block	Grundy
Name of Property	County
622 G Avenue	Grundy Center
Address	City

This Iowa Site Inventory Form is being prepared for the City of Grundy Center as part of an Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Downtown Revitalization Grant. The building is located in the Area of Potential Effects (APE) for the grant project, and the owner of the building at 624 G Avenue is participating in the Downtown Revitalization Grant. The building is also located in a potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District, and this site form provides an architectural/historical evaluation of the property as a contributing building in that potential historic district.

**7. Narrative Description**

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

This two-story, full basement, flat-roofed, brick building was originally constructed in 1888, but was destroyed by fire. The current building was erected in 1900, according to Grundy County Assessor records. The building is located within a commercial block which consists of similar buildings on both the north and south sides of the streets, adjacent to the "Central Block" and County Courthouse. The front door opens to the sidewalk on main street, and the back door provides access to the alley. Rectangle in shape, this building features 10-12 ceilings on the main and upper levels. There are three windows on the upper level overlooking main street. The windows are 7 feet tall double hung metal clad. The top of the façade contains ornate stepped tin cornice with a raised crown in the middle with the name "Kerr."

The main level façade has been altered, most recently around 1990. The storefronts features metal-framed windows and entrance door.

On the interior, the property is mainly open space in the front, divided in the middle to accommodate spa services, with storage in the back. The original pressed tin ceilings are mostly intact but have been lowered with grid and tile. Floors in the front space have been covered with wood laminate and carpet. The walls were originally brick, then plastered over, then fir strips with paneling, and now have some drywall. The ceiling lights are fluorescent incorporated into the grid and tile.

On the upper level, there are two newly renovated one-bedroom apartments. The ceilings and walls are drywall.

*(Description taken from Downtown Revitalization Grant Survey site form dated February 2018)*

**8. Statement of Significance**

The Kerr Building is locally significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places as a contributing building in a potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District under Criteria A and C. The Kerr Building, built in 1900, is associated with the first phase of development in the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District, during which a number of architecturally significant buildings replaced older buildings that were lost in fires, in this case the fire of 1899. The Italianate-style Kerr Building was made possible by the prosperity of the era and the town's railroad connections via the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad (later known as the Cedar Rapids & Sioux Falls Branch of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad), which made building materials, such as the pressed brick and cast-iron architectural elements featured on the building easy to procure. The Kerr Building also reflects the history of the Grundy Center business community. Built by Daniel Kerr, early Grundy County pioneer and Grundy Center's first mayor, the building was the location of the City Bakery from 1900 to 1920. Afterward, it was the longtime location of the popular Grundy Cafe, which operated in the Kerr Building from 1922 to 1970.

The building is also a good example of a Property Type III Main Street Commercial Building, according to typologies set forth in the National Register Multiple Property Document, *Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture* (Nash 2002). "These buildings date from the succeeding years of a town's commercial growth, with Iowa's commercial districts typically reaching a peak in the very late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The

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impact of the railroad was reflected in the continued building up of the platted commercial district. Type III buildings are typically multi-story in height and can contain anywhere from one to a number of actual store units. Large block buildings were constructed during this period, with store units often unified along the second floor by a shared façade, cornice, and other details. Type III buildings are most often of masonry construction, usually brick either locally manufactured or shipped in by rail. Many display stylish architectural features like the Kerr Building, an Italianate-style brick block with architectural embellishments confined mainly in the upper story, including tall narrow arched windows, and a bracketed pressed metal cornice with a central pediment that reads "KERR." Although the storefront has been remodeled a number of times, the tops of the decorative end posts are extant, the store lintel with rosettes is intact, and a ghost sign reading "GRUNDY CAFE" is visible above. More storefront details, such as the transom, may be extant beneath coverups.

The period of significance is 1900-1963, from the year the Kerr Building was completed to the end of the period of significance for the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District (see Iowa Site Form No. 38-00318).

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

- "City Bakery Business Sold to Cash and Carry," *Grundy Republican*, August 26, 1920.  
Downtown Revitalization Survey/Iowa Site Inventory Forms, February 2018.  
"Eels Gets Merchants Cafe," *Grundy County Dispatch*, July 6, 1921.  
"Fellers Observe 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary," *Grundy Register*, January 29, 1976.  
"Grundy Cafe Will Be Closed for Last Time December 24<sup>th</sup>," *Grundy Register*, December 10, 1970.  
*Grundy Republican*, August 23, 1900.  
Kerr, William G., contributor. "Grundy Center's First Settler in 1855," *Grundy Register Centennial Edition*, July 7, 1977.  
Nash, Jan Olive. *Iowa's Main Street Commercial Architecture*. Multiple Property Document, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C., 2002.  
"Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District," Iowa Site Inventory Form No. 38-00318, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, June 2018.  
Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, Grundy Center, Grundy County, Iowa, 1894, 1902, 1911, 1916, 1928, and 1928, updated to 1939.  
"The City Bakery," *Grundy Republican*, November 8, 1900.  
"The Grundy Cafe," *Grundy Republican*, July 27, 1922.

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**Continuation Sheet**

Site Number: 38-00327  
Related District Number:

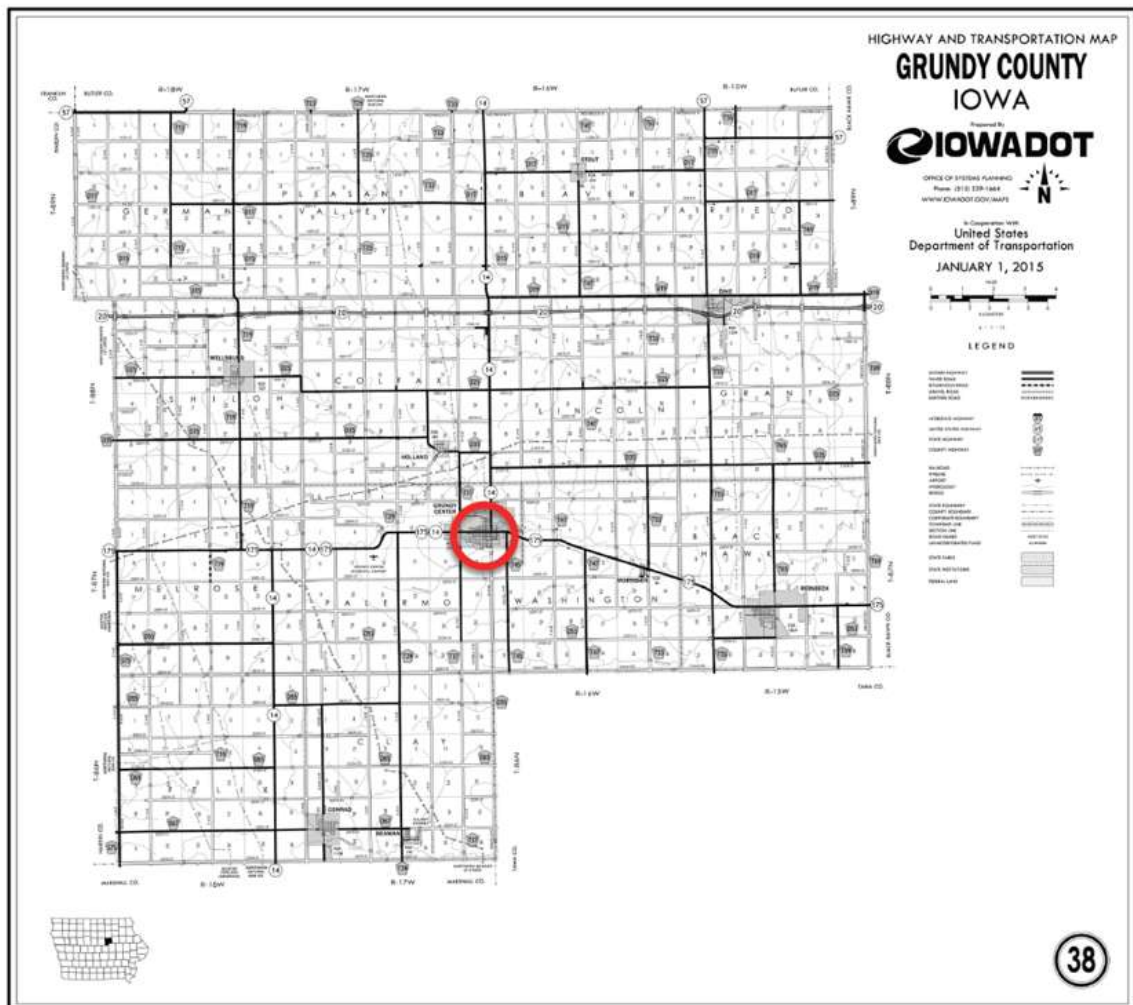
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Kerr Block  
Name of Property  
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County  
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City

**10. Additional Documentation**

**General Location Map**



Latitude: 42.361320  
Longitude: -92.772095

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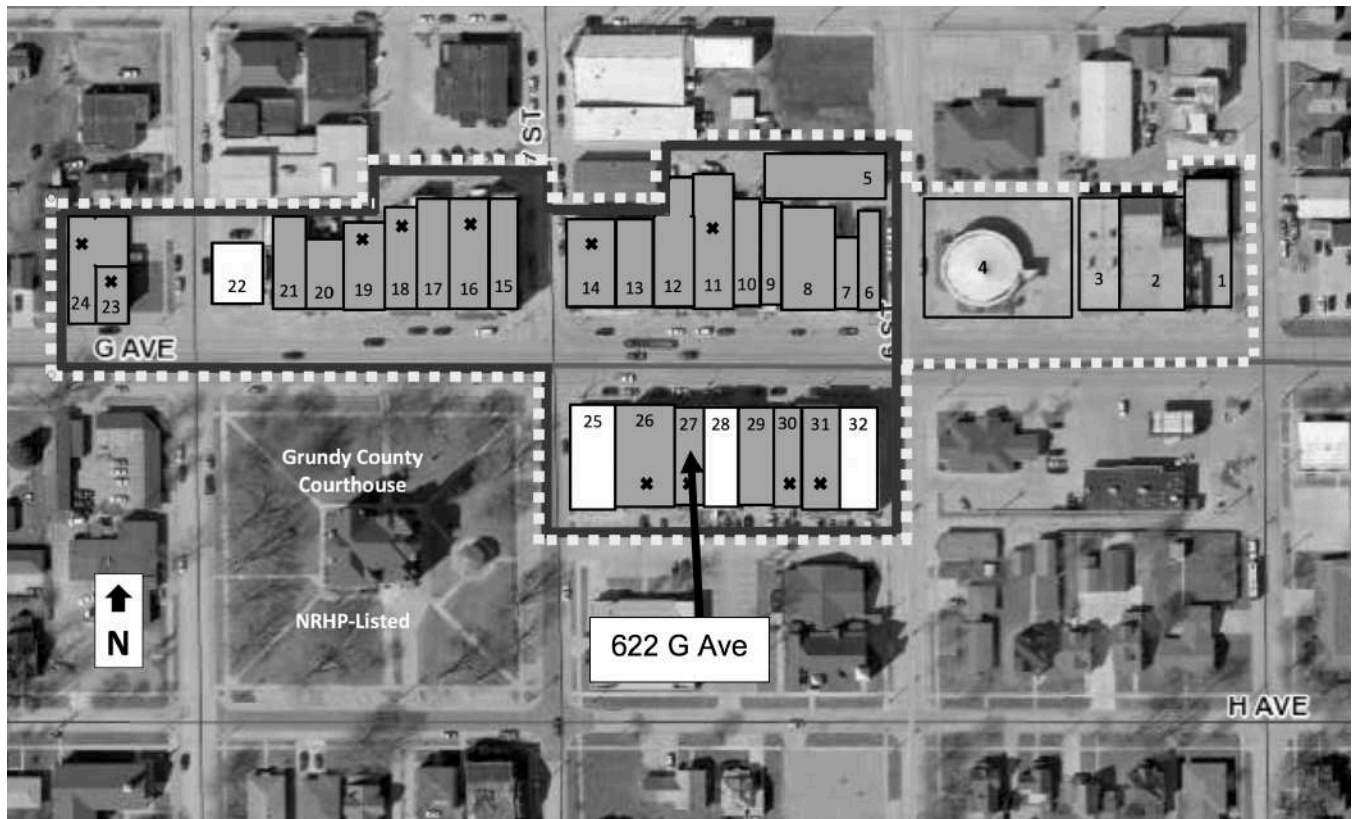
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**Location in Potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District**



(dark boundary = preliminary boundary of potential historic district)

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**Current Photographs**

*(photos by Jennifer A. Price, June 20, 2018)*



View south

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General view southeast

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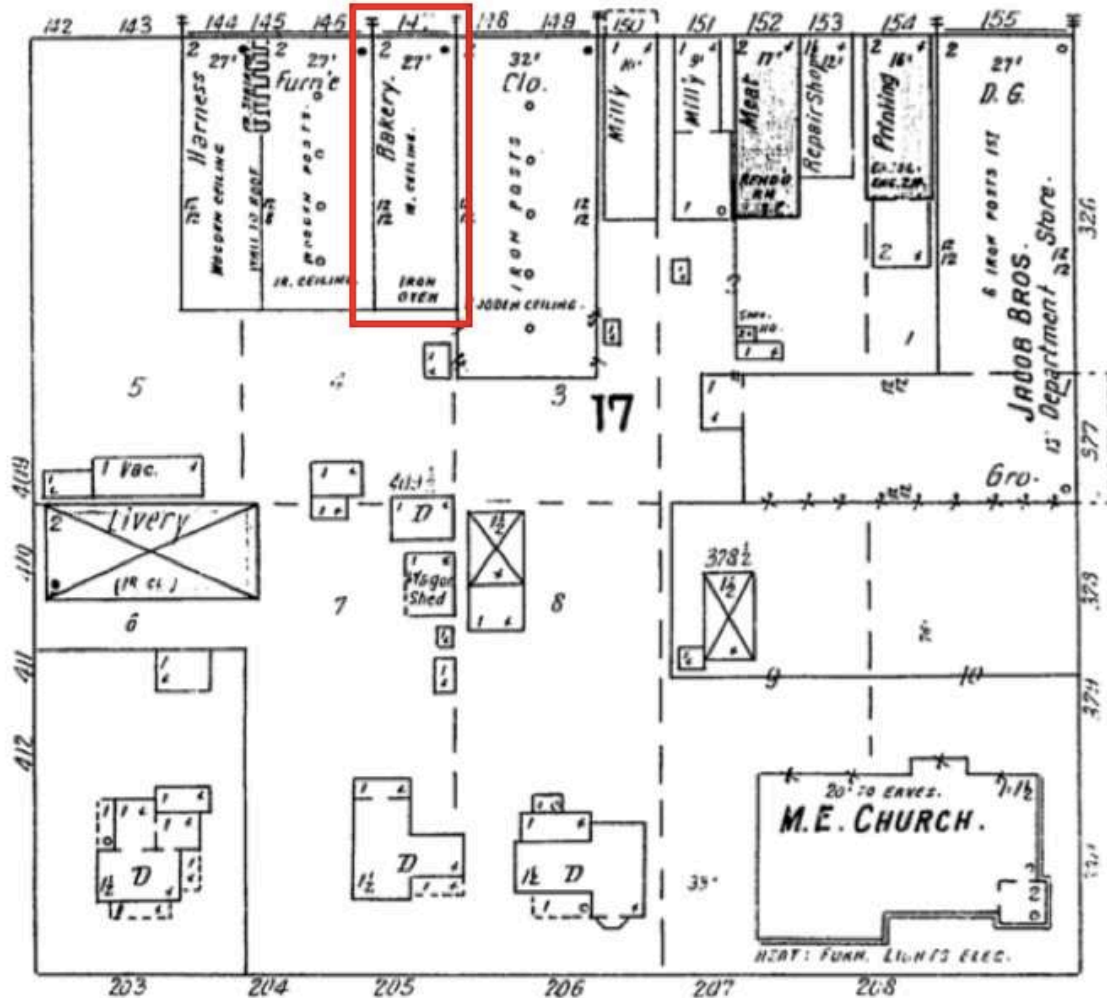
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**Historical Documentation**



Block 17 shown on the 1902 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Grundy Center with Kerr Building indicated

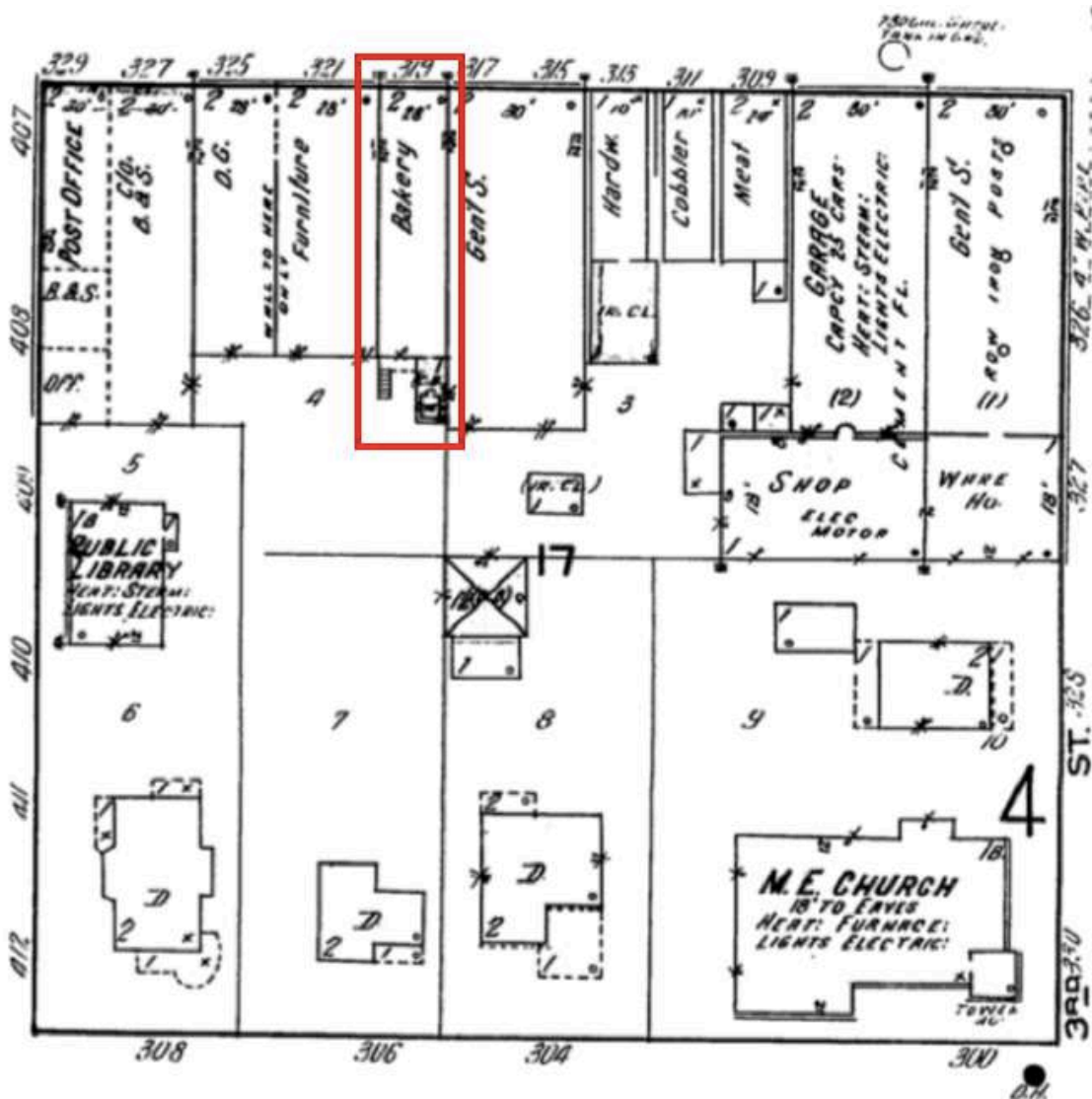
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Block 17 shown on the 1916 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Grundy Center with Kerr Building indicated

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View southwest of Kerr Building (arrow), c.1900  
Source: Grundy County IAGenWeb

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The Kerr building will soon be ready for occupancy. The oven will be put in this week.

Completed in 1900, the Kerr Building's first tenant was the City Bakery  
Source: *Grundy Republican*, August 23, 1900

### THE CITY BAKERY

A much needed industry in Grundy Center for years past was a first-class bakery. Last September Mr. C. E. Durfee, who came from Illinois, opened the "City Bakery" in the Kerr block. Mr. Durfee is an experienced baker and has skilled assistants. He bakes every day light bread, graham bread and all kinds of pies and fancy cakes and rolls, equal in quality to the best made anywhere. He carries in stock fancy groceries, fresh candies, fruits, etc., and also serves light lunches. It is not surprising that the City Bakery is meeting with so much success, as everything is strictly first class and prices are of the most moderate character.

Description of the City Bakery in the Kerr Building  
Source: *Grundy Republican*, November 8, 1900

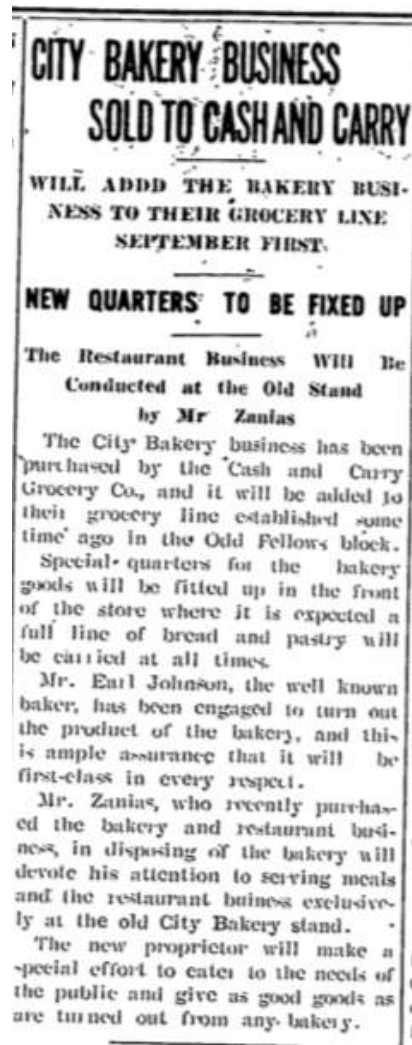
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City Bakery was sold and Merchants Cafe opened, 1920  
Source: *Grundy Republican*, August 26, 1920

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The new restaurant was called Merchants Café, 1921  
Source: Grundy County Dispatch, July 6, 1921

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**The Grundy Cafe**

The Merchants Cafe has been re-named and henceforth will be known as the "Grundy Cafe."

Last week Mr. Boren advertised a prize for a new name for the place and several persons handed in names, but the lucky one was Bob Anderson, of the Empress Theatre, who was awarded the box of candy for selecting a name deemed most appropriate by the proprietor of the cafe.

Merchants Café renamed Grundy Cafe after contest in 1922  
Source: *Grundy Republican*, July 27, 1922

Move Cuts Ranks of Restaurants . . .

## Grundy Cafe Will Be Closed For Last Time December 24th

The Grundy Cafe, popular downtown Grundy Center restaurant and the largest eating establishment in the city, will close for the last time on Christmas Eve — Thursday, December 24.

Owner Joe Hulne announced this week he does not plan to reopen the cafe after the holiday, and will sell the fixtures and equipment at public auction January 4.

The closing comes a month earlier than expected, since Hulne does not have to give up his lease until February 1. The building will be used in the expansion of Feller's Store, a project that has been in the making for several

months.

Hulne said his personal plans are "indefinite" — though he indicated he is considering opening a new restaurant at another location in the city.

The Grundy Cafe was nearly closed last June by then owner Mrs. Ivadel Meester. It was then that Hulne took over the business, and obtained a temporary extension on the lease to February.

Prior to that he operated Hulne's Maid Rite here for a number of years.

The closing of the Grundy Cafe will cut the ranks of Grundy Center's year-around eating establishments to just two — Zeno's Pizzeria at 717 G Avenue and Betty's Cafe at 606 7th Street.

Grundy Cafe remained in business until 1970  
Source: *Grundy Register*, December 10, 1970

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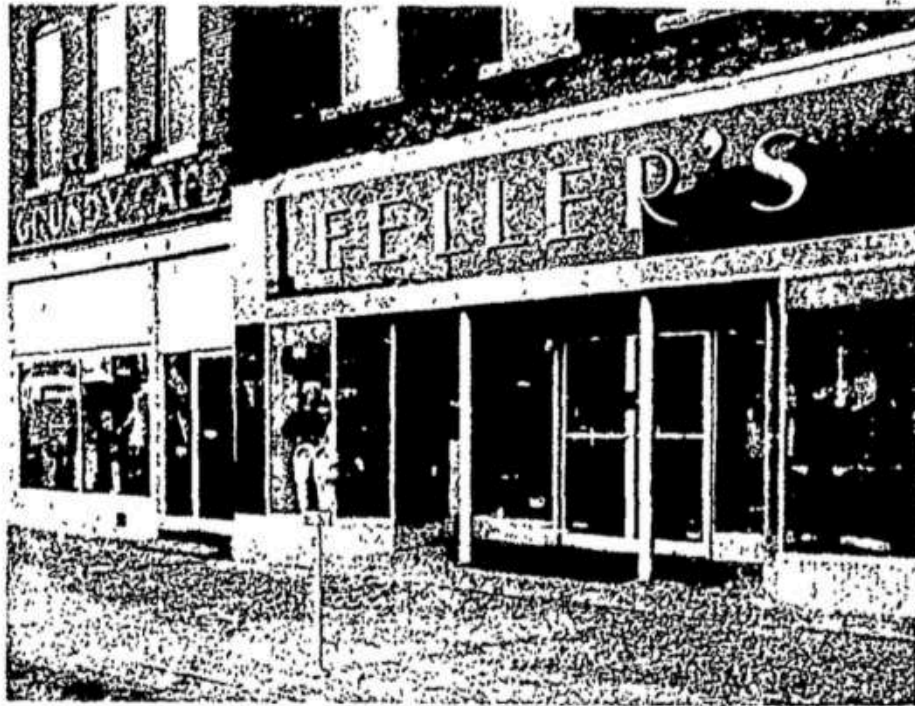
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**Fellers Observe 30th Anniversary**



Warren Feller is observing the 30th anniversary of their store in Grundy Center, with a special celebration Friday and Saturday. See full page advertisement of many anniversary gifts to be presented. Thirty years ago Warren Feller opened his Variety Store in Grundy Center, having purchased the store from Fred Bloxham. Modern fixtures and counters were installed, and the store was enlarged to almost double its former size a few years ago when the former Grundy Cafe building was purchased and consolidated into the Feller store.

In the early 1970s, the Feller Store expanded east into the Grundy Cafe space in the Kerr Building

Source: *Grundy Register*, January 29, 1976