

# Iowa Site Inventory Form

State Historic Preservation Office

(January 2016)

State Inventory Number: 38-00345  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: First National Bank Block

B) Other names: \_\_\_\_\_

• **Location**

A) Street address: 701 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: O.P. Block(s): 25 Lot(s): Part of 10

• **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:		If non-eligible property, enter number of:	
Contributing	Noncontributing		
<u>1</u>	Buildings	—	Buildings
—	Sites	—	Sites
—	Structures	—	Structures
—	Objects	—	Objects
<u>1</u>	<b>Total</b>	—	<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: Grundy Center Commercial Historic District Historic district site inventory number: 38-00318

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

MPD title

Historical Architectural Data Base #

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

A) **Historic functions**

02D02 COMMERCE/TRADE/bank

02B03 COMMERCE/TRADE/law office

02E COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

B) **Current functions**

70 VACANT/NOT IN USE

• **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 STONE/limestone

Walls (visible exterior): 03 BRICK

Roof: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

• **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. [X] Yes [ ] No [ ] More research recommended
Criterion B: Property is associated with the lives of significant persons. [ ] Yes [X] No [ ] More research recommended
Criterion C: Property has distinctive architectural characteristics. [X] Yes [ ] No [ ] More research recommended
Criterion D: Property yields significant information in archaeology/history. [ ] Yes [X] 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

02 ARCHITECTURE

05 COMMERCE

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

1885-1963

**E) Significant dates**

Construction date

1885 [ ] 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** [X] SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED

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

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

Table with 8 columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, NAD, Zone, Easting, Northing, NAD. Rows 1, 2, 3, 4.

• **Form Preparation**

Name and Title: Alexa McDowell/Architectural Historian Date: May 5, 2020

Organization/firm: AKAY Consulting E-mail: alexa@akayconsulting.com

Street address: 4252 Oakland Avenue Telephone: 515-491-5432

City or Town: Minneapolis State: IA Zip code: 55407

• **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:

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First National Bank Block	Grundy
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Address	City

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**Property Description**

The 1885 First National Bank Block is located on the northwest corner of G Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street directly north of the courthouse square. The building is the easternmost building on this block of contiguously located commercial buildings, which are representative of a variety of construction dates and architectural styles, spanning from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.

The building is a single bay, two-story brick building with a southeast facing façade. The 21- by 122-ft. building stretches north from G Avenue to the alley. The building character is defined by its long and narrow form, red brick finish, raised limestone foundation, corner entrance, abundance of windows, and Late Victorian design character, including a heavy cornice.

The bank building is rectangular in form with the southeast corner clipped. Along with the building's construction on a raised basement, the clipped corner was a device used by the builder to elevate the importance of the new bank building. By establishing the corner entrance, which was elevated from the street, the builder created a dynamic entrance which differentiated this building from the others along the streetscape.

The building is comprised of two primary sections, which are differentiated by the orientation and detail of the cornice. As noted the clipped corner marks the primary entrance; the cornice mirrors that form to establish the primary section of the building. At the rear of the east elevation, the cornice is pitched to mark the secondary entrances. Aside from the change in the cornice, the elements and finishes are consistent across the entire building

The building is red brick on a raised limestone foundation. The limestone is rock-faced with a smooth water-table marking the transition to the upper walls. The body of the building is finished in a smooth-faced, red brick with no significant variation in color. All window and door openings except those associated with the bank storefront have limestone lintels (a single block with an incised circle at center) and limestone sills. Decorative brick is limited to the upper wall, creating part of the building cornice. The brick is corbeled in a notched pattern. A heavy wood or metal cornice caps the building. The cornice is comprised of large brackets aligned with the structural piers, a deep molded overhang, smaller decorative brackets, and an alternating sawtooth pattern. The building's construction date "1885" is located on the northeast corner, over the primary entrance. As noted, the cornice is pitched over the rear (north) section of the building; it is otherwise a match to the remaining cornice.

The primary entrance is, as noted, defined by its corner location. Facing southeast, the entrance is reached by way of four, poured concrete steps with tubular steel handrails on either side (recent replacement of historic stone steps). The entrance is framed by brick piers that rise to the underside of the building cornice. The original entrance opening is retained, though the door has been replaced; a single-leaf with one side-light and narrow transom (all set in a steel frame) and an oversized transom inserted to fill the original opening (see historic images, Figures 01-03). The south-facing portion of the bank storefront is flanked by a brick pier that terminates at the storefront cornice on the east and the adjacent building on the west.

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This narrow wall plane is occupied by a paired window surmounted by a single transom. The opening for this configuration is original to the building, though the window and oversized transom are later replacements. The display window has a limestone sill and a brick bulkhead between the sill and the limestone water-table. A narrow, iron column separates this arrangement from the west portion of the storefront. The column has a simple, raised arrowhead pattern in the lower section and a single molded capital with a rosette. Historically, a door to the upper story was located in the opening now blocked; the oversized transom is also a later replacement. The opening retains a limestone sill. The east-facing portion of the bank storefront is similar to that described in that the original opening is retained but has been filled by a fixed display window and oversized transom; the limestone sill is likewise retained. The entire storefront is terminated by a cornice comprised of decorative block-like capitals (angular in shape with a simple molding) attached to the framing piers (the block over the former doorway on the south elevation is missing). A narrow sign board runs between the capitals with a simple, molded overhanging eave to terminate the storefront cornice. The sign board is painted to read “Exchange Building Mercantile Grundy Center”.

The remainder of the first story (from the corner storefront to the north end of the east elevation) is dominated by tall and narrow openings. As noted, all openings retain limestone lintels and sills. Further, all sport replacement windows or doors with the infill configured to fill the original opening; the use of oversized transoms is consistent across the first story. Window openings are typically set in pairs, except where related to entrances. Three door openings are located on the first story, in the north half of the east elevation; all are reached by way of an extended, raised, cast concrete platform with steps on the north and the south. A tubular-steel railing extends along the east edge of the platform and down both sets of stairs. The arrangement of openings adjacent to the platform is (from south to north): a doorway, three windows, a doorway, one window, a doorway. All openings are proportionate – tall and narrow and align with windows on the second floor. The remainder of the elevation has two sets of paired windows.

The upper story is generally consistent across all elevations; second floor openings align with the first-floor openings; all original windows have been replaced; infill is undersized from the historic; and a number of openings incorporate oversized transoms to help fill the original opening. On the second story of the north section (marked by the pitched cornice), window openings are about one-foot shorter than the remainder of the second story windows; the limestone sills align across the elevation, with the lintels setting lower.

The raised basement is punctuated by window openings on the south and on the east elevations. Doors are located at the south end of the east elevation and at the north end of the east elevation; those locations are protected by tubular steel railings.

On the whole, the First National Bank Block retains a very good level of historic integrity and stands as one of the most significant in the Grundy Center downtown commercial area.

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**Statement of Significance**

As established in the district site form, “the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District is locally significant and eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The potential historic district represents two phases of development. The first phase is associated with Grundy Center’s development as the Grundy County seat of government, an important agricultural market town, and a station and shipping point on the Cedar Rapids & Sioux Falls Branch of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad from the 1879 to c.1920. The second phase of development represents Grundy Center’s adaptation to the automobile, particularly after the route of State Highway 14 routed along G Avenue in 1920 and was paved in 1931, and with the post-World War II modernization and building boom, which gained steam in the late 1940s and culminated in 1963 with the Frederick Furniture front remodel” (Price, 2018).

As stated in the 2018 document, “the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District displays the building types and architectural details of a cohesive historic district that developed in two phases, from 1879, just after the fire in the 700 block on the north side of G Avenue to c.1920 and from the 1940s to the mid-1960s. The potential district, therefore, exhibits the characteristics, building types, and architectural styles of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century commercial district, mixed with mid-twentieth-century commercial buildings and historic front remodels” (Price, 2018).

Following these established guidelines for evaluating eligibility, the First National Bank Block was evaluated for its ability to contribute to the significance of the historic district under Criterion A, in association with what the 2018 evaluation identified as “Early Development and the Impact of the Railroad on Town Development, 1855-1910s” and/or under Criterion C as a resource that demonstrates the “characteristics, building types, and architectural styles of a late-nineteenth and early-twentieth-century commercial district.” With a construction date of 1885, the First National Bank Block is tied to the early era of commercial development, contributing to our understanding of the community’s commercial evolution. As a result, the First National Bank Block is counted a contributing resource to the potential historic district under Criterion A.

In addition, First National Bank Block is significant under Criterion C. The resource retains a very good level of historic integrity and remains a significant representative of the Late Victorian design executed in a commercial building.

The period of significance for the potential Grundy Center Commercial Historic District has been preliminarily established as 1879 to 1963, from the year the Central Block was built right after the 1879 fire, to 1963, the year that Frederick Furniture remodeled their façade, the culmination of the post-World War II commercial district building boom (Price, 2018). Constructed in 1885, the First National Block fits firmly within that period of significance.

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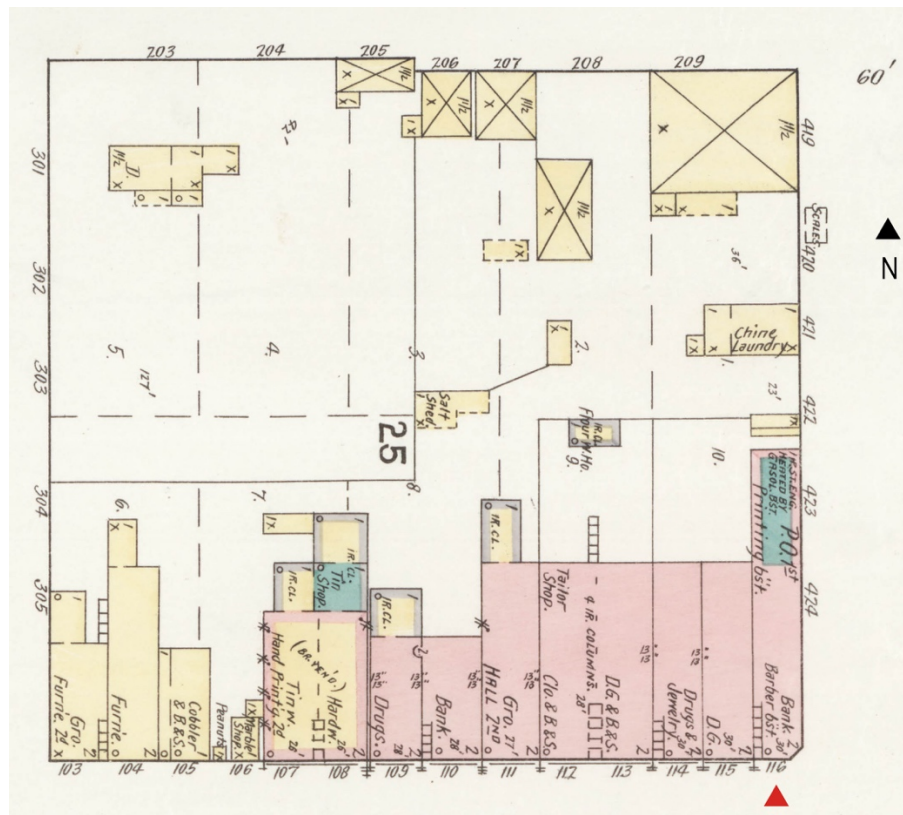
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**Historical Background**

The city's street numbering system evolved as the town grew. The 1894 fire insurance map notes that the primary east-west roadway was Main Street (now G Avenue) with north-south streets numbered Fourth Street (now 7th Street), Third Street (now 6th Street), and Second Street (now 5th Street). The method of numbering buildings was also revised, with changes made between issuance of the 1902 and 1911 fire insurance maps and again between the 1916 and 1928 fire insurance maps. By 1928 the present system of street names and building numbers was in place.

The lot upon which the First National Bank Block is sited was developed before the current structure was constructed. In 1877 Dr. E.A. Crouse, along with W.C. Williams and C.C. Schuler, constructed a two-story wood frame building that was the Grundy County Bank. That building adjoined the two-story building directly west, the Sargent Brothers Store. The centennial history notes that, in 1885, to accommodate construction of a new, two-story brick building, the wood-frame building was moved out into the street. That record seems to contradict the 2018 district evaluation, which notes that all of the buildings in the 700-block facing the courthouse square were destroyed in the January 1879 fire and all were subsequently replaced by the Italianate commercial buildings that define that block.

**Figure 01.** Fire Insurance Map – 1894



(Library of Congress Sanborn Map Collection. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/?fa=location:iowa>. Retrieved 03/15/2019.)

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First National Bank was constructed in 1885. The new building was occupied by the bank as well as, by 1894, the post office, with the basement occupied by a barber and a printing shop. The 1894 fire insurance notes that a gasoline engine was located in the basement to provide heat for the building; the space housing the engine was iron clad. The businesses occupying the First National Bank Block remained largely unchanged through the early 1900's; the only significant change that was recorded on the fire insurance map was the change from gasoline heat to electric heat in 1916. In 1930 the Grundy County Bank and First National Bank merged and occupied the building as one bank, First Trust and Savings Bank.

The centennial history places another bank in the First National Bank Block in 1934 - Farmers Savings Bank occupied the first floor; Parkhurst and Dieken Insurance was also in the building, perhaps in the second-floor space. For the first time in 1951 the First National Bank Block was occupied by a business other than a bank: Beu and Sons and Beu Limestone Company, Contractors Lime, Sand and Rock. For the next 11 years, the building was home to a materials company.

In 1962 First National Bank Block became occupied by an attorney, Carroll Engelkes, and from 1963-1976 the centennial history reports that Don Kliebenstein operated his law offices out of this site as well. When the initial district evaluation of Grundy Center's downtown district potential was completed, it was recorded that the site was vacant and remains vacant in the fall of 2019. There is no occupancy cataloged between the publication of the centennial history and the initial evaluation (1977-2014).

**Table 01: Occupancy Table**

Year	Business	Source	Notes
1877-1885	Grundy County Bank	Centennial	Built by Dr. E. A. Crouse, W.C. Williams, C.C. Schuler
1885	First National Bank	Centennial	Built by Dr. E. A. Crouse; Grundy County Bank building was moved elsewhere
1892	Assessor recorded construction date	Assessor	Construction date conflicts with other sources
1894	Bank, Post Office, Barber, Printing Shop	Sanborn	Address noted as 116
1902	Bank, Post Office, Barber, Printing Shop	Sanborn	
1911	Bank and Printing Shop	Sanborn	Address noted as 400
1916	Bank and Printing Shop	Sanborn	
1930	First Trust and Savings	Centennial	Grundy County Bank and First National merger
1934	Farmers Savings Bank and Parkhurst and Dieken Insurance	Centennial	
1939	Bank, Office, Printing Shop	Sanborn	Address change to 701
1951	Beu and Sons and Beu Limestone Company, Contractors Lime, Sand and Rock	Centennial	

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1960	Concrete Materials Company, Lime, Sand, and Rock	Centennial	
1962	Carroll Engelkes, Attorney	Centennial	
1963	Don Kliebenstein Law Office	Centennial	
1964	Don Kliebenstein and T.J. Heronimus	Centennial	
1976	Kliebenstein, Heronimus, and Schmidt	Centennial	
2014	Schuck Realty Co	Previous District Evaluation	Notes construction date at 1885
2017	Vacant	2017 Photographs	
2019	Vacant	2019 Photographs	

Early Development and the Impact of the Railroad on Town Development, 1855-1900s

The following paragraphs are excerpted from Price’s 2018 survey and evaluation of the potential historic district, which provide the historical context for evaluating resources constructed during the period from 1855-1900s.

The town of Grundy Center was platted more than two decades before the railroad arrived. In 1855, Thomas G. Copp became the town’s first resident. According to William G. Kerr’s historical account of the town’s founding and early development in the Grundy Register Centennial Edition, after a long trek across the central Iowa prairie in search of a new home.

The second resident was John Overdear. Together, Copp and Overdear made the first town plat of Grundy Center in 1856. The original plat of Grundy Center contained 35 blocks, with Block 18 at the center dedicated to a public square and the site for the proposed county courthouse. The east-west avenues were Pine, Maple, Main, Chestnut, Elm, and Locust. The north-south streets were First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth. (All avenue names were changed to letters of the alphabet in the mid-twentieth century – Main Street became G Avenue – and the numbered streets were renumbered beginning further east in newer additions). The commercial district developed east and north of the public square, in Blocks 17, 24, 25, 26, and 27. In 1857, the first courthouse was constructed. It was a wooden octagon-shaped building known locally as “the cheesebox.” The current courthouse was begun in 1891 and completed in 1893. In 1857, Copp built the town’s first hotel on the northwest corner of the block just east of the courthouse (south side of G Avenue). The town’s first store, built in 1860, was located in that block as well.

Prior to the railroad, the town grew slowly. By 1875, only about a dozen buildings had been erected in Grundy Center on the town lots north and east of the courthouse square. Nearly all of them were one or two-story wood false-front store buildings mixed with a few residences. When Grundy Center incorporated in April 1877, the town had 437 inhabitants. The first town election was held a month later.

Just after Grundy Center’s incorporation, in the fall of 1877, the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad reached the town and citizens planned a celebration. The railroad was built through Grundy Center approximately 6 blocks north of the commercial district, which paralleled Depot Street (today A



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Avenue) in its southeast-northwest trajectory. A building boom had begun that year in anticipation of the railroad. In the spring, C.W. Reynolds erected a frame building, and Daniel Kerr and Charles Campbell began construction on the two-story, double brick veneered Campbell Block. Holt and Beckman put up a two-story frame building for a bank, and Dr. E.A. Crouse, W.C. Williams, and G.C. Shuler built a frame building called the Grundy County Bank. The Sargent Brothers built a two-story building, and R.T. Miller and the Elliott Bros. erected a building known as City Hall Block on the west end of the business district. With so many wood frame commercial buildings built in two years, the Grundy Center business district resembled a railroad boom town.

Development of the current Grundy Center commercial district began in January 1879 with a fire that destroyed all the wood store buildings and the brick-veneered Kerr & Campbell Block in the 700 block just north of the courthouse. Two weeks later, a fire destroyed the City Hall Block. With Grundy Center's new railroad access to building materials not previously available, however, "plans for rebuilding the burned district were soon perfected. Within six years, six Italianate-style brick commercial blocks were built facing the courthouse. These buildings were the Central Block (Bldg #19), built 1879; Commercial Block (Bldg #16), built 1879; H.G. Geer Block (Bldg #18), built 1880; Campbell Block (Bldg #20), built c.1880; Hawkeye Block (Bldg #17), built 1884; and First National Bank Block and Post Office (Bldg #15), built 1885. A few years later, other brick buildings were built in other blocks along G Avenue, notably the Jacobs Bros. Block (Bldg #32), built 1887, and the Queen Anne style Hummel Block (Bldg #14), housing Hummel's Drug Store, built in 1893.

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### **Bibliography**

“Go Walkabout Grundy: The Liberty Tour.” Booklet for the Felix Grundy Festival, 1991. Available at the Grundy County Historical Society Museum.

“Go Walkabout Grundy: The Orion Tour.” Booklet for the Felix Grundy Festival, 1992. Available at the Grundy County Historical Society Museum.

*Grundy Center: A Centennial Portrait, 1977.* Grundy Center, IA: Grundy Center Area Centennial, Inc., 1977.

Price, Jennifer A. “Grundy Center Commercial Historic District.” Iowa Site Inventory Form, 2018.

Grundy County Historical Society Museum. Grundy Center, Iowa.

### Newspapers

*The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette.* “Grundy Center News: Grundy Center experiencing quite a boom in building.” June 09, 1900.

*The Grundy Republican.* “Historical Sketch. Early Days of Grundy County and Grundy Center.” November 11, 1900.

*The Grundy Register.* Diamond Jubilee Edition. Misc. advertisements for local businesses. June 05, 1952.

### Online Resources

Grundy County Assessor. <https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>. Retrieved 03/26/2019.

Library of Congress Sanborn Map Collection. <https://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/?fa=location:iowa>. Retrieved 03/15/2019.

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**Geographic Data**

Latitude/Longitude: NW 42.361988/-92.772774  
NE 42.361988/-92.772688  
SE 42.361644/-92.772688  
SW 42.361944/-92.772774

**Additional Information: Maps**

**01. Assessor's Parcel Map – 2019**



(Source: <https://beacon.schneidercorp.com>. Retrieved 03/20/2019.)

The location of the resource is indicated in YELLOW.  
The building is sited on the east 20-ft. of Lot 10 of Block 25.

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**02. Potential District Boundary Map – 2018**



(Source: Jennifer Price, “Grundy Center Commercial Historic District,” Iowa Site Form, 2018.)

The red outline indicates the proposed district boundaries. The First National Bank Block is noted as building ‘15’.

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**Additional Information: Photographs (06/08/2019)**

01. Streetscape View: Looking NW along G Avenue from 7<sup>th</sup> Street



02. View of façade (south) and east elevation, looking NW across G Avenue and 7<sup>th</sup> Street



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**Additional Information: Historic Images**

**01.** View of the façade, looking NW across G Ave and 7<sup>th</sup> Street – ca.1900



(Source: Grundy Center Historical Society.)

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**02.** View of the façade (south elevation), looking north across G Avenue - ca.1939



(Source: Grundy Center Historical Society.)

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**03.** Streetscape view, looking west along G Avenue from 7<sup>th</sup> Street – ca. 1945



(Source: Grundy Center Historical Society.)