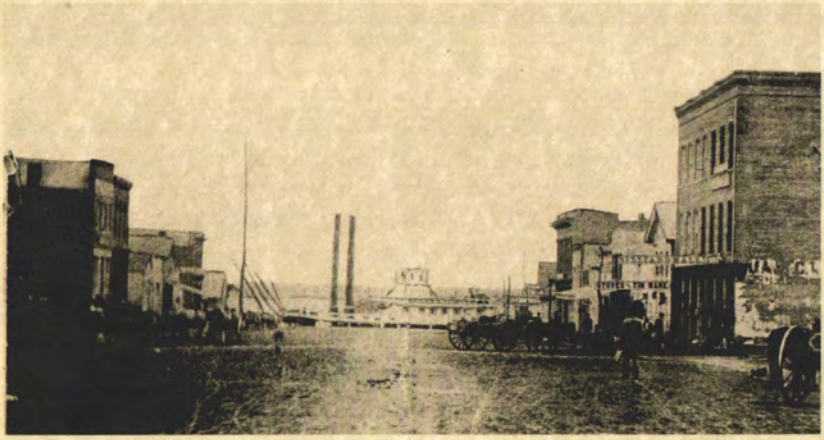
Welcome to Historic Downtown Plattsmouth, Nebraska



Steamboat docked at East end of Main Street, 1870.



Main Street looking East, c. 1890s

A Walking Tour of Main Street

Plattsmouth, Nebraska grew from an unsettled area within the Louisiana Purchase into an important river-centered trading community. Samuel Martin, a pioneering settler familiar with Native American life, helped shape its early development.

In 1853, Martin received permission from the Secretary of War to establish a trading post for the Otoe Indians and westward-bound Mormons. He moved logs from his home in Coonville, Iowa—now Glenwood—and built a sturdy two-story structure at the east end of Main Street. Martin was Plattsmouth's first settler and, on December 15, 1854, became its first recorded death.

On October 26, 1854, Samuel Martin, James O'Neill, J. L. Sharp, C. Nuckolls, Manly Green, and Lafayette Nuckolls formed the Plattsmouth Town Company. The city was mapped, then approved, incorporated, and named the Cass County seat by the Territorial Legislature on March 14, 1855. Plattsmouth is among Nebraska's oldest cities; only four towns were incorporated earlier.

When Plattsmouth was founded in 1855, the river channel reached the foot of Main Street, allowing riverboats to dock nearby. The 1860s became a pivotal decade for the town, as Main Street filled with westbound wagons and travelers debated the best route west.

The South Platte Trail passed through Plattsmouth and was favored by wagon masters because it required fewer tributary crossings than routes north of the Platte River. Local merchants supplied travelers with frontier staples, including flour, salt, bacon, clothing, and ammunition. A regular packet line from St. Louis made daily landings at the dock at the east end of Main Street, just beyond the present railroad tracks.

In 1869, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad laid tracks along the same riverfront. John Fitzgerald contracted the railroad right-of-way west from Plattsmouth to Denver. His building still stands at 6th and Main. At the time Plattsmouth was incorporated, the town had six buildings. Most of the remaining brick buildings were constructed between 1870 and 1900 in the Commercial Italianate style.

After 1900, Neo-Classical Revival architecture became more common. The Historic District lies mainly along the commercial and governmental portion of Main Street in Plattsmouth, Cass County, Nebraska. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in September 1985.

The district consists primarily of two-story Victorian-era masonry commercial buildings, along with a few one- and three-story commercial structures and major city and county government buildings. Its contributing buildings reflect the district's growth through the early twentieth century.



Two of Plattsmouth's first buildings... The Cass County Courthouse (left) and Masonic Lodge (right). 1862 - 1868.



Cass County Courthouse built in 1891.

Set back from Main Street on a broad lawn, the Romanesque Courthouse serves as the district's focal point and rises above the surrounding flat-roofed commercial and civic buildings.

Architectural Evolution

Plattsmouth's earliest buildings were made of log or frame construction, and many were destroyed by fire. Around 1870, brick became the primary building material, with local brickyards and ironworks supplying much of what was needed.

Most Main Street buildings are two-story masonry structures in the Commercial Italianate style, an architectural influence that reached America through England. This style remained common until about 1900, when Neo-Classical Revival architecture began to appear.

Commercial Italianate features include brick or stucco-over-brick facades, bracketed pressed-metal cornices, fluted pilasters, cast-iron columns, and recessed entries. Raised names and dates were often used for identification, and some buildings still display leaded or colored-glass transoms. Decorative pressed-metal hoods, triangular pediments, stone or brick window hoods and sills, and iron balconies added visual interest to the flat rooflines and downtown streetscape.

Over time, many Main Street buildings were modernized, sometimes covering or removing their original architectural features.



First National Bank building

Architectural Evolution of the Gering Business



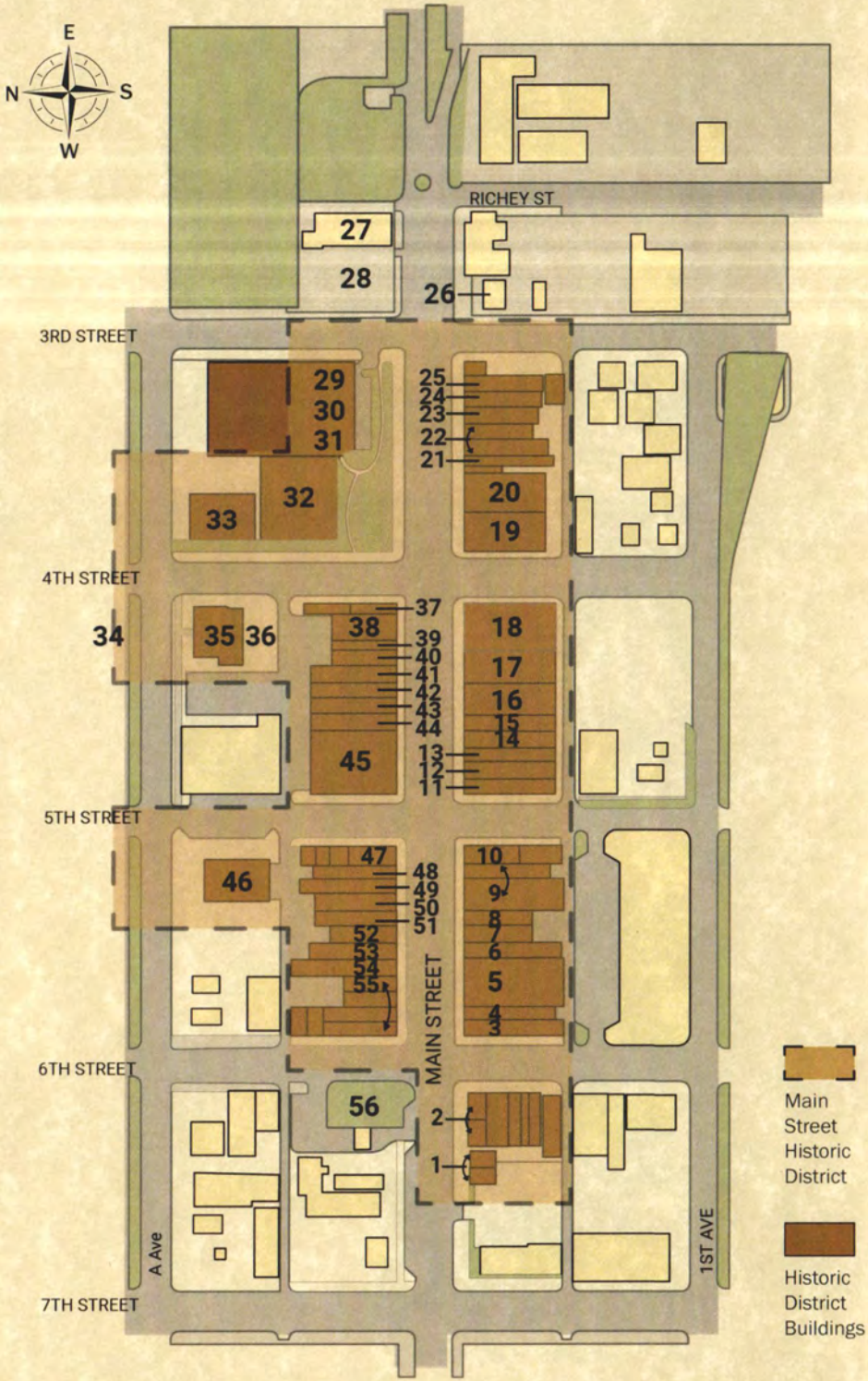
Early Gering & Co. building



Later Gering & Co. building



Modernized Gering & Co. building


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3RD STREET
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6TH STREET
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A Ave
1ST AVE
7TH STREET
Main Street Historic District
Historic District Buildings

Historic Downtown Plattsmouth Walking Tour Guide

600 Block South

1. DOCTORS BUILDING: 617-619 Main Street - 1898

E. A. and W. E. Donelan were the first physicians to settle in Plattsmouth, arriving in the fall of 1858. Dr. R. R. Livingston arrived soon after and practiced until his death in 1888, when his sons, Theodore P. and Stuart, continued the practice. Doctors have occupied these buildings since they were built, and a physician still practices in the west unit today.



Union Block - 6th and Main

2. UNION BLOCK: 6th and Main Street, SW corner - 1881

Citizens Bank occupied the corner location beginning in 1884, and its vault remains in the building. A harness shop once operated in the basement. On 6th Street, next to the bank, the F. G. Fricke Drugstore was run by the same family for 71 years.

500 Block South

3. BOECK BUILDING: 545 Main Street - 1886

Henry Boeck built this structure as a furniture factory and store, while also working as an undertaker. The building featured one of Plattsmouth's first elevators. In 1907, an explosion and fire killed one man and injured another.

4. WHITE BUILDING: 543 Main Street - 1887

Frank S. White operated a dry goods and grocery store here until the 1920s. Beginning in 1940, the Electric Co. occupied the building until recent years.

5. DOVEY BUILDING: 527,533,537 Main Street - 1886

E. G. Dovey came to Plattsmouth from England and opened his first dry goods and grocery store in 1863. He later moved the business to this location and expanded it to include a pork-packing plant in the rear. The site remained a dry goods and grocery business until 1970, when the H. M. Soennichsen Store closed after operating here since 1928. Plattsmouth's first religious meeting was also held in a frame building on this site.

6. PEPPERBERG CIGAR FACTORY: 525 Main Street - 1885

Julius Pepperberg from Warsaw, Poland, came to Plattsmouth in 1869 establishing the city's pioneer



Pepperberg Cigar Factory

cigar factory with $800. He produced hand rolled Pepperberg's Bud's, cigars, which sold for 5 cents. He was the first practical cigar-maker in Plattsmouth hand-crafting his cigars to sell to customers and local merchants. By the turn of the century Plattsmouth had six cigar factories.

7. 521 Main Street - non-contributory building.

8. 517 Main Street - A funeral parlor once occupied the second floor.

9. ROCKWOOD HALL: 505-511 Main Street - 1883
This building was constructed for Emeline P. Rockwood, though the reason is unknown. In 1886, the Young Ladies Reading Room Association rented the second floor for $10 per month, creating the city's first library. The Masons occupied the hall in 1901 and purchased the rest of the building in 1922.

10. CARRUTH/WESCOTT BUILDING: 501 Main Street - 1880
Built for Frank Carruth, a jeweler and photographer, this was one of Plattsmouth's earliest buildings. It also housed a barbershop and bathhouse in the basement. Men's clothier C. E. Wescott moved into the building around 1899, and about 1910 added colored glass windows, ceramic tile in the doorway, and a one-story rear addition. The Wescott family remained in business there until the 1950s.


Rasgorshek Building

11. RASGORSHEK BUILDING: 447 Main Street - c. 1881
John and Gabriel Rasgorshek, originally from Austria, came to Plattsmouth in 1879. They built this building for their business, where they made and sold men's clothing and Stetson hats. A photographer's studio occupied the second floor.

12. LEHNHOFF BUILDING 441 Main Street c. 1880 - Frederick Lehnhoff was a large stockholder of the Plattsmouth Brick & Tile Mfg. Co. and was engaged in various businesses in Plattsmouth. The cast iron trim on this building was made by the Cass County Iron Works. This building has housed several businesses over time including a harness shop, grocery store, men's tailor, and phonograph store.

13. 437 Main Street c. 1883 - Built by LaFayette O'Neill, son of James O'Neill, one of the founders of Plattsmouth. His meat market was the first business in the building. In 1884 a brick addition was added to the rear of the building, and it was occupied by the Gering & Co. drug store. The telephone exchange was on the second floor.

14. WATERMAN BUILDING: 433 Main Street - 1884
H. A. Waterman & Son's lumberyard stood behind this block before 1880. Waterman built this building as an investment, and it housed a grocery store.

15. HATT & MARTHIS BUILDING: 429 Main Street - 1884
A. G. Hatt and John W. Marthis operated a meat market at this location. The business later became Hatt & Son, which added camping and picnic supplies to its offerings in 1913.

16. 421 & 427 Main Street - non-contributory buildings.

17. SOENNICHSEN BUILDING 417 Main Street - 1913
In 1880 Gering & Co., druggists, had a frame building on this site. The present building was constructed in 1913, and its brick facade was likely added around 1930 when it became the Hinky Dinky grocery store.

18. WATERMAN OPERA HOUSE: 401, 409, 419 Main Street - Rebuilt 1882 - 93
The first building on this site was a two-story frame hotel built in the early 1860s. Known as the Platte Valley House, it was gone by 1882.



Waterman Opera House

The next building was originally three stories tall, with a second-floor performance hall designed to seat 1,500 people. After a fire damaged the building in 1892, the third story was removed. In 2014 another fire destroyed the building, and the site is now

300 Block South



Budweiser Building

19. BUDWEISER BUILDING: 339, 341 Main Street - 1888
Built for the Anheuser-Busch Brewing Co. at a cost of $20,000, this building housed a saloon and wholesale liquor business on the first floor. The second floor contained a YMCA reading room and a cigar factory.

20. WETENKAMP BLOCK: 337 Main Street - 1890
Several businesses occupied this building in its early years, but none remained for long.

21. VIENNA BAKERY: 329 Main Street - 1881
Built for William Stadelman, the building first housed William Holtschneider's bakery, which sold baked goods and ice cream. In the 1940s and 1950s, a duckpin bowling alley became a popular business there.

22. DREW/WECKBACH BLOCK: 317, 321, 325 Main Street - 1881-1886
Joseph V. Weckbach came to Plattsmouth in 1865, first working as a blacksmith before entering the grocery trade. With support from local lawyer Bryon F. Drew, the east two-thirds of the building was completed in 1881. By 1886, Weckbach had expanded into dry goods and added the west third in a matching style.

23. EXCELSIOR BUILDING: 313 Main Street - 1884
Brothers J. C. and R. Peterson came to Plattsmouth in 1882. They established and operated a prominent butcher and meat market business at this location until 1927 when the business passed to M.L. Johnson and Russell Chase.

24. 309 Main Street - Non-contributory building.

25. BLAKE BUILDING: 305 Main Street - 1883
John Blake, owner of a local saloon, had this building constructed. Its first tenant was clothier Ben Elson. In 1897, J. V. Egenberger opened his coal, wood, and feed store to the east. Before 1940, the building became John Cloidt's service station, a business that remained there for more than 30 years.

200 Block South

26. 3rd and Main -Southeast corner – The firm Tootle, Hanna & Co. established the Tootle & Hanna general store which was one of the first major commercial operations in Plattsmouth. This site also served as the first private bank in Plattsmouth, managed by Tootle and Hanna in their general store, the bank operated from 1859 to 1872 when it was purchased by the First National Bank.

200 Block North

27. OLD BARRACKS: Samuel Martin built the original log structure on this site in 1853 for use as a trading post. W. Herrold built the present building in 1864, and it still contains caves cut into the hillside.

28. 3rd and Main - Northeast corner - Site of the Perkins Hotel, built in 1881 by F. R. Guthman. The three-story hotel cost $30,000 and contained 50 rooms.



Perkins House or Hotel

Although many of Plattsmouth's earliest buildings on this block are gone and the area is not listed on the National Register, it remains an important reminder of the city's rich history lost over time.

300 Block North

29. CITY HOTEL - 302 Main Street - 1882



Gorder Building

The Nebraska House, the first building on this corner, was built in 1856 for the Town Company by Wheatley Mickelwaite, Plattsmouth's first postmaster and mayor. The frame building was destroyed by fire in 1882 and replaced with a brick structure. That building was demolished in 2000 to make way for the new Cass County Law Enforcement Center.

30. GORDER BUILDING: 312 Main Street - 1881

Frederick Gorder operated the Grain & Stock Co., which sold agricultural implements. In 1912, he was the local dealer for the Brush automobile, priced at $350. The building was demolished in 2000 and replaced by the Cass County Law Enforcement Center.

31. This site once held two of Plattsmouth's oldest buildings. The original Cass County Courthouse, built in 1862, was a two-story frame structure on the west half of the lot, while the Masonic Lodge occupied a one-story building on the east half. Both were removed and replaced by a brick building in the 1880s, which was demolished before 2000.

32. CASS COUNTY COURTHOUSE: 346 Main Street - 1892

On April 27, 1891, Plattsmouth gave the alley in Block 30 to Cass County to build the Cass County Courthouse. Built in the Romanesque County Capitol style, this iconic courthouse has a 135-foot central tower. The first county election was held April 10, 1855.



Cass County Courthouse

33. CASS COUNTY JAIL: North 4th Street - 1914
The first jail, built in 1865, stood on 1st Avenue near South 3rd Street and remained in use until this building was completed in 1914. New jail offices were added in 1974. A new Law Enforcement building stands east of this facility.



Original City Library

34. YOUNG LADIES READING ROOM: 4th & Avenue A; Northwest comer - 1901
Founded in 1885, by a group of 20 local women, this organization established the city's first circulating library. The Parmele family donated the site to the city, and many local merchants contributed to the building's construction. The library remained here until a new library was built across the street; the building was then sold and converted into a residence.


City Library

35. CITY LIBRARY - 4th & Avenue A; Southwest comer - 1916
Like many buildings constructed after 1900, this library was designed in the Neo-Classical Revival style. Andrew Carnegie donated $12,500 to the city, provided it set aside $1,250 each year to operate the library. Olive Jones, the first librarian, served for 54 years before retiring in 1940.

36. The parking lot behind the library was once the site of a pre-1885 frame building. Over the years, it served as a store, offices, and a residence surviving into the early 1990s.

400 Block North

37. GUND BUILDING: 402 Main Street - 1901
Built by the John Gund Brewing Company of La Crosse, Wisconsin, for local distributor Edward Donat, this Neo-Classical Revival building remains largely intact. Above the entrance is a terra-cotta ornament showing Gambrinus, King of Beer, enjoying a glass of the house specialty.

38. JOURNAL BUILDING: 410 Main - Non-contributory Although this building is new, the Plattsmouth Journal began publication on November 5, 1881. Over the years, the newspaper occupied several locations, including one across the street.

39. 416 Main Street - Non-contributory building.

40. 422 Main Street - Non-contributory building.

41. 426 Main Street - Non-contributory building.

42. STADELMAN BUILDING: 430 Main Street - 1890
Built for William Stadelman by W. H. Pickens, this elegant building first housed a jewelry store. William Barclay later opened a restaurant here, followed by the Jacobs family from 1936 to 1945. Like the Barclays before them, the Jacobs family lived upstairs.


430 Main Street

43. 436 Main Street - 1881 Levi Golding built and operated the "Great Red Store." Later, Dr. Golding, a chiropractor, joined Byron Golding in operating a variety store.

44. 438 Main Street Local undertaker J. I. Unruh ran a furniture store here. Around 1900, William Schmidtmann moved his harness shop to the building from down the street. As the business grew into an appliance and hardware store, Schmidtmann modernized the storefront around 1920 and added decorative glass.


Bank of Cass County

45. BANK OF CASS COUNTY: 446 Main Street - 1886
This building originally housed a bank and law office. Organized in 1904, Plattsmouth State Bank was then located at 6th and Main in the Fitzgerald Building. A major remodel in the mid-1960s made this building ineligible for the National Register. In 2002, the adjacent Golding and Schmidtmann buildings were demolished for the bank's expansion, but their facades were saved and incorporated into the new bank. In 2026, the buildingwas converted to county offices.

500 Block North


City Hall

46. CITY HALL: 5th Street & Avenue A - 1911
Built as the Post Office, this Neo-Classical Revival building served that role until 1967, when a new post office opened at 9th Street and Washington Avenue. The City of Plattsmouth later acquired and remodeled it for city offices and the police department. A city jail was in the basement.

47. SHERWOOD 1 BUILDING: 502 Main Street - 1883
Robert Sherwood, a trained shoemaker from England, came to Plattsmouth in 1871. After working for others for four years, he opened his own business in a frame building on this site. Fire later destroyed that structure, and this brick building replaced it. Sherwood continued operating his business here until the late 1890s.

48. FARMERS STATE BANK: 506 Main Street - 1927
After 1921, the previous building—part of the Sherwood Block and occupied by W. E. Rosencrans Real Estate—was destroyed. In 1927, Farmers State Bank built this new structure on the site.

49. HEROLD BUILDING: 510 Main Street - 1885
In the 1870s, this was the site of the Brooks Hotel. During the 1880s and 1890s, William Herold operated a dry goods store here. In 1908, First National Bank moved into the west half and replaced the facade with an imposing design featuring Roman and hybrid details.

50. FIRST NATIONAL BANK: 516 Main Street - 1880 C. G. Herold operated a clothing store here, and his family lived upstairs. In 1908, the building was remodeled by First National Bank.



First National Bank

51. Merges/**V.V. LEONARD BUILDING: 518 Main Street - 1885-1888**
After a fire in the early 1880s, boot and shoe dealer Peter Merges and photographer V. V. Leonard rebuilt on this site. Leonard, a photographer and artist, came to Plattsmouth in 1869 and worked from several locations before constructing this building. His skylit studio was on the second floor, and he remained in business here until at least 1913.

52. UNKNOWN BUILDING: 522 Main Street - 1885 No information available.

53. SHERWOOD 2 BUILDING: 526 Main Street - 1899
Bearing the Sherwood name, Robert Sherwood and Son's shoe store moved into their new building in 1899. At the grand opening of the store "each visitor received a souvenir - ladies a neat little picture and the gentlemen a fan".

54. WEBER BUILDING: 530 Main Street - 1893
Built as a bottling works company, this building reflected William Weber's hope of profiting from the soft drink business. By 1899, a saloon occupied the building, suggesting that soft drinks were not as popular as he had expected.

55. FITZGERALD BLOCK: 534-546 Main Street - 1870

In 1869, John Fitzgerald came to Plattsmouth to oversee construction of the railroad roadbed from here to Kearney. When this building was completed in 1870, it was the largest in Plattsmouth. The first floor housed First National Bank, where Fitzgerald served as president, along with two storefronts. Offices occupied the second floor, and a large third-floor hall was used for meetings and dances.

The roof cornices were made in Chicago and brought to Plattsmouth by rail. Renovation began in the late 1980s, with efforts to preserve the remaining original exterior features.



Fitzgerald Block

600 Block North

56. RILEY HOTEL SITE: 1890 and PARMELE THEATRE SITE - 1900

The Riley Hotel was an imposing three-story brick-and-stone building considered one of the city's finest hotels. Just west of it, the Parmele Theatre hosted leading road shows and plays. A two-story frame building was moved from the site to 6th Street and 1st Avenue to make room for construction. Both buildings were destroyed by fire in June 1961, a major loss for the city.



Riley Hotel

Ghosts of the Past

Plattsmouth's historic downtown is shaped not only by the buildings that remain, but also by those that have disappeared. Fires, floods, changing businesses, new construction, and the needs of a growing community have erased many early landmarks from the streetscape. These lost buildings are relics of the past—remembered through photographs, maps, and stories that help preserve the city's evolving history.

PLATTE VALLEY OPERA HOUSE (ORIGINAL OPERA HOUSE)
vacant lots adjacent to Entertainment Plaza. ***See #18 on map***



WATERMAN OPERA HOUSE - ***See #18 on map***



WATERMAN OPERA HOUSE

BANK OF CASS COUNTY - *See #45 on map*



RILEY HOTEL - Current Citizens State Bank. *See #56 on map*



PERKINS HOTEL - Barracks Lot. *See #28 on map*



TOOTLE & HANNA & GUTHMANN - *See #26 on map*



ORIGINAL CASS COUNTY COURTHOUSE AND MASONIC LODGE
See #31 on map



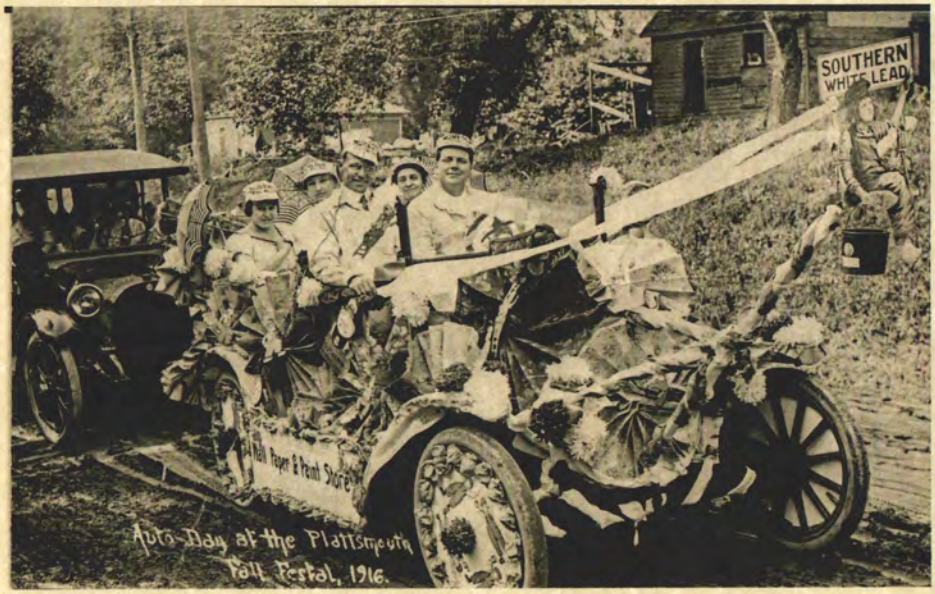
GORDER BUILDING - *See #30 on map*



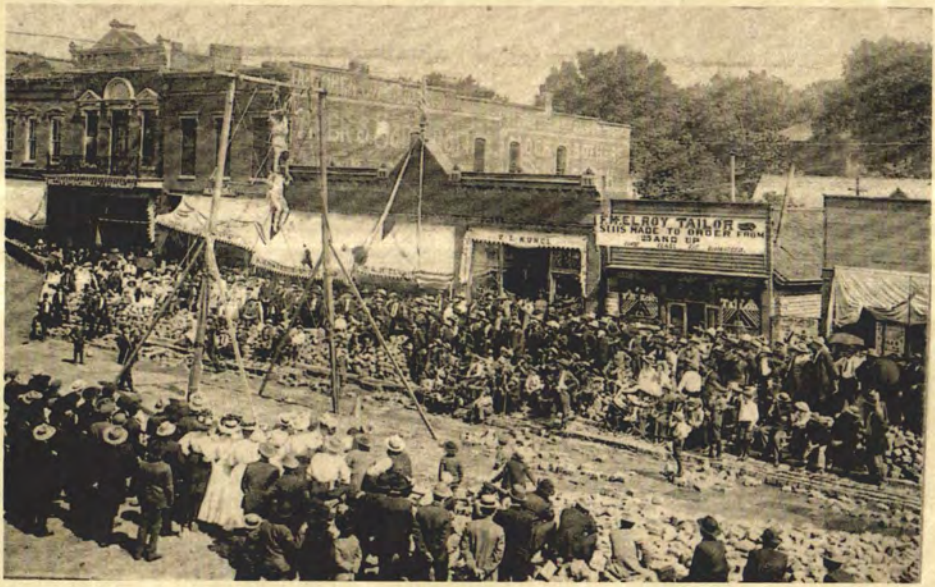
Photo Gallery



Coach Shop Float, 1909



Auto Day at the Plattsmouth Fall Festival, 1916



Trapeze on Main Street, 1908



Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Depot, 1913



ONE OF THE C., B. & Q. COACH SHOPS.

Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Coach Shop, c.1900



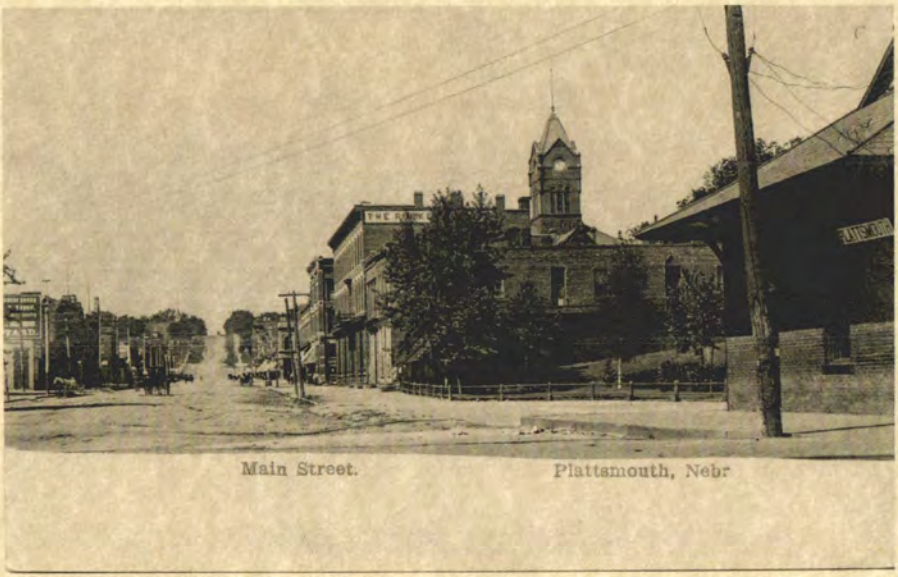
Burlington RR Coach Shops, c. 1885



Riley Hotel, looking West up high school hill, 1930



Main Street, looking West c. pre-1900



Main Street, looking West c.1906



Main Street looking West, c. 1908



Southeast corner of 6th and Main, 1911



4th of July Parade, July 4, 1910



Shop Men's Parade, 1909



Plattsmouth Ferry, 1929



Bob Sled Party, c. 1890



Snow drifts, February 26, 1912



Snow drifts, February 26, 1912



Main Street, c. 1930's

Cass County Historical Society Railroad Park

The open space at 2nd and Main Streets in Plattsmouth, known as East Park, is an outdoor museum managed by the Cass County Historical Society. Historically significant as a center for river travel and pioneer settlement, the park now preserves the Cook Log Cabin, Burlington Caboose, and a replica of Lewis and Clark's White Pirogue.

Joseph and Mary Cook Log Home



Joseph Cook built this log cabin near Mynard in 1868. In 1856, Joseph and Mary Cook traveled by covered wagon from Ohio to the Nebraska Territory with their three sons and one daughter. They crossed the Missouri River at Council Bluffs, passed through the Plattsmouth trading post, and settled about five miles farther west near Mynard, Nebraska.

Using cottonwood trees from their land, the family built a small log house where they lived for 12 years. By 1868, their family had grown to 12 children, so they began building this larger cabin—one year after Nebraska became a state.

The cabin walls were made from cottonwood logs hauled from the Missouri River. Neighbors traveled from miles around for a community "house raising" to help build the new home.

Over the years, additions were made to the cabin, which remained home to descendants of Joseph and Mary Cook.

In 1978, a great granddaughter of Joseph and Mary Cook donated the cabin to the Cass County Historical Society, which moved it to Plattsmouth.

Burlington Caboose

In 1869, Plattsmouth became the Nebraska headquarters of a Burlington & Missouri River Railroad sub-branch. Its "Burlington Shops" built cabooses, boxcars, freight cars, and locomotives.

Reflecting the city's deep railroad heritage, the park's bright red caboose was built in Aurora, Illinois, in 1913 and donated to the City of Plattsmouth in May 1970.

Although constructed elsewhere, it resembles cabooses made at the local railroad shops on the site of today's Clayton Rhylander Memorial Park.



Replica of Lewis and Clark's White Pirogue

On May 14, 1804, Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and their crew departed St. Louis, Missouri, in a keelboat and two pirogues on an expedition to reach the Pacific Ocean. On Friday, July 20, the expedition reached present-day Cass County, Nebraska. After breaking camp on July 21, 1804, the explorers continued upriver to the mouth of the "Great River Platte."

Honoring the Lewis and Clark expedition's local significance, this replica white pirogue was christened in Onawa, Iowa, on July 28, 2018, and arrived in Plattsmouth on July 20, 2019. Douglas V. Duey, a longtime Plattsmouth resident and former Cass County Bank president, donated it to the Cass County Historical Society.



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Nebraska
State Historical Society
Foundation

Connecting people with Nebraska history since 1942.

Historic Downtown Plattsmouth Association
P.O. Box 506
Plattsmouth, NE 68048
historicdowntownplattsmouth@gmail.com
historicdowntownplattsmouth.com

Progress, promote and preserve Plattsmouth's treasured historic district.

Photos provided by Cass County Historical Society Museum