

58

**U.S. POST OFFICE**  
*500 Main Avenue*

Congressman Philo Hall introduced the bill to Congress circa 1908 to enable construction of the Government Building. Construction began in 1913 and the U.S. Postal Service occupied the building in January 1915. It typifies the Classical Revival style with its Ionic-columned portico entrance, decorative dentils, massive scaling, and limited ornamental motifs. Constructed of Bedford limestone at a cost of \$75,000, the Government Building/Post Office forms a prominent corner anchor.



**What is the National Register of Historic Places?**

Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate and protect historic and archaeological resources. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. These resources contribute to an understanding of the historical and cultural foundations of the Nation. The Brookings Commercial Historic District was placed on the National Register on April 19, 1988. This brochure has been financed in part by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or politics of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of the Interior. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or age in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington DC 20240.

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**CREDITS**

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THE  
**BROOKINGS**



COMMERCIAL  
**HISTORIC**  
DISTRICT

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(605)692-6281 phone  
[www.cityofbrookings.org](http://www.cityofbrookings.org)



**A WALKING TOUR**

*presented by the*  
Brookings Historic Preservation Commission



University and largest university. It is also the center of an agricultural trade area with an approximate radius of 35 miles. In 1900, the population of the city was 2,346. There were about 4,500 inhabitants in 1919, and 7,764 in the 1950 census. This included college students for the first time.

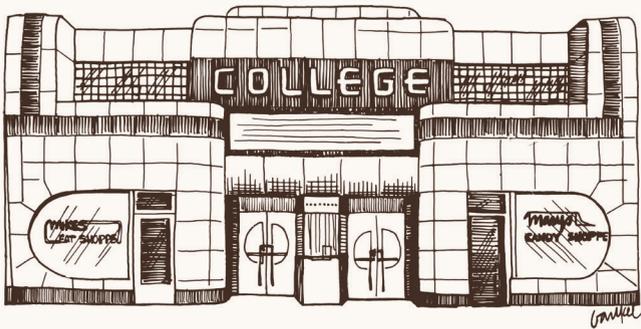
Eighty-three percent of district construction took place between 1894 and 1928. The last major commercial construction activity was in 1940 with the building of the Woolworth/Stratton building and the College Theatre. As commercial structures were rebuilt to replace the wooden frame structures built during the village's early days, brick and concrete became the primary building materials, with permanence and fire-proofing primary considerations. Six buildings were constructed between 1930 and 1936, and a new business was added each year between 1937 and 1940. There were no major commercial additions within the district until 1952.

The Brookings Commercial Historic District is composed of 59 buildings. Predominantly exhibiting early twentieth century vernacular brick-front commercial construction, the district also has examples of late nineteenth century vernacular commercial construction, and is influenced by the Romanesque, Beaux-Arts, Classical Revival, and Art Deco styles. The district provides commercial goods and services for residents of the community.



**3****COLLEGE THEATRE***5051507 Main Avenue*

Frank McCarthy constructed the College Theatre in 1940 after crews razed the old Grand Theatre Building. The building site has always been associated with entertainment; the original Opera House of the late nineteenth century was located here. Perry E. Crosier, a regionally-known theatre architect, designed the College Theatre. It is prominent in the district as one of three Art Deco buildings. Crosier also designed theatres in Dell Rapids, Webster, and the Twin Cities area.

**5****NICK'S HAMBURGER SHOP***427 Main Avenue*

Gladys and Harold Niklason started Nick's Hamburger Shop in 1929 and since then this little "burger joint" on Brookings' Main Avenue has gained national and international fame, and provided local residents with a hamburger treat that has changed little in its more than eight decades of operation. Current owner Dick Fergen has no intention of changing the unique burger service. Buns are baked from a special recipe daily, and he still mixes up the relish from Niklason's original secret recipe by hand. The small, folksy little Nick's Hamburger Shop building of Spanish style has become a Brookings icon. Extended families sharing a burger there for more than 80 years have made it a family tradition in Brookings and the area. After WW II, with service men and women back home again, Hobo Day of 1947 was the busiest in history. More than 4,450 ten cent Nickburgers were sold that day.

17

**CITY HALL***310 Fourth Street*

City Hall exemplifies the importance of government in the central business district. It was constructed at a cost of \$25,000 in 1912.

Huron architect George Issenhuth designed this building highlighted by a window framed by arched brickwork and a decorative cornice line trimmed with dentils and modillions featuring egg-and-dart patterning. A canted entrance provided central access and is the focus for the arcaded block concept with Romanesque styling.

The government hall housed the Commercial Club, city offices, and the fire and police departments. The police and fire departments moved from the building in the 1960s and administrative offices in 1982.

On the northeast corner, a decorative clock tower, with a painted replica of a clock face, was removed in the 1930s.



19

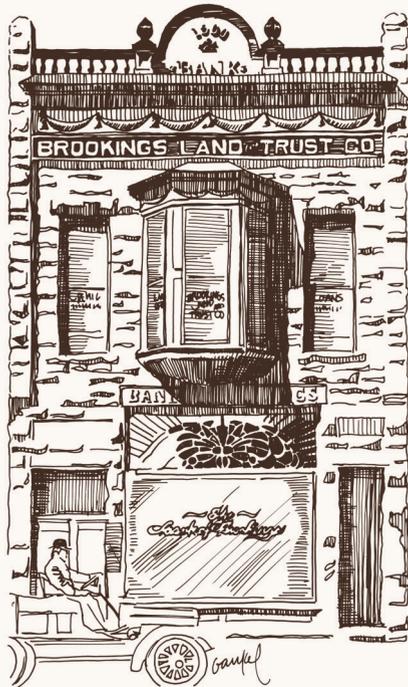
**FIRST NATIONAL BANK***327 Main Avenue*

Situated where pioneer banker Horace Fishback located the towered First National Bank, this property has always been recognized as the “Bank Corner.” George Cobel was president of the bank when the Beaux-Arts classically inspired structure was constructed in 1919. The front of the building is dominated by massive Ionic columns and an ornate pedimented entrance. The brochure distributed at its grand opening proclaimed: “Standing on the most prominent corner in the city, its dignified appearance claims your immediate attention, its granite and brick walls give you a feeling of permanence, its massive gray pillars an impression of stability and strength. From its outward appearance you gain an impression of confidence.”

25

**BANK OF BROOKINGS***311 Main Avenue*

Organized in 1880, the Bank of Brookings was originally located in a wood frame structure on this site. George Morehouse was the chief organizer of the financial institution. He is also credited with developing the Brookings Land and Trust Company, distinguished in the early 1900's as the primary land development company in the area. The bank was rebuilt in 1900 with Jasper stone from Minnesota quarries. The building is the only surviving early twentieth century banking institution in the city. An architectural highlight of the building is the continuous garland relief pattern on the cornice line and on the bay window of the structure.



31

**MASONIC TEMPLE***225 Main Avenue*

The oldest building in the district, the Masonic Temple/Skinner Block was dedicated in 1894. W.H. Skinner, the city's postmaster, and Wm. M. Brooke, Robt. F. Kerr, and P.C. Murphy, other members of the Masonic Order, developed the structure. Planning began in the early 1890s.

Charles A. Dunham, a nationally prominent architect, designed the Masonic Temple. Working predominantly in the Northwest United States, Dunham designed schoolhouses, courthouses, Masonic temples, opera houses, churches and store buildings. He was the architect for the old red schoolhouse building, known as the Red Castle, in Brookings.

The stones were squared and numbered in the quarries near Kasota, MN, and the brick are Monominee sand-rolled red cherry. A projecting conical tower once crowned this corner building at the south end of Main Avenue. Its style is reminiscent of the Romanesque tradition.



### 33 CHICAGO & NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY DEPOT *111 Main Avenue*

Constructed to replace an earlier wood-frame passenger depot which burned down, the pattern book designed depot represents an important district development in the area of transportation.

W.H. Skinner and others convinced officials to locate a depot in Brookings. The Depot was symbolic of a very important link for all Dakota pioneers. The genesis of Brookings is attributed to the siting of the Chicago and North Western Railroad here.

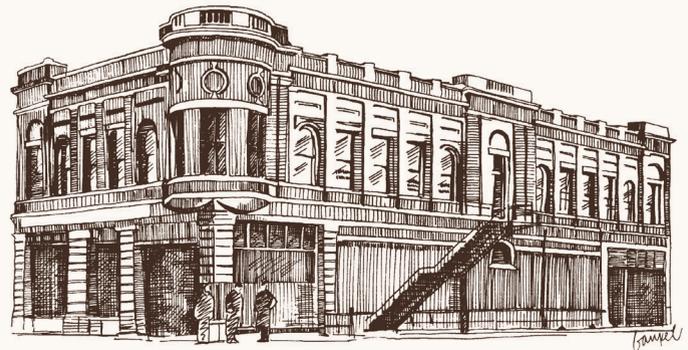
Opening on February 1, 1905, the structure was built of No. 1 Continental brick manufactured at Galesburg, IL, and Kasota-cut stone. The pattern book design features classical detailing with Doric columns and quoining at each entrance.

Early newspaper accounts report interior details including the “delicate shade of green and the deep rose lake” color of the waiting room and features of the ticket office and lunch room.

### 37 NEW CENTURY BLOCK *300 Main Avenue*

Pioneer merchants, including C.A. Skinner, Wm. Caldwell, Dr. A.W. Hyde, George Morehouse, John Wilson, F.J. Carlisle, H.H. Reeves, Thos. Ross, and C.E. Childs, formed a syndicate to construct this building in 1901 that was “the result of the growth of the city and its business enterprises.”

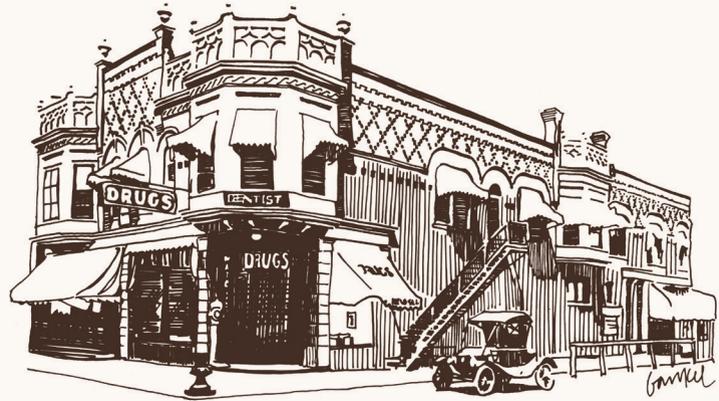
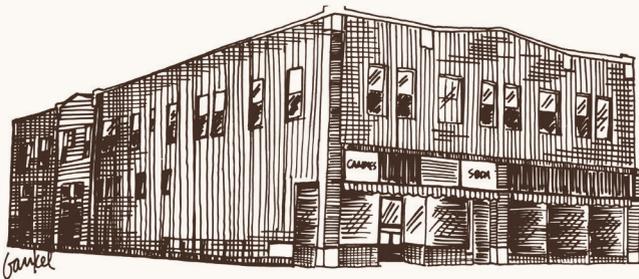
The New Century Block is constructed of Twin City pressed brick trimmed in Kasota Stone. Constructed in the corner-anchor Romanesque tradition, the style is highlighted by its corner-placed modified turret. The commercial structure housed W.H. Skinner’s department store, previously located in the Masonic Temple building. An embossed pressed-metal ceiling is an outstanding interior feature.



## 46 SELLERS AND BARTLING

324/326 Main Avenue

The erection of the Sellers and Bartling Building, the Raak Harness Shop and the Red Owl Grocery, the Martinson Building, Tidball Drug, and Columbia Clothing made 1926 a record year for commercial construction. This flurry of construction is documented in newspaper headlines proclaiming “Half Million Dollars in Buildings and Improvements in Process of Construction.” The Sellers and Bartling Building is an intact corner property that is a nearly exact reminder of the 1926 structure. This large, two-story structure was originally occupied by a furniture store (moved from its Masonic Temple location); the professional services of doctor, dentist, attorney, and insurance agent; a mortuary and chapel; a drug store and haberdashery; and a restaurant and a basement pool hall. The structure typifies twentieth century brick-front commercial construction.



## 48 BINFORD BLOCK

400 Main Avenue

The Binford Block was constructed in 1899 by pharmacist A.L. Binford. The pharmacy and the Kaufman Brothers' Clothing and Furnishings were on the main level. Occupying the second floor were various professionals, including surgeon, Dr. Miller, and dentist, Dr. Borst. The second floor clinic use continued until 1957. In 1903, C.D. Kendall purchased the drug store and E.H. Beatty acquired the jewelry store. It is an imposing corner building in the arcaded block tradition with a canted ground level entrance. As a design statement, the arcaded block symbolized the importance of business in the small rural community. The highly ornamental design and patterns on the brick and tin turret facades and the use of round-headed designs on the windows contribute to its late nineteenth century commercial architectural tradition.

# THE BROOKINGS COMMERCIAL HISTORIC DISTRICT



Historical Site	Address	Year
1 Fricke Tire Shop .....	519 Main	1919
2 Johnson Buick Garage .....	509/511 Main	1914
3 College Theatre .....	505/507 Main	1940
4 JC Penney Building .....	501/503 Main	1927
5 Lincoln Cafe/Nick's .....	427 Main	1932
6 American Billiard Parlor .....	421 Main	1920
7 Erb's Bakery .....	419 Main	1959
8 Fergen's Men's Wear .....	417 Main	1955
9 Jackson's Jewelry .....	415 Main	1959
10 Stratton Shoe Shop .....	413 Main	1940
10 F.W. Woolworth Bldg .....	409 Main	1940
11 F.W. Woolworth (1)(Demolished) .....	407 Main	1928
12 Candy Kitchen .....	405 Main	1920
13 E.E. Haugen Dry Goods .....	403 Main	1917
14 Trygstad Law Office & Commerce .....	401 Main	1917
15 Brookings Register Building .....	306 Fourth St.	1936
16 Ladies' Lounge .....	308 Fourth St.	1952
17 City Hall .....	310 Fourth St.	1912
18 Dr. B.T. Green Office .....	316 Fourth St.	1914
19 First National Bank .....	327 Main	1919
20 Columbia Clothing .....	325 Main	1926

