

**Site Inventory Form**  
**State Historical Society of Iowa**  
 (November 2005)

**State Inventory No.** 29-03671       New     Supplemental  
 Part of a district with known boundaries (enter inventory no.) 29-03685  
 Relationship:     Contributing     Noncontributing  
 Contributes to a potential district with yet unknown boundaries  
 National Register Status:(any that apply)     Listed     De-listed     NHL     DOE  
 9-Digit SHPO Review & Compliance (R&C) Number  
 Non-Extant (enter year)

**1. Name of Property**

historic name Elks Building

other names/site number Labor Temple, Nassau Building, Post Office Building, Downtown Survey Map #DT-41

**2. Location**

street & number 300-304 Washington St.

city or town Burlington       vicinity, county Des Moines

Legal Description: (If Rural) Township Name \_\_\_\_\_ Township No. \_\_\_\_\_ Range No. \_\_\_\_\_ Section \_\_\_\_\_ Quarter of Quarter \_\_\_\_\_

(If Urban) Subdivision Original City Block(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Lot(s) 373 – east 58' (1/2) & east 58, of S ½ (30') of Lot 374

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification [Skip this Section]**

**4. National Park Service Certification [Skip this Section]**

**5. Classification**

Category of Property (Check only one box)	Number of Resources within Property	
	If Non-Eligible Property Enter number of:	If Eligible Property, enter number of: Contributing    Noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	— buildings	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> district	— sites	— sites
<input type="checkbox"/> site	— structures	— structures
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	— objects	— objects
<input type="checkbox"/> object	— Total	<u>1</u> Total

**Name of related project report or multiple property study** (Enter "N/A" if the property is not part of a multiple property examination).  
 Title Intensive Level Historical and Architectural Survey of "East" Downtown Burlington, IA      *Historical Architectural Data Base Number* 29-034

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

**Current Functions** (Enter categories from instructions)

02A01: Commerce / office building

70: Vacant

04F: Government / post office

03A04: Social / fraternal hall

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

05G: Late Victorian / Romanesque

foundation      04C Limestone

09F05: Commercial / brick front

walls (visible material)      03 Brick

roof      08A Shingle & 15C01 Rubber M

other \_\_\_\_\_

**Narrative Description** ( SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED)

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" representing your opinion of eligibility after applying relevant National Register criteria)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | A    Property is associated with significant events.                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | B    Property is associated with the lives of significant persons.      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended | C    Property has distinctive architectural characteristics.            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> More Research Recommended            | D    Property yields significant information in archaeology or history. |

County Des Moines  
City Burlington

Address 300-304 Washington St.

Site Number 29-03671  
District Number 29-03685

**Criteria Considerations**

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

**Areas of Significance** (Enter categories from instructions)

05: Commerce  
02: Architecture

**Significant Dates**

Construction date 1883  check if circa or estimated date  
Other dates, including renovation 1907 - 4<sup>th</sup> floor added, 1947 & 1976 - 1<sup>st</sup> story remodeling

**Significant Person**

(Complete if National Register Criterion B is marked above)

**Architect/Builder**

Architect S.V. Shipman (Chicago), George Washburn (4<sup>th</sup> story in 1907)  
Builder O.J. King (1883, Council Bluffs)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**  SEE CONTINUATION SHEETS, WHICH MUST BE COMPLETED

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

Bibliography  See continuation sheet for citations of the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form

**10. Geographic Data**

**UTM References (OPTIONAL)**

Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	_____	_____	2	_____	_____
3	_____	_____	4	_____	_____

See continuation sheet for additional UTM references or comments

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Rebecca L. McCarley, consultant, Davenport research and draft by Hal Morton, commission member  
organization SPARK Consulting / Burlington Historic Preservation Commission date January 3, 2013  
street & number 17 Oak Lane / City Hall, 400 Washington Street telephone 319-753-8158  
city or town Davenport / Burlington state Iowa zip code 52803 / 52601

**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION (Submit the following items with the completed form)**

**FOR ALL PROPERTIES**

- Map:** showing the property's location in a town/city or township.
- Site plan:** showing position of buildings and structures on the site in relation to public road(s).
- Photographs:** representative black and white photos. If the photos are taken as part of a survey for which the Society is to be curator of the negatives or color slides, a photo/catalog sheet needs to be included with the negatives/slides and the following needs to be provided below on this particular inventory site:

Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____
Roll/slide sheet # _____	Frame/slot # _____	Date Taken _____

- See continuation sheet or attached *photo & slide catalog sheet* for list of photo roll or slide entries.
- Photos/illustrations without negatives are also in this site inventory file.

**FOR CERTAIN KINDS OF PROPERTIES, INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING AS WELL**

- Farmstead & District:** (List of structures and buildings, known or estimated year built, and contributing or noncontributing status)
- Barn:**
  - A sketch of the frame/truss configuration in the form of drawing a typical middle bent of the barn.
  - A photograph of the loft showing the frame configuration along one side.
  - A sketch floor plan of the interior space arrangements along with the barn's exterior dimensions in feet.

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

Concur 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: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluated by (name/title): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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## 6. Function or Use (continued)

- 02C01: Commerce / organizational - trade unions
- 02C02: Commerce / organizational - labor unions
- 05A: Education / school – (music)
- 08D: Culture / music facility
- 02B03: Commerce / law office
- 11D03: Healthcare / doctor or dentist's office
- 02B04: Commerce / insurance office
- 02E15: Commerce / billiards or pool hall
- 02E17: Commerce / tobacco store or cigar store
- 02E: Commerce / specialty stores (music, business machines, stationary)
- 08D04: Recreation/culture / dance hall
- 04E: Government / government office (justice of the peace & constable office)

## 7. Narrative Description

This brick building sits at the northwest corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and Washington Street, facing Washington Street to the south. The building constructed by Dr. Nassau in 1883 was originally a three-story Romanesque Revival building that sat on a stone foundation. The fourth story was added by the Elks in 1907. From 1907 until 1942, the building was generally referred to as The Elks Building. Stone banding across the frieze of the original building continues to extend above the third story windows. The windows throughout the building have one-over-one-light double-hung wood sashes. The second and third story windows have decorative segmental brick arch lintels and stone sills with decorative brick banding between them. There are also decorative brick panels between the tops of the third story windows. The added fourth story has arch windows with stone hoods with keystones and a continuous stone sill band. The metal cornice with brackets was added in 1907 as well.

The primary façade faces Washington Street to the south. The current storefront generally dates to a 1947 remodel that modernized the appearance of the building. The original storefront of cast iron columns from Murray Iron Works (the corner column reportedly featured the names of Dr. W.W. Nassau, owner, S.V. Shipman, architect, Perley Hale, superintendent, and O.J. King, contractor) and plate glass windows with transoms was remodeled with large aluminum-frame plate glass windows, newer brick, and opaque white and maroon structural glass in 1947 for the new Graham's Café (Labor Temple improvement inspires historical data", *Burlington Hawk-Eye-Gazette*, December 17, 1947, p. 11). The newer storefront was added against the outside of the original storefront, so it is possible that the original cast iron columns remain hidden in the current wall. The main entry is currently slightly to the west of center. Vertical windows from this period are found to the right of the recessed double-door entry, and maroon structural glass panels are found on the interior, complementing the white panels applied for the streamlined modern look on the exterior. The east half of the storefront has four large windows. There is a separate recessed entrance at the west end of the first story for 304 Washington, with a large window to the right/east. The middle three windows on the second and third stories are grouped to accentuate the slightly projected center third story brick section, "supported" by brick

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corbelling adjacent to the second story windows. Each set of windows share a stone sill, with a common segmental arch lintel across the third story set. Decorative gables on this section and the complementary 3<sup>rd</sup> Street side section, along with a small corner turret, were removed to construct the fourth story in 1907. A rectangular limestone plaque incised with "BPOE" was placed above the center third story windows during this remodel, with another on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street side. These plaques replaced "Nassau Building" and "1883" that had decorated the gables of the three-story building. There are three windows to either side of this center section on the second and third stories. The fourth story has two arch windows above the center section of the original building, with three arch windows to either side. The third and fourth story windows have generally been covered, with some low small windows installed. The cornice around the top of the building is terne metal, including closely spaced brackets and a round finial on the southwest corner.

The secondary façade faces 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the east. The remodeled storefront wraps around the front three bays of the first story. Eight double-hung windows then extend along the first story on this side, north to the side storefront at the north end. Historic photographs show that the front/south six windows historically had mid-level stone sills with the bottom halves being originally filled with inset and corbelled brick. This detail has been somewhat repeated at a later date for the north two windows, which were originally full one-over-one-light double-hung windows. The north end has a small side storefront with a center entry and iron columns from Murray Iron Works. Another entrance at the corner just to the north accesses a rear staircase to the upper floors. This entrance is a few steps above sidewalk grade, and it has a high small roof over the landing. There are two basement entrances with steps cut parallel to the sidewalk on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street side. A stone band divides the first story from the second story. The second and third stories have a center section similar to the south side, with the third story slightly projected and supported by brick corbelling by the second story windows. Only two windows are found in this section on this side, with the third story windows sharing a stone lintel. A rectangular limestone plaque incised with "BPOE" was placed above the center third story windows during the 1907 remodel, replacing the earlier plaque and gables of the three-story building. Five windows are found on the second and third stories on either side of this center section, with detailing as noted previously. The fourth story has two shorter arch windows above the center section with five windows to either side. The third and fourth story windows have generally been covered, with some low small windows installed. The bracketed metal cornice continues across this side.

Only a portion of the west side is visible above the adjacent two story building. Windows on this side also have segmental arch lintels and stone sills. Double-hung stair windows are found near the front/south of the building on the upper stories. Four full height windows are found on the third story, while the added fourth story has short double-hung windows.

The north/rear elevation appears to have originally had two-over-two-light double-hung windows on the original three stories, with several small windows then added with the addition of the fourth story. Windows on this side also have segmental arch brick lintels and stone sills. The first story has several covered windows and a rear entry. Three windows remain towards the west end, at the rear of the 304 Washington storefront. A fire escape extends up this side of the building. The second and third stories have five windows, grouped with one, then two, and then two. A narrow window is also located along

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the west side of the chimney on the second story. The upper set of seven windows for the fourth story and an interior mezzanine appear more irregular, though they are located above the lower window bays. A door provides access to the fire escape from the fourth story as well.

The first story is divided into a large double-width storefront space on the east and a smaller storefront space on the west. The entry vestibule to the upper stories is set within this west storefront space as well. As noted, the entry vestibule has maroon structural glass panels on the wall in various conditions. Some are intact while others are cracked/broken or missing completely. The stairs in this space appear remodeled around the same time. The large east storefront space has columns down the center. The floor is covered in carpeting, and the walls/windows are covered in drywall. A dropped ceiling has been installed, with some holes revealing portions of a metal ceiling intact above the later ceiling. The west storefront likewise has non-historic finishes on the floors and walls as well as a dropped ceiling.

The second story also has been remodeled. Music/practice rooms were built throughout the majority of the space, and interior walls were added along the exterior walls, blocking (insulating?) the windows. A small space is located between the added walls and the original exterior wall. The historic window trim is intact on most windows, and historic baseboard continues to exist in large sections along these walls. Historic staircases with dark wood trim, newel posts, balustrade, and treads exist from the second to third stories, including the main set in the southwest section of the building and the secondary/rear set in the north section.

The third story continues to reflect remodeling by the Elks Lodge in 1907, as well as a later date. It consists of a "reception room" at the south end of the east two-thirds of the building, a large room to its north, and a small "card room" on the north half of the west one-third. Dark woodwork is found throughout these rooms, and interior window trim is generally intact. Windows are covered on the exterior, and they have generally have broken/missing glass as well as missing sashes in some instances. Historic photographs show that a bar area was apparently added after the original remodel at the north end of card room extending to the south, though the date of this change is unknown at this time. The original wood stairs to the fourth story remain intact, added in 1907 when this additional story was constructed.

The fourth story consists of the large lodge room on the majority of the east two-thirds of the building. Similar to the third story, the room retains historic wood trim, and the windows are missing glass or sashes in some cases. A balcony area along the west side of the room is intact. A bar area is built into the northwest corner room, with curves reflecting perhaps the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The southwest corner room retains historic trim, including crown molding.

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## 8. Narrative Statement of Significance

The Elks Building appears to contribute historically and architecturally to the potential Downtown Commercial Historic District. The building was built originally in 1883 as a three story building at a prominent downtown Burlington corner to house the post office and provide professional office space, and it was remodeled and expanded with the addition of a fourth story by the Elks Lodge in 1907. The original building was designed by Chicago architect Stephen V. Shipman, who had just completed the design for the Grand Opera House immediately to the north. The Romanesque style then became popular in downtown Burlington for the remainder of the 1880s and into the early 1890s, and the 1907 addition was designed by local architect George Washburn to complement the original design. The brick and stone detailing of the Romansque style from the original three-story 1883 building and the 1907 addition remains intact on the exterior. The third story lodge/club rooms and the fourth story ballroom and club rooms from the 1907 remodeling and addition remain intact on the upper stories of the interior. The building was then bought by Burlington Labor Associates, Inc. in 1941 to provide a building for the Burlington Trade and Labor Assembly as well as Burlington Building and Construction Trades Council. The storefront remodeling in 1947 reflects the period of post-war improvements in Burlington that resulted in modern appearances for older buildings. The Labor Temple operated here until 1975 when the number of organizations had significantly declined. Additionally, several commercial tenants and professional offices occupied the building from the 1880s to 1960s. This architecture and history contribute strongly to the potential Downtown Commercial Historic District.

Additionally, the Elks Building appears to be individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A. As noted above, the building is strongly linked to several aspects of Burlington's commercial and social history. Dr. W.W. Nassau built the building for the post office on the first story and professional offices on the second story. Offices were listed as located in the Nassau Building or Post Office Block, and the post office functioned here from 1883 to 1896. At this point, the post office moved and leasing the office spaces facing the challenges of new space in the Tama Building. Dr. Nassau sold the building to the Elks in 1907, who remodeled the third story and added the fourth story with a ballroom and additional club spaces. The building was then known as the Elks Building from 1907 to 1941. Several tenants remained in the storefront spaces on the first story and office spaces on the second story, including the Burlington School of Music, Burlington Gas Light Company, Archer-Bennett Burial Company, music teacher Martin Bruhl, other musical groups, and several physicians. The building was then bought by Burlington Labor Associates, Inc. in 1941 to provide a building for the Burlington Trade and Labor Assembly as well as Burlington Building and Construction Trades Council. The Labor Temple was a unique space for labor organizations in Burlington, providing meeting space for over 40 organizations. The Labor Temple operated here until 1975 when the number of organizations had significantly declined. The building retains sufficient integrity to reflect its historic significance. While the exterior brick and stone architecture of the building remains intact, alterations to the windows and remodeling on the interior first and second stories likely would be nomination individually under Criterion C difficult.

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Originally built as a three-story brick commercial building on a limestone foundation, this building was constructed in 1883 by prominent local physician and businessman Dr. W.W. Nassau. Dr. Nassau was also the largest shareholder in, and served as the original vice president of, the Grand Opera House next door to the north, which had opened in January 1882 (demolished). He served as one of the founders and president of the Des Moines County Medical Society as well. His local business interests included the Burlington Water Works, Street Railway Co., Merchant's National Bank, and the German American Savings Bank of Burlington, serving as vice president of the latter (*Portrait and Biographical Album of Des Moines County, Iowa*, 1888: 544; Jordan 1975: 4). This building was designed by Stephen V. Shipman. The local superintendent, or supervising architect, was Perley Hale (a local architect), and O.J. King was the contractor ("Labor Temple improvement inspires historical data", *Burlington Hawk-Eye-Gazette*, December 17, 1947, p. 11). Stephen V. Shipman was an architect from Chicago who also designed the Wisconsin State Capitol and many other prominent buildings. He had recently designed the Grand Opera House, and he was hence known to Dr. Nassau. O.J. King was a contractor from Council Bluffs, who built several large buildings across the state in this period. Perley Hale was a prominent local architect, who had designed the Des Moines County Courthouse built in 1879-1880. According to the 1915 county history, "Dr. Nassau constructed a building on the northwest corner of Washington and Third streets, the lower part of which was especially adapted to post office purposes, and to this place it was removed" from the southeast corner of the intersection (Antrobus 1915, Vol. 1: 501).

J.J. Curran & Co. operated a cigar and newsstand inside the post office, with a cigar factory toward the rear. By 1886, J.J. Curran & Co. is then listed at the street address of 304 Washington, perhaps indicating the early addition of an exterior entrance for dividing interior space. The 1887 City Directory indicates that the cigar and newsstand had relocated immediately to the west (from 304 to 306 Washington). In 1892, J.J. Curran & Co. moved to 321 Jefferson, and then, appointed by President Cleveland, John J. Curran served as postmaster from 1894-1898. The first story served as the Burlington Post Office until a new post office building was completed at 4<sup>th</sup> and Valley in 1896 (*Souvenir of Burlington* 1896: 64). The 1893 city directory lists the Nassau Building under public halls and office buildings.

During the first several years, the building also housed the offices of the R.G. Dun & Co. (mercantile agency) and several attorneys and physicians, as well as the district office of the US Internal Revenue Service, the US Customs Office, and the headquarters for the Railway Mail Service according to one source (vertical file: Buildings Miscellaneous). From 1887 through 1897, the German American Mutual Life Association was also located in the building. The 1892 Sanborn map indicates the post office on the first story and a vacant store in the space to the west at 304. Stairs to the upper stories, noted as offices on the second story, are located at the far west end of the building, west of the 304 storefront. The relocation of the post office in 1896 coincided with the completion of the Tama Building at the northwest corner of 3<sup>rd</sup> and Jefferson (one block to the south of the Nassau Building), and many professional offices moved into this new building. The Nassau Building was only sparsely occupied by one or two doctor & dentist offices for the next decade. Dr. Phillip C. Naumann, MD had his office in the Nassau Building from 1890-1897, and his son Dr. L.A. Naumann, DDS, was here from 1893-1899. Dr. P.C. Naumann served two terms as elected alderman and two terms as mayor of Burlington

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beginning in 1898, during which he was credited with improving methods for garbage disposal, extending street lighting, completely revising the ordinances describing and regulating the duties of all city officials, and establishing a city board of health (Jordan 1975: 45). The 1900 Sanborn map shows two storefront spaces on the first story and notes offices on the second story. Nothing is noted on the third story. In 1904, the Burlington School of Music moved into this building, from its prior location next door to the north in the Grand Opera House.

The Elks Club #84 (B.P.O.E.), the oldest chapter in Iowa (organized July 12, 1888), bought the building from Dr. Nassau in March 1907, and added the 4<sup>th</sup> story using matching brick with arch windows ("Unterkircher Structure to be Club Home," Burlington Hawkeye, October 1, 1941, pp 1-2). They moved here from the top story of the Parsons Block, having rented the full story and had several previous smaller homes. The third story was remodeled for club rooms, and the fourth story added for a lodge hall, with dining room and kitchen annex ("Elks Lodge Has Ripe Age," *Hawk-Eye*, August 4, 1942). According to notes in the Burlington Public Library vertical file (Buildings – Miscellaneous), the top story addition was supervised by prominent local architect George Washburn, and it was built at a cost \$40,000. The 4<sup>th</sup> story housed a large dance hall known as the Sahara Lounge and club rooms. From 1907 until 1942, the building was generally referred to as "The Elks Building" (also reflected by the large limestone plaques noting "B.P.O.E." which replaced the earlier "Nassau Building" and "1883" in the center sections on the two primary sides.) Beginning around 1915, the "Elks Building" was the listed home of a few prominent local bands and orchestras, probably affiliated with the Sahara Lounge dance hall on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and the large ballroom on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Stone's Orchestra was listed in 1915 to 1919 (Walter A. Stone also worked with C.W. Campbell on amateur theatrical productions – see references to the Palace Theater and the Ebis Club), and Fischer's Band and Orchestra, directed by J. Henri Fischer, was listed from 1916 to 1940 (by then J. Henri Fischer was listed as the director of the Burlington Municipal Band). A justice of the peace and constable office was located in the Nassau Building from 1907 to 1910.

Commercial tenants continued to rent the storefront spaces. From 1908 through 1926, the 300 Washington storefront of the Elks Building was home to the Burlington Gas Light Co (and then it was bought by Iowa Southern Utilities). Also in 1908, the western storefront (304 Washington St.), along with the basement was used by James M. Burnett, undertaker and embalmer. By 1910, this enterprise became the Archer-Burnett Burial Co., and from 1913-1915 was the Burnett-Hilleary Co. It was then the Remington Typewriter Company and Teeter Adding Machine Company in 1920. No tenants were then identified separately in this storefront in the 1920s and 1930s until Clayton Music Store is listed at 304 Washington in 1940. J.C. Penney briefly relocated into this building in January 1928 following the fire in their building at 5<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson, and they then moved into new space at 6<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson in August 1928. Brown, Lynch, Scott Company then moved into the 300 and 304 storefront spaces. The firm had been in existence for three years and grown substantially. They moved into the full first story as well as the room west of the corner that were formerly part of the Unterkircher funeral home ("Firm to Move to Elks Site When Vacated," *Hawk-Eye*, August 16, 1928, 5). They moved out in November 1930 to Jefferson Street. The Union Tire and Supply Company then moved to the first story and basement of the Elks Building, opening on December 1, 1930. The company had been in business for six years, with C.E. Anderson at the head. They planned to focus on wholesale and retail sales in radios radio

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supplies, automotive supplies, and commercial and household refrigeration, along with maintaining their Goodrich products. They distributed Clarion radios and Zerozone refrigerators ("Local Firm to Take New Site," *Hawk-Eye*, November 23, 1930, 10; "Well Known Radio-Refrigeration Firm Has New, Enlarged Home in Elks Bldg," *Hawk-Eye*, December 13, 1930, 5). In 1935, the storefront was listed again as vacant. Hazelton Dance Studio was then listed here in 1938, and Iowa State Employment Service was here in 1940.

Several physicians and dentists, and an assortment of music teachers, co-existed with the Elks Club on the upper stories. Music teachers included Martin Bruhl, once a piano soloist with the New York Symphonic Orchestra (now known as the New York Philharmonic Orchestra) and piano teacher for prominent cabaret composer and native son Bart Howard, Bruhl is first listed in the "Elks Building" in 1908, and remained through 1915. From 1913 through 1917, Dr. Edward L. Durand practiced mechano-therapy in the building. From 1916 through 1940, Dr. Harry Walter Harmer was listed as a naprapath (treating disease by manipulation of joints, muscles and ligaments). John S. Lahee, a long-established insurance agent in downtown Burlington, relocated into the "Elks Building" from across the street at 323 N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in 1922, remaining until 1941, when the Labor Temple, Inc. purchased the building. John S. Lahee was very active in the community, involved in the county Republican Party, several fraternal circles, and active in many musical endeavors. He played first B flat cornet in the Burlington Boat Club Band, first violinist in Professor Heyner's orchestra, and was founder and organizer and first director of a local orchestra which became the Schramm Orchestra. He was chief musician of the Second Regiment, Iowa National Guard, played first violin in the Ladies Musical Club orchestra and led the Presbyterian church orchestra. He actively served on the Board of Trade, the Commercial Club, the Commercial Exchange, and the board of the Burlington Boat Club (*History of Des Moines County*, pp. 494-498).

In 1941, the Elks Club (BPOE) purchased the smaller building immediately west at 306-310 Washington St. and sold the Nassau Block to the Labor Temple, Inc. The Elks Club temporarily continued to use the lodge room and the Sahara Lounge on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor while they overhauled and expanded the property at 306-310 Washington St. Thereafter, the moniker "Elks Building" was ascribed to the new BPOE home at 306-310 Washington, and the Nassau Building became known as the Labor Temple until 1979. The building committee for Labor Activities, Inc. acquired the building, who were sanctioned by the Burlington Trades and Labor Assembly. The group reportedly had \$100,000 in cash available due to establishment of Iowa Ordnance Plant in town and bought the building for \$72,500. The building committee for Labor Activities included Clyde Bailey, Willard Koch, Perry Philpott, Frank Elliott, and Leo Burke. Both groups took possession of their new buildings on November 1, 1941, though the Elks retained used of the Sahara Lounge and club room on the fourth story until the new building was ready ("Unterkircher Structure to Be Club Home" and "Labor Buys Elks Building," October 1, 1941, in vertical files of Burlington Public Library).

The Burlington Trade and Labor Assembly was chartered in 1890 as a group of numerous labor organizations from in and around Burlington. The organizations included various trades such as barbers, bartenders, bus drivers, painters, truck drivers, carpenters, brick masons, and nearly 40 other groups. The main goal of the Assembly was to educate all workers and the public on unionism,

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stewardship, and other topics. Burlington Labor Activities, Inc. was simply in charge of the building, which served as meeting space for the Burlington Trade and Labor Assembly, Burlington Labor Activities, Inc., and Burlington Building and Construction Trades Council. Retail space provided income, and the dance hall was used for fundraisers. Archived information exists for Labor Activities, Inc. from 1942 to 1976, along with meeting minutes from 1951 to 1973 for the Burlington Trade and Labor Assembly and from 1951 to 1959 for the Burlington Building and Construction Trades Council in the State Historical Society of Iowa (historic information from collection archive records).

This sale was a major change in the use of the entire building. Listings in the Labor Temple in 1942 included the Unemployment Compensation Commission, the Iowa State Employment Service, Burlington Labor Activities, and offices of at least 34 local and regional labor and trade unions. There was also a Union Club. The exact lineup of unions represented in the building varied slightly according to each successive City Directory up through 1975. The total number of unions listed declined substantially beginning in the early 1970s. By 1976, no unions remained in the building.

Several businesses were listed at 304 Washington through this period, including Bell Investment Co. (1942-1976) and Burroughs Adding Machine Co. (later to become 3-M) (1942-1967). National Studios also had a space from 1942-1945. Graham's café was located diagonally across the intersection in the Medical Arts Building, and the Mississippi Savings and Loan Association sought to expand into their space in summer 1947. Mrs. Lyle Graham then leased the portion of the Labor Temple occupied by OPA, with interior and exterior work planned. The café closed on September 6, 1947 as they waited for the improvements for the new space to be finished. They moved into this building in August 1948, after work to the storefront was revealed in June. In addition to the new front on the building, interior work included tile flooring, indirect lighting, and air conditioning ("Café to Move to Labor Bldg," *Hawk-Eye*, August 1, 1947, 2; *Hawk-Eye*, June 1, 1948, 2; "Graham Café Opens Tuesday," *Hawk-Eye-Gazette*, August 30, 1948, 10). In 1950, Burlington's first Chinese food restaurant opened the café's space in the building, with the interior completely redecorated. The Rice Bowl operated through 1953 ("Open New Café Thursday," *Hawk-Eye-Gazette*, October 25, 1950, 12).

By 1955, App's Music House and App's School of Music, operated by O.W. and Inez Appleton, moved in from 205 N. Main St., remaining through 1975. O.W. Appleton had created an electric solid body guitar (reputed to be the first electric solid body guitar anywhere) in Burlington in the early 1940s – a decade before Gibson and at least 4 years before Fender introduced solid body electric guitars ([www.owappleton.com](http://www.owappleton.com), and "Guitar Pioneer", *The Hawk Eye*, February 3, 1994, p. 3A). Burlington Dance Academy operated in the building also at 300 Washington from 1958 through 1960. App's was succeeded by Mundt Piano & Organ Co.

The Labor Temple sold the building to Mundt Piano & Organ Co. in December 1975, and they are listed here from 1976 to 1979. They remodeled the first and second stories of the building in 1976 as they prepared to move here from a location in west Burlington at Sunnyside and Roosevelt ("Burlington Business Community was and still is expansion minded," *Hawk-Eye*, January 30, 1977, 11). Mundt's still operates on the northeast corner of 5<sup>th</sup> and Jefferson Streets.

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Keith D. Rosenberg bought the building December 1979 and opened The Typewriter Shop on the main floor, moving here from another location in town. The Typewriter Shop started in 1935 on N. Main, moving to 311 N. Main in 1936. They repaired and rented typewriters through World War II when sales were limited. They moved to 205 N. Main in 1952, bought from App's Music House. Office furniture was added to the store in the middle of the 1950s. Niels Rosenberg retired in 1967, selling the business to son Keith and wife Mary. In 1985, they celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. At this time, the first story housed office supplies, business machines, and drafting supplies. The second story had office furniture in display settings. The third and fourth stories were used for warehouse space for office furniture. A service department was located in the basement. The shop sold and serviced business machines, supplies, and furniture in four counties in Iowa and three counties in Illinois ("Typewriter Shop Reaches Milestone," *Hawk-Eye*, November 17, 1985, 22). The Typewriter Shop closed in 2002.

Acquired by John E. Danielson at a sheriff's sale in May 2003, the building has remained essentially vacant since then. The building was again sold in 2007 and in 2012. The current owner is working on plans to rehabilitate the building.

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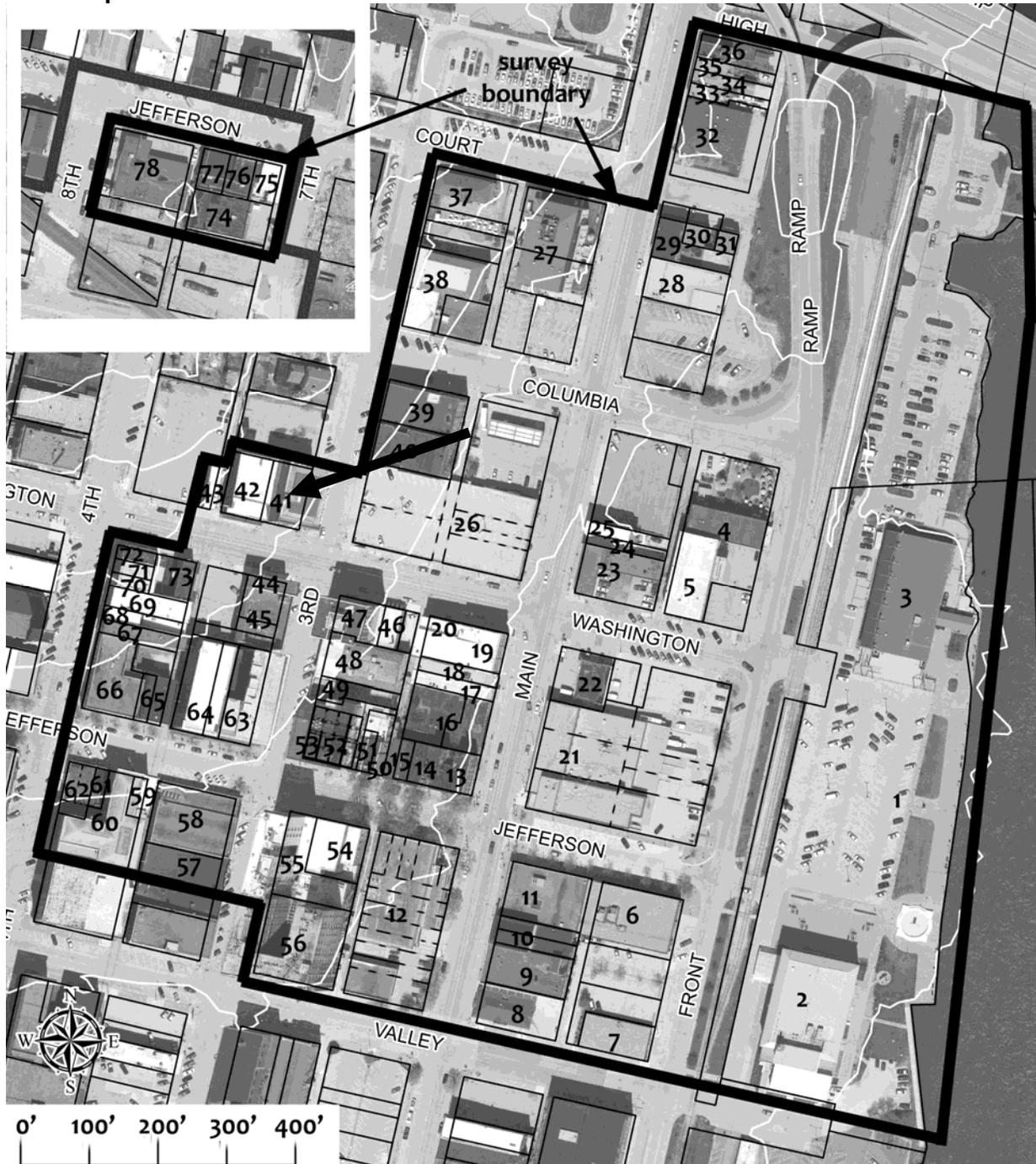
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**Location map**



Base aerial photography by Aerial Services Inc for Des Moines County GIS Commission, March 2010.

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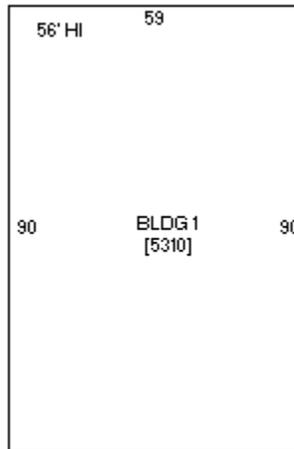
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## Building plan (from assessor's website)



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**Historic images**



Post Office and Opera House.

**Original three-story building built by Dr. Nassau with post office on first story (*Burlington Illustrated* 1889)**

*opera house in building at right*

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**Postcard of building in 1910s after fourth story added by Elks (Downtown Partners collection)**

*opera house in building at right*

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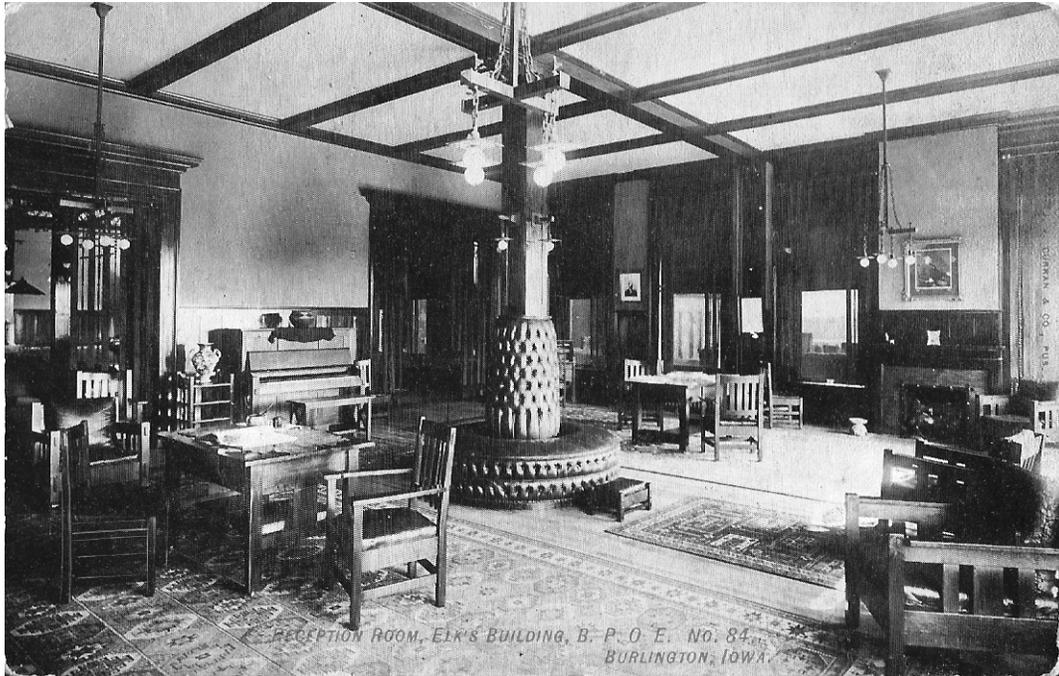
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Reception room (south end of third story) in Elks Building (Downtown Partners collection)



Card room (west room on third story) in Elks Building (Downtown Partners collection)

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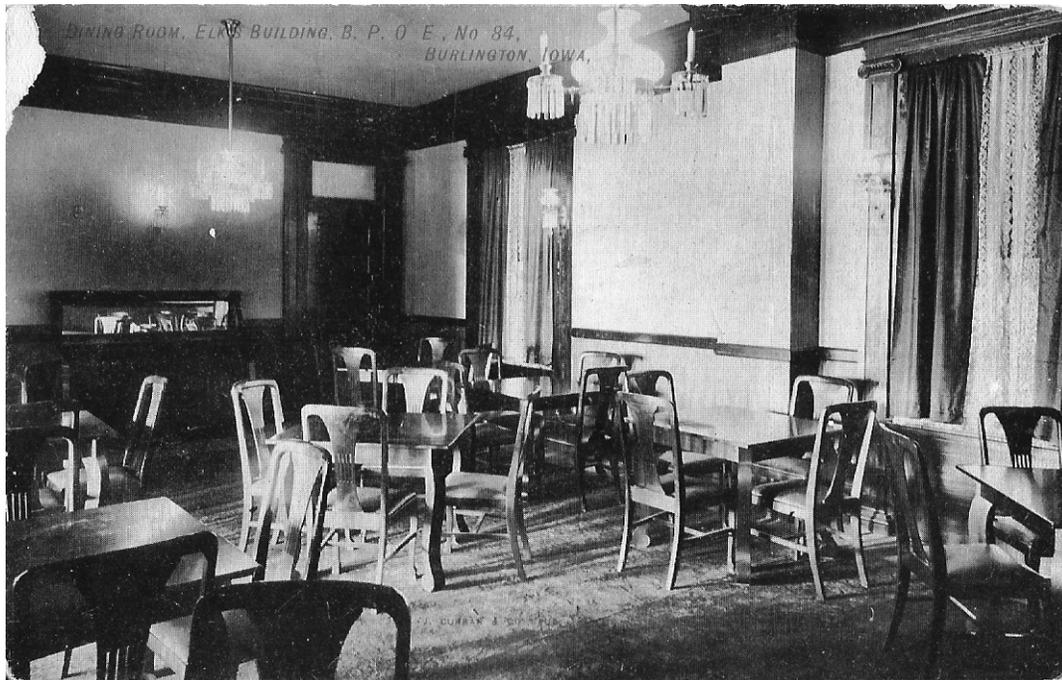
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Dining room in Elks Building (Downtown Partners collection)



Lodge room (main room on fourth story) in Elks Building (Downtown Partners collection)

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West side of 300 block of 3<sup>rd</sup> Street in 1969 with Elks Building across Washington at far right  
(Ewinger photo in DMCHS collection)

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**Digital photographs**



Photograph 29-03671-001 – South and east elevations, looking northwest (McCarley, November 15, 2012).

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Photograph 29-03671-002 – South elevation, looking north (McCarley, November 15, 2012).

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Photograph 29-03671-003 – East elevation, looking west (McCarley, November 15, 2012).

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Photograph 29-03671-004 – West elevations, looking northeast (McCarley, November 15, 2012).

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Photograph 29-03671-005 – East and north elevations, looking southwest (McCarley, November 15, 2012).