

Information on this brochure was collected from the Springfield Museum, City of Springfield, State of Oregon Inventory for Historic Sites and Buildings, and other documents.

For complete history of Springfield Oregon, visit the Springfield Museum located at 590 Main Street.

www.springfieldmuseum.com

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www.ci.springfield.or.us

Thank you Springfield Museum for providing most of the historic pictures for this brochure.

Brochure prepared by
Commissioner Paula Guthrie

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Springfield Downtown District

Walking Tour Guide



Springfield, Oregon

The History of Springfield Oregon

Elias and Mary Briggs and their family first arrived in Springfield in the winter of 1848. Mr. Briggs chose a site for his land claim and a new city on the east bank of the Willamette, between the Willamette and the McKenzie Rivers, on rich prairie surrounded by virgin timber. The claim included a spring in a field. The town of Springfield was named for the spring that still exists on the corner lot of Pioneer Parkway West and B Streets. The spring has been capped and covered and is under the kitchen of Unit #1 in Spring Site Apartments.

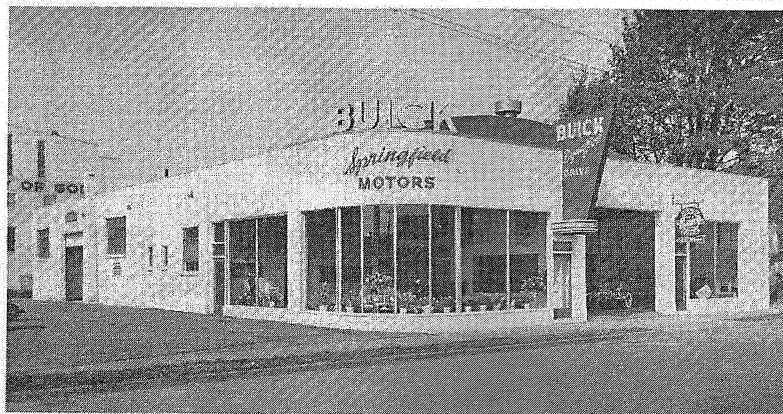
Elias began building a town. Elias Briggs' father, Isaac Briggs, also bought a land claim in Springfield. In 1852, using shovel and plow, they built the Millrace. Elias and Mr. Driggs of Linn County formed the Briggs' and Driggs' Company to build the flour and sawmills in 1853 and 1854.

In the early 1850s, the settlement of Springfield consisted of a ferry service across the Willamette, the Briggs' house, two mills, a trading post, and a school. Other businesses of the time included a shoemaker, a wagon maker, a cabinetmaker, four carpenters, two blacksmiths, a physician, and a merchant.

The Springfield School District was formed in 1854. Miss Agnes Stewart was the first teacher. The first schoolhouse was probably located in a small crude building near 7th and South B Streets. This school building was replaced in the 1880s by a one-story, two-room schoolhouse on the Mill and D Street site where District 19's Administration Building now stands.

The town was platted in 1856, two blocks between South A and Main, and Mill and 3rd Streets. The lots measured 66 x 120 feet, with streets 66 feet in width. The original town was designed in a grid system that aligned to the four cardinal directions.

By 1870, the census included the following businesses: a wagon maker, a tannery, a chair manufacturer and a sash and door factory, along with the saw and flour mills.



*Buick Dealership
702 North A Street
c. 1948*

Since April 1949, Springfield Buick has been in the same location and under the original family ownership. In 1948, Clarence Scherer opened the first new car dealership in Springfield on Main Street. In 1999, Springfield Buick was honored by General Motors for its 50th anniversary as a family-owned dealership. Robert Scherer is the present owner.

Robert's grandfather, Otto Scherer, was born in 1872 in Wisconsin. He opened a store in 1903 and sold Buicks. In 1911, Scherer Buick became the number one-selling store in Wisconsin. In 1928, Otto's two sons moved to Medford Oregon and opened a Buick dealership. They later opened one in Eugene before moving to Springfield.

The structure is considered Art Moderne or Streamline Moderne. This is a late branch of the Art Deco style. Its architectural style emphasized curving forms and long horizontal lines.

Art Moderne buildings typically have soft or rounded corners, flat roofs, flat wall surfaces, and horizontal bands of windows. The overall effect of these features makes the building look as streamlined as possible. Ornamentation is usually done in low relief to maintain the flatness of the walls. A similar car dealership building survives in Roseburg, Oregon.

Springfield incorporated as a city on February 25, 1885. Albert Walker, a Springfield blacksmith, was the first mayor.

In the year 1891, eighteen years after Eugene, Springfield finally secured a railroad line and its isolation ended. The flour mill changed hands, and after an expensive renovation, Springfield flour became famous throughout the Northwest.

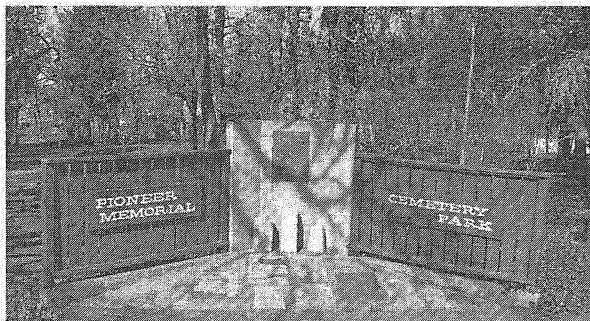
Welby Stevens was mayor in 1915. The community services and businesses available at this time were the largest flour mill in Lane County; a sawmill; two banks; an ice and cold storage plant; 42 blocks of pavement; a sewer system 6 miles long; gas and electric light plant, which furnished power and light for 11 towns; a street car service; a creamery; two newspapers; a steam laundry; and two hospitals.

Springfield maintained its small town demeanor until after World War II when industry expanded along the north of downtown and grew north and east. With residents moving away from the old downtown, and with the competition of businesses in Eugene, downtown retailing declined.

Increased timber demand accounted for a boom of population between 1940 and 1950. Booth-Kelly modernized its Springfield mill in 1948 and Weyerhaeuser arrived in 1949. Lane County became the lumbering capital of the nation.

Art and history are blended together in Springfield. There have been over the years several artists hired by the Arts Commission to create art and murals in the downtown area. Some of the murals are The Oregon Trail Mural on the east side of the historic Gerlach building; Bob the Dog in Art Alley; Draft Horse Logging; and the Jessie Bostelle Memorial Mural.

Main Street still has many of the structures built during the 1900s. These buildings retain the old fashioned charm but have the potential space for modern functions, such as retail, cultural and professional services, and restaurants.



*Springfield Pioneer Cemetery
South B and 4th Street
c. 1852*

Although two of founder Elias Briggs' children had been buried in the cemetery by 1852, the cemetery was not formally established until 1866. It is one of the oldest cemeteries in Lane County. Elias and Mary Briggs deeded the two acre site to the trustees of the Christian Church. Through the years, the property changed hands. In 1913, the City sued the alleged owners to get the cemetery back when they sold the property. The Springfield City Council described the Pioneer Cemetery as a place that had degenerated into overgrown open pits where bodies had been exhumed, graves unprotected, and foot and wagon trails crossed the property with no regard for the graves therein. The council then directed relatives of people buried there to get the bodies out in 60 days and strictly prohibited any more burials. In 1915, the City had the land surveyed and fenced. For the next 60 years, nothing happened. What tombstones remained were broken, stolen or buried in the undergrowth.

In 1966, there was a talk about removing and preserving the identity of the remains in the cemetery. Due to the expense, the council decided to leave any remaining burials in place. A beautification project began in 1973 and the memorial was completed in 1975. There were 12 remaining stones containing 14 names that make up the memorial. These people are still buried on the site. It is likely there are other plots on the property and quite possibly some that are very old.

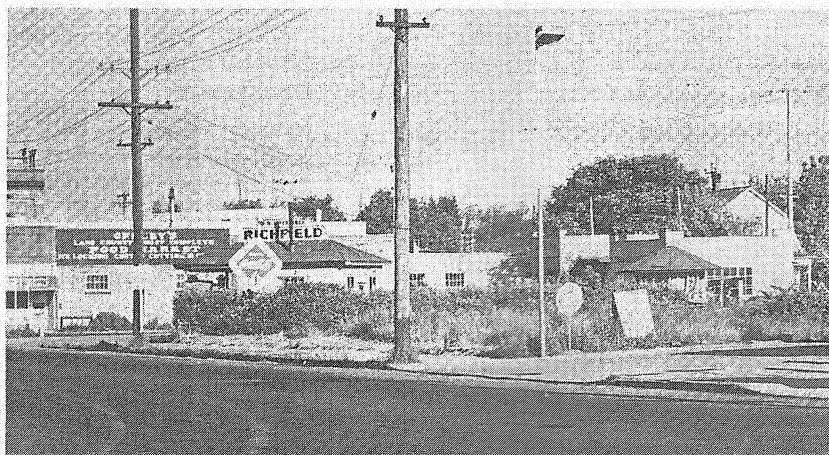
It is .25 acres and now a public park.



*Varsity Theater
727 Main Street
c. 1947*

The Varsity Theater opened its doors on October 2, 1947. It was built and owned by the Western Amusement Company. They also owned the Cascade Drive In Theater that was located on Main and 49th Streets.

The historic theater has been altered. The two-story façade has a rounded parapet wall with inset piers, giving it an Art Deco appearance. The theater marquee has been removed, and a long low awning stretches across the building on the first floor.



Richfield Gas Station
710 Main Street
c. 1927

The first automobile arrived in Springfield in 1907. The first automobile dealership, Gittens and Bally, was established in 1911. Over the next few years, local blacksmiths either adapted to the change by learning automobile repair along with horseshoeing and carriage gilding, or went out of business. The streetcar that was so modern in 1911 was outdated by 1920s. By then the automobile was cheap, practical, and efficient. With improved roads, the auto was the modern mode of transportation. A garage, presumably for auto repair, is listed in the 1915 city directory. The first service station opened in the 1920s by Ernest Black. Clear evidence of the increased use of the automobile in Springfield by the 1920s was the replacement of the streetcar bridge across the Willamette River by a span of concrete and steel for vehicle use in 1929. By 1928 there were two automobile dealers in the city, three service stations, and a taxicab service.

This old service station is built of staggered concrete blocks which provide decorative texturing. It was originally a Richfield Station. On the interior, the original garage doors are rolled up against the ceiling.

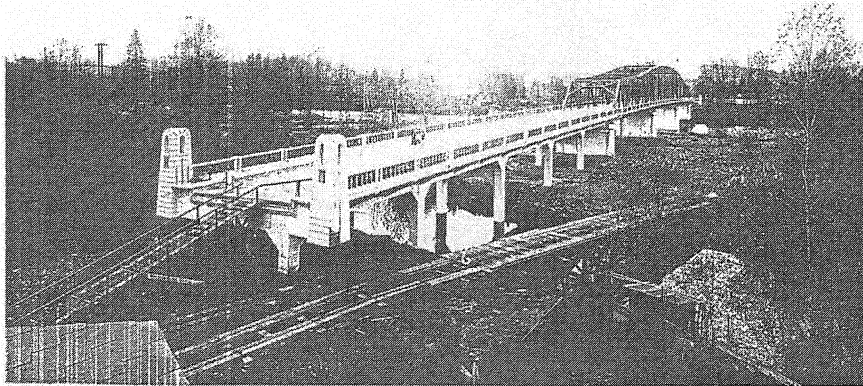


Southern Pacific Depot
101 South A Street
c. 1891

The Southern Pacific Railroad built the depot in 1891, the year the short line from Dundee to Coburg was extended to terminate in Springfield. This was eighteen years after Eugene got their railroad service. In those days, the absence or existence of a railroad could make or break a town. Establishment of the railroad in Springfield brought new prosperity to the City. The Depot was significant as the hub of passenger flow, freight traffic, and communications in Springfield until the end of WWII.

The depot is one of the oldest structures in Springfield. It was built by the Oregon and California Railroad Company. The building embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Stick/Chalet style of railroad stations built in the late 1880-90s. The Queen Anne style tendencies are an attractive example of 1890s depot architecture with the long open eaves supported by scrolled brackets. The two story aspect is a unique feature in Oregon as most stations were limited to one level. The building has decorated gable verge boards, sheltering ground story overhangs, and multi-paned, double hung window sash. The second story living quarters were for the station master.

The depot was relocated from the original location of South 7th Street to its present location at 101 South A Street on October 20, 1989, five blocks west of its former site. It is on the National Register of Historic Places.



*Main Street Bridge
Main Street Over Willamette
c. 1929*

Elias Briggs, the founder of Springfield, operated a ferry across the Willamette at the site of the bridge. He received a license in October 1853 to run the ferry.

There have been four bridges across the Willamette between Springfield and Glenwood. The Willamette Ferry service was replaced in 1875 by a 368' covered wooden bridge span. At that time it was considered the longest single span bridge west of the Mississippi. The wagon bridge was washed away during a flood. The second covered bridge was destroyed in the flood of 1890. It was replaced by a wood and steel bridge in 1890, which again was considered the longest span at 402 feet.

In order to accommodate growing automobile traffic, the city decided in 1929 to replace the streetcar bridge and span the Willamette with concrete and steel. Until the mid 1950's, both the bridge and Main Street had two way traffic.

This bridge was designed by Conde Balcom McCullough (1887-1946), a bridge engineer who is primarily known for designing many of Oregon's coastal bridges on Route 101. He helped design over 600 bridges in his life, many with architectural details such as art deco obelisks and Romanesque arches incorporated into the bridges features.

The South A Street Bridge was built in 1957.



*Offley Grocery Store
650 - 660 Main Street
c. 1948 - 1934*

Delbert R. and Sylvester D. Offley were partners in the Offley Super Market. Edward Offley was the butcher. They built the building as a grocery store and it still operates as such.

In the early days of retailing, all products generally were fetched by an assistant from shelves behind the merchant's counter while customers waited in front of the counter and indicated the items they wanted. This was time-consuming. The concept of self-service grocery was developed by Clarence Saunders and his Piggly Wiggly stores, which opened in 1916.

The two story brick commercial block actually consists of two separate buildings of similar style. The building closer to 7th Street is the older of the two and was built around 1934. The other building, which has the name "Offley" in cream color tile at the top, was built in 1948.

The buildings are constructed of red common bond brick. The building has a large white cement stringcourse immediately above the windows. Both buildings are topped with a course of patterned brick and a band of white concrete. Flat Roman brick has been installed below the windows and metal sheeting has been used to cover the brick pilasters that divide the bays.

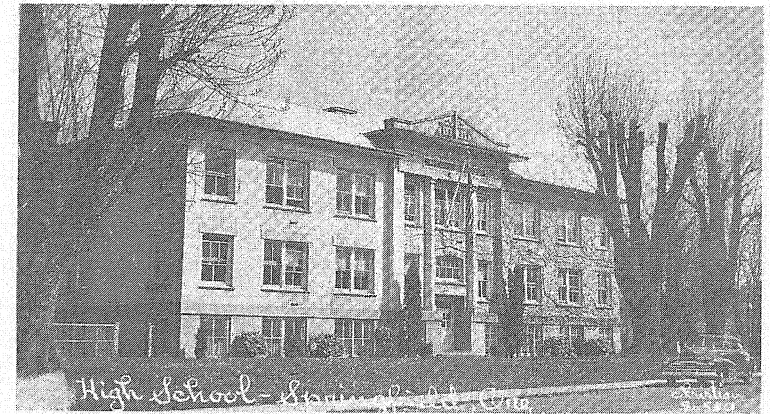


McKenzie Theater
628-630 Main Street
c. 1946 / 2006

In 1946, the McKenzie Theater on Main Street held its grand opening. On the marquee was the western film *The Virginian*. The building has had many owners and businesses in its life. It started as a theater and went on to be a fine arts theater, a boxing club, and a dance and music hall called The Zoo. It has always been used as an entertainment venue.

The current theater is named after Richard E. Wildish who passed away in 1990. He was a partner in the T.C. Wildish Company. Wildish Land Company started the sand and gravel business in 1935 with a single truck which hauled gravel, and is now a multi-million dollar operation in Lane County.

The theater features a 284 Roman-style seating hall and a huge street-level stage. It was a \$2.1 million renovation project completed in 2006.



Springfield School Building
525 Mill Street
c. 1921

In 1854, Springfield School District No. 19 was formed and the first teacher, Agnes Stewart, was appointed. The first school on this site was built in 1888 and it was replaced in 1890. Between 1907 and 1912, the building was enlarged and converted to a high school.

The current structure was built in 1921 as the high school. It is the fourth school to be erected on this site. Charles H. Burggraf of Albany, Oregon was hired as the architect. George W. Perkins was the contractor and was paid \$33,524 for its construction. The building became a Junior High in 1942, when the Union Senior High was built.

The façade of the building has changed very little. It has a truncated hip roof covered with tin plates. The wooden windows are mostly two over two and are set back into the wall. Most of the windows have a large fake lintel above and a sloping ledge at the bottom. There is a unique five-sided window above the front door. There is a simple wooden cornice under the eaves. The most prominent feature of the façade is its large central bay with classical features. It has four pilasters set on half of a basement story. The top of the base has a false pediment which had "High School" and "1921" applied in large letters that were removed when it was converted to the admin building.

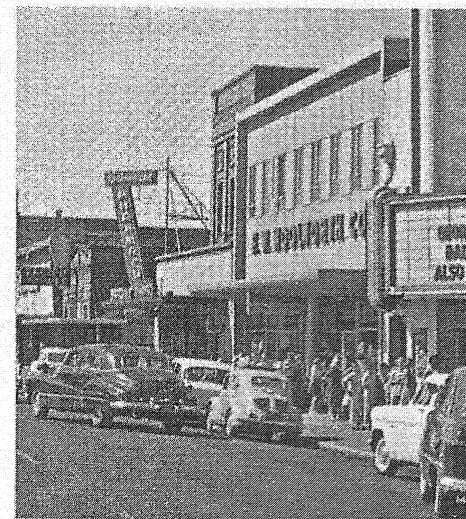


Bell Theater / Seavey Building
208-216 Main Street
c. 1911

The theater was built by J. A. (Jess) Seavey and was owned by J.J. Bryan. The building was designed by Eugene Architect John Hunzicker.

In 1911, chairs and hard benches were the accepted seats and the music was provided by a player piano, or a gramophone. Actors and actresses also made regular vaudeville circuits. Mr. Bryan operated "The Grand," "The Electric," and "The Bell" theaters in Springfield. Although this building did not house the first theater in Springfield, it appears to have been the only theater in operation from the date of its construction in 1911 until 1949.

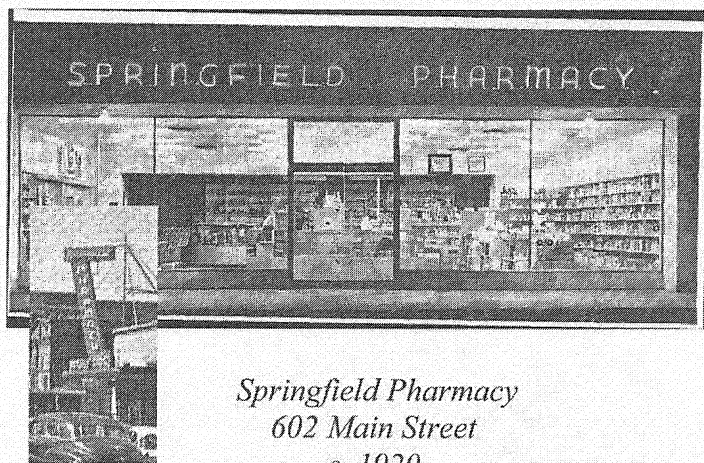
This fairly high style downtown building features a wide brick cornice, brick belt course, block modillions and dentil course. It has a keystone lintel above the small window on the western side of the front façade. Other windows are paired 9-pane Chicago style on the upper floor. The theater entrance and lobby were converted into a commercial storefront prior to 1979. The Main Street transoms have been painted over. Stucco now covers the original brick siding on the lower level.



Maloney Building
612 Main Street
c. 1950

The building was originally built for the F. W. Woolworth Company, a retail company that was one of the original American five-and-dime stores. Woolworth's, as the stores popularly became known, was one of the first American retailers to put merchandise out for the shopping public to handle and select without the assistance of a sales clerk. The building has always been a retail shop.

This large two-story commercial building is constructed of reinforced concrete. It has a rectangular shape and a flat roof. The street façade is finished in stucco. The second floor features a long row of windows, all paired metal casements above a fixed horizontal lite. An unusual feature of this building is the way in which the entire front façade is slightly recessed, leaving a projecting rim around the sides and top.



*Springfield Pharmacy
602 Main Street
c. 1920*

For many years, this location housed the Springfield Pharmacy. The Springfield Pharmacy sign had the symbols of a mortar and pestle as well as the Rx to make sure that any passerby would not mistake this drugstore for some other type of establishment. William Schlitzkus was the owner.

This is a large, low commercial building. The plain walls are unrelieved stucco with a slight lip at the cornice. Flat metal awnings were added in the 1980s to the front entrance and the second entrance on 6th Street. The shop front windows have been replaced with aluminum sash, and marble skirting has been added below the windows.

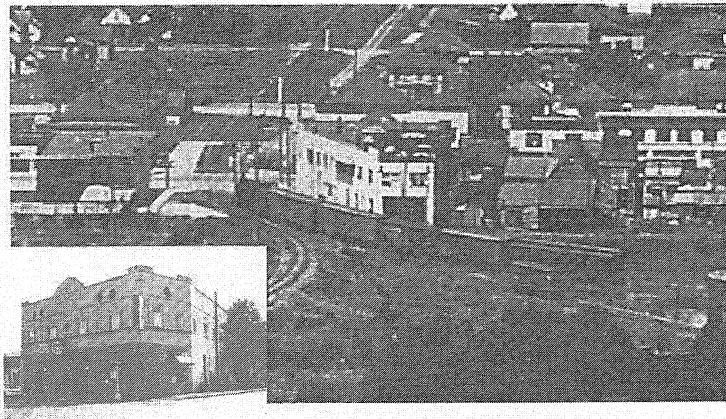


*Master Woodsmen Lodge / Masonic Temple
226-230 Main Street
c. 1910*

In 1901, the Master Woodmans' Lodge of Springfield was formed; after that the group erected a lodge hall on Main Street that exists today. The street level was used for businesses while the second floor was used for meetings. Liberty Lodge, a Masonic organization, was organized in about 1925. The lodge hall was originally the Woodsmen of the World building and was purchased in November 1930 by the Masons for \$5,500. They had met in the IOOF building, but moved in 1931.

The Masons, founded in Oregon in 1851, is a fraternity of moral men (just as a sorority is a group of women) who join together because they are committed to self-improvement, family values and community involvement. In 1911, eleven fraternal organizations were active in Springfield.

The first floor originally had picture windows and two wooden framed entrances. There are two large wooden brackets at the edges of the building underneath the screen. There is a white wooden cornice above the screen. The second story was originally stuccoed over brick and probably gray in color. It had four-over-one windows. The roofline has been changed to a mansard roof covered with tile. The upper windows are capped by low brick arches and a brick belt course separating the floors.

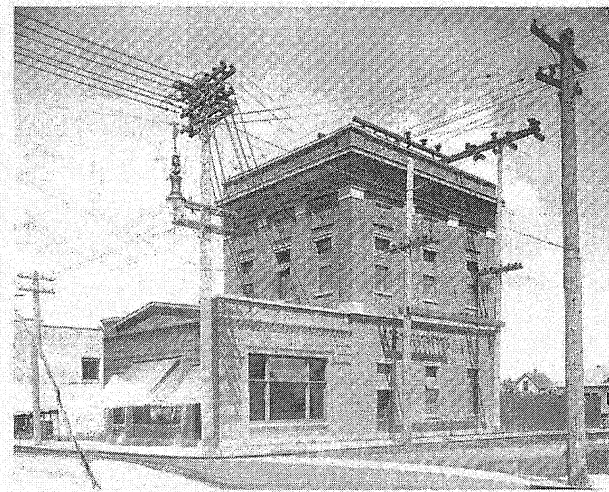


Fry and Rankin Building
307 Main Street
c. 1911-12

The Fry and Rankin building was constructed by Joseph P. Fry of Springfield and Mr. Rankin of Eugene. J.P. Fry located his real estate business in the building. In 1912, the Polk directory showed that there was also a restaurant located in the building along with a saloon, a jeweler, and confectionary with a candy factory in the rear. The rooms on the second floor were rented out.

The building used to be called the Flatiron building because of its wedge shape. The Flatiron style was originally named by pioneer women who said mountains in Boulder Colorado looked like the flat, metal irons used to iron their clothes.

The rear corner on Pioneer Parkway East and A Streets was clipped due to the railroad line that passed by the building. It is made of board-formed concrete which has been covered with stucco. A great deal of the original Mission style decorations remain on the second story of the façade, including a cornice, fancy stringcourses, and four round vents. "Fry and Rankin" is spelled out in the curved decorative false pediment at the top.



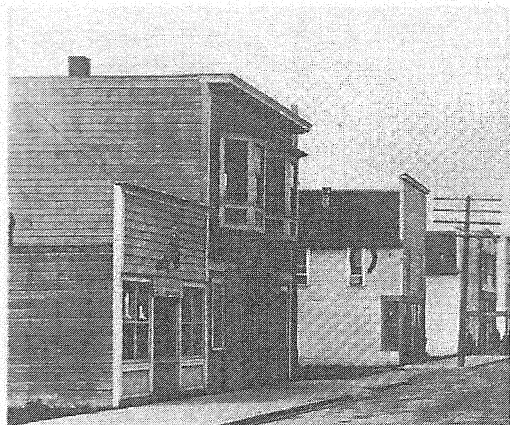
Mountain State Power Company Substation
590 Main Street
c. 1911

This unusual building is the home of the Springfield Museum. The structure was built as a power substation and the prototype design was also used in Albany, Oregon.

The Northern Idaho and Mountain Power Company bought the property in January, 1911, for \$3500.00. The building was first erected by the Oregon Power Company. Since that time it was owned by the Mountain States Power Company and the Pacific Power and Light Company. The building was originally used as a substation in order to provide electricity to the community.

It features a two-story brick mass fronted by a single story. The two-story portion features ornamental details including cast stone lintels and sills, pilasters dividing the windows on the second floor level, and cast stone cornice. The front half of the building was stuccoed in the 1940s. Although the electrical equipment on the roof and the transformers from inside have been removed, there are still visible remnants of the transformers on the interior walls.

The building was designated as a City Landmark in July 1980 and is on the National Historic Register.



*Royal Building Site
505 Main Street
c. October 2007*

The buildings and businesses located at the corner of 5th and Main Street have long served the needs of the community. In the early 1900s a two-story brick building housed a blacksmith shop, a wagon shop, and a bicycle shop. In later years, the structure was rebuilt with reinforced concrete and an auto tire store took up shop. In more recent years, the businesses located on this corner included a photography studio and St. Vincent De Paul Store.

The new Royal Building was completed in October 2007. Spread across the mid-rise's upper four floors are 33 single-bedroom apartments. The Royal is designed with energy efficiency in mind. The use of "green" construction materials and a geothermal heating system keep tenants' energy bills to \$20 a month or less.

The Royal Building name is a quirky tribute to the late Eugene artist David Joyce. Joyce, best known for his photo mural of flying people at Eugene Airport, had his studio in the earlier structure. When he bought the building, he found a box of large Art Deco-style metal letters. Playing with them like Scrabble pieces, he found the letters could spell "Royal Bldg," so he made a sign and named the building. The original letters are set in concrete at the entrance.

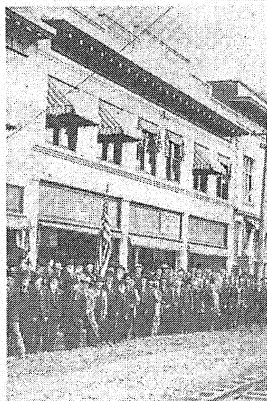


*Springfield Armory
326 Main Street
c. 1921*

In 1887, Oregon authorized the building of armories to allow for the drilling and practice of the National Guard. In 1916, Congress passed the National Defense Act which established a system of armory instruction that required all members of state militia organizations to assemble for drill not less than 48 times each year.

After the armory, the building held boxing matches, a hardware store, and an upholstery and drapery fabric store.

The building is constructed of common bond brick. The most prominent feature of the façade is the large arched entrance. Behind the arch is a recessing double door with two windows above. Two large picture windows that are set into the wall about six inches flank the entrance. There are six windows on the second story. They are all six-over-one with vertical bricks above. There are two brick stringcourses between the first and second stories and at the top of the building. At the rear of the building is a one story section of cement.



Stevens and Perkins Building
330-336 Main Street
c. 1911

The Stevens and Perkins building was built by Welby Stevens and A.J. (Al) Perkins. The building may have been constructed by George W. Perkins, Al's brother, who was a well-known contractor in Springfield. In 1912, three stores occupied the building including a grocery store and a clothing store. The central section was occupied by a store called "The Racket" which sold notions, glassware, writing materials, and some clothing. At various other times, the building housed a dance hall, a five and dime Store, the Springfield News, and apartments upstairs.

The building was one of the first brick commercial structures in the City following "Sutton's Grocery Store." The building contributed to the development of Main Street as a major commercial district.

The two storied building is constructed of tan-colored common bond brick. There are three banks of windows and three recessed entrances on the first floor with a two-foot base of gray brick. There are six paired, one-over-one windows arranged symmetrically on the second story. Between the windows are panels of small white and brown patterned hexagonal tiles. The face is topped with a stepped false front with "1911" "Stevens" and "Perkins" applied.

This building is on the City Historic Landmark Inventory.



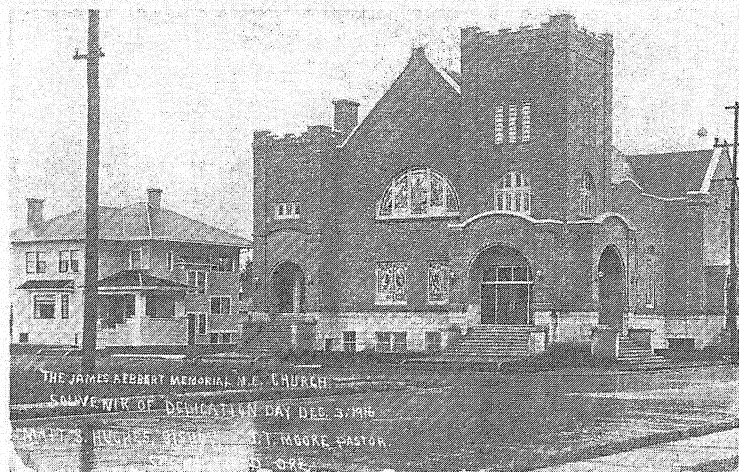
Sutton Block / Gerlach Building
500 Main Street
c. 1909 / 1939

When the building was constructed in 1909, it was called "Sutton's Place." William Sutton, the mayor, planned a one-story brick block in the City and this was the final design.

The building has been used for several types of businesses. It used to be a doctor office, dentist office, lawyer office, a drugstore, a tailor's shop, and a grocery store. In 1931, the building became known as the Stanley Building for the grocery store called Ralph and Stanley's, located on the main level. The building housed Gerlach Drug Store from 1941 -1985.

The building was first constructed in an Italian Renaissance style of brick with three stories and large pronounced cornice which supported a pediment. The third story windows contain four-over-two panes of glass and between these were placed decorative quoins. Single-paned windows were placed in the second story and a large canopy covered the ground floor entrance. The pediment announced "Sutton Block" with "1909" above it. It is highly likely that John Hunzicker was the architect who designed the building.

The brick siding was stuccoed over during the late 1930s and the building looks more like the art deco style popular at that time. In the 2000s, Emerald Arts Center renovated the building and restored the main entrance to the corner as it was originally.

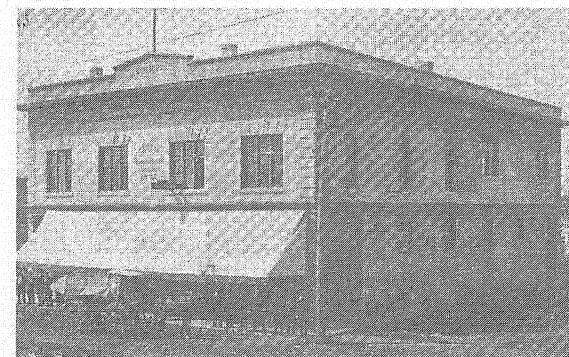


Ebbert Methodist Church
532 C Street
c. 1916

The Springfield Methodist Church formed in 1868 as part of the Methodist circuit that included six communities. By 1907, it was large enough to be a permanent station. The building was constructed by J.J. McCracken with the interior finished by Matt Male, both of Springfield. The church is named after James A. Ebbert who secured the last donation land claim in the area.

It is of Romanesque architecture that was inspired by medieval churches of England, France and Germany. It is like a fortress characterized by the use of round arches, corner towers, and heavy masonry. The church is a wood frame building with brick veneer and a full concrete basement. It and the adjacent parsonage were designed by Albert J. Crandall, an architect from Lebanon, Oregon. Both were built at a cost of \$40,000. The 23 stained glass windows in the church are a notable feature. The five main windows were based on paintings depicting bible verses. The windows were built by the Povey Brothers Glass Company of Portland, Oregon. The church paid \$1600 for the windows in 1916. They are protected on the outside by bullet proof glass. The Povey Company still maintains the windows. The church still contains original oak pews.

It is the oldest church structure in the City.



I.O.O.F. Building
342-346 Main Street
c. 1907

This corner has been the home of Springfield Lodge #70 of the Odd Fellows since its construction in 1907. Upon completion, it was the largest one of the few masonry buildings in town, contrasting sharply with the timber structures then lining Main Street. It was the first building of modern urban character, and is the oldest building remaining downtown. The IOOF occupied the second floor, while a variety of businesses were on the first floor.

The Lodge's purpose is their steady exercise as a benevolent organization to relieve distress wherever it is seen; to visit the sick; to bury the dead; and to educate the orphan whether it be through financial support of the hospital, administration of the cemetery, or the simple act of visiting an ailing neighbor to make sure all needs are provided for. The Lodge had a deep impact on the moral character and social history of early Springfield.

The two-story structure is built of brick and surfaced with stucco. Many decorative features are incorporated, including a belt course above the first floor; quoins at the building corners and at window surrounds; and, a projecting cornice with large modillions. The flat roof is surrounded by a parapet wall with a simple stepped pediment in the front with contains the 1907 date.

Mr. John Hunzicker was the architect and L.W. Stewart was awarded the contract for a price of \$10,995.00.

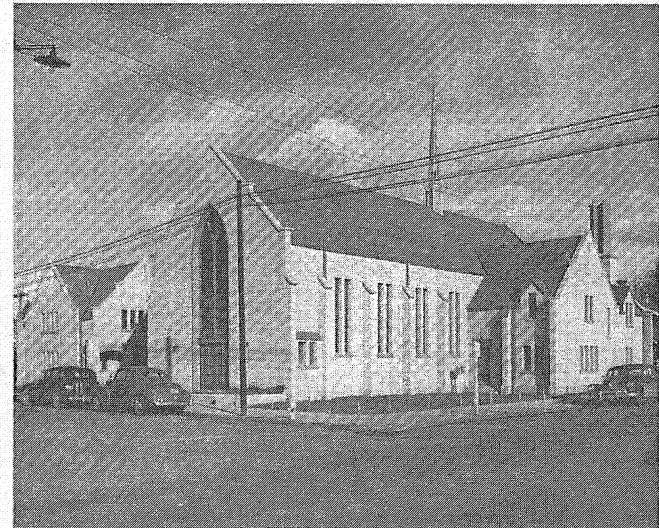
This building is on the City Historic Landmark Inventory.



Hasting Building
346-349 Main Street
c. 1910

This two-story commercial building lies on the corner of Main and 4th Street with its shop fronts concentrated along Main and several apartments along 4th Street. A one-story addition has been made to the south end of the building and dates to c. 1940.

The building is constructed of board-formed concrete and has a flat roof and stuccoed wall surfaces. A slight cornice projects over the walls and the windows are set in low surrounds. The primary windows are Craftsman style with four-over-one casement flanking eight-over-one fixed.



First Christian Church
418 A Street
c. 1948

The Springfield Christian Church was organized prior to 1872. The first church building was built in 1880 on the hill south of the railroad tracks. The land was donated by Isaac Briggs, who is the father of the founder of Springfield. The Pioneer Cemetery was the cemetery in the old church yard. In 1905, the building was moved to the current location of 4th and A Street. It was remodeled and an addition made in 1907. That structure burned down in 1922. It was rebuilt in 1924, and burned down again the last Sunday of December in 1945. The current structure was dedicated on September 19, 1948. Percy D. Bentley of Eugene was the architect with W.H. Shields as the contractor.

The building is constructed with pumice masonry blocks. It is fireproof. The sanctuary is simple, yet beautiful in design. Its Norman Gothic architectural style goes back to the beginning of the Church. It was dedicated on September 19, 1948, and cost \$120,000 to build.