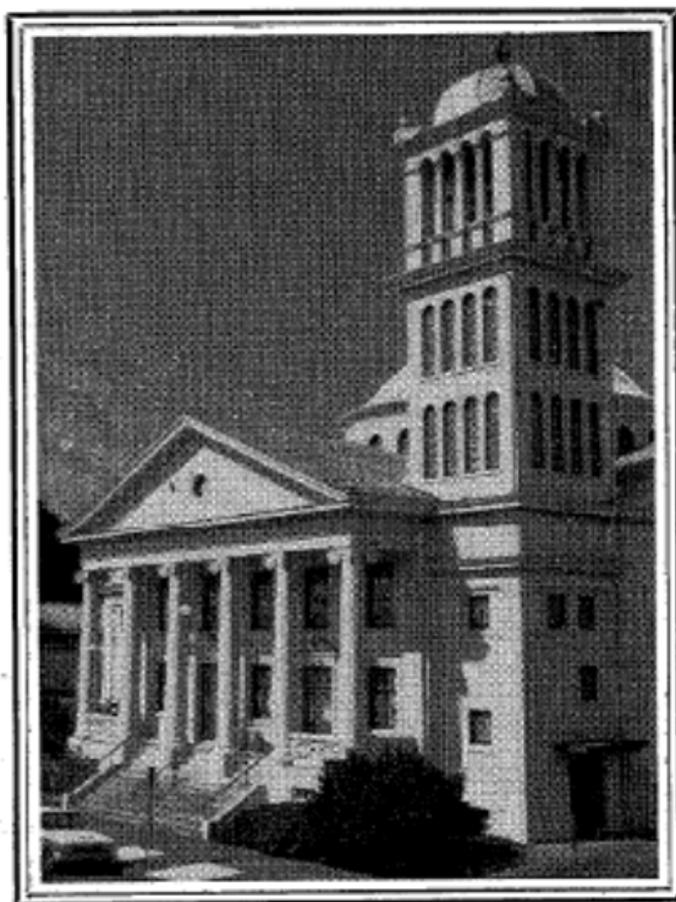

Historic Buildings of Downtown Eugene



A self-guided walking tour of
Historic Landmarks in Eugene.

BRIEF HISTORY OF DOWNTOWN EUGENE

In 1876, the year of this nation's first centennial, the City of Eugene had about 1,400 residents, and the City Limits at that time corresponded roughly to what we now call "the downtown area." Its center for the next three decades was about where it is now, a stone's throw from the present Lane County Courthouse at 8th Avenue and Oak Street. Probably the most important event during those years was the arrival of the railroad in 1871, which encouraged confidence in the City's future. The location of the train station at 4th Avenue and Willamette Street inspired City officials to grade Willamette Street and to install gas lights; this was the first of Eugene's streets to get such treatment, and it clearly institutionalized Willamette as the City's "main street."

In 1891, the first trolley was developed in Eugene. This allowed residents to live beyond walking distance of the old town. As the trolleys were gradually replaced by automobile in the 1920s and 1930s, Eugene's downtown hit its historic high point as the City's functional and cultural heart. During this period, while each neighborhood provided for its own day-to-day goods and services (groceries, etc.), major purchases, entertainment, celebrations, as well as much of the City's employment and manufacturing occurred in the downtown.

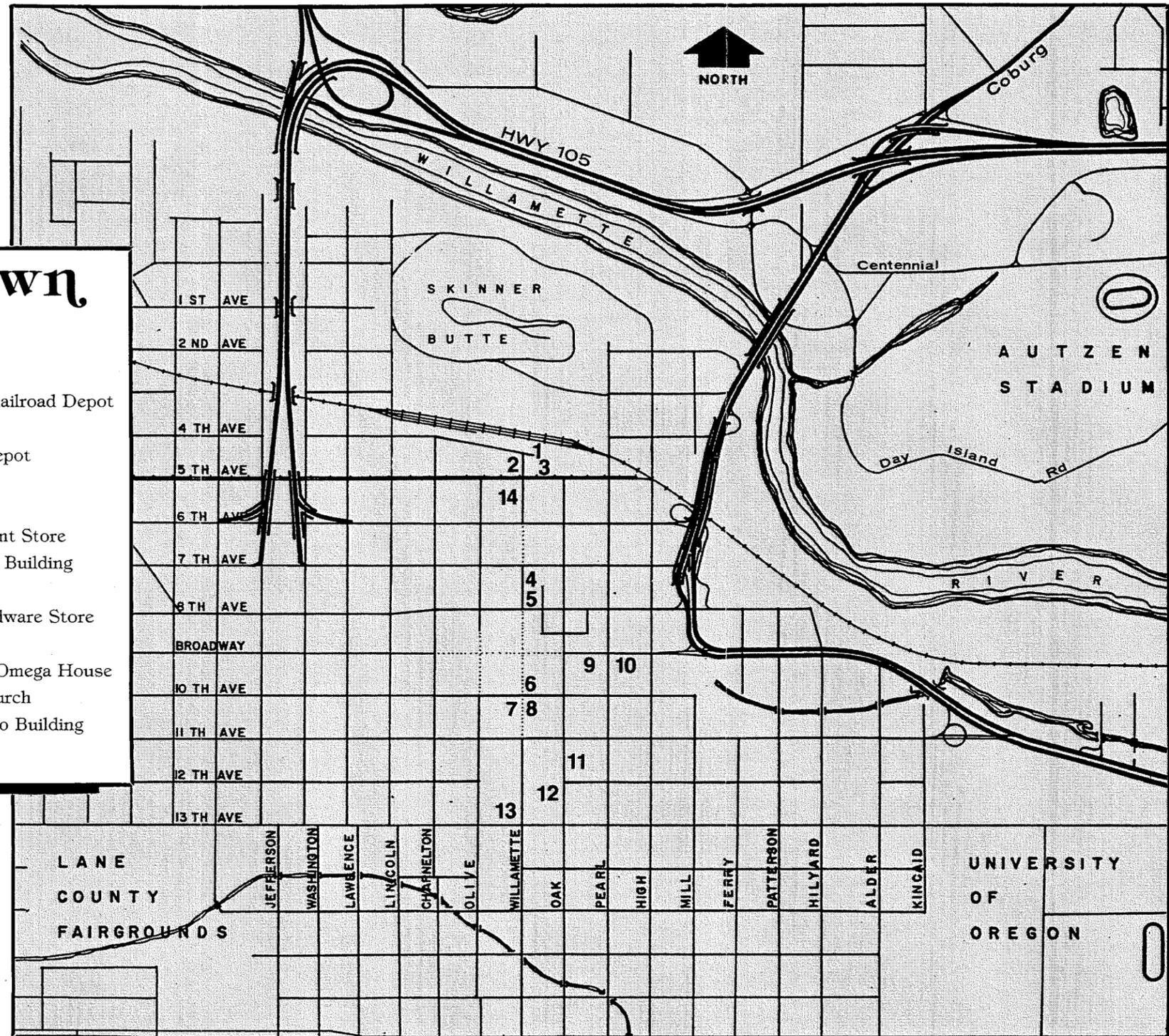
Today there are 14 historic buildings in downtown Eugene with dates of construction ranging from 1855 up to 1946. Most of these historic buildings are near Willamette Street which continues to be recognized as Eugene's "main street."

You will find the historic buildings in the downtown to be in different states of repair. Some, such as the First Christian Church, have always been maintained by their owners, and have continuously been seen as historical assets to the community. Many have been restored and converted to commercial uses such as the Oregon Electric Railroad Station and the Smeede Hotel. The Ax Billy building was recently restored and converted to an athletic club.

All of these buildings make an important contribution to the character of Eugene's downtown and to its role as the City's historical center.

Downtown Eugene

1. The Southern Pacific Railroad Depot
2. The Lane Hotel
3. The Oregon Electric Depot
4. The Smeede Hotel
5. The Tiffany Building
6. The Ax Billy Department Store
7. The McDonald Theater Building
8. The Schaefers Building
9. The Quackenbush Hardware Store
10. The Eugene Hotel
11. The former Alpha Tau Omega House
12. The First Christian Church
13. The Kennell-Ellis Studio Building
14. The U.S. Post Office





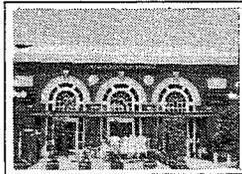
1. The Lane Hotel (1903), located at 488 Willamette Street was developed by George G. Gross, realtor and founder of the Willamette Valley Land Company. Although the building

has undergone several alterations, it has retained the majority of its original features. After careful restoration work in 1974, the Lane Hotel now appears virtually as it did in 1936.

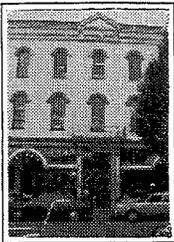


2. The Southern Pacific Railroad Depot (1908), was the third passenger depot to be built at the north end of Willamette Street. The style of building is Romanesque Revival

which is distinguished by the low Bell-cast-hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves supported by massive wooden beams.



3. The Oregon Electric Depot (1914), located at 27 East 5th Avenue, was designed by Oregon's dominant architect of the time, A.E. Doyle. The building is one of the few remaining public buildings of the Georgian Revival style of architecture in the state, and the best of that style remaining in Eugene.



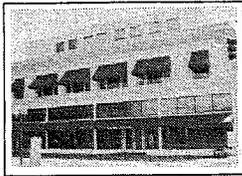
4. The Smeede Hotel (1885), located at 767 Willamette Street, represents one of the best examples of Early Italianate commercial architecture in the Upper Willamette Valley,

and is the oldest surviving brick hotel in Lane County. Among the many beautiful features of this building are the round arches that occur over each of the original windows.



5. The Tiffany Building (1913), located at 795 Willamette Street, was created in a reconstruction of a smaller, two-story structure known as the McClung Building, which dated

back to 1902. The four-story structure is one of the few remaining of the Commercial style of architecture in Eugene.



6. The Ax Billy Department Store (1910), located at the northeast corner of 10th Avenue and Willamette Street, is the only terra-cotta brick Commercial style building in

Eugene dated from the early 1900s. The ornamentation and detailing of this style are simple and subordinate to the strong horizontal appearance created by the windows and doors.



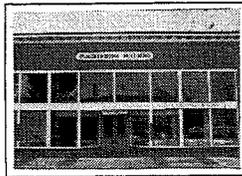
7. The McDonald Theater Building (1925), located at the southwest corner of 10th and Willamette Street, was considered the grand theater of Eugene. It displays a blend

of Classical, Mediterranean, Oriental, and Nordic architectures characteristic of the exotic style of that era's movie palaces.



8. The Schaefers Building (1929), located at the southeast corner of 10th Avenue and Willamette Street, is the only commercial example of "Modernistic" architecture in

Eugene and one of the few examples of that style remaining on the West Coast. Of particular interest on the exterior is the use of a fine-grain, yellow-orange brick to create decorative chevron motifs.



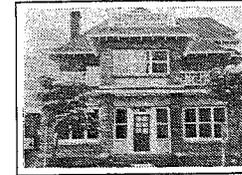
9. The Quackenbush Hardware Store (1903), located at 160 East Broadway, is an example of the Early Commercial style of architecture and is one of the few structures of

this style and period remaining in Eugene. The building's restoration in 1971 preserved the simplicity of the original red-brick design and the symmetry of the facade.



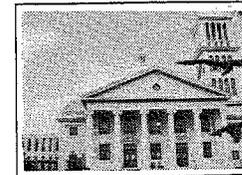
10. The Eugene Hotel (1924), located at 222 East Broadway, served for three decades as the "hub" of the Eugene community. Of particular interest in the massive,

seven-story, U-shaped building is the arched main entryway which is suggestive of North Italian Romanesque style.



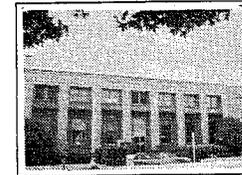
11. The former Alpha Tau Omega House (1910), located at 1143 Oak Street, is a large, two-and-a-half story Craftman style residence. Applied as a veneer to the exterior

are seven different patterns of concrete block combined in a manner that creates rich and varied texture.



12. The First Christian Church (1911), located at 1166 Oak Street, is representative of Neo-Classical Revival architecture, distinguished by pediments on each gable end, a

tin-roofed dome, and a portico of two-story Ionic columns. In 1926 the bell tower was added, which brought the first chimes to Eugene.



13. The U.S. Post Office (1938), located at 520 Willamette Street, was designed by architect Gilbert Underwood in classic Art-Deco style. Particularly evident Art-

Deco features include the blue terra-cotta on the east front of this New Deal era government building.



14. The Kennell-Ellis Studio Building (1946), located at 1280 Willamette Street, is reminiscent of the International style of architecture. The smooth flowing lines

of the curved soffit, the uninterrupted balcony, canopy, and handrails and the faceted windows all intensify the speed and continuity of the street.

The buildings described above have all been designated as either national or city historic landmarks, or are on the statewide inventory of historic sites.

For more information, contact the City of Eugene Planning Division at 99 West 10th Avenue, 682-5377.

