

City of Auburn

Local Landmark Designation Application

For Staff Use Only

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building | <input type="checkbox"/> Site | <input type="checkbox"/> District | Approval Date _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Structure | <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Property | _____ |

1. NAME AND LOCATION OF PROPERTY

Historic Name Hetzel Building

Other names/site number _____

Address 923 Central Ave

Historic address _____

2. PROPERTY OWNER(S) NAME AND ADDRESS

Name Charles Dana Nixon

Street and number 5832 Fallbrook Ave

City Woodland Hills State CA Zip 91367

Phone (H) (818) 887-5943 (w) _____ Email _____

3. NOMINATION PREPARED BY


Name/title Sarah Atkinson

Organization Peru State College

Street and number _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email Saatkinson@campus.peru.edu

Date prepared 4/14/2013 Signature 

Name of Property _____

4. NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY

| Contributing | Non Contributing | | Contributing resources previously listed on the National Register or Local Register |
|--------------|------------------|------------|---|
| <u>1</u> | | Bldings | |
| | | Sites | <u>None</u> |
| | | Structures | |
| | | Objects | |
| <u>1</u> | | Total | |

5. GEOGRAPHIC DATA

Acreage of property Less than (1) acre

Property identification number 640034217

6. BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION

Describe boundary line encompassing all man-made and natural resources to be included in designation (general legal description or survey). Attach map delimiting proposed boundary. (Use continuation sheet if necessary)

Howe & Nixon addition to Auburn Block 20 Lot 12

7. FUNCTION OR USE

| Historic Functions | Current Functions |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| <u>Retail Store</u> | <u>Retail Store</u> |
| | <u>Storage</u> |
| | |
| | |

8. DESCRIPTION

| Architectural Classification | Materials |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Brick</u> |
| | <u>Stone</u> |
| | |

Narrative Description

On one or more continuation sheets describe the historic and existing condition of the property. Illustrate the following information: original location and setting; natural features; pre-historic man-made features; subdivision design; description of surrounding buildings; major alterations and present appearance; interior appearance.

Name of Property _____

9. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria for Significance
(mark one or more boxes for the appropriate criteria)

- (1) Historical importance or cultural significance, or association with a significant person
- (2) Architectural and engineering importance
- (3) Geographic importance
- (4) Archeological importance

Area(s) of Significance
(See Attachment A for list of categories)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates
1890

Significant Person(s)

Cultural Affiliation/Historic Period

Builder

Architect

Narrative Statement of Significance
Explain the significance of the property as it relates to the above criteria and information on one or more continuation sheets. Include biographical data on significant person(s), builder, and architect, if known.

10. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.

ATTACHMENT A – Areas of Significance for Local Landmark Designation

A particular site, structure, or area may be designated for preservation as a landmark or historical district if it has:

- (1) Historical importance or cultural significance, or association with a significant person
 - Historical importance or cultural significance, interest or value as part of the development, history, heritage or culture of the City, state or nation;
 - Associated with the life of a person significant in the past;
 - Site of an historic event, or exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, educational, social or historic heritage of the community;

- (2) Architectural and engineering importance
 - Architectural and engineering importance, portraying the historical setting or environment of a distinctive characteristic of an architectural or engineering type, period, style, or method of construction;
 - Work of a resident, builder or designer whose individual work is significant in the development of the City;
 - Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship of distinctive quality, or which represents a significant innovation;

- (3) Geographic importance
 - Geographic importance, by being a part of or related to a city center, park or other distinctive area, which should be developed or preserved according to a plan based on a historic, cultural or architectural motif;
 - Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community, or the City; or

- (4) Archeological importance has yielded or is likely to yield information regarding the history of the area prior to the establishment of the City.

Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

The Hetzel Building sits on the southeast corner of Hwy 75 and Hwy 36. It features architecture that is unique in Auburn. The most prominent feature would be the turret on the corner of the building. This turret and the front of the building features elaborate stone décor. The façade features both brick and stone work.

The second story of the Hetzel Building is part of the New Opera House that is mostly contained in the adjoining building.

The windows have recently been replaced on both stories.

Continuation

Section 9 Page 1

Since its construction in 1890, this building has been a part of the downtown business area of Auburn. Several businesses have occupied the first story over those 123 years, including McKnight Clothing Co. (1930s and before) and Hahn Clothing (1970s and 80s) and was part of the A.H. Gilmore Store during the early 1900s.

The original owner of this building was Louisa R. Hetzel.

25

1-1 25x10

5,950

119

119

25

5
4.1

4.5

5.8

6.1

89

Iron wall.

Continuation

Section 10 Page 1

Bibliography

Auburn Directory. Years 1930, 1954-1961, 1982. Auburn: Nemaha County Museum. 13 March 2013 and 10 Apr 2013.

Barnhart, E.G. Auburn: A progressive, Wide Awake City of the Great Mid-West. Auburn, NE: Herald Printing House, Date Unknown. Print.

Engles, Margaret. Personal Interview. Auburn: 14 Apr 2013.

Hemmingsen, Robert. Personal Interview. Auburn: 25 Feb 2013.

Nemaha County Assessor. Nemaha County Assessor. Web. 13 April 2013

Nemaha County Museum Archives. Undated photographs. 10 Apr 2013.

Nemaha County Register of Deeds. Misc. public records. 12 Apr 2013.

1361-14

Auburn

A Progressive, Wide Awake City
of the Great Mid-West

THE STORY OF HER PRESENT TOLD WITH PEN AND
PHOTOGRAPH, COMPILED BY E. G. BARNHART AND
PRINTED BY THE PRESS OF THE HERALD PRINTING
HOUSE, AUBURN, NEBRASKA

VI. THE 20TH CENTURY IN AUBURN AND ENVIRONS



Plate 35

A downtown redevelopment project has retained the impressive architecture of the late 19th century, restoring the "gingerbread" which characterized the confidence of businessmen in the growing city.

It is much more difficult to characterize cultural life in the 20th century in this area—partly because we are so close to what has happened since 1900, partly because no great disaster has struck the town of Auburn, nor has any event caused great local celebration. Some of what happened, and what did not happen, made the sustaining of a sense of local community and culture much more difficult.

Shortly after 1900 came the automobile, the telephone, and the silent movie. Later came the radio, the sound movie, and television.

The first World War with its Kaiser-hanging and pressure against the Germans subjected the European ethnic cultures in the area to some of the pressures to which the Otoe had been subjected almost a century earlier.

World War II sent Nebraska soldiers everywhere in the world exposing them, however superficially, to the customs of people in a hundred different places. And it was fashionable in the United States to think that all glamour and all culture came not from "down on the farm" but from "Paris"—pronounced "Paree".

These changes made it increasingly difficult to sustain live theatre and locally-sponsored bands or musical groups, except in the schools and a few churches. The nationalization of businesses, schools, and banks all contributed to the homogenization of people. And yet, how remarkable that so many living traditions survive. It may be useful to look at the literature, art, architecture, theatre, folklore and

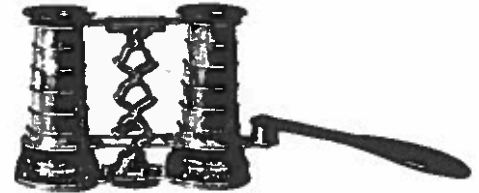
Peck's Bad Boy was down at the rink,
And he was a girl, they say;
All who attended the show, we think,
Are glad that he's "far, far away."

During 1888 and 1889, the usual community functions were held at both the Park and Daugherty's, including some Civil War scenes, with "old songs that the soldiers sang from '61-'65," a strawberry and ice cream festival, and frequent dinners and balls. In 1890, the Auburn Dramatic Company was formed, and in September *The Confederate Spy* played to a full house at the Park Theatre. The September 26 *Granger* reported: "The general verdict was 'First-class for home talent.'"

A History of Crazy Deals

Whatever happened to the Park Theatre, the converted rink, is unknown. Perhaps it was razed. The Daugherty Opera House lasted until 1950 and changed hands frequently. Patrick Daugherty sold the south half of the opera house block to his wife in February, 1896, according to the Nemaha County Deed Book, but bought it back again in March of 1903. A year later he sold all his lots to John R. Daugherty in November for "\$700 and natural love and affection" John may have been Patrick's son, as John sold only lot 6, with the opera house on it, to John A. Conners for \$7,200 on August 1, 1908. Conners sold the opera house to the Mastin family, who owned it from 1908 to 1918, and then it was sold to the Lare family, who had possession from 1918 to 1937. At that time, with back taxes amounting to \$3,871.56, the sheriff auctioned it off to Oscar Flau, who paid \$230 for it on March 16, 1937. About a month later, April 30, Flau sold it to Alyse Rapp for only one dollar.⁵ Alyse and her husband Clarence owned the opera house until 1950, when a tornado partially destroyed the building. It was then sold to Cecil Rapp, who operated a machine and welding shop on the lower floor. He in turn sold it to the St. Paul's Lutheran Church congregation. The extent of the tornado damage was shown in the Nemaha County *Herald*, May 18, 1950. The picture's

caption mourned the passing of the old house: ". . . the remains of the once center of cultural activities, the old Daugherty Opera House. Here *East Lynn* and the best legitimate stage and musical productions were witnessed. Now a shambles of brick and twisted ruins as a result of the tornado."



The New Opera House

Long before its demise, Daugherty's Opera House was to compete with another opera house, about as large, but in another part of town. Again the need for another place of entertainment was mentioned in the local press. An appeal appeared in the *Post* during 1889 for a "nice opera house on the North Side." This appeal was to be soon answered. The *Gazetteer and Business Directory* for 1890-91 announced that "a new opera house is about to be constructed to cost \$14,000." Its cost may have exceeded that figure, as the 1894-95 *Gazetteer* reported that Auburn "boasts of two very fine opera houses costing \$20,000 each." Based on pictorial evidence, both Daugherty's and the New Opera House, as it was initially called, could seat about the same number of people.

The Auburn Building and Improvement Association was legally organized June 13, 1890, according to records in the Nemaha County Clerk's office, for "improvement of the city of Auburn, by the construction of an opera house—erection and maintenance and such other improvements as may be deemed necessary, and to purchase necessary real estate thereof." The association issued 250 shares of stock at \$100 a share. They were legally incorporated for 25 years. Those who signed the Articles of Incorporation were: Church Howe, James W. Kerns, Thomas J. Crummel, James G. Maclay, Jr., W. H. Horrum, W. M. Robison, W. G. Swan, J. W. Darrah, E. H. Dort, Thomas W. Eustice, Moses Furlong, Frederick E. Allen,

⁵Nemaha County Clerk, Deed Book 30, p. 422; Deed Book 40, pp. 102, 408; Deed Book 42, p. 372; Deed Book 61, pp. 12, 101.

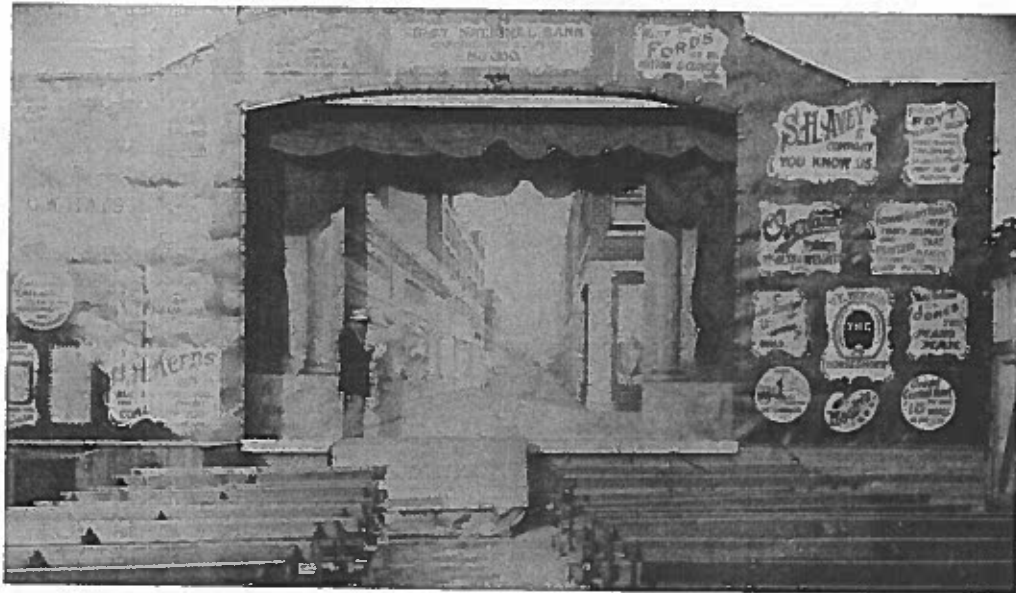


Plate 31
 Maclay Opera House was the cultural center in early days. The stage attracted many well-known musicians and artists, and home talent productions were scheduled regularly. The advertisements painted on the curtains and stage props were the work of a local artist. (Photo courtesy John G. Sanders, Auburn.)

and Henry Culwell (with D. J. Wood as a non-signing board member). They made plans to put up a building that would contain an opera house on the second floor. Auburn's north side suffered a serious fire in the spring of 1890 and the group decided to build in this area, according to the June 20 *Herald*, on the "second and third lots east of First Street (not J Street) upon the burned district." The building was completed in the fall of 1890.

Nemaha County records indicate that on June 14 the members signed a contract with William G. Swan who owned the lot immediately east to share the cost of building a wall between the two properties, and on July 8 a similar contract was signed with Louisa R. Hetzel who owned the lot immediately west. Also included was an agreement to permit (for \$200) a six-foot-wide stairway to be built on the southwest corner of the Hetzel building leading up to the opera house, as well as permission to build a three-and-one-half-foot doorway from the hallway of the Hetzel building "to be used in private approach to the stage of the Opera House." According to the Nemaha County *Herald* of June 6, the bottom floor of the opera house building was to house the stores of W. M. Robison and E. H. Dort. Druggist Dort, moved into the new building by December 5, 1890, in time to make

ready for the Christmas shopping season, stated the December 5 issue of the newspaper.

The New Opera House still exists over Hemmingsen's Clothing Store, providing Auburn with the only visual evidence of its opera house past. Sometime during the 1920s it was managed by Fred D. Maclay and became known as the Maclay Opera House (plates 31-34).

Many opera houses in the state had wide staircases between the two rooms or places of business under them, and patrons entered from the street level in front of the building, the stage being to the rear of the building on the second floor. However, the Maclay Opera House had a long stairway leading up the side at the rear (southwest corner) of the building, thus placing the main entrance in a corner of the auditorium, with a foyer-like space under the balcony which ran the full width of the building at the back. Access to the balcony was gained by a short stairway halfway under the balcony. Three roof-supporting columns ran down the middle of the center auditorium aisle.

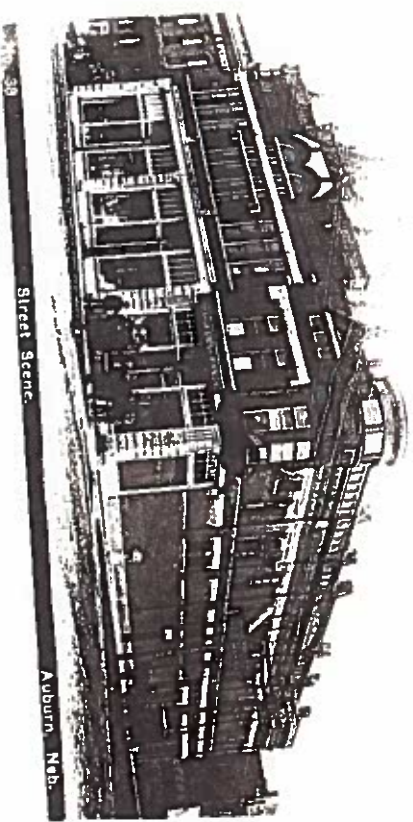
Because large, long windows adorned the street front of the Maclay building, the stage on the north side of the building had window wells toward the back of it—since the stage was raised about three feet above the auditorium floor. The stage was eighteen feet deep,

923 Central (Continued)



OPERA HOUSE BLOCK.

This picture is from the early 1900s



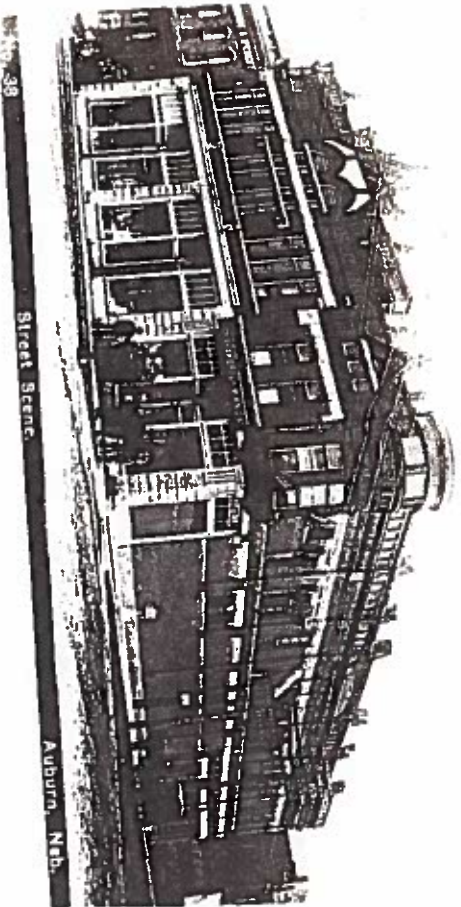
Street Scene

Auburn, Neb.

Undated Photo, probably from 1890s



301-923 Central Ave



323 Central

Cornerstone Building, also known as the Hetzel Building, after the first owner, Louisa R Hetzel

Features a unique turret on the corner of the building

Provides access to the New Opera House

Once housed Hahn Clothing, McKnight Clothing Co



General Information

· A fire destroyed many of the buildings on this block in the Spring of 1890

· This block is part of the Howe & Nixon addition to Auburn

· This area has served as a hub of commerce for Auburn and the surrounding rural areas for the last 123 years.

