

Fisher-Plane Block [No. 121 & No. 119]

1874 – H.A. & Sterling Fisher & R.R. Plane

Both **Fisher Bros. Grocery** and **Plane's Hardware** were back in business in their new stores before the end of 1874. The grocery continued to grow and by 1881 was doing the greatest amount of grocery trade in town. Sterling retired from retail in 1887, going on to manage the Independence Mills Co. and, later, serve as president of People's National Bank. Arch continued to run **Fisher Grocery** until he died in 1897, a run of 32 years. The store was briefly managed by his brother-in-law, S.C. White, who kept it under the Fisher name.

In 1899, Albert Israel, by then well established and known for the quality of his merchandise, moved **Israel's Clothing** to

this location. For the next 34 years, the building housed a high-end men's clothing store. Albert, later with the assistance of his nephew Ronald Baum, personally tended the store until his death in 1933.

The 2nd floor of No. 121 was an early communications center. From 1877 to 1882, the **Western Union Telegraph Office** resided here, to be followed by the **Iowa Telephone Exchange**. In 1891, **Dr. B.B. Sells** opened his medical practice in this building, remaining here through 1932.

Plane worked until his death in 1895. **Plane's Hardware** was considered to be the foremost business of its kind in the region. Irving C. Plane, who had already been involved in the store, then assumed ownership. Over time, Irving expanded his holdings by buying up other downtown

property, all the while running his hardware business. His early death in 1939 put an end to his 62-year career, but Plane's Hardware, under the auspices of the Plane Estate, continued until 1960.

Dr. W.H. Thrift's dental office was located on the 2nd floor of No. 119 from 1876 to 1880. Having served as a private during the Civil War, Thrift later served in the Spanish American War of 1898 and with the Iowa National Guard. He was named Adjutant General of Iowa, the most prestigious military position in the state. Later, he was placed in charge of the National Cemetery near New Orleans and was eventually appointed superintendent of all national cemeteries.