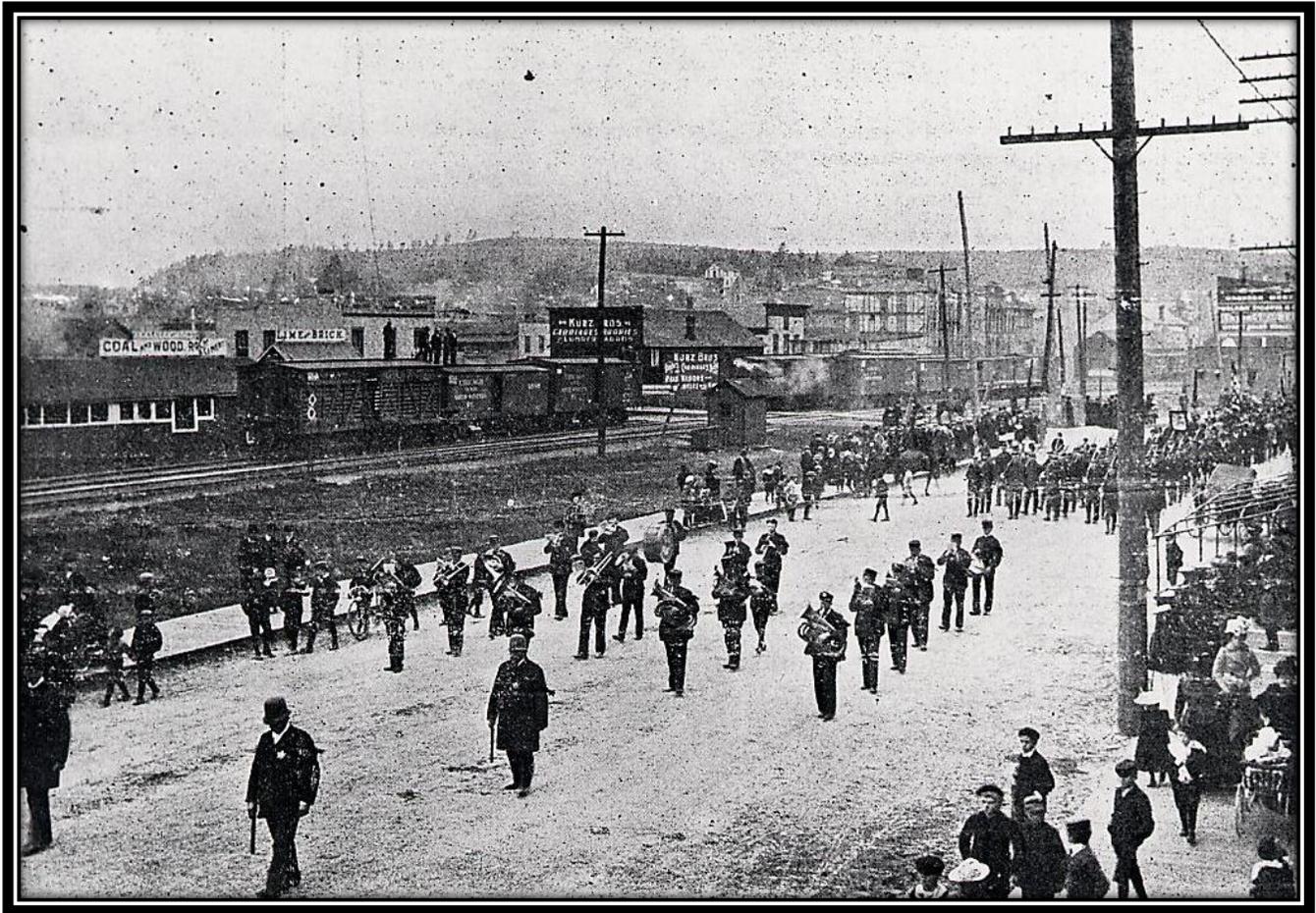


MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 56: DOWNTOWN IRON MOUNTAIN – WEST SIDE OF THE 500 BLOCK OF SOUTH STEPHENSON AVENUE

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



Iron Mountain, like the rest of the nation, mourned the death of **President William McKinley**, who was assassinated by anarchist **Leon Czolgosz** while receiving callers at the **Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York**, on **September 6, 1901**. McKinley died September 14, and Iron Mountain's memorial services were held **September 19, 1901** at Cemetery Park. **William S. Laing**, marshal of the day, led the procession of about 2,000 marchers, who were moving south on the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue between A and B Streets when this photograph was taken. The unoccupied site on the west side of the street was where the Commercial Bank was constructed in 1929. *[Gene Derwinski/Dick Ferris]*

[NOTE: Dates, placed chronologically, are highlighted in boldface red letters for easier reading, and names of individuals and places are highlighted in boldface black letters to facilitate finding information.]

The 56th installment of Menominee Range Memories, a series of articles by

William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation historian, now available on the Dickinson County Library's website, is titled "Downtown Iron Mountain – West Side of the 500 Block of South Stephenson Avenue."

History of 500: Originally housing the **Commercial Bank**, downtown Iron

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Mountain's most prominent building opened for business on Monday, **December 23, 1929**.

Organized thirty-seven years earlier, in **March 1892**, the Commercial Bank opened its doors with a paid in capital of \$50,000 and a total of \$77,232.99 at the close of the first day's business. At the time the new bank opened in 1929, its resources totaled

\$2,929,541.27, and the capitalization stood at \$100,000.00.

The bank's first president was **Jesse Spaulding**. Other original officers were **Francis A. Brown**, vice-president; **Oliver Evans**, cashier and director, and **Anson F. Wright**, **Herbert M. Pelham**, **E.L. Parmenter, Sr.**, **Frank C. Smart**, **Mandel Levy** and **J.F. Hancock**, directors.



Ground was broken for the construction of the Commercial Bank on the **west side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue** in the **spring of 1929**. The architects for the building were **A. Moorman & Company**, of Minneapolis. The company specialized in bank buildings and took charge from “the first blueprint to the final placing of the inkwells on the desks.” The architects awarded all individual contracts and supervised the erection and equipment of the structure. Their representative on the job was **George J. Morrison**. The general construction contract was held by the **Phelps-Drake Company**, and work was begun in the spring of 1929, as soon as the basement excavation had been completed by **Joseph Mongrain**. The **intersection of South Stephenson Avenue and East A Street** is shown in this photograph. The **J.C. Penny Company** then occupied the north store front of the **U.S. National Bank building** on the northeast corner, but later occupied the **Levy-Unger Company building** two stores north. The **Central Drug Store** was located on the southeast corner of the intersection. *[Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

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At the time the new bank opened **O.C. Davidson**, superintendent of the **Oliver Iron Mining Company** on the Menominee and Gogebic Ranges and one of the leading mining men of the country, was president of the bank. **Wilbur W. Thompson** served as cashier, and it was largely through his insistence and counsel that the board of directors was convinced of the advisability of erecting the new building.

Other officers of the bank then were **William Kelly**, vice-president; **Edward G. Kingsford**, vice-president; **Frank O. Morett**, assistant cashier; and **Edward F. Sandercock**, assistant cashier.

In addition to Davidson, Thompson, Kelly and Kingsford, directors of the bank then included **Medio J. Bacco**, contractor; **Festus C. Cole**, owner of the **City Lumber Yard**; **C.H. Baxter**, professor at the **Michigan College of Mines and Technology**, Houghton; **Henry G. Neuens**, retired pioneer businessman; and **Raymond Turner**, prominent attorney.

The building occupies the entire west side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue with a depth of more than 30 feet. The structure is six stories high plus the basement, but to increase the illusion of height the architectural lines that predominate are perpendicular. Only two floors, the first and mezzanine, extend the full length of the block, with the center section of four stories having somewhat the appearance of a tower. This center section was designed for rental offices.

The style of the day, which came to be known as Art Deco, is characterized by strong vertical lines and the feeling of motion. The vertical is emphasized on the middle section of the already-tall building. Light beige terra cotta relief panels decorate the façade. Art Deco artists often looked to the natural world for inspiration,

as evidenced by the stylized ram's heads and geometric botanicals.

Constructed of concrete, brick and steel, upon opening the building was described to be "of solid construction and fireproof." Little wood was used in construction, and nearly all of that was in adornment, such as wainscoting when the building opened. Door frames and like trims were metal, and the movable partitions in the office quarters were also of the metal.

The architects for the building were **A. Moorman & Company**, of Minneapolis. The company specialized in bank buildings and took charge from "the first blueprint to the final placing of the inkwells on the desks."

The architects awarded all individual contracts and supervised the erection and equipment of the structure. Their representative on the job was **George J. Morrison**.

The general construction contract was held by the **Phelps-Drake Company**, and work was begun in the **spring of 1929**, as soon as the basement excavation had been completed by **Joseph Mongrain**.

The plumbing and heating contract was given to **Arthur Bourgeois**. The **Meyers Electric Company**, of Oshkosh, Wis., held the electrical contract.

Etched glass was made by a Chicago firm, a Minneapolis concern manufactured the light fixtures, two other northwest firms finished the tile and marble, the wrought iron cages came from St. Paul, doors from Chicago, the oil burner from California, furniture from Wisconsin and Iowa.

Face brick was obtained from the **Service & Supply Company**, of Iron Mountain; wood supplies were obtained from the **City Lumber Yard** here, and shades were purchased from the **Home Furniture Company**, of Iron Mountain.

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Insofar as possible local labor was employed on the job, this being one of the

provisions of the bank's contract with the architects.



The **Commercial Bank** hosted an open house on **Saturday, December 21, 1929**. With between 12,000 and 15,000 visitors touring the bank between 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The bank opened officially on Monday, **December 23, 1929**. **A. Moorman & Company**, of Minneapolis, specialized in bank buildings. Their contract with the Commercial Bank entrusted the architects to make all decisions, also awarding the construction contract to the firm, all at a prearranged total price. When the building was finally turned over to the bank, it was complete in every respect. Everything was in place, even to furnishing cleaning materials for various surfaces, naming the days on which the janitors were to send their clothing to the laundry, giving instructions on how to polish the brass, marble, silver, steel and other materials and supplying the brushes for sweeping out. The building occupied the entire **west side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue** with a depth of more than 30 feet. Containing six stories plus a basement, the architectural lines that predominate are perpendicular, increasing the illusion of height. Only two floors, the first and mezzanine, extend the full length of the block, with the center section of four additional stories having the appearance of a tower. This 1940-1950 postcard view shows the north end of the bank before an addition was made that extended the building to the corner. *[William J. Cummings]*

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The Thursday, **December 19, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* featured a series of articles about the new Commercial Bank which are reproduced below as printed under the general headline “Progress Has Marked History of Commercial Bank.”

Under the headline “**MATERIALS FORM MANY COMPANIES IN NEW BUILDING: General Construction Contract Was Held By Phelps-Darke**” in the Thursday, **December 19, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* the following article appeared:

Many firms furnished the materials and equipment in the new Commercial bank building.

And sources of the material were on foreign shores as well as in this country.

*The general construction contract was held by the **Phelps-Drake company**, and work was begun last spring as soon as the basement excavation had been completed by **Joseph Mongrain**. Little delay was encountered and the structure rapidly took shape.*

*The plumbing and heating contract was given to **Arthur Bourgeois**. All fixtures are of the most modern type, while the large boiler in the basement is heated with an oil burner.*

*The **Meyers Electric company**, of Oshkosh, Wis., held the electrical contract, and the intricate installation was completed without flaw.*

Etched glass was made by a Chicago firm, a Minneapolis concern manufactured the light fixtures, two other northwest firms finished the tile and marble, the wrought iron cages came from St. Paul, doors from Chicago, the oil burner from California, furniture from Wisconsin and Iowa.

*Face brick was obtained from the **Service & Supply company**, of Iron*

*Mountain, wood supplies were obtained from the **City Lumber Yard** here, and shades were purchased from the **Home Furniture company**, of this city.*

Insofar as possible local labor was employed on the job, this being one of the provisions of the bank’s contract with the architects.

Under the headline “**Harmony Keynote In Fixtures, Decoration Of Commercial’s Home: Directors’ Room at One End, With Bookkeeping Department At Other, Overlook Principal Quarters**” in the Thursday, **December 19, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* the following article appeared:

Search far and wide and comparatively few banking rooms will be found as harmonious and comprehensive in their arrangement as that in the new Commercial bank building.

One reason for the perfect appointment is that the entire job was in the hands of one architectural firm, responsible for everything from construction of the walls to placing the inkwells on the specially designed walnut desks.

There is a theme note in the banking room in the wrought iron cages. Originally a different pattern has [sic – had] been perfected, but this was changed inasmuch as iron is symbolical of the country in which the bank has thrived.

The design of the cages is by no means ordinary and the wrought iron has a silver tint produced by several coats of a dark lacquer which was then burnished to bring out the highlights.

No Customer Delays.

There are six cages with two windows each, and each window is numbered and has its own special title. While usually only one man will work in a cage, the arrangement permits placing two men in

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one during busy hours, so that customers will in no way be delayed.



This postcard view, taken in the **early 1940s**, shows the **Commercial Bank** on the **west side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue**. On the east side, businesses easily seen are: **513**, **Combination Lunch** (Steve Pappas, George Corombos, John Corombos); **517**, **City Drug Store** (Angelo B. Bracco); **521**, **Frankini Jewelry Store** (Arthur C. Frankini); **523-525**, **Gambles Store** (Arnold Sjodin, manager); **531**, **The Quality Hardware Store** (Keeler L. Calvi); **535**, **Cashway Stores**, grocery (H.S. Toretti, manager). **Buchman's Drug Store** (Abraham G. Buchman) was located at the south end of the Commercial Bank with an address of **120 East B Street**. The entrance was to the right of the weight scale. [William J. Cummings]

A special shaded light illuminates the title over each cage and also furnishes light for the employe [sic – employee]. Aperatures [sic – Apertures] in the wicket provide for furnishing one telephone for every two cages. Each cage has a door with automatic lock, and should the teller or other employe [sic – employee] have material for the bookkeepers he places this

in a trip basket which permits its removal from the outside.

Counters and other furniture in the cages is of walnut, fitting in with the other furniture.

The base of the cages is of marble, the main foundation being light toned, with a baseboard of dark red.

Basic Color Is Green.

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The general standard, or basic, color scheme of the room is of green, with ornamental stencils of unique design on the cross-beamed ceiling. This is embellished by a silver finish in a drop border and panels beneath the upper tier of windows.

The walls are of a green with highlights, the appearance being enhanced by the textured [sic] finish.

At the south end of the banking room the patron enters through tall metal and glass doors, the framework of which carried out the wrought iron design. At the left of these doors, on entering is the grill door, with electrical lock operated by an attendant, that gives access to the bond booths and vault.

The bond booths are of especial interest to those who have safety deposit boxes. To gain admittance the customer notifies the attendant in the last cage. He presses the button operating the lock on the grill door, which then opens and closes after the customer has entered. Each safety deposit box has two keys, one possessed by the customer and the other by the attendant. Both unlock the safety deposit box, which is then removed, and the customer enters a bond booth after it has been unlocked by the attendant. In [the] event a customer, after leaving the booth, which is automatically locked when he departs, should have forgotten something, he must call an attendant, who opens the door and both investigate together.

Five Booths.

There are four booths of sufficient size for one customer, and a fifth of larger accommodations for the convenience of groups which may be settling an estate or providing other business.

The bond booths are of walnut, with modernistic lighting fixtures. The floor in this room is of the same flexible finish as in

the working quarters of the banking room, both to provide easy walking and to deaden interference from noise.

Advancing along the cages, which are glass enclosed and each of which bears the name of the employe [sic – employee] within, the officers' quarters is reached. Walnut desks built according to special specifications are provided for the cashier and assistant cashier. Because of the commodious area there is entire confidence in conversations.

Jutting off of the officers' quarters is a private office, walnut empanelled [sic – panelled] and with a unique lighting fixture, that will be used by the cashier. So detailed is the entire arrangement, that a plug in the center of the floor provides the taps for both the telephone and desk lamps.

In the wall at the north end of the banking room will be noticed a grating, which is the mouth of the ventilating system. A blower system will maintain a constant flow of fresh air, warm in winter and cool in summer.

Lighting Fixtures.

Three huge chandeliers will illuminate the banking room. They are ponderous but artistic in design and hang suspended by four metal cords. More than 6,000 candlepower are contained in these three lights, each of which has a three-way switch controlling it. The chandeliers, also of special design, are of a sort of inverted smoked, or shaded, glass enclosed cone.

Along the walls are other fixtures of modernistic type which light up the customers' check writing desks and the leather upholstered, with marble frame, benches.

A few steps from the officers' quarters will be found a short flight of stairs leading to the mezzanine floor upon which is the directors' room. Walnut panelling [sic –

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paneling] in this room is three-quarters of the way up the wall, with an odd and highly attractive finish for the molding and ceiling. A large and altogether entrancing fixture lights the center of the walnut table about which is arranged the chairs of the directors.

At the south end of the banking room is another flight of stairs leading to the bookkeeping department, this arrangement being another innovation in this part of the country.

Bookkeeping Department.

Ordinarily the bookkeeping department is on the main floor with the banking room. In this instance, it has been established on the mezzanine floor, with a window overlooking the main banking room.

At this window is located the telephone switchboard through which every telephone in the bank will be controlled. Surveying as she does from her position the entire banking room and bookkeeping office, the operator will be able to tell immediately whether a person called for is in the building.

The ceiling of the bookkeeping department is surfaced with a sound deadening material of waffle-like appearance that absorbs sound waves. This is intended to eliminate the distraction of noise of the computation machines.

A door opening off the bookkeeping department leads to the mezzanine floor lobby and elevator landing, with another door off the same corridor into the insurance department conducted by the **Commercial Insurance Agency**. Thus the insurance agency may be reached both through the bank and the regular elevator service and stairway.

Tile Floor.

To return to the main banking room, the floor in the customers' section is of a very

attractive design in tile. On the other hand, the floor in the working space behind the cages is of a special composition which is resilient to the pressure of feet and reduces noise.

Lobby entrances at both the north and south ends also have tile floors, with a square in the center into which fits a large rubber mat that will be cleaned daily.

The entire arrangement of the banking room has been laid out with one thought in mind, harmony and appointment, at the same time preserving life. Visitors to the bank will be surprised by the dignity of tone and at the same time the modernistic atmosphere that predominates.

Under the headline "**Sound-Proof Ceiling In Bookkeeping Room One Of Many Features: Compressor Furnishes Air Pressure To All Dental Offices; Partitions Are Of Movable Type**" in the Thursday, **December 19, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* the following article appeared:

A sound-proof ceiling in the bookkeeping department that reduce [sic – reduces] the average talking voice to a whisper; a central compressed air plant on the sixth floor for dental and medical equipment used in the building; movable partitions that permit the re-arrangement of room-space [sic – room space] without damage to the permanent structure – these and many other special features mark the new Commercial Bank building as one of the outstanding achievements of its kind in the northern district of Michigan.

Only one of the office spaces in the six-story structure will be vacant when all of the present applicants have moved in – and that is the room which comprises the sixth floor. Although the elevator does not reach to that floor, a short flight of stairs gives access to it from the fifth. And the top-floor

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compartment is by no means the least attractive in the building, for it affords an excellent view of the city and surrounding territory.

Every room in the new bank building is adequately equipped with light and telephone fixtures, with extra floor plugs for electrical equipment. Each room will also be attractively decorated. There is hardly an inch of waste [sic – wasted] space throughout the building.

Basement Layout.

In the basement are located the men's and women's lockers and washrooms, the oil-heating plant, the central electrical control units, and a room designed for use as a barber shop. Printed instructions tell the janitors what must be done each day, week, month or year to keep the equipment in perfect condition and repair.

Overlooking the banking quarters on the third floor is the book-keeping [sic – bookkeeping] department and "PHX," or telephone switchboard. The telephone operator will sit at a window overlooking the banking room so that, at a glance, she can tell whether or not the party called for is in the bank. One telephone is provided for each two cages, and there will be a total of from 12 to 15 instruments in the bank.

The offices on the third, fourth and fifth floor are roomy, bright and adequately suited for the purposes for which they have been rented. For the most part they will be occupied by dentists and doctors. The elevator, centrally located, gives ready access to each floor, and stairs are provided for those using the building at night, when elevator service is not available.

The steel partitions may be moved about and placed in any position. This is intended primarily to eliminate the necessity of cutting into the walls, tearing away the

plaster or otherwise defacing the building with alterations. Partitions will be placed according to the instructions of the tenants themselves.

Unusually attractive are the fittings and decorative effects provided for the private office of the cashier and the directors' room. These are also equipped with private lavatories. The cashier's office being located off the main floor and the directors' room is on the mezzanine floor above.

*Once each day every foot of floor space will be swept and cleaned by the janitors – and that must be done before the first office is opened for business in the morning. That service is provided also for the **Buchman Drug store** and the barbershop in the basement.*

*Under the headline "**Mere Cough Will Set Off Burglar Alarm In Bank's Heavy Vault: System Offers Utmost Protection And Leaves No Vital Point Without Fullest Safeguard**" in the Thursday, **December 19, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* the following article appeared:*

So finely adjusted that a cough, low whistle, slight knock or the merest vibration within the safe deposit vault will set off the alarm bell outside the building, the safety alarm system in the new Commercial bank is the most up-to-date that can be obtained.

To see the alarm system in action is mystifying enough. To hear it explained is baffling, for it [is] far more intricate and delicate than the fine workings of a watch. Yet, in every test at the conclusion of the installation, it never once failed in operation.

Extending from the more obvious avenues of approach from the outside to the out-of-the-way places within, and woven into the massive walls of the structure, the alarm system provides a net-work [sic – network] of highly responsible mechanism

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that wholly eliminates any reasonable possibility of breaking and entering.

And within reach of every employe [sic – employee] in the bank proper is a hidden button, available to hand or foot, and which at the slightest pressure releases the gong outside. It is a gong, incidentally, which cannot be mistaken for any other bell in the city.

All Protected.

There is no beginning to this alarm system – and no end. For purposes of description one may start at the small but solidly-built depository door just to the right of the main entrance. Wound around the heavy metal box, or container, is a series of finely-adjusted wires which respond to the slightest touch of a metal tool.

That isn't all. A torch or heated instrument of any kind has the same effect. In either case, the mechanism responds immediately, and away goes the gong. Money-bags [sic – Moneybags] dropped in there are as safe as if placed in the main vault itself.

The central control plant for the intricate alarm system is located within the vault. It is a marvel of scientific achievement and almost human in its response. There is a maze of wires, contacts and finely-adjusted parts.

Hidden within the massive steel door for the vault is the hair-trigger mechanism which, like that on the outside depository, needs but a touch – the slightest knock, to tip off the alarm system. Set when the vault is closed at the end of the day, the mechanism in the 13-ton door, tuned to the alarm system inside, is alert throughout the night.

Microphones Catch Sounds.

Within the vault, attached to the ceiling, are two microphones, so keenly tuned that a low whistle, clap of the hands or slight tap

on the wall conveys the message to the gong. To attempt to remove or in any way disturb either microphone would set up an immediate clatter. Not the slightest sound made within or near the vault when the microphones are set can escape their "ears."

In each cage, private office or other department of the bank are the hidden buttons. There is hardly a square foot of space in the banking quarters themselves where the buttons are not immediately available. In the cages they can be reached from any angle with scarcely a move of the body.

Vault Ventilator.

After years of experimental research work there has finally been developed a device which will provide fresh air in the event an employe [sic – employee] is locked within a vault and an aperature [sic – aperture], also, through which food and drink may be passed, all without in any way endangering the valuables locked inside.

The new Commercial Bank building has such a device, and it is the latest in scientific achievement.

To the right of the main entrance, in the foyer of the building and built into the west wall may be seen what looks like merely a round, metal disk. It is the outlet to the freshair aperature [sic – fresh air aperture] inside the vault. It cannot be opened from the outside.

At the other end, inside the vault, is fixed a solid metal plug, four-inches [sic – four inches] in diameter, and built of manganese and copper. It cannot be drilled or burned. A heavy metal pin directly through it, and accesible [sic – accessible] from the inside, holds it in place.

The pin which holds the plug in place will stand 60,000 pounds pressure, while the plug itself weighs 65 pounds. Around

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the steel tube, and covered with wax which will melt when the slightest heat is applied, are thin wire coils, connected with the central control. Tampering with the tube at either end, with a sharp instrument or a torch, will immediately set off the alarm.

By removing the pin the person within may likewise remove the plug. That act alone starts the alarm gong. Hanging on the wall near the aperature [sic – aperture] is an accessory device – a hollow tube with a fan at the inner end – which when slid into the opening and plugged to a light switch draws in the fresh air and drives out the old. Its operation is infallible. It cannot go wrong. An automatic trap controlling the steel disc on the outer wall is sprung when the hollow tube is inserted.

Thus, the person locked inside may sit near the aperature [sic – aperture] in perfect comfort. True, he cannot be released from his secure niche until the timelock [sic – time lock] permits the vault door to be opened in the morning, but he may sit at the air vent with as much comfort as his situation may afford, smoke, converse with persons at the other end and, if hungry, receive food and drink with ease.

The question may be asked; [sic] why cannot an employe [sic – employee] locked inside be released until morning? Because, when the time clock is set inside the vault door, nothing – no one – can open it until it is automatically unlocked at that hour the following morning. To attempt to force an entrance through the 13-ton door and casing would be futile. It was built to make that as nearly impossible as science and invention could make it.

The vault, complete in every detail, with its central alarm control in full view, and all the mechanism which it governs will be available for inspection at the opening Saturday. It should prove highly interesting.

Under the headline “**BUCHMAN STORE TO HAVE WALNUT FIXTURE LAYOUT: Establishment To Be One Of Features Of Bank Building**” in the Thursday, **December 19, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* the following article appeared:

Occupying the corner site fronting the southwest intersection of Stephenson avenue and B street, lighted by 34 windows, and with a floor space of 68 by 28 feet, the store building to be occupied by the Buchman Drug company is a feature of the new Commercial bank building.

Every fixture – from the smallest decorative panel to the new liquid carbonic soda fountain and built-in luncheonette – will be new. Not a single “stick” used in the old Buchman store will be moved to the new. And most of the stock as well will be fresh from the packing boxes.

Windows For Display.

The main entrance to the drug store fronts on B street, but is near the intersection of Stephenson. Each of the lower windows will be equipped with decorative light fixtures and used exclusively for display. Every window will be trimmed in American walnut. One, the large display window facing B street, will be fitted for novelty and specialty displays.

*The floor is of Italian tile, in red and green. The walls and ceiling are of varying light-colored tints, with the decorative stencils designed and applied by **Steve Portermain**, of Rochester, Minn. Portermain has planned the interior decorative scheme of many public buildings and private homes throughout the northwest.*

Near the entrance, along the east wall, will be located three luncheon booths, with three more situated at the north end of the same side wall. In the center there will be a

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modern, liquid carbonic soda fountain and luncheonette, embodying every new feature. There is even a compartment for

the preservation, at the temperature meant for them, of biologicals used in the drug business.



Commercial Bank, West Side of the 500 Block of South Stephenson Avenue, Facing Northwest, Iron Mountain, ca. 1940-1950: The Commercial National Bank building is an excellent example of Art Deco architecture. Art Deco is an eclectic artistic and design style which had its origins in Paris in the first decades of the 20th century. The style flourished in the Twenties and continued to be employed until after World War II. Three huge chandeliers, “ponderous but artistic in design,” illuminated the banking room. Green walls with a textured finish had “ornamental stencils of unique design on the cross-beamed ceiling.” There were six teller’s cages with two windows each, and each window was numbered and had its own special title. Counters and other furniture in the cages were of walnut, fitting in with the other furniture in the bank. The base of the cages was marble, the main foundation being light toned, with a baseboard of dark red. The offices on the third, fourth and fifth floor were primarily occupied by dentists and doctors. The centrally-located elevator provided easy access to each floor, but elevator service was not available at night, and the stairs had to be used. The steel partitions in the office suites could be “moved about and placed in any position to eliminate the necessity of cutting into the walls, tearing away the plaster or

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otherwise defacing the building with alterations.” Partitions were placed according to the tenants’ instructions. The men’s and women’s lockers and washrooms, the oil-heating plant, the central electrical control units, and a room designed for use as a barber shop were all located in the basement. [William J. Cummings]

Decorative Cases.

Along the west wall will be the electrically-lighted and decorative cases for the display of perfumes, novelties and specialty goods. These cases, like the display windows, are to be finished in American walnut, with polychrome trimming.

Two telephone pay-stations are provided.

In addition to the six booths, four tables, at the north end of the shop, and eight seats at the soft drink counter will be available. The fountain will be 16 feet in length.

Eighteen lights, of modernistic design, with low-hanging, tapered chandeliers, will give adequate illumination, and wall lights will also be available for the luncheon booths.

Bakery Department.

At the east and south the north wall is a bakery, which will be given over wholly to the gift and art department in charge of Mrs. Ray Hubley. The latest in art and novelty goods will be available there. The railing, overlooking the sales floor, is hammered, wrought iron, finished in bronze and black.

All of the radiators in the store will be hidden and covered with asbestos to prevent any possibility of fire, or injury to the walnut furnishings.

A door at the rear provides access to the banking quarters and the elevator in the building.

While the Buchman store will not be open for inspection Saturday, it is hoped

the installation of fixtures and stock may be completed by about January 15.

Under the headline “**Janitors Find Plenty of Work in New Building: Chart Outlines Their Duties For every Period In Year**” in the Thursday, **December 19, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* the following article appeared:

Thorough and efficient janitor service for every office on all six floors of the new Commercial bank building, and also for the one store space, is worthy of mention in emphasizing the service features of the newly-completed structure.

Two men will be employed for that work, and their’s [sic – theirs] is no mean task.

Posted in a prominent place in the basement are charts showing the daily, semi-weekly, weekly, semi-monthly, monthly, semi-annually and annual tasks that must be attended to by the janitors. These regulations are laid out, originally, by the architects themselves and are part of the service plan provided by them.

The charts show the color and type of uniform to be worn by the janitors – in this case, blue and white. Each of the two janitors must own at least two complete uniforms, and a suit must be sent to the laundry once each week. The name “Commercial Bank” appears on the hats and coats of each outfit.

No Question of Duties.

In addition, the charts set forth, specifically, the duties of each janitor in respect to the care of the heating plant, electrical equipment, lighting arrangement and all other details pertaining to the care of the structure. Even the type of cleaning

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materials to be used on the marble base and counters, in the banking quarters and all other fixtures, is not overlooked, and a separate treatment is required for each.

For instance, water cannot be used on the light marble counters. However, a damp cloth will do the work – and that is specified in the chart. Singularly, a certain brand of shoe polish works best on the marble used for the base structure, and that too is pointed out in the charts.

Every office, every foot of store space must be cleaned before the tenants arrive in the morning. That duty is divided, each janitor taking charge of certain floors. There are 13 offices and one store.

Once a day the rubber mats in the foyers, inside the entrances, must be lifted and cleaned, and the floor beneath it scrubbed. There are numerous other duties – and all are specified in the janitors' charts.



West and East Sides of the 500 Block of South Stephenson Avenue, Looking North, ca. 1940-1950: This postcard view, taken in the **late 1940s**, shows the Commercial Bank on the west side, and on the east side, businesses easily seen are: **513**, Combination Lunch (Steve Pappas, George Corombos, John Corombos); **517**, City Drug Store (Angelo B. Bracco); **521**, Frankini Jewelry Store (Arthur C. Frankini); **523-525**, Gambles Store (Arnold Sjodin, manager); **531**, The Quality Hardware Store (Keeler L. Calvi); **535**, Cashway Stores, grocery (H.S. Toretti, manager). Buchman's Drug Store (Abraham G. Buchman), was located at the south end of the Commercial Bank with an address of **120** East B Street. The entrance was to the right of the weight scale. [William J. Cummings]

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Under the headline “**HUNDREDS TURN OUT AT OPENING OF BANK’S HOME: Officers Hold Open Housed [sic – House]; Structure Is Praised By Visitors**” in the Saturday, **December 21, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* the following article appeared:

Officers and directors of the new Commercial bank, Stephenson avenue and B street, were holding open house from 2 to 5 and 7 to 9 p.m. today to hundreds of interested persons, many of whom waited considerable time for the doors to open this afternoon.

Shortly before 2 o’clock every officer and employe [sic – employee] was in the place which he will occupy when the establishment opens for business Monday morning, December 23.

It is difficult to estimate the number of visitors who strolled through the spacious banking quarters during the afternoon. It was an ever-increasing flow of traffic.

It was impossible for the bank employes [sic – employees] to give individual attention to everyone who came in, but every effort was made to answer the numerous questions asked, and to explain in detail every part of the arrangement.

Vault of Interest.

Two features attracted interest and attention. They were the new elevator and the massive and intricate vault, with its triple time lock and burglar alarm.

Every visitor highly praised the bank’s new home, and found it even more beautiful than had been anticipated.

Under the headline “**12,000 PERSONS ARE VISITORS AS NEW BANK OPENS: Paul Khoury, Jr., And Henry Neuns [sic – Neuens] First To Make Deposits**” in the Monday, **December 23, 1929** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* the following article appeared:

Crowding every available foot of space, from 12,000 to 15,000 visitors, according the architect’s estimate, attended the formal opening of the new Commercial bank building here Saturday afternoon and evening. Certain it is that every moment of the scheduled hours from 2 to 5 and from 7 to 9 p.m. a steady stream of humanity weaved in and out of the structure.

Starting from the moment the doors were opened at 2 o’clock and continuing until the last of the pushing file had reached the street after 9 o’clock Saturday night, employes [sic – employees] and officers were busy showing the visitors about and explaining the working departments of the establishment. Souvenirs were given to as many as the employes [sic – employees] could reach.

Plenty of Business.

This morning, at 9 o’clock, the bank opened for business, and judging from the activity throughout the day, there was plenty of it. All of the money, supplies, fixtures and other equipment were moved yesterday, while state troopers and county and state police accompanied the truck-loads of money and securities, and stood by with loaded rifles while the valuables were being taken form the old bank and moved into the new.

Although new safety-deposit boxes are provided in the bank’s new home, some of the old ones were transferred yesterday and will be retained temporarily, until the necessary readjustments are made within the vault. Customers today found the well-appointed “clipping rooms” near the vault, a decided convenience.

Some of the tenants in the offices of the floors above the bank began today to move in their equipment, although most of them, it is understood, will wait until after January 1 to make the change. One feature worthy of

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note is that, as nearly as could be determined today, all of the furniture and fixtures to be moved in, with the exception of the mechanical and analytical equipment used by the doctors and dentists, will be new.

Employees [sic – employees] of the insurance department of the bank this morning completed the transfer of their files and records, hauling up the heavy cases in the new mechanical lift.

Occupy Desks.

Wilbur W. Thompson, cashier, and Frank Morett, assistant, occupied their desks at the north end of the building for the first time this morning. Ora Meries, plant chief for the Michigan Bell Telephone company, and Miss Amelia Wilmers, chief operator at the local branch, assisted in opening the new FBR switchboard which provides phone service to every department of the bank.

Paul Khoury, Jr., son of the proprietor of the Blackstone shoe-shine and smoke parlor, was the first customer to make a savings deposit in the new bank. He was waiting, at 9 o'clock, when the door opened. Henry Nuens [sic – Neuens], a director, made the first checking deposit this morning before leaving for DePere, Wis., to spend the holidays with relatives.

In the 1935 city directory, the Commercial Bank Building, listed at 510 South Stephenson Avenue, contained the following businesses and offices: Basement, Angelo N. Izzo, billiards; George S. Sullivan, barber; Ruth V. Lindquist, beauty shop; Room 212, Commercial Insurance Agency; Room 300, Crowell & Smith (Dr. Joseph Addison Crowell and Dr. Donald R. Smith, physicians); Room 310, vacant; Room 400, Dr. Andrew Nelson, physician; Room 406, Dr. Benjamin J. Eslick, dentist,

and Dr. Gereon Frederickson, physician and surgeon; Room 408, William E. Dirks, music teacher; Rooms 410-412, Raymond Turner and C. Oliver Payant, attorneys; Rooms 500-502, vacant; Rooms 504-506, Dr. Lloyd J. Straub, dentist; Room 508, Bacco Construction Company (Medio J. Bacco, president; John J. Bacco, vice-president; Carl I. Israelson, secretary; Arthur Fortier, treasurer), general contractor; Room 510, Upper Peninsula Credit Association, Donald B. Smith, manager; Room 512, Dr. William H. Alexander, physician.

In the 1939 city directory, the Commercial Bank Building, listed at 500 South Stephenson Avenue, contained the following businesses and offices: Room 212, Commercial Insurance Agency, N.C. Bartholomew, manager; Room 300, Dr. Donald R. Smith, physician; Room 308, Ray E. MacAllister and James C. Perino, attorneys; Room 310, Dr. Grant C. Hamm, dentist; Room 312, Dr. Herman Sturtz, dentist; Rooms 400-405, Dr. Andrew Nelson, physician; Room 406, Dr. Gereon Frederickson, physician; Room 408, Dr. Arthur L. Costa, dentist; Rooms 410-412, Raymond Turner and Ernest W. Brown (prosecuting attorney), attorneys; Room 500, Beauty Nook, Ruth V. Lindquist; Room 504, Dr. Lloyd J. Straub, dentist; Room 508, Bacco Construction Company (Medio J. Bacco, president; John J. Bacco, vice-president; Carl I. Israelson, secretary; Arthur Fortier, treasurer), engineers and contractors; Room 512, Dr. William H. Alexander, physician.

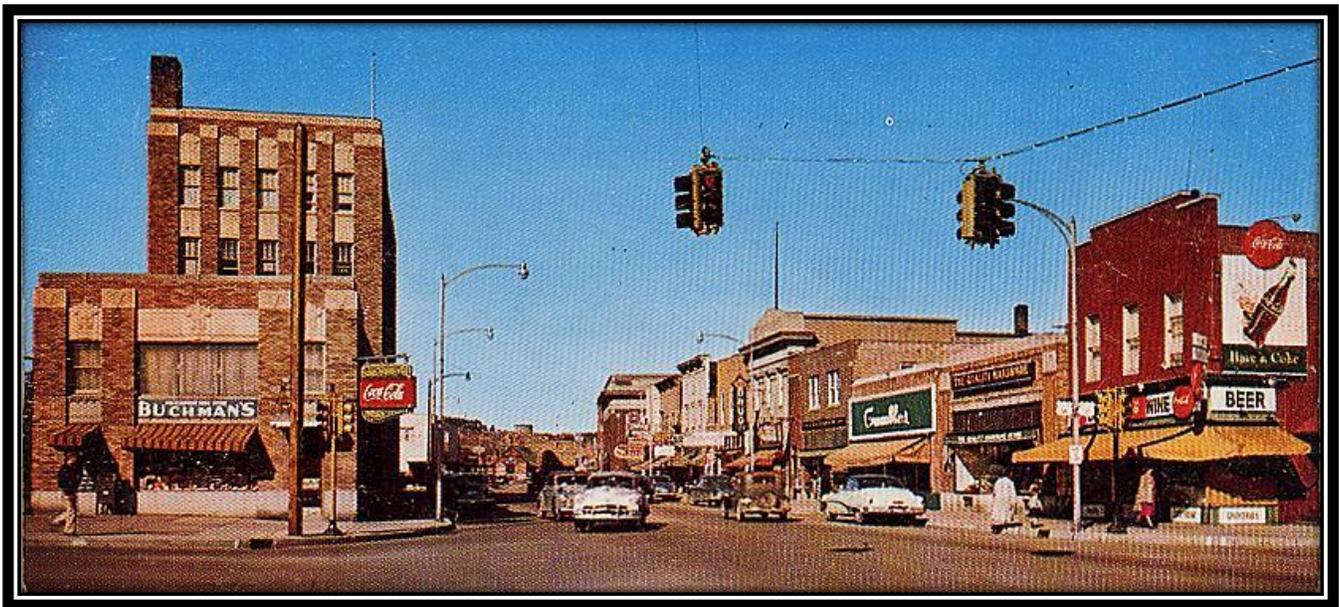
In the 1941-1942 city directory, the Commercial Bank Building, listed at 510 South Stephenson Avenue, contained the following businesses and offices: Basement, Squinch's Bar, Quinto Spera;

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Room 212, **Commercial Insurance Agency**, **N.C. Bartholomew**, manager; Room 300, **Dr. Donald R. Smith**, physician; Room 308, **Ray E. MacAllister**, attorney; Room 310, **Dr. Grant C. Hamm**, dentist; Room 312, **Dr. Herman Sturtz**, dentist; Room 400, **Dr. Andrew Nelson**, physician and surgeon; Room 406, **Dr.**

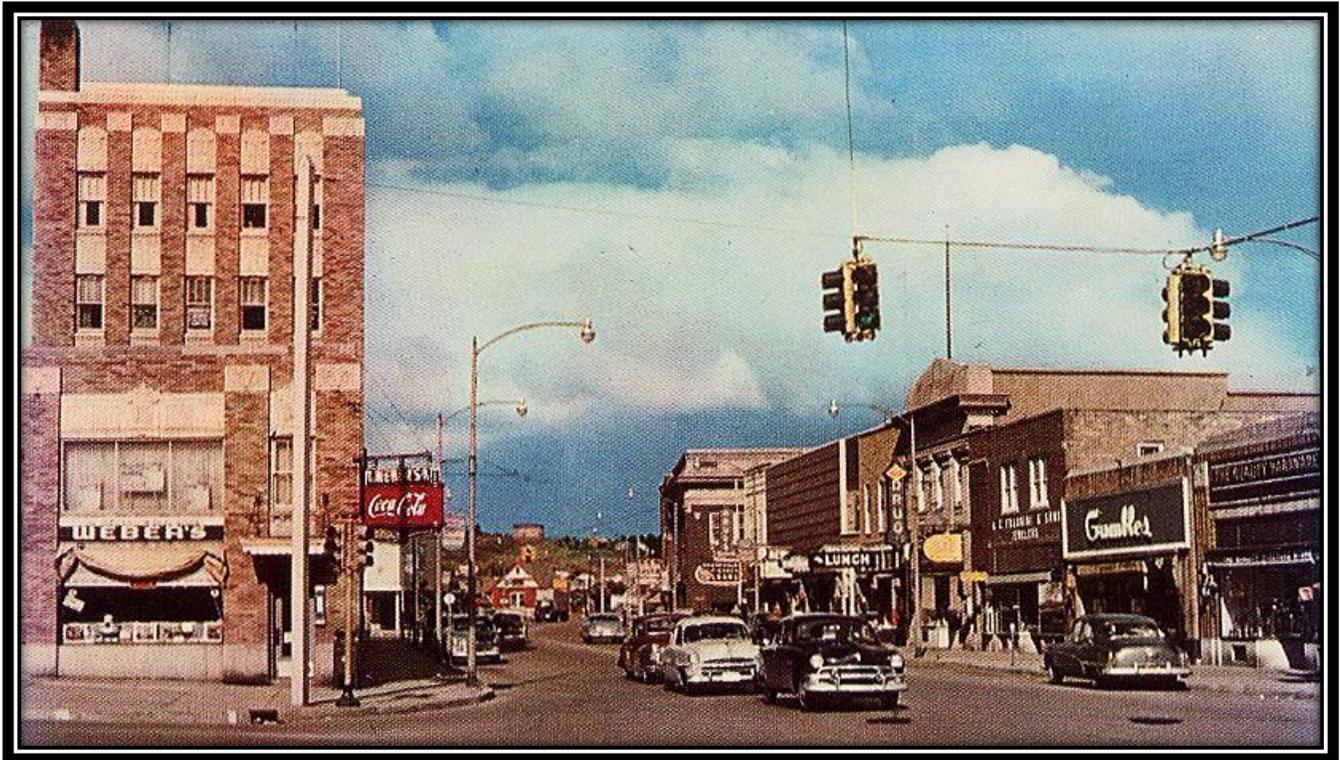
Gereon Frederickson, physician; Room 408, **Dr. Arthur L. Costa**, dentist; Rooms 410-412, **Raymond Turner** and **Ernest W. Brown** (prosecuting attorney), attorneys; Room 504-506, **Dr. Lloyd J. Straub**, dentist; Room 508, **Dr. Hugh D. McEachran**, physician; Room 512, **Dr. William H. Alexander**, physician.



This postcard view, copyrighted **1951** and looking north, shows the **Commercial Bank** on the west side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue with **Buchman's Drug Store** (Abraham G. Buchman) at the south end. On the east side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue businesses easily seen are: **513**, **Combination Lunch** (Steve Pappas, George Corombos, John Corombos); **517**, **City Drug Store** (Angelo B. Bracco); **521**, **Frankini Jewelry Store** (Arthur C. Frankini); **523-525**, **Gambles Store** (Arnold Sjodin, manager); **531**, **The Quality Hardware Store** (Keeler L. Calvi); **535**, **City Fruit Market** (William Khoury and Mary Khoury). The City Fruit Market began business here on **April 11, 1946**. [William J. Cummings]

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This postcard view looking north and dating to the **early 1950s** shows the **Commercial Bank** on the **west side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue** with **Weber's Drug Store** (Verlin Weber, Jr.) at the south end. On the **east side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue** businesses easily seen are: **513**, **Combination Lunch** (Steve Pappas, George Corombos, John Corombos); **517**, **City Drug Store** (Angelo B. Bracco); **521**, **Frankini Jewelry Store** (Arthur C. Frankini); **523-525**, **Gambles Store** (Arnold Sjodin, manager); **531**, **The Quality Hardware Store** (Keeler L. Calvi). *[William J. Cummings]*

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This postcard view looking north, probably from the **early 1960s**, shows the **Commercial National Bank** on the west side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue with **Weber's Drug Store** (Verlin Weber, Jr.) at the south end. On the east side of the 500 block of South Stephenson Avenue businesses included: **501**, Koffman's Store for Men (Mrs. Nina Z. Koffman, Peter D. Koffman); **505**, The Brass Knocker (Arthur A. Muth), gift shop; **507 ½**, M & M News Company (Joe I. Masty); **509**, Woman's Fashion Shop (Frank W. and Mary S. Peterson), Tot's Shop (Mrs. Inez E. Olson); **513**, Vigo's Restaurant (Ernest and Clara B. Vigo), Stogie's Barber Shop (Julius C. Eutizzi); **517**, City Drugs (Sherman Kellstrom); **519-521**, A.C. Frankini & Sons (Louis A. Frankini and Arthur C. Frankini, Jr.), jewelers, and Ellen Blixt Gift Shop (Ellen C. Blixt and Viola V. Blixt); **525-527**, Gambles Store (Kenneth G. Muzzy, manager); **531**, The Quality Hardware Store (Robert C. Calvi); **535**, City Fruit Market (William and Mary Khoury). Alvin "Al" Thompson ran the Thompson Barber Shop, on the south side of the City Fruit Market at 200 East B Street, for many years. The **1964 city directory** was used for business identifications. *[William J. Cummings]*