

Bishop Block  
371-375 Sibley Street  
St. Paul  
Ramsey County  
Minnesota

HABS No. MN-62

HABS  
MINN,  
62-SAIPA,  
25 -

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey  
National Park Service  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
Department of the Interior  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225

HABS  
MINN,  
62-SAIPA,  
25-

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

### BISHOP BLOCK

HABS No. MN-62

#### Location:

371-375 Sibley Street, St. Paul, Ramsey County, Minnesota

#### Significance:

The Bishop Block was constructed by well known contractor, Asher Bassford. The Block housed many of St. Paul's largest companies over the years. The Bishop Block and the John Wann Building are two of the oldest structures on Mears Park.

#### Description:

Originally the Bishop Block was a five story, fourteen bay Victorian styled building that was divided by firewalls into two separate structures. Both buildings shared a common facade and were built at the same time. The building had three cast iron storefronts, and at the center of the roofline was a large pediment that projected above an elaborate galvanized iron cornice. Between 1922 and 1940, several alterations were made to the northernmost eight bays of the structure. The cornice was removed, and a top story was added. In 1941, the southernmost six bays of the building (the portion which stood at the northwest corner of 5th and Sibley Streets) were demolished. The cast iron storefront in the remaining portion of the building was replaced with a vitrolite tile storefront in the 1950's. In 1981, the Bishop Block consisted of six stories and eight bays with horizontal banding decorated with incised carving in stone and decorative brickwork between stories.

#### History:

This building was probably constructed circa 1882-83 as a rental property for Judson Wade Bishop, a former Civil War Brigadier-General and engineer who served as the general manager of the St. Paul and Sioux City Railroad which eventually became part of the Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis and Omaha Railway system. The building was constructed by Asher Bassford, a St. Paul builder and carpenter who was the brother of Edward Payson Bassford, a well-known St. Paul architect. The building appears on the 1883 J.L. Stoner, Panoramic Map of St. Paul, indicating that it may have been under construction as early as 1882.

In 1883 the building housed the Nicols and Dean Hardware Company, a firm that originated in 1855 as Nicols and Berkey. The 1886 publication, Industries of St. Paul lists the tenants of the Bishop Block as Fairbanks, Morse, and Company manufacturers of scales, windmills, pumps, and engines; Guiterman Brothers, manufacturers and jobbers of Men's Furnishing Goods; and Nicols and Dean Hardware Company. Photographs of the building taken in 1902 and 1922 reveal that the northern part of the building was

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occupied by the Goodyear Rubber Company. More recently the building has been occupied by the Sperry Office Furniture Company.

Sources:

HPC/RCHS tour, research by Jim Sazevich, 1980.

Building Permit Index Card.

A.W. Morrison. Industries of St. Paul, 1886, p. 112.

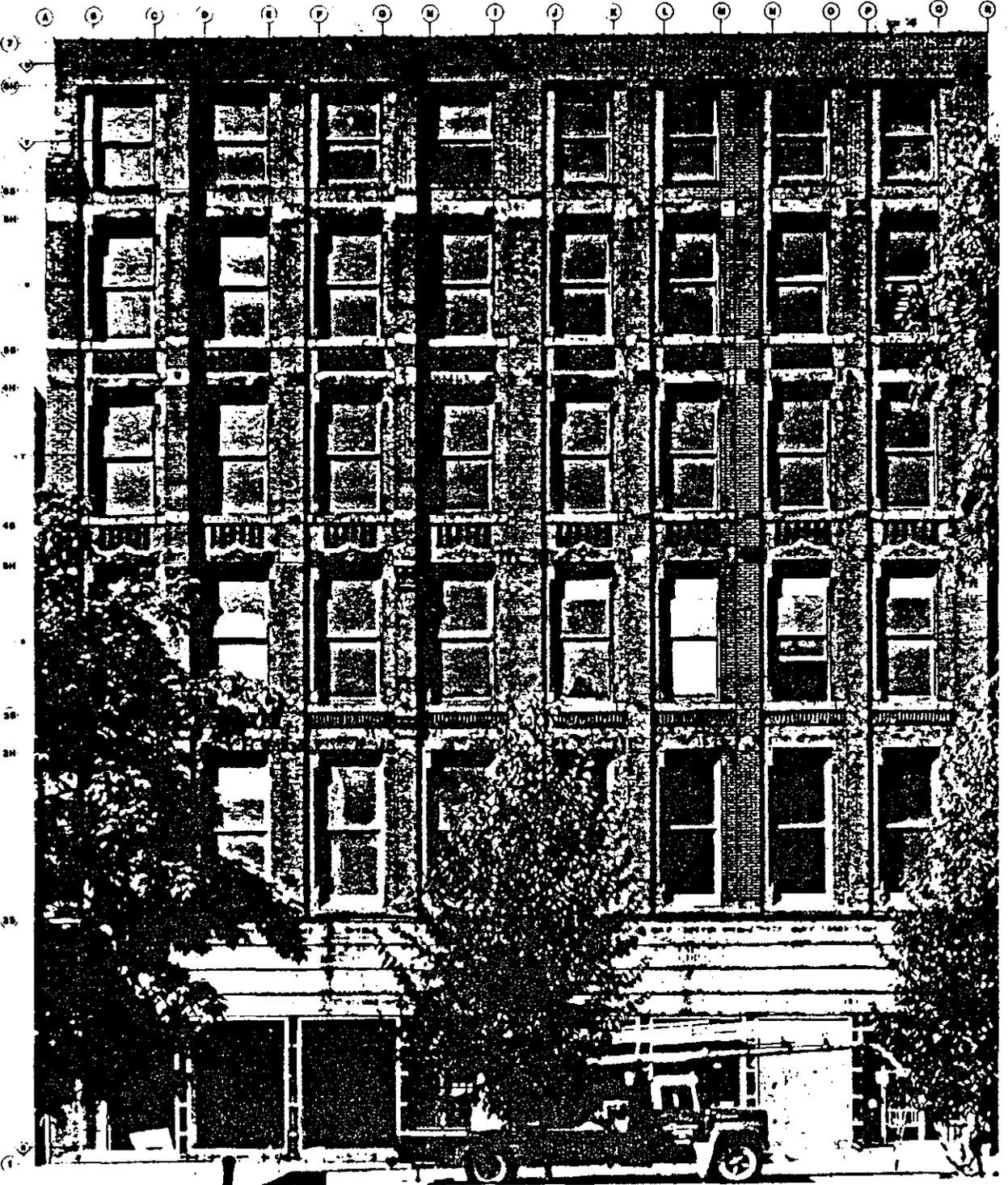
Lowertown Historical District, National Register Nomination Form, prepared November, 1981.

Historian:

S. Granger

3/27/81

Photocopy of a photographic reproduction of a drawing of the east front section



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 Engineer: Westrick Bell  
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