

Historic Central Avenue

[Start at UP depot parking lot, distribute handout]

Junction – UP & B&MR half block east of point where UP track crosses Central.

1 Duel depot at first

Immigrant/passenger trains arrived at 9:30 p.m.

Original business development – south of tracks then north with hotels on Ave A

As businesses moved north, those on south became utilitarian – stables, etc.

Cowboys riding up & down streets frightening citizens

Becket house, first hotel – block south on west side

Boom period development – Many of current buildings north of tracks

Infrastructure of sewer, water, electricity

2 Trolley system – horse drawn, electric with overhead wire

Down center of Central Ave. south to courthouse, north to 25th

Board walks at first

Dirt street with cement curbs & manhole covers over sewers

Original street name – Wyoming Avenue – renamed in 1888

3a 2001 – Lowe Building – 1881 (Pre-boom)

1st National Bank – outgrew building, moved to new one

Farmers Bank

3b 2003 – Building next to it also goes across east end of Lowe Building to face on RR Ave.

North side destroyed in 1927 Coddington fire

[Cross Railroad Street]

2005-2007 – ca 1890 – newer building now

Original building housed Coddington's retail & wholesale grocery.

Burned in 1927 – Rebuilt

2011 – ca 1890 – Paddy O’Malley’s now

2013 – 1888 – Alley Rose now

Liberty Cleaners 1921-1966

Peppermill in 1989

2021 – 1923 – The Ultimate Look now??

Built by George Peterson – Central Café

Ku Klux Klan tried to stop him (Greek) from opening

Operated into the 1950s

Buck’s Floral for many years

4 2029 – McEwan Building – 1890

Restored lawyers office – former Homestead House

Ornate Victorian style building – note decorative roof line

round arch windows & wide dormer

balcony on second floor

third floor was Knights of Pythias Hall

4 2031 – Andrews Block – 1889

[corner building] – Miles Marshall, etc. now

Originally 3 stories – top floor removed in 1950s, weakened by heavy equipment

Richardsonian Romansque architecture

Arches at front and side entrances – Windows long and deep – Roofline with balustrade (railing)

City Nat. Bank – Ft. Kearney State Bank – Ft. Kearney Nat. Bank – 1st Nat. Bank

Other offices on 2nd, 3rd, & basement floors

Elks on 3rd floor until their club house built over on 1st Ave.

In restoration portion of original tin ceiling was uncovered – see from front hall

Bank robberies in 1930s

[Cross 21st street – Note the tragedy of Central Avenue]

5 Original corner building – now covered by brick facade

Decorative Victorian building of late 1880s

Golden Eagle Clothing in south half until 1930s – Chinese Laundry around the corner

Always a drug store in north half except few years in 50s when Singer was in there

ABC Drug for many years

Drs offices and then KRNY radio upstairs

Buildings destroyed – built in 1883, 1886, 1889

Italianate commercial architecture

Round arches over windows, recessed doorways, brackets under the roof line

Businesses on ground floor:

Kearney post office

Famous Shoes

Photographers upstairs

Safeway

Bakeries

(Anderson, Butcher, Mattson)

Chase clothing

YMCA upstairs

Hamilton Loan & Trust

Relief agencies in mid-90s in basement

2121-2123 – Pratt Building – 1917 [Corner Building was Rutgers Card & Gift and Rutgers the Fashion]

Clean cut, little ornamentation

South half – Lantz drug then Card & Gift downstairs – law offices upstairs

North half – Rutgers the Fashion – their 4th location – beamed ceilings, beautiful wood paneling

[Cross 22nd street]

6 2201 – Hamer Block – 1887

Original entrance on corner – raised level 1st floor

Before this building there was another housing the New York Cheap Cash Store

Owners were firemen who left the store unattended

This building was called the Hamer Block – Hamer was first lawyer in town

Built for the Commercial & Savings Bank – Gould's Grain & Cattle Co. also had offices here

2205 – ca 1920 – Fort Theater

Built for Empress Theater in 1920's – burned – one of biggest fires downtown
Doraleen Weed memory of frozen boots

Art deco architecture in and out – preserved in restoration

2215 – [next building north of beauty school] – 1916

Built by Augar Eck for his paint and wallpaper store

He retired in 1965 – He and father were in business here 75 years [beginning 1890]

Shirt Shack located here later

2217-2219 – ca 1920s – plain, modern style of that time

Last brick building to be built on Central between MONA and the railroad

– 2217 – So-Fro Fabrics

– 2219 – Klones Sports Equipment

7 2221-2223 – Midway Loan & Trust Building – 1889 – Now KGFW Building

One of the more elegant buildings – 3-story with tower (now gone)

Richardsonian Romanesque architecture again – arches over windows and doors

Colorado sandstone trim - 3rd floor windows deep set with rounded arches

Often referred to as the Federal Building because of federal offices here on 2nd and 3 floors

Many businesses & professional firms here over the years

Platte Valley State Bank started here in 1944

Were once living quarters on 2nd and 3rd floors.

[Look across the street at Yanda's]

8 2301-03 – Switz Building – 1889

Victorian era Italianate –

hood windows – decorative belt between floors – ornamented roof line (now gone)

Built by F. J. Switz, a very early businessman for his furniture store – 1889-1920

Baumgartener's 1938 – early 1980s – variety and school texts & supplies

Text books on 2nd floor, teachers came in fall to buy

Bissell's Decorating – 1985- 2005??

2311-2313 – Wort Building – ca 1915

Stucco walls & red tile roof – variation of Spanish Colonial revival of teens & 20s.

Built as office and clinic for Dr. Tupper Kirby

D Wort acquired it in 1918 – Stores & offices on street floor, apartments on 2nd floor

[Cross Central - Look a block north to World Theater]

2308-2322 – Masonic Temple – 1927 – their second building

Post WWI architecture – flat roof – smooth walls – modest ornamentation

1877 – site of a saloon converted by Presbyterians for their 1st church, 3 years

9 2300 – Buffalo County National Bank – ca 1876 – first brick building on Wyoming Ave

Mansard roof – recently repaired, restored repainted – arched window on 2nd floor

3rd floor dormer windows – note 4 chimneys in picture

Later (during boom) expanded to alley

3rd floor – GAR and other lodges and societies

2nd floor, later 3rd also, had apartments

Street floor – grocery store – Paul's Broiler, Tasty Tea Room, Blue Parrot

[Looking straight across the street from now on]

2220-2224 – 1st Masonic Temple – 1887

Looks newer but windows in back on alley bear out the earlier date

Hartzell's book Store used most of the area in the 1890s

1917-1945 – Kappas Bros. candy kitchen and Emporia Café on north side

1914-2005? – Music stores – Gaston's, then Yanda's

2216 – Western Schwinn now – Crescent Theater in teens

2214 – Hecht built it – 1886

Italianate style architecture

Hardware store in earliest days – Claussen's shoe store from ca 1940

10 2210-2212 – St John & Barnd Building – 1886

Italianate style – ornate – cornices – brackets under roof line – ornamented window heads –
Grillwork in front of windows over the porch roof

Sylvester St. John – 1872 – 1st city clerk –

Started with implement business, moved on to real estate, insurance & banking

John Barnd – attorney, county judge, banker

Street level

South half – K O Holmes book store

North half – grocery store

1920s Woolworths took whole space

1958 – Hellman's Ready to Wear

Upstairs

Chamber of Commerce

Midway College of Business started here

YMCA – one of its locations

Professional offices – doctors, dentists, lawyers

Small businesses

2206-2008 – Don't know when it was built

Turn of century 1900 – Mrs. Squires Millinery

1924 – Kaufman Wernert's 5 & 10 cent store

1938 – Swan's Furniture

2200-2204 – Kaufmann Center – 1922

Kaufmann & Wernert had started 5 & 10¢ store – 1908

Built this store to be a department store, one of the finest in the state

\$80,000 for store fixtures

Tea room on mezzanine

Opening in wall to 5 & 10 next door

Two stores combined in Depression & Swan's Furniture replaced the 5 & 10

[Cross 22nd Street]

11 2122 – C R Miller for 1st Nat. Bank – 1888

Bank had outgrown the Lowe Building

3- story Italianate – ornate roof trim

Cornice window heads w/ pressed metal corbels (blocks imbedded in wall, partly projecting)

Robertson, bank owner, had his name on building

S. A. D. Henline acquired building about 1900 and put his name on it

2nd & 3rd floors used for offices, lodge & club rooms and living quarters

1995 city directory lists residents' names

2120 – “Scott & Miller” – ca 1890 – name on building – Cowpoke now

Carl Bodinson Hardware store for over 50 years

2118 – built 1892 – now Valley Pharmacy

Drug store since teens – Henline – Haeberle – Valley Pharmacy

2116 – Nothing known about building, been a shoe store 95 years – Twidale, Fink, Redmans

2114 – First building on this spot – in 1880, boardwalk days – housed Kearney Post Office

Penneys was here in mid-1920s [must not have stayed long in Opera House]

2112 – Construction date unknown –

Since 1906 – Clothing – Olson – Killian – Hirschfeld's (1936) until moving to mall

12 2106-2108 – Built by W. A. Downing – 1882

One of the early brick buildings on Wyoming

Italianate – decorated roof line – cornice window heads – iron bracket trim between stories

North half Downing's saddle and harness shop

He was a harness maker

Upstairs – 1st telephone office 1888

South half L. C. Gregg had dry goods store

Later Golden Rule – Brown-McDonalds – The Buckle

W. A. Downing built the Women's Club house

Gregg built the house directly south across the street

12 2104 – Hawthorne Jewelry now – Construction date unknown

Originally looked like W. A. Downing building next door

Empire Store for many years

Operated by Finch brothers: Charlie (mayor 1887-1890) & Ed (fireman, charter member)

They may have built the building matching it to their neighbor

[Look south across the street to the 2-story original part of Bruce Furniture]

2024-2026 – Built in 1925 –

Before 1925 – small frame buildings including

(1906) Keenan Cigar factory in building on south half of site

1925 – south half – Debus Baking Co.----- north half – Troxell Furniture [less than 10 years]

Ca 1933 - Montgomery Wards for more than 30 years (used both sides)

1963 – Payne Larson

2016 – Tripp – 1885 (Miskos now)

Victorian era Italianate – ornamental corner treatment, curved window hoods, decorated below roofline

Tripp had small jewelry store, rented the rest

2014 – W. L. Nash – 1885 (Miskos now)

Similar design but different decorations at roofline & over windows

Nash - stock dealer with office on 2nd floor

Street level

Russell & Jakeway Hardware followed by other businesses

1935 – Two buildings combined to become Kearney Hardware

13 2006 – Dildine – 1884

2004 – Leach – 1888

Brunswick Hotel – 2nd floor balcony with iron railing

[Look back directly across the street to former Schwesers Building]

14 2100-2102 – Downing-Bartlett Building – ca 1890 (south half) and 1907 (north half)

Built by R. L. Downing & John J. Bartlett (Kearney flour mill owners)

North half – Hawthorne Jewelry store (est. 1878) for many many years after completion in 1907

Architecturally identical to south half

South half – completed by 1891 - E. Walker & Sons Emporium

1906 – Central National Bank – 1934 – ladies dress shop

Architecture – contrasts with rest of buildings

No Victorian roof or wall ornamentation, smooth brick surface above 1st floor

Rounded arches over windows with contrasting color brick

Belt of trim dividing 1st & 2nd floor

1st floor - Light colored Colorado sandstone with bands of rough red sandstone

South side – 2 sets of four granite columns with foliated red terra cotta capitals supporting an arch of red sandstone

The Gem – Marble column on corner like no other in Kearney

A Corinthian capital topped by Romanesque red terra cotta with foliated design

Gargoyle on each side

[Cross Central Avenue, close look at pillar and south side of building, note erosion]

[Look south to Opera House site]

15 2028-2030 – Opera House - 1890

1880-1890 – More's Bank & later the Kearney National Bank

1891, May 1 – Opera house opened – finest between Chicago and Denver

Theater seated 1200 – electric lighting system

5 Stories – Upper floors – 45 offices – apartments [3rd & 4th floors?]

Club rooms, including large meeting room on 5th? Floor

Street floor – grocery store, bank, department store – Payne & Larson started here

Torn down in 1954 – Grants – Pennys (Penneys had opened first store in Opera House in 1920)

One wall remains – 22 inches wide – common wall with building to south

[Cross 21st Street and return to the parking lot]