

This program was made possible by a Historic Preservation Education Grant from the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, the Indiana Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities

## A Walking Tour Guide for Heritage Tourists



# Terra Cotta

### Downtown Lafayette-West Lafayette

Architectural Terra Cotta by Eileen E. Booth

#### Handmade Tradition

White, glazed terra cotta clads several important downtown buildings in Lafayette, Indiana. They reflect the celebration of America's turn-of-the century love affair with arts and crafts and handmade traditions. These buildings reflect Lafayette's prosperity at the turn of the twentieth century and the sensibilities of the modern city with its electric lights, electric streetcars, high-speed interurbans and many railroad connections. They boast the longevity of a material considered innovative over a century ago.

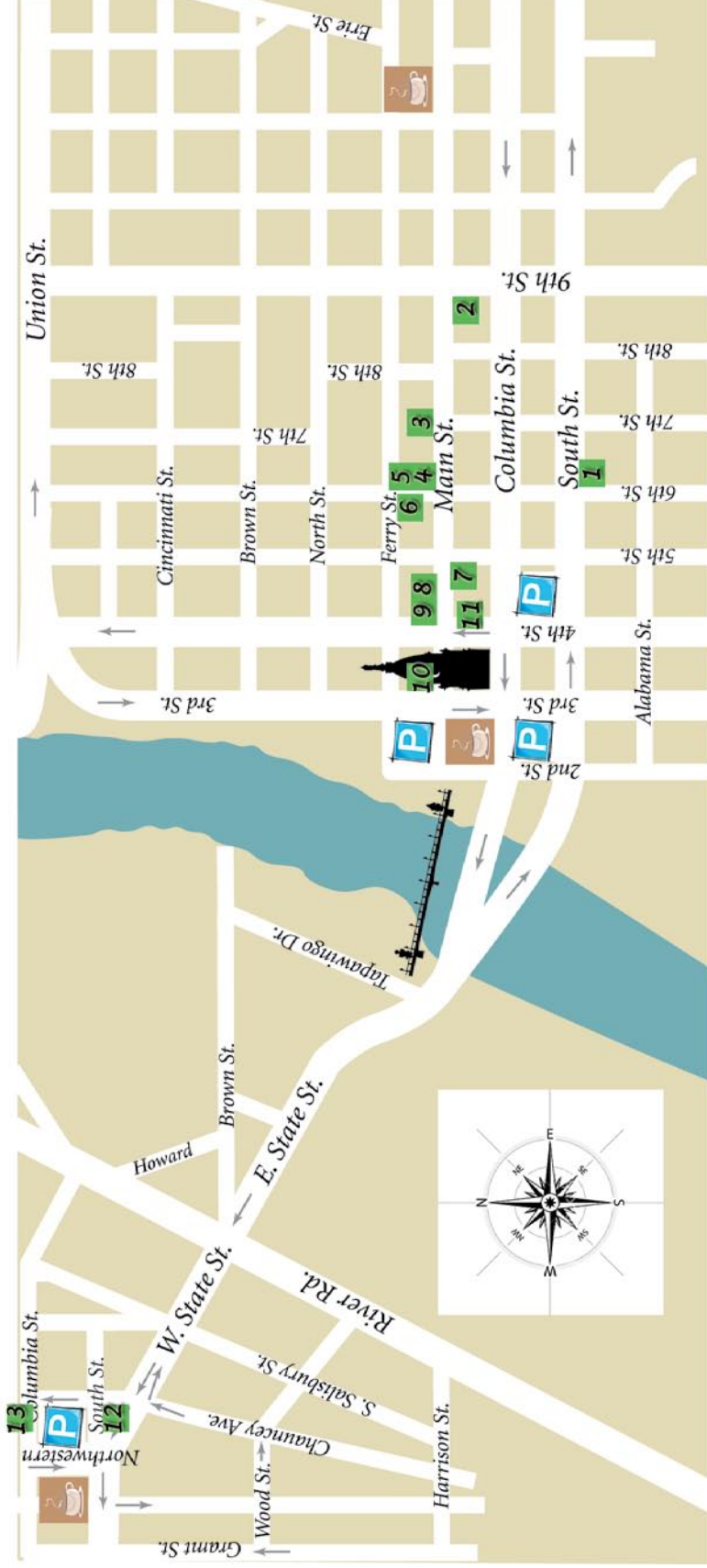
Architectural terra cotta in Lafayette arrived via railroad freight from the American Terra Cotta Company, Midland Terra Cotta Company, or the Indianapolis Terra Cotta Company.

#### Washable Characteristics of a Dinner Plate

Essentially, architectural terra cotta served the construction industry by providing the durable and washable characteristics of a dinner plate and the luster and ornate sculptural qualities of a decorative glazed clay vase. Manufactured by pressing clay into molds, this material provided an affordable and lightweight alternative to stone.



## Downtown Lafayette-West Lafayette



### Downtown Lafayette:

1. 605 South Street, Standard Oil Station, 1927-1928
2. 839 Main Street, Reifers Furniture, 1914
3. 672 Main Street, ca. 1913
4. 600 Main Street, Lafayette Theater, 1938
5. 217 N 6th Street, Painters & Decorators Building, 1923
6. 226 N 6th Street, Murdock Building, 1913
7. 427 Main Street, Hirsh Bros. Building, 1920-1921

8. 416 Main Street, Ruger-DeWenter Building, 1859-1861
9. 400 Main Street, Oppenheimer Building, 1914
10. 312 Main Street, Ross Building, 1918
11. 125 N 4th Street, ca. 1850

### Downtown West Lafayette:

12. 210 W. State Street, Purdue State Bank, 1914
13. 208 W. Columbia Street, WL Public Library, 2004

# Downtown Lafayette

## Standard Oil Station

605 South Street  
 Standard Oil Company  
 1927-1928

Owned by the Tippecanoe County Public Library, used as the Red Crown Mini Museum, this is most likely a product of the American Terra Cotta Company who made terra cotta for two other Standard Oil Stations in Lafayette in 1939 (neither still stand today).

The gas station was built by the Standard Oil Company of Indiana with an attached one garage bay. It features glazed brick walls and a red tile roof. In 1935-36 a second garage bay was added. Standard Oil designed filling stations like this one to celebrate a modern design aesthetic using clean surfaces and streamlined curves. The company used these stations to establish corporate identity wherever the driver traveled. They became popular symbols of youth, vitality and mobility.

This station operated until 1979. In 1985, the library purchased the property with the intent of leveling it for a parking lot. In 1991, Don Stein, a local business man and auto collector offered to restore the gas station which he did that same year.



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Sept. 11, 1934. C. A. URBANEK Des. 93,308  
 SERVICE STATION BUILDING OR THE LIKE  
 Filed May 23, 1934 2 Sheets-Sheet 2

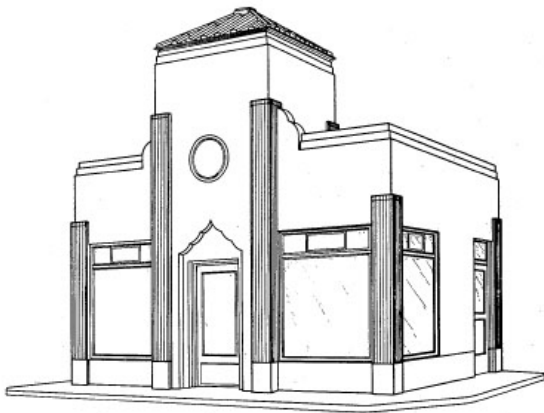


FIG. 3

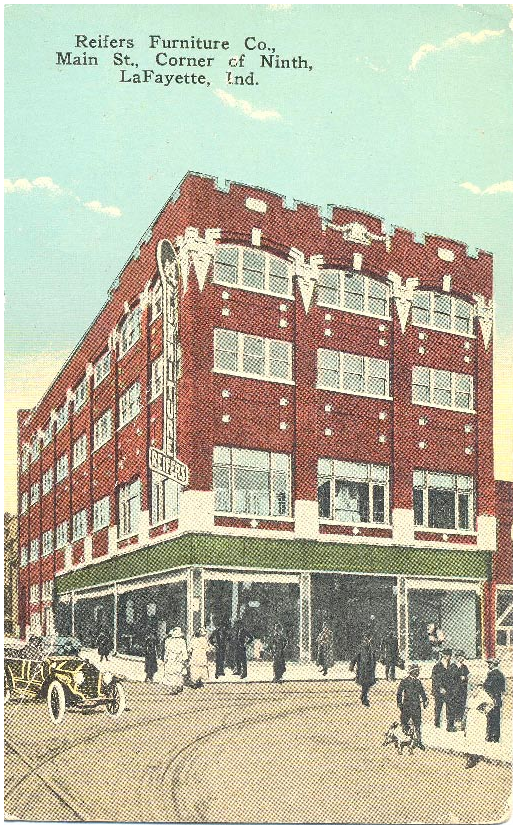
INVENTOR  
 Charles A. Urbaneck  
 BY *Bruce K. Bann*  
 ATTORNEY

www.jitterbuzz.com



Osher Map Library and Smith Center for Cartographic Education

Reifers Furniture Co.,  
Main St., Corner of Ninth,  
LaFayette, Ind.



Tippecanoe County Historical Asso-

## Downtown Lafayette

### Reifers Furniture

839 Main Street

Charles W. Nicol

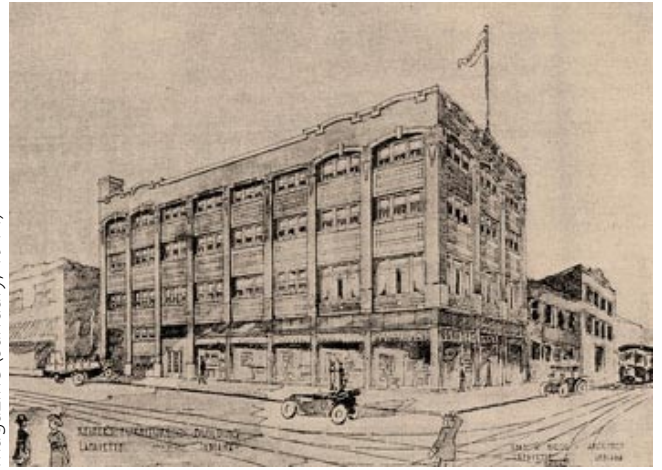
Built 1894, facades remodeled 1914

American Terra Cotta Company

This brick and white glazed terra cotta building is owned and occupied by Bison Financial. John S. Reifers established his home outfitters store here in 1914. In a 1927 City Directory, Reifers Furniture advertised it had everything for the home including furniture, carpets, rugs, linoleums, office furniture, New Edison phonographs and records.



The Ohio Architect, Engineer and Builder Magazine (January, 1914)



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# Downtown Lafayette

## 672 Main Street

Ca. 1913

This white glazed terra cotta building is owned by Thomas Reed and used for accounting firm, Reed and Company. A contemporary tile entry was added to the entry in 1999.

This building housed Case Leroy Cigars and Tobacco in the late twenties.



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Herman Berry Collection (1972)



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## Downtown Lafayette

### Lafayette Theater

600 Main Street

Architects: Marr & Holman, Louisville, Kentucky

Contractor: Karl H. Kettlehut and

A.E. Kemmer (steel)

1938

This glazed terra cotta tile building is owned by Madame NY, LLC who restored the theater with the Wabash Valley Trust for Historic Preservation.

Formerly, The Family Theatre, operated on this site from 1906-1938. The Loeb Realty Company built this theater in 1938 and leased it to the Fourth Avenue Amusement Company of Louisville, Kentucky. The Lafayette Theater opened on September 1, 1938 showing "Four's a Crowd." The art deco building opened it seated 1,251 and astonished patrons with it's modern air conditioning and advanced sound system.



Ben L. Ross



Ben L. Ross



Tippecanoe County Historical Association (October, 1938)

## Downtown Lafayette

### Painters & Decorators Building

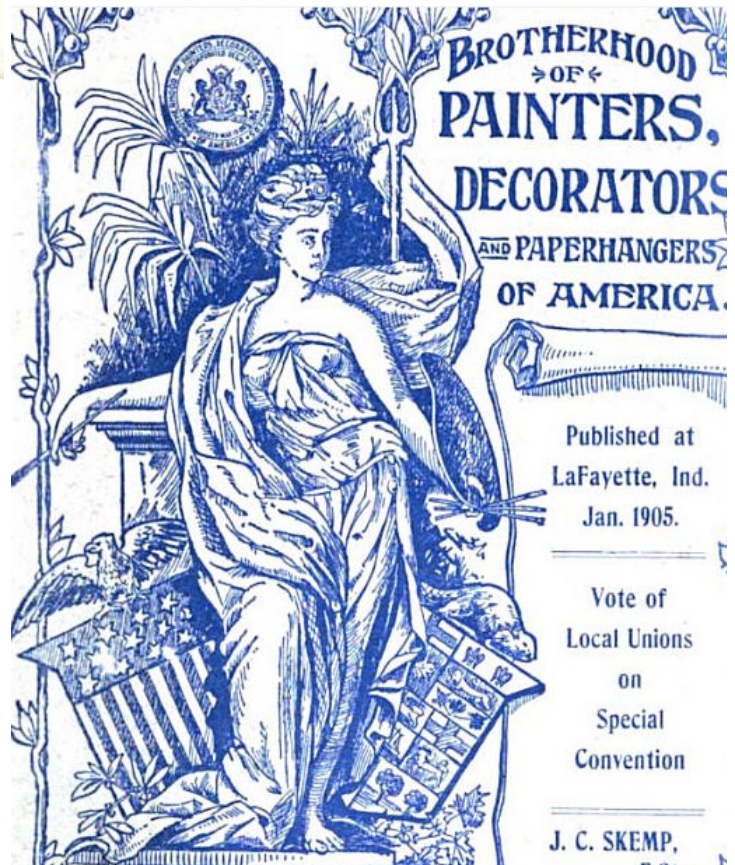
217 North 6th Street  
Architect: Nicol, Scholer & Hoffman  
Contractor: A.E. Kemmer  
1923

This glazed and marbled terra cotta building is owned and occupied by the Journal and Courier, a Gannett media company, who purchased the building around 1970 and moved here from an adjacent 1920 building. Originally, this building was used as the National Headquarters of the Brotherhood of Painters, Decorators & Paperhangers of America. They published monthly newsletter, The Painter and Decorator, "The Official Monthly Magazine Devoted to the interests of house, sign, pictorial, coach, car, carriage, machinery, ship and railroad equipment, painters, decorators, paperhangers, hard wood finishers, grainers, glaziers, varnishers, enamellers and guilders." This facade features beautiful iconographic details showing the tools of decorating trades including wallpapering equipment, paint, brushes, a ladder and an artist's palette.

Tippecanoe County Historical Association



BROTHERHOOD OF PAINTERS, DECORATORS AND PAPERHANGERS OF AMERICA, LAFAYETTE, INDIANA



Susan Tunick, Friends of Terra Cotta



## Downtown Lafayette

### Murdock Building

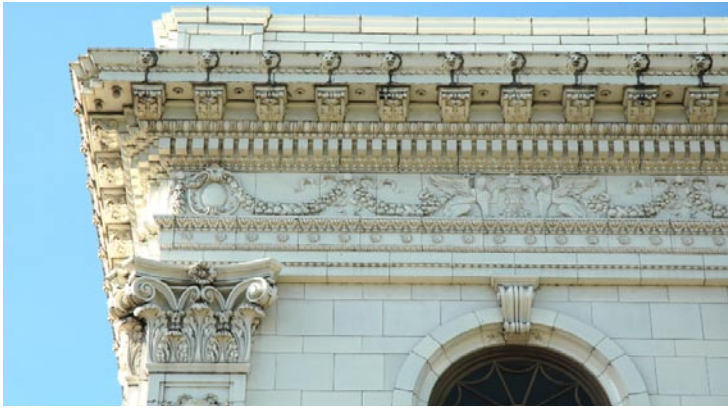
226 North 6th Street

Attributed to Charles W. Nicol

1913

This white glazed terra cotta building is owned and occupied by the Lafayette Ballet Company. The Murdock Building is a remodel of the former Pottlizer Block, built to house the Pottlizers' Lafayette Cracker & Confectionery Co. (the largest competitor to the National Biscuit Co., NaBisCo in the 1890s). The adjacent Pottlizer-Masonic Hall Building (1884) housed the Pottlizers' wholesale fruit store. The Pottlizer Block was extensively remodeled in 1913, at which time the third floor was designed specifically for the Allen School of Dancing, with the spectacular Allen Ballroom. There were originally projecting terra cotta balconies at the third floor level which were removed sometime before 1970. The building contains a central light well (now roofed over) with a huge skylight on the first floor level. Charles A. Murdock established his businesses, Murdock Farms Company and Murdock Realty Company in this beaux arts building. He leased offices to several dentists, an insurance company, a grain dealer, a lawyer and piano salesperson. Charles Nicol moved his office into the building in 1914, occupying one of the second floor offices.

Don't miss the fantastic polychromatic glazed terra cotta tile advertising the "Steam Bakery" on the north facade of the Pottlizer Block building.



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Tippecanoe County Historical Association



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Eileen E. Booth



## Downtown Lafayette

### Hirsh Bros. Building

427 Main Street

Nicol, Scholer & Hoffman

Contractor: A.E. Kemmer

1920-1921

American Terra Cotta Company

This marbled terra cotta building is occupied by Coldwell Banker Shook Realty. Benjamin and Samuel Hirsh moved their popular store, The Hub Clothing House, from the west side of the square to this large modern building in 1921. The Hub was previously located in one of the buildings that was for many years part of "Maize, an American Grill" on the west side of the square. This building still features rows of electric lights characteristic of these modern commercial buildings from the 1910s-1920s.



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Painting, Coldwell Banker Shook Realty



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## Downtown Lafayette

### Ruger-DeWenter Building

416 Main Street

Mann

Built 1859-1861, facade remodeled 1913

American Terra Cotta Company

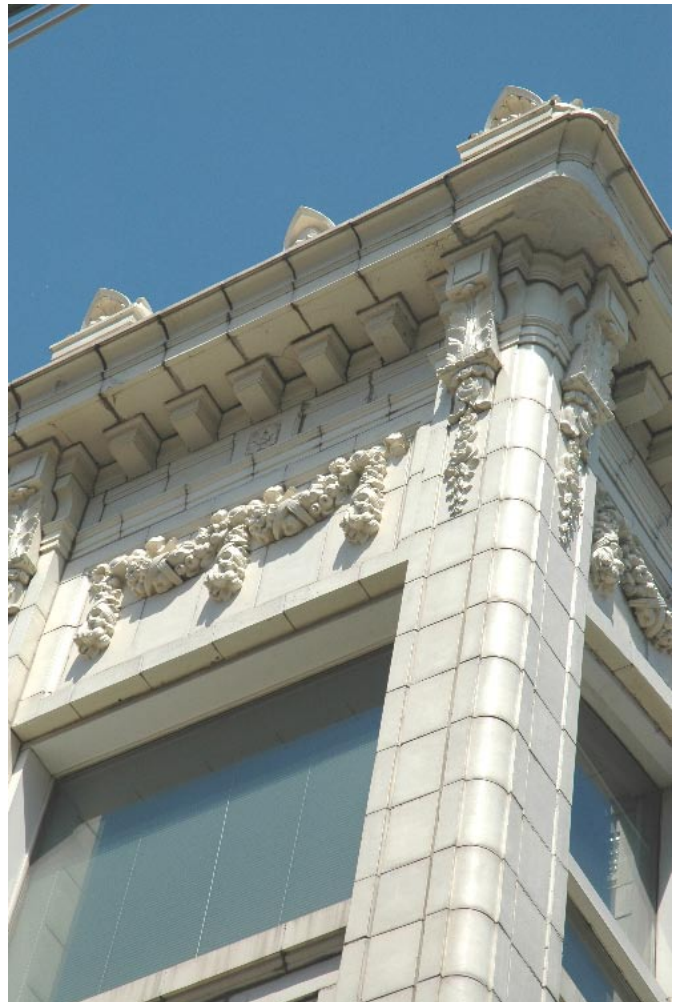
This white glazed terra cotta building is owned and occupied by Indiana Design Consortium. This building originally had an identical facade as its neighbor. It was used in 1861 as Ruger's Store and Steam Bakery. William A. DeWenter founded a Hatters and Men's Furnishings Clothing store at this location in 1913 and added the terra cotta facade.



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## Downtown Lafayette

### Oppenheimer Building (Baltimore Store)

400 Main Street

Charles W. Nicol

Built 1865, façades remodeled 1914

American Terra Cotta Company

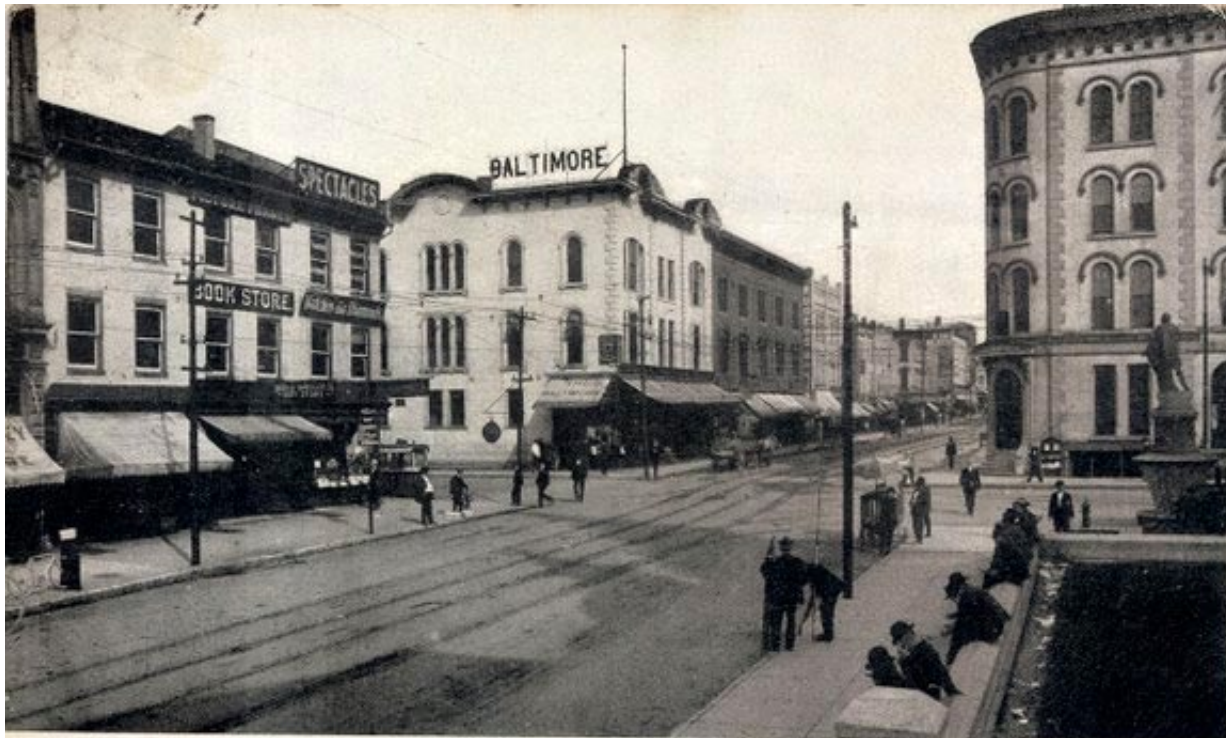
This white glazed terra cotta building is owned and occupied by Salin Bank. Nicol built the J.L. Reynolds & Co.. Bank here in 1865. The building was remodeled several times, gaining some larger windows on the Main Street facade and a storefront with huge plate glass windows around 1890. The façades were replaced in 1914 in time for the 25th anniversary of the Baltimore Clothing House, founded by Levi Oppenheimer. The roof line was originally outlined in electric lights, with lampposts on top of the raised parts of the parapet.



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Main Street, from the Court House, La Fayette, Ind.

## Downtown Lafayette

### Ross Building

312 Main Street, Nicol & Dietz  
1918  
Midland Terra Cotta Company

This white glazed terra cotta building is owned by R. Gregg Sutter and used as La Scala Restaurant. Purdue graduate and engineer, David E. Ross had his primary business office here. He had a very important influence on Lafayette's history intellectually, civically and financially. In 1905, he developed a new type of steering gear and founded Ross Gear and Tooling Company. Later, business partner George Kummings amicably founded spin-off company Fairfield Manufacturing Company.

Ross served on Lafayette City Council for eight years and leveraged major capital for both the Purdue Memorial Union and Ross-Ade Stadium.

Ross founded the Rostone Company in 1927, producing a synthetic stone made from slate, shales and clay. This decorative building material was used on several local homes and on the original Lafayette Theater (600 Main Street) facade. For a listing of Rostone buildings [www.rostone.com](http://www.rostone.com).



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Eileen E. Booth



La Scala Restaurant

# Downtown Lafayette

## 125 North 4th Street

Built 1850s, facade remodeled 1930s

Parts of this building date back to the 1850s, when it was part of a larger building known as the Spencer Block. The Spencer Block housed Spencer Hall, used as a public meeting place and may have been the largest assembly place other than Lafayette churches in the 1850s. After a severe fire, the second and third floors were used as meeting halls (1907) and for King, The Clothier from at least 1908-1915. Sometime around 1920, the building was extensively rebuilt to house the Tippecanoe Loan & Trust Co. with a new neoclassical limestone facade. After multiple renovations and several facade replacements, the present streamlined extruded terra cotta facade was added in the 1930s.



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Tippecanoe County Historical Association (1871-72)



Tippecanoe County Historical Association (1923)



Tippecanoe County Historical Association (ca. 1915)

## Downtown West Lafayette

### Purdue State Bank

210 West Lafayette Street

Louis Sullivan

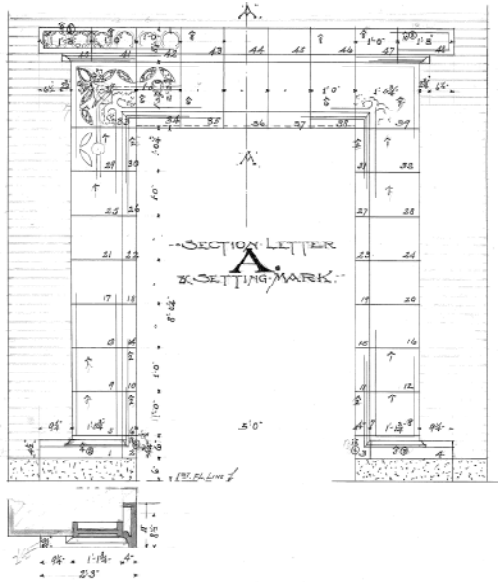
1914

American Terra Cotta Company

This important Sullivan Bank is owned and occupied by Chase Bank. At the turn of the century, banks across the Midwest worked to reinvent themselves as progressive and community-oriented entities. They commissioned new bank buildings to reflect these philosophies. At a time when most new banks were being built in classical styles with limestone facades, Sullivan introduced very progressive architectural designs indeed. Sullivan completed eight banks during the last twenty years of his life making this an extremely important building.

The Purdue State Bank was established in 1910 during a rapid growth period for Purdue University. The successful bank operated out of a storefront for four years before it strategically purchased the triangular lot on the main street connecting campus with Lafayette. A design competition in 1913 drew submissions from both Sullivan and Nicol. Purdue president W.E. Stone served on the bank board and probably had a hand in steering the board towards commissioning Sullivan. Critic Montgomery Schuyler declared in 1912 that a new work by Louis Sullivan "is the most interesting event which can happen in the American architectural world today." This commission was built for \$14,600.

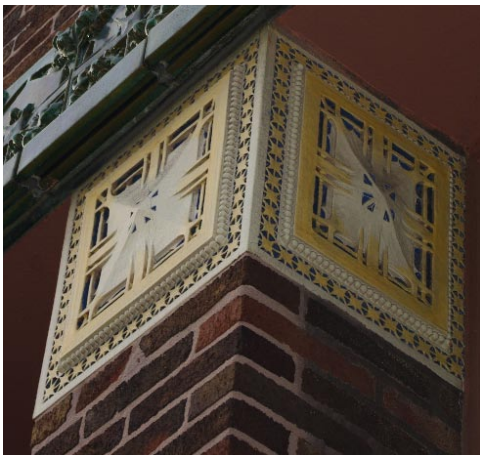
The rear addition was most likely added between 1950-1960. At that time the original entrance was filled in, replaced with a window and later an ATM. The building also suffered unsympathetic alterations when it was repointed. Originally it had color-matched mortar with deep raked joints so that the brick read as a textured mass rather than individual bricks.



Friends of Terra Cotta



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## Downtown West Lafayette

### West Lafayette Public Library

208 West Columbia Street

K.R. McGomery Associates Architecture

2004

Boston Valley Terra Cotta, Hamburg, NY

Completed in 2004, this handsome glass and masonry building has panels of glazed green terra cotta foliage on the exterior columns. These seem to pay homage to the ornament on Sullivan's near-by bank. In addition, there are glazed terra cotta squares with individual leaves inset into the brick pillars throughout the interior of the library. These leaves are from 16 local tree species including: Beech, Black Locust, Red Bud, Sassafras, Tulip Tree and White Ash.



Susan Tunick, Friends of Terra Cotta



KfM Architecture+



Susan Tunick, Friends of Terra Cotta



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