

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Tempe Hardware Building

Other names/site number I.O.O.F. Hall, Cosmopolitan Hall, Curry Hall

2. Location

street & number 520 South Mill Avenue not for publication

city of town Tempe vicinity

State Arizona code 04 county Maricopa code 13 zip code 85282

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,
I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official	Date
<u>State Historic Preservation Officer</u>	<u>Arizona State Parks</u>
Title	State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official	Date
Title	State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
___ entered in the National Register		
___ determined eligible for the National Register		
___ determined not eligible for the National Register		
___ removed from the National Register		
___ other (explain:)		

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box)

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal
<input type="checkbox"/>	private

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
0	0	buildings
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/organization

Social /meeting hall

Government /city hall

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE/ professional

COMMERCE/ specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

Late 19th, early 20th century Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Stone and concrete

walls: Brick, stone

New roof is prefab wood trusses, plywood

roof: deck and other roofing

other: Wood, plywood, synthetics

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

Tempe Hardware building was constructed in 1898 and is located at 520 S. Mill Avenue in Tempe, Arizona. The 45-foot three-story brick building is an example of an Arizona Territorial period commercial structure. Rectangular in design, the front façade measures 50 feet; the sides measure 95 feet. Significant features include its main entrance, which contains a semicircular stone arch supported by stone piers. The front façade faces east on Mill Avenue and is divided into three bays. A brick parapet runs along the top of the façade. The building's rear façade contains six segmental arch windows and a metal staircase, added during the building's rehabilitation. Two pairs of double-hung windows mark the north façade office; six double-hung windows mark the ballroom area on the second story. The south façade has one second story double hung window and one third story double hung window. The south façade is brick. The building is considered to be an example of Romanesque Revival style.

Narrative Description

See Continuation Sheets, Section 7

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Period of Significance

Significant Dates

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Period of Significance (justification)

Tempe Hardware was constructed in 1899. The building functioned with minor changes until a 1976 fire lead to its rehabilitation in the early 1980s. Its architect was James M. Creighton.

Criteria Consideratons (explanation, if necessary)

N/A

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Tempe Hardware is listed in the NRHP under Criterion A and C. The Hardware building served as an important social, commercial, and political gathering place. The Curry's hardware business, from which the building acquired its name, was one of the longest operating businesses in Tempe. The building is also significant under Criterion C for its association with Arizona architect James M. Creighton. The Hardware building is reportedly one of the oldest three story Territorial style buildings in Maricopa County.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance)

See Continuation Sheets, Section 8

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

Tempe Hardware was constructed in 1898. James M. Creighton was the architect. Creighton had previously designed Phoenix's Adams Hotel, the Phoenix City Court House, and University of Arizona's Old Main. The International Order of the Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) commissioned the building; the original business operating out of the ground floor was the Abell, Wilbur and Mullen Hardware Company. Floyd Holsapple bought this company in 1900. M.E. Curry became involved in 1901 when Holsapple incorporated his business. M.E. Curry, George L. Compton, and Dr. B.B. Moeur then purchased the company in 1906. Curry's sons, M.E. (Ed) Curry, Jr. and John J. Curry, Jr., and nephew, also John J. Curry, took over the business in 1928. In addition to the building's commercial history, the second floor ballroom, known as Curry Hall, served as a prominent Tempe gathering place. Finally, the building served an important political function: Tempe's city offices were located in the building along with those of the Tempe Irrigation and Canal Company.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
 - Other State agency
 - Federal agency
 - Local government
 - University
 - Other
- Name of repository: **Tempe History Museum**

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Tempe Hardware Building
Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
County and State

Acreage of Property .17 acres

(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>12</u>	<u>412710</u>	<u>3698690</u>	3	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
2	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	4	<u> </u>	<u> </u>	<u> </u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The Tempe Hardware Building is located on lots 9 and 10, Block 4 TEMPE and is 150 x 50 feet in size. It faces east on Mill Avenue. M&I Bank, on the corner of Mill Avenue and west 6th Avenue, shares Tempe Hardware's south side. Tempe Hardware shares its north façade with Old Town Books.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

These are the legally recorded boundaries for this building.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Andersen
organization _____ date March 8, 2011
street & number 1125 E Broadway Road Unit 217 telephone (435) 730-3573
city or town Tempe Arizona zip code 85282
e-mail rkander1@asu.edu

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Tempe Hardware

City or Vicinity: Tempe

County: Maricopa

State: Arizona

Photographer: The photographer for all black and white photographs is unknown. All other photographs are taken by Rebecca Andersen.

Date Photographed: The dates vary for the black and white photographs; all other photographs were taken March 7, 2011.

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

- 1 of 10. Google Map image
- 2 of 10. Tempe Historical Museum, accession number 1987.1.2169. Landscape view of Tempe, early 1900s.
- 3 of 10. Tempe Historical Museum, accession number 1987.1.2841. Mill Avenue, Tempe, early 1900s.
- 4 of 10. Tempe Historical Museum, accession number 1987.1.2870. Inside Tempe Hardware, early 1900s.
- 5 of 10. Tempe Historical Museum, accession number 1988.18.267. Rehabilitation of the ball room, early 1980s.
- 6 of 10. Entryway arch, view to front.
- 7 of 10. Street shot, Mill Avenue.
- 8 of 10. North side.
- 9 of 10. Rear.
- 10 of 10. North side, rear.

Tempe Hardware Building
Name of Property

Maricopa, Arizona
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Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

Setting

At 520 S Mill Avenue, the Tempe Hardware Building is in the heart of Tempe's Mill Avenue District. Adjacent to Arizona State University, Mill Avenue is a seven block shopping and dining district marked by tree lined brick sidewalks and vintage style lamp posts and benches. The hardware store itself shares its south side with M&I Bank; its north side with Old Town Books. It is across the street from Urban Outfitters (545 S Mill Avenue), a newer building, located on the corner of Mill Avenue and 6th Street.

Revitalization of Mill Avenue began in the early 1970s. Though planners worked to create an old town feel, many of the buildings along Mill Avenue are of fairly recent construction, built within the last twenty to twenty five years. The Light Rail station, located a few blocks north of Tempe Hardware at Mill Avenue and 3rd Street, links the district to the larger Phoenix metro area.

Physical Description

Built in 1898, the Tempe Hardware building is a Territorial period commercial structure. Rectangular in design, it has been identified as "exhibiting simplified Romanesque Revival and Classical architectural elements."¹ It is a three story brick building. The front façade contains three bays with a brick cornice across the top.

According to the 1983 Arizona State Historic Property Inventory, "The north and south edges of the façade are articulated with brick pilasters on the upper stories and stone on the ground level. The central bay features a semicircular cut stone cut arch supported on stone piers." The building's rear façade contains six segmental arch windows and a metal staircase, added during the building's rehabilitation. Two pairs of double-hung windows mark the north façade office area; six-second story double-hung windows mark the ballroom area. The south façade has a second story double hung window and a third story double hung window. The remaining south façade is brick.

Inside, the first floor was designed as a retail space; its concrete floor is believed to be the first of its kind in a Tempe commercial building. It is scored at a 45 degree grid pattern. The second story contained an office area measuring 35 x 50 feet and a two story tall ballroom, 60 x 42 feet. Additional office space is located on the third floor. These three offices are situated along the front façade. The building also retains its three vaults, one on each floor, dating to 1910. The 1980 National Register indicates the vaults were installed when the building housed the Tempe City offices.

A 1976 fire left the building in considerable disrepair. According to an article from the *Arizona Republic*, the chemical fire started in the rear of the building, blowing up "two 55 gallon drums of paint thinner and one drum of kerosene." The fire affected the first and second stories; the third floor received smoke and water

¹Tempe Hardware Building National Register, May, 1980 section 7 p. 1.

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damage. The complete damage estimate was placed at \$100,000.²

Rehabilitation began in early 1982 by Siefer and Associates Architects. The Rehabilitation Specifications submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office discuss various ways in which the building's more delicate features were to be handled. Outside brick was to be washed; methods included water washing or manual scrubbing with soft bristle brushes. In addition brick work was carefully repaired. "The west façade (rear) has 8' high stucco wainscot which was added to cover and reinforce damage caused by the 1976 fire," the Siefer report indicates. "This stucco will be painted to match the brick." Bricks missing on the south side of the front façade's parapet were replaced with matching new bricks. Business signage on the west façade was retained, though not repainted in any way.

In the interior, damaged wainscoting was to be replaced with oak wainscot thereby meeting fire code requirements. Windows and doors were to receive special treatment. "Entry doors shall be custom large lite wood sash doors—oak. Interior non-labeled doors shall be custom milled to match existing historical doors." Windows were replaced with fixed insulated glass. North and south façade windows were replaced with fixed steel frames and wire glass to comply with fire code.

The Historic Structures Report prepared by Seifer and Associates gives additional insights into both the building's condition prior to

rehabilitation and steps taken during rehabilitation to remedy problems. "The wood stairs and frame leading to the third floor are badly deteriorated. The handrail and stairs will be rebuilt with detailing similar to the existing."³

Careful attention was paid to the ball room's badly worn wood floor. Extensive resanding and refinishing took place. A balcony was also added along the ballroom's south wall. In addition, a fire exit door was installed at the west end of the ball room, replacing a previous window opening. The new steel stairway provided an additional back exit. All original doors, hinges, and doorknobs, where possible, were retained.

Finally, a new HVAC system was installed; prior to this the second floor offices were cooled with window A/C units. The ballroom and third floor offices were without a cooling system and the first floor utilized an evaporative cooler. Duct work would be located "in ceiling space or in furred down areas," the report stated.

Development of the Site

Construction of Tempe Hardware building began on April 14, 1898 with a cornerstone laying ceremony. The land on which the building is situated was held by Tempe as early as 1887. A deed search listed the Tempe Land and Improvement Company as original grantor and J.M. Creighton as grantee, and the filing

³ Siefer Associates, Historic Structure Report: The Tempe Hardware Building 520 S. Mill Avenue. Tempe Historical Museum, 39-62.

² *Arizona Republic*, April 1, 1976.

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date as February 14, 1893. The Tempe International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) then acquired the property from J.M. Creighton, March 10, 1896.⁴ A mortgage from the Tempe I.O.O.F to Thomas Hagan indicates Hagan purchased the building in July of 1899. The I.O.O.F. continued holding a variety of social functions in the upstairs ballroom until 1905 when they could no longer afford to rent the space.⁵ At this time M.E. Curry purchased the building.⁶

Tempe Hardware Company, from which the building acquired its name, was established in 1906 by M.E. Curry, George L. Compton, and Dr. B.B. Moeur. Prior to the company's founding, a number of small hardware companies had occupied the ground floor retail space.⁷ The 1982 National Register form details the intricate changes in business: "The first business to open its doors in April 1899, was Abell, Wilbur and Mullen, a hardware company based in Mesa. The company was purchased in May 1900 by Floyd Holsapple... On March 15, 1901, the Tempe Hardware and Supply Company took formal charge of Holsapple's hardware store. The incorporators were William Rohrig (president), G.B. Compton, T.H. Thompson, M.E. Curry, Leroy F. Hill and W.A. Bolton." Between 1905 and 1906, the year Curry, Compton, and Moeur formed their company, K.L. Hart, president of

Arizona Hardware and Vehicle Company occupied the retail space until his company went into receivership.

When M.E. Curry died in 1928, John and Edward, Curry's twin sons, and a cousin, John J. Curry, took over the business. In 1938 the Curry twins became sole owners. John J. Curry died January 4, 1975. The next year M.E. Curry (son) sold the building and business to Southwest Associate Companies, Robert Derrick, president. The hardware company came under the management of Scottsdale couple Jim and Imogene Waugh under the name Tempe Western Value Stores, an Arizona chain store whose corporate office was to be located on the second floor.⁸

Tempe Hardware building has had an array of uses by the Rotary Club (November 1923), the Rebekahs Lodge, Good Templers (a temperance organization), Ancient Order of United Workers, and the Tempe Women's/Men's Club. Normal School, high school, and Spanish American Alliance dances were held in the second floor ball room. In addition, the ball room served a variety of political functions, hosting speakers such as W.P. Hunt, Arizona governor (1912-1918, 1922-1928), Senator Henry L. Ashurst, 1912-1940), Thomas Maddox, gubernatorial candidate, 1934, U.S. Senator Carl Hayden (1926-1968), and B.B. Moeur.⁹

Between 1902 and 1908 the Tempe City Council met in the building; during this time the

⁴CNWC Architects, "Historical and Architectural Survey Prepared for the City of Tempe Neighborhood Development Program," Volume 1. March 16, 1976.

⁵Tempe Historical Museum, HPS 224.

⁶Seifer Associates, "Historic Structure Report: The Tempe Hardware Building," Tempe Historical Museum.

⁷Eric M. Hansen, Staff Report to the Historic Preservation Commission, May 3, 2001.

⁸Tempe Daily News, January 5, 1976.

⁹Tempe Hardware Building, National Register, Tempe Historical Museum, HPS 244.

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Tempe Irrigating Canal Company offices were on the third floor. A 1914 community history state that Tempe High School briefly met in the building, or at least the school district offices were located there.¹⁰ However, Marsha L. Weisinger's history disputes this claim.¹¹

In addition the ballroom was used for a short time by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. The church rented the building from the Curry brothers beginning December 6, 1927. Sacrament Meeting services were held in the evenings. The branch comprised 50 members and soon organized into the Tempe First Ward on February 19, 1928 with Marion W. Turley serving as Bishop. According to Stake records, the ward boundaries included "all of Scottsdale to the north mountains and four miles west to Mill Avenue, south the mountains. The east boundary runs south along the Old Tempe Canal to a point where the canal is crossed by Ash Lane to the Mountains." Beginning in 1928, the ward constructed a chapel on 6th street and College Avenue. The new structure was completed November 4, 1929.¹²

Since its rehabilitation, Tempe Hardware Building has continued to serve the community in a variety of functions. During the 1980s, Homespace Furniture occupied the first floor retail space, Hub Clothing and Paris Optique during the 1990s. Aveda Shop currently operates out of the north suite; Pitaya Clothing out of the south suite. During the early 1980s, the Fine Arts Center of Tempe occupied the ball room and in the early 1990s Mill Avenue Theatre. From 1994 to the present, Mood Swings Salon uses the ballroom. From the early 1980s to the mid 1990s, Mill Avenue Merchants Association had offices on the Second floor; current offices include Terralever and Synapse. Siefer Associates Architects office has used the third floor office space since 1981.

¹⁰Ruby Naigler Wood, "A History of Tempe," 1914, Arizona Historical Foundation.

¹¹Marsha L. Weisinger, "The History of Tempe, Arizona, 1871-1930, a Preliminary Report," 1976. Arizona State University, Special Collections.

¹²Sherwood B. Idso and Carolyn M.W. Idso, *A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Tempe, Arizona* (Tempe, Arizona: Tempe Arizona Stake, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1980), 12-15, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. Maricopa Stake minutes, June 30, 1929, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah.

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NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction

Tempe Hardware is listed in the NRHP under Criteria A and C. The Hardware building served as an important social, commercial, and political gathering place in Tempe. The Curry's hardware business, from which the building acquired its name, was one of the longest operating businesses in Tempe. The building is also significant under Criterion C for its association with Arizona architect James M. Creighton. The Hardware building is reportedly one of the oldest three-story Territorial style buildings in Maricopa County.

James M. Creighton

James M. Creighton was a well-known architect during Arizona's Territorial period. Creighton was born September 14, 1856 in New Castle, New Brunswick, Canada. At age 13 he became an apprentice millwright and carpenter. He left for Denver, Colorado in 1879. While in Denver, he spent his time "[following] the building business and studying architecture."¹³

In 1881, he moved to Tucson, Arizona where he partnered with J.M. Henderson, contractor. As he recalls: "The Indian wars in the early 80s in Arizona filled the headlines of the eastern newspapers nearly all the time. The urge

for tragedy, and my strong impulses for excitement brought forth my Scotch war instincts and brought me to Arizona." Upon hearing of the construction of the Phoenix Courthouse, Creighton headed north, hoping for a job as superintendent of construction. Though unsuccessful, he formed a partnership with S.E. Patton.¹⁴ "Our new firm was Patton and Creighton, Contractors," Creighton later wrote. "We built the building at Fort McDowell Military Post in 1883. In 1884 we secured a contract from the U.S. government for the building of a twelve company military post and to install the present water system at Fort Haachuca."¹⁵

While working as a government contractor, Creighton managed to build his career as a Phoenix based architect, designing the Maricopa County Courthouse, the first building at the Tempe Normal School, the Pinal County Courthouse, Phoenix City Hall, University of Arizona's Old Main, and the Adams Hotel, all within a twenty year period. Each of these exhibits styles Creighton utilized through out his career. "Stylistically, the Maricopa County Courthouse falls into the line of Creighton's future work: segmental arches, mansard roof, entry portico, belfry clock tower, cruciform plan, corbelled chimneys and subdivisions of the exterior wall surfaces through the use of brick panels in relief," Dale Fens noted in his paper, "James Miller Creighton: Arizona Pioneer

¹³James M. Creighton, Pioneer Historical Society autobiographical sketch, 11/14/1940. Tempe History Museum, 2001.17.4.

¹⁴Dale H. Fens, "James Miller Creighton: Arizona Pioneer Architect," paper submitted to Professor Robert C. Giebner, May 17, 1976.

¹⁵James M. Creighton, Pioneer Historical Society autobiographical sketch, 11/14/1940. Tempe History Museum, 2001.17.4.

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Architect.”¹⁶ Other Creighton buildings include the Osborn School (1892). The school’s two story brick rectangular plan with a mansard roof exhibit common Creighton elements.

Creighton’s use of the Romanesque Revival style, which the Tempe Hardware building resembles, coupled with the ornate design of the Adams’ Hotel, itself inspired by the 1893 Columbian Exposition, places Creighton firmly within his times. As John C. Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers observe, the Chicago School, marked by projecting bays and Romanesque, Gothic Revival facades, spread throughout the country, only to give way to “Beaux-Arts-trained eastern architects who were largely responsible for the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago.”¹⁷

Other Creighton projects like University of Arizona’s Old Main exhibit common Victorian styles. University of Arizona’s Old Main blended a French colonial architectural style of the Southern United States with frontier military architecture. “The one-story ‘fad’ was on at that time, following the trend set by the recently accepted plans for Stanford University. The Stanford plans followed the French Monastic type of architecture,” Creighton later recalled.¹⁸ The Niels Peterson House, constructed in 1892 is a classic Queen Anne Victorian with a “multigabled

roof, decorative shingles, balconies, dormers and chimneys.”¹⁹

Of Creighton and other Territorial architects, Harris Sobin observed that their structures lacked regional character. “These structures utilized brick walls with segmental arched openings, a wide variety of timber, roof structures, and an increasing number of prefabricated components.” Sobin continues: “Often elegantly detailed, they provided no adequate response to either the local climate or landscape, but they offered tremendous psychological comfort to men and women transplanted from the East.”²⁰ Thus, the Tempe Hardware Building reflects Tempe’s coming of age. No longer a frontier town, Tempe’s architecture demonstrates a desire on the part of individuals and the town at large to replicate Eastern society and landscape with all its comforts and amenities.

Tempe Hardware Building and Tempe Commerce to 1976

The Tempe Hardware Building served the community as a commercial store and prominent social and political gathering space. Thus its history is enmeshed and interwoven with that of the town as a whole and articulates what Robert Archibald calls “a center for civic life,” or centers

¹⁶Fens, 3, 8.

¹⁷John C. Poppeliers and S. Allen Chambers Jr., *What Style is It? A Guide to American Architecture*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2003),105.

¹⁸Quoted in Dale H. Fens, “James Miller Creighton: Arizona Pioneer Architect,” 12-13.

¹⁹Tempe Historic Property Survey, HPS-242, Tempe History Museum.

²⁰Harris Sobin, “From Vigas to Rafters: Architectural Evolution in Florence, Arizona,” *Journal of Arizona History*, 16 (Winter, 1975) quoted in Dale H. Fens “James Miller Creighton,” 1.

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which “[reflect] and [enhance] the community’s sense of itself.”²¹

By the time Tempe Hardware Building was constructed, Tempe was a bustling town. The community had grown with its canals. What had started out as the Tempe Canal and Hayden’s Ferry in 1871 years grew into an agricultural village; the 1880 census placed the population at 135.²² Through the efforts of John Armstrong, the Thirteenth Territorial Legislature appointed Tempe as the site for the Territorial Normal School. The Normal School gave the town an added sense of prominence, but most importantly employment and revenue.²³

Two years later, the Maricopa & Phoenix Railroad, a spur line of the Southern Pacific Railroad, brought unprecedented growth to the area. Though still a farming town, the railroad stimulated the growth of the town’s retail sector. “Local farmers were now able to raise crops for export to larger and more distant markets, and local merchants could get a more diverse supply of goods faster and at lower prices,” historian Mark Pry explains. “This enhanced Tempe’s status as a local trade center, attracting farmers and buyers not only from the surrounding area but also from the neighboring town of Mesa.”²⁴

Tempe’s main street reflected the boom: Tempe Bakery, Bank of Tempe, the Andre

²¹Robert R. Archibald, *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community* (London: Altamira Press, 1999), 34.

²²Mark E. Pry, *Oasis in the Valley: The Story of Water in Tempe* (Tempe: Tempe Historical Museum, 2007), 9.

²³Blaine P. Lamb, “Historical Overview of Tempe, Arizona 1870-1935,” 3.

²⁴Pry, 11.

Building were all made of brick, reflecting the town’s permanent character. “Businesses located primarily along Fourth Street, which led from the railroad station to Mill Avenue, and along Mill Avenue between Fourth and Fifth Streets,” local historian Blain Lamb indicates.²⁵

1890 and 1891 flooding along the Salt River briefly impeded Tempe’s commercial progress; by 1893, Tempe’s building boom reached all new heights, then dipped during the 1894 depression. Hard times proved an incentive for the community to incorporate, despite Charles Hayden’s opposition. When Tempe Hardware was constructed, the city had telephone service, a waste water disposal ditch, and electric power service, nine general merchandise stores (one of which was Chinese) and two elementary schools, the Eighth Street School and St. Mary’s Catholic School.²⁶

The completion of the Phoenix and Eastern Railroad in 1903 touched off another round of growth, complemented by the introduction of cotton to the Salt River Valley. Lamb writes, “Following the entrance of the United States into World War I, the demand for cotton skyrocketed.”²⁷

Bill Windes’ memoir, “Growing Up in Tempe, 1909-1929” provides insight into Tempe’s commercial life. He particularly recalls Eighth Street Merchants: the Matleys general merchandise store, Lukin’s grocery store,

²⁵Lamb, 5,7.

²⁶Lamb, 8.

²⁷Lamb, 12.

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Ahlquist's Garage, Stark's Bakery, and Oviedo's grocery store.²⁸

Tempe was in the middle of another upswing when the 1929 stock market crashed. The town had just voted to become a city; residential lots continued to be sold and the Arizona State Teachers College had launched a new building phase. While the crash did not affect the area immediately, economic conditions quickly stagnated. "The Works Projects Administration brought jobs with federal funds through the construction of sidewalks and curbs in Tempe," historian Ben Furlong states.²⁹

In 1940, Mill Avenue remained Tempe's commercial hub and the agricultural town's population hovered at 2,906. Tempe's post-war years completely changed the town's character. Housing boomed, threatening to eat up Tempe's agricultural base and Arizona State College achieved university status in 1958. Most significantly, Tempe's commercial life migrated south, following the population. "The center of commercial and social activities for nearly 100 years was rapidly being abandoned. Laird and Dines closed in 1964, and the Tempe Hardware went out of business in 1971. One business after another disappeared from the downtown area to relocate or to cease its existence," Furlong summarizes. By 1975, plans were underway to rehabilitate, restore, and redevelop much of Mill Avenue.³⁰

Tempe's Social Scene

The International Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) commissioned the building of the Hardware store. Involvement in the Odd Fellows and other fraternal organizations provided an important form of social activity for frontier towns. An English Fraternal organization, the earliest Odd Fellows lodges in Canada and the United States date to 1819.³¹ Most major Arizona towns had at least one lodge. Prescott organized their I.O.O.F. grand lodge on April 26, 1884. According to the Prescott *Weekly Courier*, Prescott celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Free Masonry in July, 1891. The Tempe Masonic Lodge was organized in 1900.³² According to the 1980 Tempe Hardware NRHP register form, "The Odd Fellows (Lodge No. 8) met in the new building, holding meetings, dances and funerals, until 1905, when they could no longer afford to lease the hall."

Despite the Odd Fellows brief ownership, the second floor ball room continued to serve as a gathering place for Tempe's other lodges, as well as for meetings, and town dances. The Women's Christian Temperance Union was one such organization that met at the Hardware building. They successfully banned liquor in 1911. Writing in 1914, Ruby Neigler Wood commented: "Most of all we pride ourselves upon not having any saloons, a blessing to any town."³³ Known as Cosmopolitan Hall or more commonly as Curry Hall, "it was a rare weekend night or holiday that

²⁸ Bill Windes, "Growing Up in Tempe," (1982), 21-23.

²⁹ Ben Furlong, *Tempe: The Past, The Present, The Future* (Tempe: Tempe City Council, 1997), 26, 29.

³⁰ Furlong, 39, 40.

³¹ <http://www.ioof.org/>

³² Carl Hayden Papers Box 782, Folder 11; Box 789 Folder 9, Arizona State University Special Collections.

³³ Wood, 4-5.

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the hall was not filled with dancers.” The register continues, “Balls were given there when the boys marched off into World War I and when they returned.”³⁴

Of course, not everyone was welcome at these gatherings. “Race relations in Tempe reached a low point in the mid-1910s,” Furlong observes. “Persons of Hispanic origin were increasingly separated from the flow of Tempe’s social activities.” In 1899, the Arizona Territorial Legislature established segregated schools; by 1915 Tempe Elementary School was officially segregated.³⁵

Politics and Governance

Water and politics are closely intertwined in any Western town and Tempe was no exception. For a time, both the Tempe Irrigating and Canal Company and the town council had their home in the upper stories of the hardware building, many of the same men serving on both the council and canal company board. The years in which the council and canal company occupied Tempe Hardware were pivotal ones for the town in terms of public works and water rights.

Between July 1902 and 1908, city offices were located at the Tempe Hardware Building; the council continued to meet there until the completion of the Town Hall in 1912. During these years Tempe changed drastically. Carl Hayden launched his own career in politics, serving on the town council until 1904 when he

was elected County Treasurer. From 1906 to 1912, Haden was County Sheriff before moving on to be elected to the United States House of Representatives and later Senate in 1926.

In 1902 city bonds were sold to Dwight Heard, and for \$28,000 Tempe had running water. Electricity came that same year from a Mesa power plant and the town’s first fire department organized. In 1909, the town’s telephone exchange found a home above Laird and Dines Drugstore.³⁶ In 1912, gas derived from coal, was piped into Tempe through Mesa.³⁷

Between 1902 and 1920, the years in which the Tempe Irrigating Canal Company’s offices were in the Hardware building, Tempe’s water policy developed. In 1902 the Reclamation Act granted additional resources and opportunities for Salt River agriculture. In an effort to demonstrate their eligibility for Reclamation funds, the Salt River Project worked to unite the various canals throughout the valley. The Salt Water Users Association hoped to obtain federal funding for a dam at Tonto Lake. Their overarching goal was to bring all canals under federal government ownership to be managed by the Association. Their goal was partially realized in 1911 with the dedication of the Theodore Roosevelt Dam. But as Mark Pry explains in his history, “Oasis in the Valley: The Story of Water in Tempe,” the Tempe Canal Company did not play along. “If they were to merge with the other canals, they argued, their assessments would rise and the priority of their

³⁶Weisinger, 46, 47.

³⁷Dorothy F. Robinson and Lola Brough Bonham, “A History of Early Tempe,” 10-11. Arizona Historical Foundation, FM MSM-33 4/12.

³⁴ Tempe Hardware, National Register, 1980, Tempe Historical Museum, HPS 244.

³⁵ Furlong, 23.

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water rights would be reduced. Instead they suggested that the Association serve only as an umbrella organization for the canal companies, which would continue to be independently managed and retain their original water rights.”³⁸

While the Canal Company chose to remain outside of the Salt River Project, they did receive water from the Roosevelt Dam. The only problem was that an increase in water from the dam caused Tempe’s water table to rise and along with it unwanted salt and minerals, destroying the crops’ root structure. Several efforts to drain the area failed and by 1919, the Tempe Irrigating Canal Company considered joining the Salt River Valley Users Association. Upon their joining, in 1923, the Salt River Project launched a pumping program. It took several years before the watertable started to drop.³⁹

Conclusion

“The places that people make can never be static, but change must not overwhelm continuity,” Robert Archibald writes in his *A Place to Remember: Using History to Build Community*. He continues: “Civic, neighborhood, and familial life all depend upon shared places that are repositories of common memories and shared experiences.”⁴⁰ Certainly Tempe Hardware Building is one of these places. Its significance lies not only in the architect who designed the building’s physical edifice, but more importantly its role as a community gathering place, a place where important, lasting community

decisions and problems were weighed and contended. The integrity of the building is remarkably intact. Tempe Hardware still continues to function as a retail store with office space on the second and third stories. In addition, Mill Avenue continues to be one of Tempe’s most important commercial venues. The lifetime of the building has seen massive changes in landscape, changes in the use of downtown space, and changes in how the building itself has been used.

³⁸Pry, 21.

³⁹Pry, 23-24.

⁴⁰Archibald, 17.

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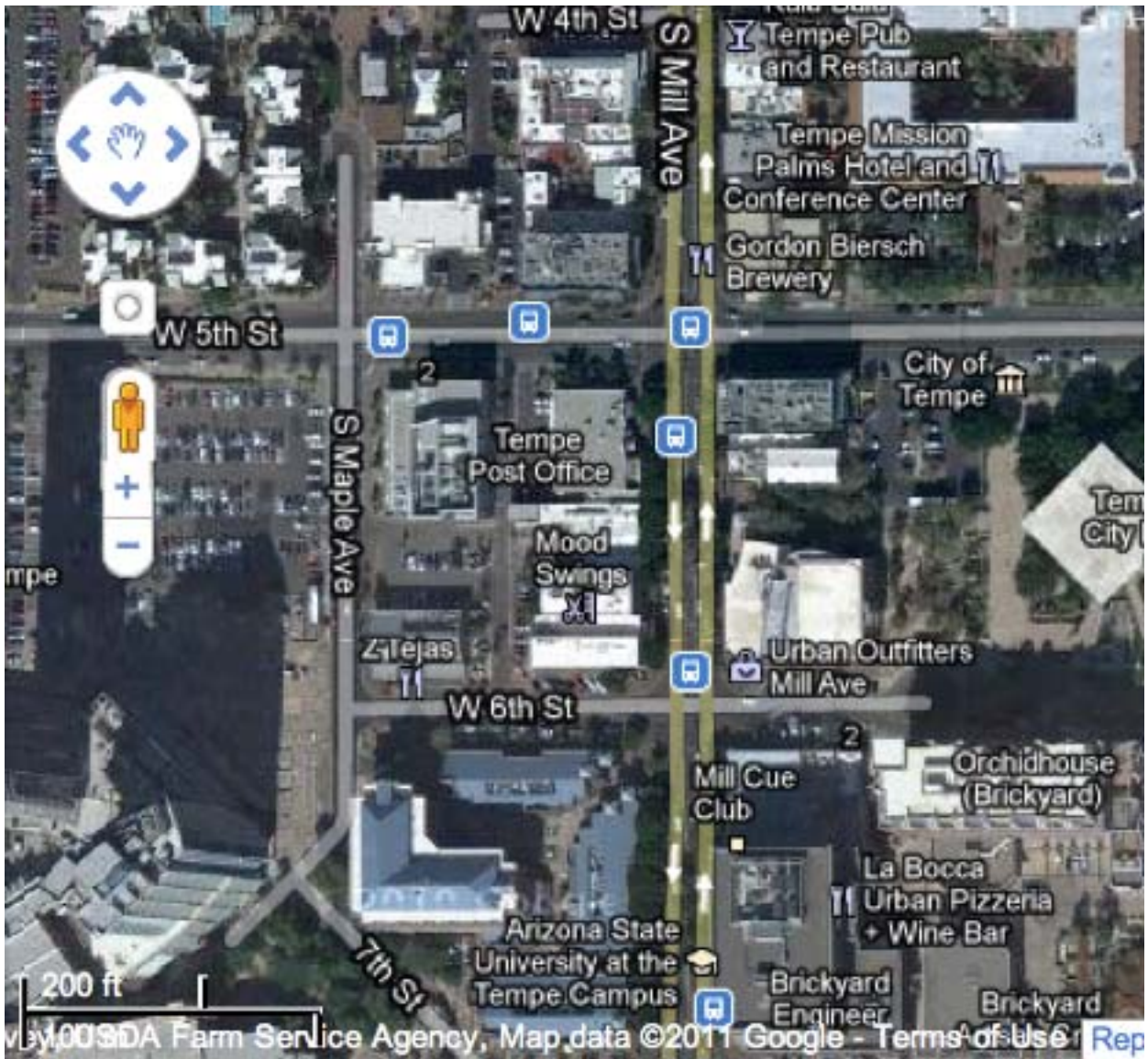
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