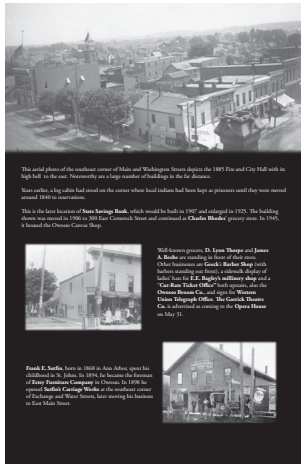
24 x 6.6 sticker

MAIN STREET

450SQI
18 x 25



This aerial photo of the southeast corner of Main and Washington Streets depicts the 1885 Fire and City Hall with its high bell to the east. Noteworthy are a large number of buildings in the far distance.

Years earlier, a log cabin had stood on the corner where local indians had been kept as prisoners until they were moved around 1840 to reservations.

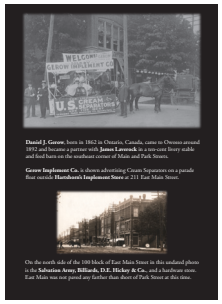
This is the later location of **Tuscarawas Savings Bank**, which would be built in 1907 and enlarged in 1925. The building shown was moved in 1906 to 300 East Cassimuch Street and continued as **Charles Rhodes'** grocery store. In 1945, it housed the Owosso Caterer Shop.

Well-known grocers, **D. Lynn Thorpe** and **James A. Roche** are standing in front of their store. Other businesses are **Gooch's Barber Shop** (with barbers standing out front), a sidewalk display of ladies' hats for **E.E. Bagley's millinery shop** and a "**Car-Rate Ticket Office**" both upstairs, also the **Owosso-Benton Co.**, and signs for **Western Union Telegraph Office**. **The Garrick Theatre Co.** is advertised as coming to the **Opera House** on May 31.

Frank E. Surlin, born in 1868 in Ann Arbor, spent his childhood in St. Johns. In 1894, he became the foreman of **Estey Furniture Company** in Owosso. In 1898 he opened **Surlin's Carriage Works** at the southeast corner of Exchange and Water Streets, later moving his business to East Main Street.

25 x 39
975SQI

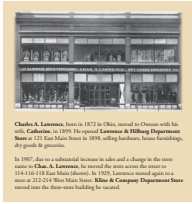
450SQI
18 x 25



Daniel J. Genoa, born in 1862 in Ontario, Canada, came to Owosso around 1892 and became a partner with **James Lovesuch** in a ten-cent livery stable and feed barn on the southeast corner of Main and Park Streets.

Genoa Implement Co. is shown advertising Cream Separators on a parade float outside **Hazelmann's Implement Store** at 211 East Main Street.

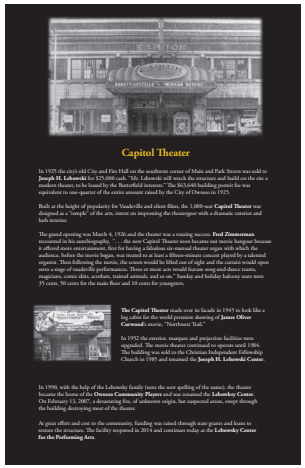
On the north side of the 100 block of East Main Street in this undated photo is the **Salvation Army, Billiards, D.E. Hickey & Co.**, and a hardware store. East Main was not paved any farther than there of Park Street at this time.



Charles A. Lawrence, born in 1872 in Ohio, moved to Owosso with his wife, **Catharine**, in 1899. He opened **Lawrence & Hilburg Department Store** at 121 East Main Street in 1898, selling hardware, house furnishings, dry goods & groceries.

In 1907, due to a substantial increase in sales and a change in the store name to **Chas. A. Lawrence**, he moved the store across the street to 114-116-118 East Main (shown). In 1929, Lawrence moved again to a store at 212-214 West Main Street. **Kline & Company Department Store** moved into the three-story building he vacated.

16 x 17
272SQI



Capitol Theater

In 1925 the city's old City and Fire Hall on the southwest corner of Main and Park Streets was sold to **Joseph H. Lebowski** for $25,000 cash. "Mr. Lebowski will wreck the structure and build on the site a modern theater, to be leased by the Butterfield interests." The $65,440 building permit for was equivalent to one-quarter of the entire amount raised by the City of Owosso in 1925.

Built at the height of popularity for Vaudeville and silent films, the 1,000-seat **Capitol Theater** was designed as a "temple" of the arts, interior an impressing the clientsinger with a dramatic exterior and lush interiors.

The grand opening was March 4, 1926 and the theater was a rousing success. **Fred Zimmerman** recounted in his autobiography: "... the new Capitol Theater soon became our movie hangout because it offered more entertainment, first for having a fabulous six-manual theater organ with which the audience, before the movie began, was treated to at least a fifteen-minute concert played by a talented organist. Then following the movie, the screen would be lifted out of sight and the curtain would open onto a stage of vaudeville performances. Three or more acts would feature song-and-dance teams, magicians, comic skits, acrobats, trained animals, and so on." Sunday and holiday balcony seats were 35 cents, 50 cents for the main floor and 10 cents for youngsters.

The Capitol Theater made over its facade in 1945 to look like a big cabin for the world premiere showing of **James Oliver Curwood's** movie, "Northwest Trail."

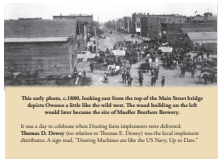
In 1952 the exterior, marquee and projection facilities were upgraded. The movie theater continued to operate until 1984. The building was sold to the Christian Independent Fellowship Church in 1985 and renamed the **Joseph H. Lebowski Center**.

In 1998, with the help of the Lebowski family (note the new spelling of the name), the theater became the home of the **Owosso Community Players** and was renamed the **Lebowski Center**. On February 13, 2007, a devastating fire, of unknown origin, but suspected arson, swept through the building destroying most of the theater.

At great effort and cost to the community, funding was raised through state grants and loans to restore the structure. The facility reopened in 2014 and continues today as the **Lebowski Center for the Performing Arts**.

25 x 39
975SQI

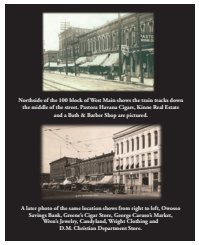
450SQI
18 x 25



This early photo, c.1880, looking east from the top of the Main Street bridge depicts Owosso a little like the wild west. The wood building on the left would later become the site of Mueller Brothers Brewery.

It was a day to celebrate when Deering farm implements were delivered. **Thomas D. Dewey** (no relation to Thomas E. Dewey) was the local implement distributor. A sign read, "Deering Machines are like the US Navy, Up to Date."

A winter scene in 1905 looking east on Main from Water Street shows Baird's Meat Market, Knapp & Smith in the Hunter Block and across Ball Street on the corner is Hall Bros.



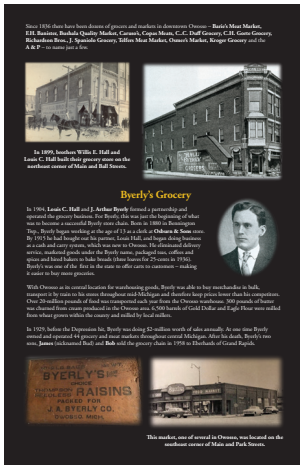
Northside of the 100 block of West Main shows the train tracks down the middle of the street. Pattons Havana Cigars, Kizer Real Estate and a Bath & Barber Shop are pictured.

A later photo of the same location shows from right to left, Owosso Savings Bank, Gowen's Cigar Store, George Caesar's Market, Wines Jewelry, Cutcheon& Wright Clothing and D.M. Christian Department Store.

16 x 20
320SQI

Hill Gallery - West Wall (93" span on 102" wall)

975SQI
25 x 39



Since 1836 there have been dozens of grocers and markets in downtown Owosso – **Baird's Meat Market, F.H. Bastian, Burbah Quality Market, Caesar's, Copas Meats, C.-C. Duff Grocery, C.H. Gates Grocery, Richardson Bros., J. Spaniale Grocery, Tillion Meat Market, Osman's Market, Kroger Grocery** and the **A & P** – to name just a few.

In 1899, brothers Willis F. Hall and Louis C. Hall built their grocery store on the northeast corner of Main and Ball Streets.

Byerly's Grocery

In 1884, **Louis C. Hall** and **J. Arthur Byerly** formed a partnership and operated the grocery business. For Byerly, this was just the beginning of what was to become a successful Byerly store chain. Born in 1860 in Bessemer Twp., Byerly began working at the age of 13 as a clerk at **Osburn & Sons** store. By 1919 he had bought out his partner, Louis Hall, and began doing business as a cash and carry system, which was new to Owosso. He discontinued delivery service, nonfoood goods under the Byerly name, packaged teas, coffees and spices and fried fabrics to bake breads (*bun loaves for 25 cents in 1930*). Byerly's was one of the first in the state to offer cars to customers – making it easier to buy more groceries.

With Owosso as its central location for warehousing goods, Byerly was able to buy merchandise in bulk, transport it by train to his stores throughout mid-Michigan and therefore keep prices lower than his competitors. Over 20 million pounds of bread was transported each year from the Owosso warehouse. 500 pounds of butter was churned from cream produced in the Owosso area. 6,500 barrels of Gold Dollar and Eagle Flour were milled from wheat grown within the county and milled by local millers.

In 1929, before the Depression hit, Byerly was doing $2-million worth of sales annually. At one time Byerly owned and operated 44 grocery and meat markets throughout central Michigan. After his death, Byerly's two sons, **James** (nicknamed Bud) and **Bob** sold the grocery chain in 1958 to Eberhards of Grand Rapids.

This market, one of several in Owosso, was located on the southeast corner of Main and Park Streets.

Hill Gallery - NW Corner
(25" span on 38" wall)

936SQI
24 x 39

D. M. Christian Department Store and The Owosso City Club

Daniel M. Christian, born in 1877 in Cuyahoga County, Ohio came to Owosso in 1897 and founded the **D.M. Christian Co.** department store in the 100 block of West Main Street, eventually expanding into the building that had been **Hall & Byerly Grocories.**

Christian's was a big-city, three-story department store with state-of-the-art elevators and a vacuum-tube payment system. On the main floor were cosmetics, shoes, men's & women's clothing and leather goods. *In the glove* department, associates would powder customer's hands before trying on fine leather gloves. The basement level had a snack bar and coffee shop along with kitchen items and linens. Located on the second floor were carpets, dry goods and lingerie. **Christian's Restaurant**, a very elegant spot to meet, was located on the second floor of an adjoining building on Ball Street and connected to the main store with a passageway over the alley, or through the millinery department mezzanine level.

Leigh Hugh Christian, born in 1882, inherited his father's department store. Although his father was an active Temperance advocate for many years, Leigh Christian established a "City Club"– a private club in which people could legally drink alcoholic beverages. **The Owosso City Club** was started around 1930 and over the years expanded to encompass the entire second floor of the 1894 Strohm & Cramer Block. Access was by elevator at 120 Ball Street or by stairs at 121 Exchange Street. **Knapp & Smith Undertaking** was on the ground level until 1926.

The site of many elegant social events, business lunches and dinners, the club was known for its excellent food and service. The club included a large kitchen, a bar with piano, a mosti card-playing and cigar-smoking area, a main dining room which could seat 200, and two other smaller dining rooms which could each seat fifty guests, plus a very fancy Ladies Room. Wrought wrought iron furniture was throughout the bar and lounge and two dining rooms.

Many civic clubs would meet at the club for lunch or dinner on a weekly basis including the **Owosso Kiwanis Club** (pictured). The City Club was known for its special parties (oh, if only the walls could talk). The dinner after the annual U of M - MSU football game brought club members together for a huge buffet of jumbo shrimp, prime rib and a cake decorated with the final game score in the colors of the winning team.

At one time the Owosso City Club membership consisted of 347 of the most socially prominent families in the area and thrived for over four decades. However, at times changed membership began declining in the 1970s and the Owosso City Club closed in 1986.

A mainstay in downtown Owosso for nearly 95 years, **Christian's Department** closed around 1980. **Wischmann's Department Store** then occupied the building.

Christian's

George Skentos and John Kratt were co-owners of the popular Candyland restaurant at 112 West Main Street. Known for its good food, in 1956 customers could get a full course meal for only 70 cents. And, the restaurant was air-conditioned. Skentos is shown outside his restaurant in 1929 with the Owosso Hotel under construction across the street. Skentos was a member of the Boy Scouts and Water Subdivision of North Street, county of Owosso High School. Lots sold very quickly after the new school was built in 1962.

12 x 16
192SQI

Hill Gallery - NW Corner
(35.5" span on 38" wall)