

# Lenoir Downtown National Register Historic District Christmas Ornament Series

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2008

## The Clock on the Square

The prominence of street clocks parallels the growth of American city and towns. The earliest clocks served a useful public purpose in time when inexpensive wrist watches did not exist. They also became symbols of community wealth and prosperity. In 1922 the street clock on the corner of the Bank of Lenoir became a focal point on the Southwest quadrant of the Square. When the Bank of Lenoir building was demolished, the clock was moved to a free-standing tower in front of Lenoir City Hall. In 2003, Curtis Moore repaired the mechanism of the clock so that it could continue marking the passage of time on the Square.



2009

## Courtney Warehouse 212 Church Street, circa 1888

Two-story, brick, Italianate, commercial building with a front-gable roof, eave brackets, and corbelled, arched, brick window and door hoods; projecting arches between second-story windows shelter small niches; six-over-six sash; replacement front door; round, louvered gable vent with arched brick hood.

Early accounts of the Courtney business state that trade in herbs, roots, and country produce became so great that Marshall M. and R. G. Courtney had a building constructed around 1888 to use as storage space before Marshall built the Courtney Department Store (which faces West Avenue) in 1897. The 1902 and 1907 Sanborn maps indicate that this building initially served as a warehouse. By 1913 the building functioned as a grocery store; in 1927 there was a dry goods store at this location.



**2010**  
**209-211 Main Street**  
**circa 1900**

Two-story stuccoed commercial building with pilasters topped with cast-metal Ionic capitals framing each of the five bays on the south elevation and at the corners of the façade; enclosed second-story windows; altered two-part storefront (south side has recessed entry) with large plate glass windows sheltered by an awning; narrow cast-metal pilasters flank first-floor storefront bays; auxiliary entrance at west corner of south elevation.

The 1902, 1907, and 1913 Sanborn maps show that the south side of this building served as a dry goods and clothing store and the north side a grocery. In 1921 and 1927 the south part was an office. By 1930, H. L. Angley, purveyor of dry goods, operated in the south section and Lenoir Fruit and Candy Company in the north. A. Clyde McCormick, a jeweler, began a long tenancy in the south side in 1937-38; his store remained in this location through the 1950s. A series of restaurants – Caldwell Café in 1937-38, M & S Grill during the 1940s and Central Café in the 1950s – operated in the north side. The Johnsie Hackney Floral Shoppe shared the jewelry store side in 1953-54.



**2011**  
**Courtney Building**  
 814 West Avenue  
 1879; 1908

Two-story red brick commercial building with finely-executed three-and-one-half-story Classical Revival-style façade; classical stone ornament; reconstructed stepped wood parapet with a central rectangular panel that used to display the building's name, "Courtney," and now reads "1879" to reflect the date the original portion of the building was constructed; deep molded cornice embellished with dentils and modillions; brick central and corner pilasters flanking window bays on the upper floors terminate at stone Doric and Ionic capitals; central pilaster is banded; arched window surrounds in upper section of façade have egg-and-dart borders and acanthus-leaf keystone consoles; simple stone surrounds at first- and second-story windows; lions-head and plant motifs on sculpted terra cotta rinceau panels in between first and second stories; replacement sash; storefront remodeled 2006.

Marshall M. Courtney and B. M. Tuttle opened a general store at Tuttle's Crossroads (now Hartland) in 1872 and expanded the operation to Lenoir in 1879. An article in the *Lenoir Topic* on May 1, 1879 states that "Mr. Courtney is having about one hundred thousand brick [sic] made, and will erect a large and handsome two story brick store-house on the corner lot adjoining the Central Hotel." An August 28, 1879 update reports that the store was substantially complete; John Rainey painted the building in mid-February 1880. Marshall Courtney purchased Tuttle's interest in the business in 1883, partnering with his brother, R. G. Courtney, in the venture. They constructed the warehouse that still stands behind the Courtney Buildings (facing Church Street) around 1888 to store their inventory. Courtney Brothers sold a wide variety of merchandise, from farm equipment to medicine. On September 19, 1888 Marshall Courtney became the sole proprietor of the business.

A two-story brick building appears on the 1902 and 1907 Sanborn maps in this location; after the construction of Lenoir Building in 1907 Courtney updated the façade, adding an additional one-and-one-half stories to the front part of the building. A 1908 article reports that "the changes...will be a great improvement to his [Courtney's] corner and will be in keeping with all of the other great changes and improvements that have been made in our town in the last few months." Courtney's sons, G. C. and Harry, established the Courtney Clothing Company in 1908 and sold men's clothing at 814 West Avenue until 1934, when they moved the operation into Courtney's Department Store. The Courtneys remodeled the storefront in 1928; the building served as the Lenoir Drug Store from the mid-1930s through the 1950s.



2012

The Lenoir Building  
808-812 West Avenue  
1907

Three-story-on-basement, two-part, brick, Romanesque Revival-style commercial building with brick corner and intermediate pilasters flanking each bay; stepped metal cornice ornamented with modillions above first and third stories of corner section, plain metal cornice elsewhere; one-over-one sash on façade and east elevation, six-over-six sash at rear; second-story windows on façade and all stories of the north side of the east elevation have stone sills and lintels; round-arch windows on the third-story of the façade are surmounted by corbelled arches that rest on the impost blocks; recessed corner entrance with replacement double-leaf, aluminum-frame glass door; recessed bay on south elevation allows for stair leading from street level to basement; original Lenoir Furniture and Hardware storefront has been altered. An early-twentieth-century photo shows the roof balustrade that once wrapped around the south and east elevations. The original decorative pressed-metal ceiling is intact throughout the first floor retail space.

This building stands on the site of a three-story brick hotel constructed by Lucius Tuttle in 1841. The hotel was demolished and the Lenoir Building — named after the Lenoir family and their successful hardware business open from 1908 through the 1950s — erected. The prominent Charlotte architectural firm of Hook and Rogers, established by C. C. Hook, designed the building. Lenoir Furniture and Hardware carried an eclectic array of supplies for local industrial concerns, from lumber to mining equipment, as well as domestic goods such as clocks, toys, and silverware.<sup>5</sup> The 1913 Sanborn illustrates that a bank occupied the corner space, the hardware store paint department the northeast corner of the first floor, and an undertaker the third floor. Rooms on the second floor were available for lodging or office use. A barber shop was located in the basement of the east side of the building from the late 1930s through the 1950s. Mutual Building and Loan and Allen and Bernard Insurance, occupants of the corner space during the 1930s and 1940s, moved out around 1952, and the corner office became a clothing store. Occupants of the retail space fronting West Avenue after Lenoir Hardware closed in 1954 included Shield's Hardware and D. D. Suddreth Furniture.



2013  
Belk's Department Store  
101 Main Street  
1928

Two-story, brick, Commercial Style building with a stepped parapet and three-bay façade; recessed Main Street storefront and large display windows sheltered by a flat metal canopy; brick corbelling above replacement sash on second story of façade and south side elevation; five-bay Harper Avenue elevation with display windows on lower level of eastern three bays and recessed entries on western two; brick stretchers outline the bays, windows, and entrances.

A two-story dwelling appears on this corner in 1902 and 1907; the lot was vacant through 1927. According to property cards, the building was constructed in 1928. Belk's Department Store occupied this location through the 1950s.



2014  
217 Main Street  
1920

One-story brick commercial building with a corbelled cornice; awning shelters recessed entry flanked by large display windows.

This lot was vacant in 1913; by 1921 a one-story grocery store stood in this location. Clay's Market operated in the space in 1930; City Market in 1937-38. By 1943-44, Horace B. Arnett operated Arnett's Billiard Parlor on the first floor and lived upstairs, an arrangement that continued until 1950, when the establishment was renamed City Billiards.