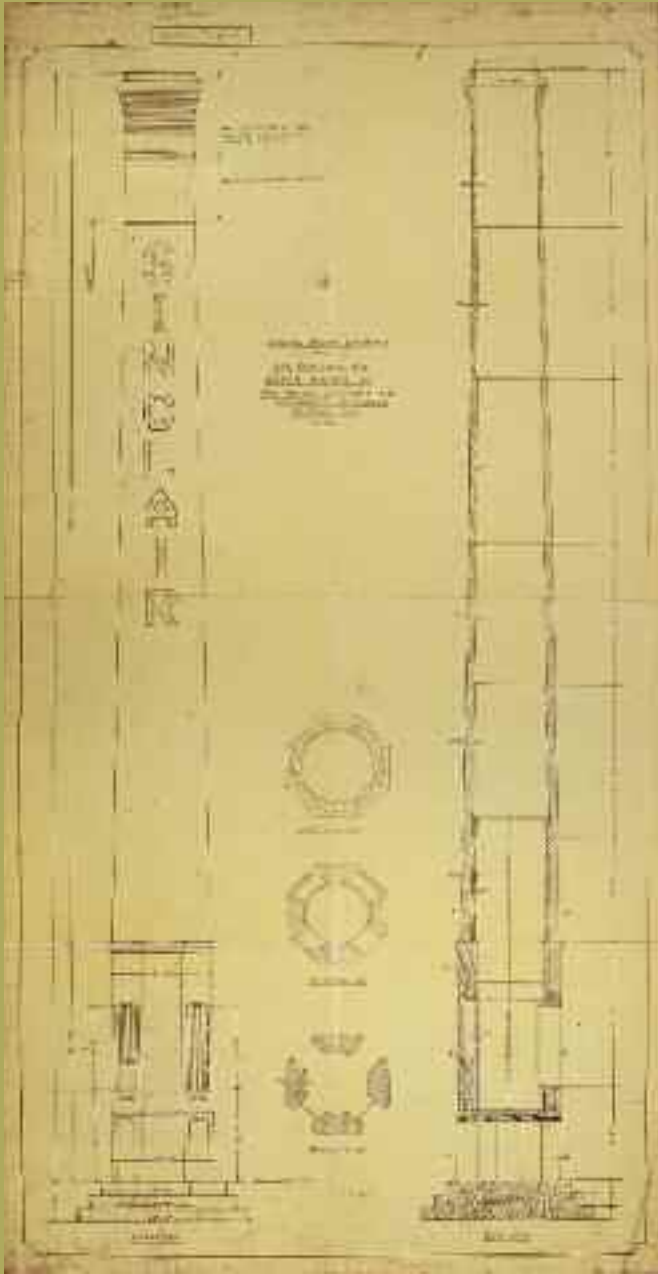


history of

T.M. SINCLAIR & COMPANY, MEATPACKING PLANT





Inside Cover Photo. Blueprint of Sinclair Smokestack. Farmstead Foods Collection of Brucemore Inc. Courtesy of Jim Piersall. Copyright of Brucemore, Inc.



Cover Photo. View of T.M. Sinclair Meatpacking Plant taken on May 5, 1920.
(Reproduced with permission from Farmstead Foods Collection of Brucemore, Inc.)

HISTORY OF T.M. SINCLAIR & COMPANY, MEATPACKING PLANT

by
Eric Barr
THE Louis Berger Group, INC.

Designed by To The Letter Type & Design, Marion, Iowa
Printed by J&A Printing, Hiawatha

With special thanks to:
Jessica Peel-Austin, Bruce more
The Carl & Mary Koehler History Center
Marlys Svendsen, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department

This project was produced under the terms of a Memorandum of Agreement pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, among the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency, the State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the City of Cedar Rapids, Bruce more, the Carl and Mary Koehler History Center, Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission, Czech Village New Bohemia Main Street District, Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area, and Preservation Iowa, regarding adverse effects to historic properties in Cedar Rapids, Linn County, Iowa. FEMA administered Federal disaster assistance through FEMA's Public Assistance Program pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for the demolition of historic properties damaged as a result of flooding in July 2008 that resulted in declared disaster DR-1763-IA.



Figure 2.

Original T.M. Sinclair & Co./Wilson & Co. Packing House Site Included Auditor's Plat (AP) 29, Lot 3; Plat of Survey (POS) 132, Parcel A.; POS 149, Parcel A; and Lot 12, Block 38 of J.C. Mays Addition. (Map of Cedar Rapids, Iowa Compiled and Drawn by City Engineer's Office, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Cedar Rapids, IA; Laurance Press Co., 1960)

Introduction

The T.M. Sinclair & Co. Packing House

(later known as Wilson & Company) has been an integral part of the history of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, since its establishment in 1871. The packing house operated for over a century, becoming the fourth largest meatpacking plant in the world by 1878.¹ Over the years the plant produced a variety of products that included smoked hams, hot dogs (wieners), sausages, lard, offal (edible internal organs), bacon, Vienna sausages, pickled pig feet, tongue, boneless hocks, bologna, corned beef, beef roast, and other beef products under the Sinclair and Wilson brands. They also produced by-products that included soaps, animal feed, fertilizer, cosmetics, oleo-oil, stearine for making candy and chewing gum, and pharmaceuticals. After it closed in 1990 all that remained of the company's noteworthy history were its buildings. Spanning the period from 1880 to 1978, the construction and varied uses of these buildings painted a picture of the evolution of the plant and the important changes that took place in the meatpacking industry.

Sinclairs family of meat packers



Figure 3.

T.M. Sinclair, Founder
of T.M. Sinclair & Co.
in Cedar Rapids.
From *Semi-Centennial
1871-1921: T. M. Sinclair
& Co. Ltd.*

The Sinclair family originated in Belfast, Ireland, where in 1832 brothers John and Thomas organized a meat processing company named the J & T Sinclair Company. In the 1850s John's son William opened a branch in Liverpool, England, and his 18-year-old brother, T.M. Sinclair, joined him in 1859. A line of Sinclair owned merchant vessels helped to bolster their business by enabling them to ship their products directly to customers, thereby reducing shipping costs. In 1862 the Sinclairs established a plant in New York City to meet the stiff competition they faced from American pork packers.²

In 1866 the Belfast plant claimed to be the largest provision house (another name for a wholesale meatpacking facility) in Ireland and even the world, focusing solely on cutting dressed hogs and curing the meat for export.³ The economic depression following the American Civil War and 1866 fiery destruction of the

Belfast plant devastated the Sinclairs' Irish operation. The company encountered significant losses as several large firms that made up a significant portion of their customer base also failed. The economic hardships caused by the depression and fire resulted in the separation of the New York operation into an independent entity. The new company formed under the name John Sinclair & Company and followed the practices used at the Belfast plant and produced the same products. In 1871 T.M. Sinclair and family moved to Cedar Rapids, Iowa expanding the family meatpacking business. The new concern remained a family business despite the separation of the U.S. and Irish branches.

Early meatpacking operations killed hogs exclusively in winter to preserve them until they could be cut into shoulders, hams, and sides with the fat being converted to lard.



To ship the processed pork without spoiling (prior to the advent of refrigeration), they placed the meat in wooden barrels and covered it with salt. Hog hides were used, but the blood, entrails, and bones were considered waste and disposed of in the nearest body of water. This practice led city governments to confine them to the outskirts of town.

T.M. Sinclair

Thomas McElderry (T.M.) Sinclair was born in Belfast, Ireland, on May 14, 1842, and arrived in America in 1862, via New York. The 29-year-old Irishman moved to Cedar Rapids in 1871 to open a Midwestern branch. His 1881 obituary states that the operation started “on a very moderate scale, as an experiment” and then

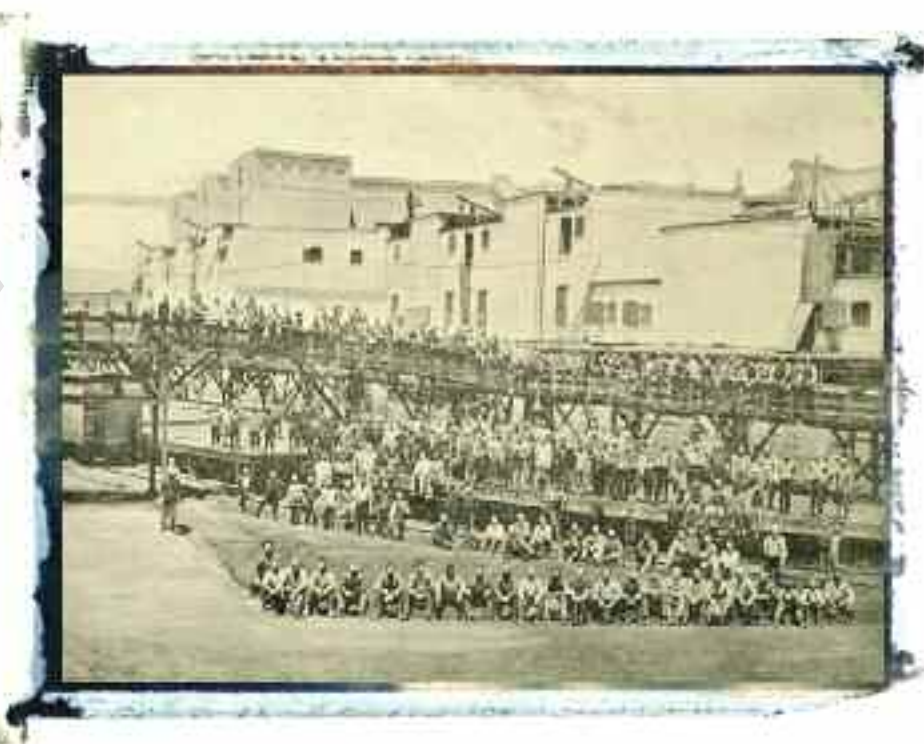
gradually enlarged to become the “largest, strongest and most successful business establishment of its kind in the west.”⁴ He died on March 24, 1881, after falling down an elevator shaft during a plant inspection. The 39-year-old Sinclair left behind six children, his wife Caroline, and multiple other family members. The following is an account of his fall:

Having about completed the examinations and being ready to leave the building about noon, the gentleman in company with Mr. Sinclair took hold of the elevator rope to bring the platform from above that they might descend to the floor below. Both were standing near the hatchway, but before the elevator had started downward from the floor above them, Mr. Sinclair stepped or fell through the hatchway down upon the stone floor below, a distance of about thirteen feet. He made some exclamation as he started on the fatal fall... He was reached as quickly as possible and was found in an unconscious condition, having fallen upon the right shoulder, side and head. No bones were broken nor any marked evidence of serious external injury.⁵



Figure 4.

“Sinclair’s Packing House at noon, showing one-third of employees” (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA, Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Flower & Wiltach, 1891) (Reproduced with Permission from Brucemore, Inc. Farmstead Foods Collection, Cedar Rapids, Iowa)



T.M. SINCLAIR & CO.

opens for business

Railroad Construction/ Homestead Act:

Following the Civil War, the construction of railroads boomed. The Transcontinental Railroad was completed in 1869.

Westward expansion also continued and moved at a more rapid pace, due to immigration and emigration fueled by the Homestead Act. This act, passed in 1862 under President Abraham Lincoln, encouraged settlers to move west to establish homesteads, which they could get for free after staying on the land for five years. The settlement of the west also increased significantly when a large influx of Europeans immigrants arrived in the late nineteenth century.

The independent U.S. branch sought to expand its U.S. operations beyond New York. The meatpacking industry started moving west to take advantage of the post-Civil War farming and transportation expansion from the 1870s to 1890s. To take advantage of this growth and remain competitive, the Sinclairs sought a location for a western plant. The selection of Cedar Rapids was prompted by David Blakely, a friend and former employee from New York, who moved to Cedar Rapids in 1870. Blakely was impressed with the city and recommended it as a possible location for the new plant. Cedar Rapids' advantages, such as access to waterways, railroad routes, and the availability of hogs, helped solidify the decision.

The Cedar Rapids plant opened in 1871, having been selected over other potential sites in Minnesota and Iowa. The new meatpacking house opened in the former Higgins Icehouse, located between 4th and 5th Avenue SE in the heart of downtown. In November 1871 it was reported that:

The pork packing house of T.M. Sinclair & Co. is being pushed rapidly to completion. Although the buildings are but temporary, they will afford capacity for handling from 500 to 800 head per day. This will give our farmers a ready and good market for their pork, and establish a new and profitable branch of trade in our midst.⁶





The process for meatpacking changed over the years for Sinclair. In the beginning, the company carried on practices used in the Belfast plant. The following is a brief description from the founding in 1871:

[T]he tanks for rendering the lard stood at one end of the building; next to that was a space where the killing operations were carried out; then there was a space where dressed hogs were hung for chilling; next to that were the tables and blocks on which the hogs were cut, the rest of

the building being given over to curing. The operations being carried on in the winter, there was apparently no attempt to refrigerate with ice and the whole arrangement was so crude and operated under such difficulties that the first year's operations were not a success.... The hog was chilled whole and placed on the cutting block on its back. The most skilled and difficult point in the operations was splitting the hog along the back bone so as to leave the backbone on one side without cutting into the meat on the other side.⁷



Figure 5.

Ice House leased by T. M. Sinclair & Co. to open Cedar Rapids Plant in 1871. Reproduced, with Permission from the Farmstead Foods Collection of BruceMore, Inc.

Coopers constructed barrels on site for packing the pork, and refrigeration was achieved on a limited basis by using ice from the Cedar River. During the summer ice was stored in large ice houses and in bunkers within the processing buildings. Waste products were discarded in the Cedar River, and early on these included large parts of the hog that couldn't be made into lard. Native Americans from the Tama Reservation came to the plant in the early days "to gather out of the pile of refuse of the slaughter house, choice pieces of livers, hearts, etc...."⁸

On January 4, 1872, the plant advertised its opening to farmers and stock dealers. Utilizing its leased quarters, the packing house slaughtered 15,039 hogs in its first year of operations. In February 1872 Sinclair acquired a 16-acre site one mile outside the city limits downstream of Cedar Rapids, where

it would operate for over 100 years. The new site was adjacent to the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad and the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Railroad lines and side-tracks were laid shortly thereafter. T.M. Sinclair & Co. used the railroads to directly ship its meat and by-products and to receive and unload deliveries of livestock and bulk goods. Beginning in 1872, the company marketed and sold its ham, bacon, lard, and other packable hog parts under the "Fidelity" brand.

The new plant made an immediate impression. In August 1872 citizens of Cedar Rapids levied a lawsuit against the plant for being a nuisance because of the smells, noise, and waste products produced by the plant, which went directly into the Cedar River. The case resulted in a favorable resolution for the Sinclair plant. This was an isolated incident in its history.

EARLY DEVELOPMENT 1872 - 1878

The first wood-frame buildings at the new site were constructed in the summer of 1872. These included a slaughterhouse, warehouse, engine house, and office building. Throughout the 1870s the meatpacking plant experienced consistent growth, requiring the construction of new buildings and expansion of old ones. During T.M. Sinclair & Co.'s initial season, lasting from August to December 1872, the payroll was \$15,333.94. In the next two years the payroll doubled twice, from \$30,998.43 in 1873 to \$68,706.27 in 1874; by 1878 wages reached \$117,118.01.⁹ The growing economic importance of the plant was not lost to the *Cedar Rapids Times*:

We doubt if even our own citizens really appreciate the extent of this mammoth institution which is silently but surely making Cedar Rapids the pork market of Central Iowa. We thought the packing house was large and last winter's work immense before the addition was built, but now, with greatly increased facilities, they are doing a marvelous business.... If you wish to look at cords upon cords of hams, piled in rows and looking as nice as possible for them to look, upon tons of pork or casks of lard, go through the cellars of this establishment and drive all thoughts of famine, for years to come, from your head. We can scarcely estimate the amount to which this one institution contributes to our prosperity.¹⁰

In November 1873, 135 packing house workers, 27 coopers, and 22 carpenters processed 1,000 hogs daily for a total of over 14,000, with a gross weight of 3,323,840 pounds.¹¹ "By 1874, Cedar Rapids attained first place among Iowa packing centers, a position it retained for all but two years over the next two decades."¹²

The year 1874 marked the start of year-round operations aimed at fulfilling an arrangement with the J & T. Sinclair Company of Belfast. Under the contract the company provided cured pork to Britain, which was primarily used to supply the British army.¹³ Smoking operations also began the same year. The continuation





Figure 6.

"Fidelity" Brand Advertisement circa 1900 and (Right) (Courtesy of Carl & Mary Koehler History Center)

of hog killing and curing during the summer was described as "the most interesting development around this time" because T.M. Sinclair & Co. became just the second plant of its type in the United States to do so.¹⁴

The company's export market in Britain was significant, with over half of their products being shipped there. Between 1874 and 1878, a four-story curing house was constructed, which measured 132x250 feet (since demolished). The completion of the new building enabled increased production capacity of 2,500 hogs per day in the winter and 1,200 in the summer, in addition to the employment of 300 to 450 laborers and 50 coopers.¹⁵

In 1874 T.M. Sinclair established a Sunday school for his workers in the Box Factory that later moved to Hope Chapel, a site directly adjacent to the plant in 1878. This was organized as the Third Presbyterian Church in 1887 by Mrs. T.M. Sinclair and became Sinclair Memorial Presbyterian in 1903 (at 12th Avenue and 10th Street SE) after the original church burned down.¹⁶

The plant expanded so much that in 1875 the city erected a wagon bridge for workers across the Cedar River two blocks upstream from the plant. The crossing connected the packing house to its largely Bohemian immigrant workers, who lived in an expanding working class neighborhood directly next to the plant across the river.

In 1877 T.M. Sinclair & Co. processed 76,945 hogs annually and became the ninth largest packing center in the United States behind (in order from least to most important) Cleveland, Kansas City, Louisville, Milwaukee, Indianapolis, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Chicago.¹⁷ In 1878, just a year later, the plant covered 16 acres with substantial buildings constructed of brick, stone, or wood that gave the "locality the appearance of a village of no mean pretensions," and made it the fourth largest packing house in the world and eighth in the U.S.¹⁸ It remained the leading industry of Cedar Rapids and the largest plant in the Iowa meat packing industry.

SINCLAIR'S BOHEMIAN WORKERS

T.M. Sinclair & Co., from its founding in Cedar Rapids in 1871 to well into its years as Wilson & Co., employed a large number of Bohemian-Czech workers. Many of these workers settled in what is now the Bohemian Commercial Historic District. The historic district directly borders the Sinclair site at 3rd St. SE following a route along 14th Avenue SE. The area, known as the "South Side" or "Little Bohemia," is distinguished by "a mix of residential, commercial, and industrial structures built over approximately six decades from the 1880s through the 1930s."⁷⁸ The neighborhood grew in the areas directly next to the plant to the east and southeast. Sparsely developed by Bohemian families prior to 1870, immigration and development of the neighborhood spiked from the 1870s to 1920s.

The following is an excerpt from Marlys A. Svendsen's National Register nomination for the Bohemian Commercial Historic District:

*The Sinclair packing plant was the earliest industrial site established downstream from Cedar Rapids' central business district... The city's first Bohemians populated a multi-block area that extended south of the downtown from 5th Avenue SE to the city limits where the T.M. Sinclair and company meat packing plant located. Beginning with the blocks closest to the river, the neighborhood eventually extended east several blocks beyond the 4th Street Railroad corridor. These level blocks were easily developed and hundreds of homes were built and occupied by Bohemian families here beginning in the 1870s and 1880s and continuing through the 1920s.*⁷⁹

The presence of the T.M. Sinclair & Co plant and other companies, such as the J.G. Cherry Company, provided wealth of employment opportunities for three generations of Bohemian/Czech-Americans. These immigrant workers developed a neighborhood with a rich ethnic history and maintained their language for many years. The language barrier was a factor in union organizing during the 1930s.

DISASTER, CORPORATE RESTRUCTURING AND

FURTHER EXPANSION 1879-1909



Figure 7.
1889 Advertisement
for T. M. Sinclair
& Co. From *Cedar
Rapids Gazette*
December 31, 1889.

A major fire struck the plant on March 6, 1879, causing \$75,000 in damage. The fire originated in the lard processing area and spread to the slaughterhouse, hog house, and engine rooms. The *Cedar Rapids Weekly Times* described the frenzy caused by the fire:

All was now excitement; teams were pressed into service with which to take the fireman the quicker to the scene, while throngs of our citizens hurried toward the dense clouds of black smoke which were issuing from the portion of the packing house closest to the river. It was patent to all that a fierce fire was raging and threatening the destruction of our most prominent industrial establishment.¹⁹

The fire destroyed a large portion of the southeastern wing of the plant, resulting in only a few injuries. All workers remained employed to clean up the ruins and to erect new buildings, under a pledge by T.M. Sinclair to restore the plant to full capacity within two months. After the 1879 fire, mechanical packing house appliances were installed, which started a trend of improving each part of the plant's meatpacking process and facilities.

Another disaster occurred in March 1881 with the accidental death of T.M. Sinclair when he fell down an open elevator shaft while inspecting the plant. His brother-in-law,

Charles B. Soutter, took over company operations and ushered in a new era of expansion in employment, production, and physical facilities. Soutter was familiar with the business, having previously worked in the New York Sinclair plant. The operation continued to prosper with steady growth.

In 1882 the company erected a new stone warehouse (storage & coop-erage; Building #1) on the west side of 9th Street SE between 17th and Hull Avenue SE, which remains standing in 2014, and in 1886 the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern Railroad laid new tracks into the plant. Fire ravaged T.M. Sinclair & Co. again in the spring



Figure 8.
Sinclair Plant as it appeared in 1878
(Reproduced with permission from
the Farmstead Foods Collection,
of Brucemore, Inc.)



of 1883 and summer of 1887, reflecting the “precarious nature of the packing industry.”²⁰ Fire was used heavily in the processing of meat products for activities such as boiling water or smoking meats; the chance of fire was only increased by the lack of plant cleanliness (common during that period) and flammable materials being stored in very close proximity. Nonetheless, each fire resulted in the company rebuilding with new and improved machinery.

Expansion during the 1880s included additions to the “Fidelity” brand of products. In 1880 T.M. Sinclair & Co. began producing sausage in addition to smoked meats. In 1885 the plant started slaughtering beef on a limited basis, until reaching full production under the “Fidelity Meats” label in 1888 with newly completed facilities.²¹ The facilities included a converted ice house and

a \$10,000 two-story addition to the sausage and smoke house.²² In 1885 or 1886, the packing process changed with the introduction of “Sanford Boxes” to chill the meat to preserve it. Through this process, “ice fed itself down through the buildings as it melted.”²²

In 1890 refrigerator engines and equipment were installed in the plant, making the process of refrigeration much more efficient and sanitary. Sinclair also processed 5,000 hogs daily and produced a wide variety of pork meat and byproducts. In 1894 mechanical refrigeration replaced the use of ice houses with ice drawn from the Cedar River, greatly improving sanitation from production to delivery. An October 1898 newspaper article described the plant’s vast physical footprint and extent of production by the end of the century:



Figure 9.

Early views of meat packing operations. Circa 1900. Reproduced with permission from Farmstead Foods Collection of Brucemore, Inc.



Figure 10.

#1 Stone Warehouse. (Top) View south-west at intersection of Hull Avenue and 9th Street SE. (Bottom) Original drawings from collection of Carl & Mary Koehler History Center Collection showing first floor plan, 1882 (right) and insulated floor with brick pavers, 1912 (left) The #1 Stone Warehouse was built in 1882 and is the sole remaining extant building at the site in 2014. It is sited north of the former Rock Island Railroad tracks that run along the north section of the plant site. The 200x150 foot building functioned as a cooperage shop and storage facility with its stone foundation, coursed ashlar limestone walls, and basement. It had a "chill room" and "summer sausage hanging room," A wood frame refrigerator/ice house addition built in 1889 and 1891 spanned the whole length of the building. In 1906 the basement was used for ham curing while the main floor served as cooperage (barrels) storage, primarily lard. From 1931 to 1949 the building had an interior refrigerator room and canned goods department added. The large ham curing storage room in 1949 had 12 rows of wood posts that served as an interior structural system. There was also the #79 Tunnel (underground) that was indicated on Sanborn Maps from 1889-1970.

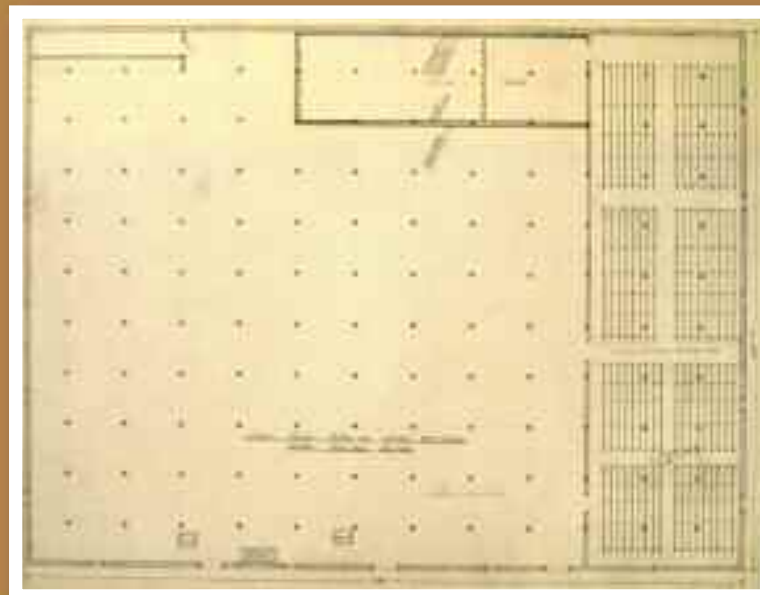
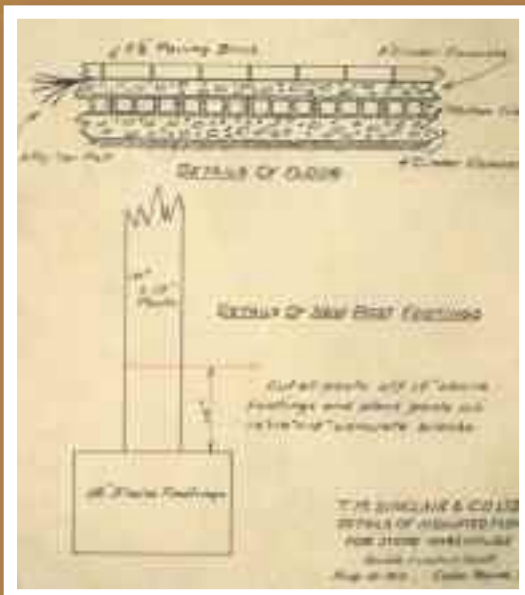




Figure 11. Sinclair "Fidelity" Products From Eleanor Wright, Sinclair Fidelity Recipes: A Collection of Valuable Hints and Tested Recipes Covering the Selection, Preparation, and Cooking of Meats in General and of "Fidelity:" and White Cross" Brands in Particular.

The great plant is seen usually by all those who enter and depart from Cedar Rapids... over the lines of the Chicago & Northwestern and Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Northern railways. This bird's eye view gives some idea of its extent, but few among the thousands who see it imagine that within that enclosure are packed from 500,000 to 600,000 hogs every year, together with 10,000 head of cattle...that this packinghouse contains killing rooms with a capacity of 10,000 hogs every ten hours, together with every facility for cutting, curing, packing and shipping the same; that the company runs its own box factory, its own cooperage and its own establishments for making cans to contain the lard; that in addition to this there is an immense fertilizing (sic) plant, a large refrigerator plant, a machine shop and blacksmith shop, giving employment in all to more than 700 individuals, to whom are paid in wages something like

*\$350,000 per annum... this establishment, as a rule, fills 16,000 cars; the box factory turns out close to 200,000 boxes per annum; about a hundred thousand barrels are manufactured at the cooperage, and there are manufactured at the can factory about 500,000 lard pails in twelve months."*²⁴

In addition to physical changes the organization of T. M. Sinclair & Co. was altered because of new government involvement in the 1890s, when the federal government initiated limited inspections of meatpacking establishments, including Sinclair's Cedar Rapids plant. Inspections expanded in 1906 with passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act. The act passed in part because of the poor sanitary conditions in Chicago meatpacking houses exposed in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906).

**Figure 12.**

Pork Processing Operations. Circa 1890s. Notice the U.S. Government inspection sign on the right, notifying workers to wash their hands before and after handling the meat products. (Reproduced with permission from Farmstead Foods Collection of Brucemore, Inc.)

Figure 13.

Letterhead for Cedar Rapids Refrigerator Express Co. (From S. E. Sinclair Letter to Stockholders dated May 16th, 1900.)



Upton Sinclair and *The Jungle*

Upton Sinclair published *The Jungle* in 1906. He was one of many muckraking authors during the Progressive Era who used journalism and novels to advance change in the areas of social injustice, political corruption, corporate monopolies, and worker's rights. This novel exposed the appalling working conditions in Chicago's meatpacking industry. The resulting public outcry spurred a Federal investigation and resulted in the Meat Inspection Act and Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. The novel's plot follows the experiences of Jurgis Rudkus, a Lithuanian immigrant. The book exposes harsh working conditions he experienced, in terms of worker safety and working with rotten and contaminated meat that got mixed with products going out for sale to the public.

INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENTS AT SINCLAIR

During the late nineteenth century work accidents frequently occurred in plants and factories throughout the United States. Sinclair was no exception. Three high-profile industrial accidents occurred in 1887, 1891, and 1892. Each demonstrated the “personally hazardous nature of the work for employees at the packinghouse during the 1880s and 1890s.”⁶⁶

The first occurred in 1881 with the death of T.M. Sinclair due to a fall down an elevator shaft at the plant, as previously described. Later on in the decade, on June 25, 1887, John Kelley was killed when he fell into a boiling cauldron vat.⁶⁷ Another took place on December 15, 1891. Frank Stanz became trapped around an axle shaft in one of the plant’s engine rooms and was killed. The machine whirled at 150 revolutions per second, crushing the bones of his body except for the head. The following is an account of the accident:

*The engine room at T.M. Sinclair & Company’s packing house was the scene last evening of one of the most dreadful accidents in the history of that big institution. Frank M. Stanz, whose work it was to oil the machinery which was the cause of his death, had some part of his clothing caught around the main shaft, and after being whirled around for a few brief seconds his body, all mangled and bleeding, was thrown down onto a pile of coal below. Just exactly how the accident happened will never be known as no one witnessed it and the victim never spoke after he was picked up by tender hands, from the coal heap on which he fell... Just as Stanz felt himself being drawn around the shaft he gave vent to such a shriek of agony as a man only gives when his life is in imminent danger. The cry alarmed a fireman in adjoining room, who rushed in just in time to see Stanz’s lantern and hat come tumbling to the floor, which were followed a few seconds later by the body. Dr. Rund was at once summoned and responded promptly but found the man beyond all mortal aid. Although he lived for fully a half an hour after the accident he never regained consciousness in the least degree.*⁶⁸

June 20, 1892 marked the occurrence of yet another serious accident. Frank Kratochvil fell into a tank of boiling hot water and was fatally scalded. Working in the steam lard department, he failed to insert a safety board over the vat, and then fell inside while attempting to turn a nut. These accidents occurred prior to 1910 with accidents after 1900 being harder to track through existing newspaper indexes.

Figure 14.

(Left) Early view of dried beef meat packing operations. (Center) View of pork packing operations, and (Right) circa 1900 photograph of plant workers loading products into refrigerated railroad freight cars for shipment. (Reproduced with Permission from the Farmstead Foods Collection of Brucemore, Inc.)



T.M. Sinclair received praise for cleanliness after Secretary of Agriculture James Wilson visited the plant in 1906; by 1921 there were 18 federal inspectors at the plant.²⁵

The first change in the company's organization occurred in 1892. T.M. Sinclair & Co., formally incorporated with John Sinclair as president, Charles B. Soutter as vice-president, and Henry B. Soutter as secretary and treasurer.²⁶ In 1892 Cedar Rapids

Refrigerator Express Co. incorporated as a subsidiary for shipping their products across the country. The operation started with the purchase of 100 cars and eventually expanded to 203 cars by 1921, with Sinclair products being shipped throughout the country on routes covering around four million miles annually.²⁷ This allowed the company to ship its products under more favorable freight transportation rates.

Refrigerated Box Car

Gustavus Swift of Chicago invented the first practical all-weather refrigerated railroad car in 1882, making it practical to ship meat across the nation without it spoiling. Previous refrigerated box cars had been patented, beginning with J.B. Sutherland's 1867 patent. Swift's invention allowed for the incorporation of the Cedar Rapids Refrigerator Express Co. in 1882 as a side venture of Sinclair & Co. The operation was located along low-speed siding tracks of the Burlington, Cedar Rapids and Northern Railroad located on land downstream from and adjoining the packing house site.⁸²



Figure 15.
T. M. Sinclair & Co.
Ltd. Plant in 1899.
From 1899 Cedar
Rapids Booklet
(Courtesy of Carl
& Mary Koehler
History Center)



The declining health of John Sinclair and Charles Soutter in the 1890s necessitated further organizational change.²⁸ In 1899 the company reorganized as T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd., with Sydney E. Sinclair (T.M. Sinclair's cousin) chosen as president, Robert S. Sinclair (T.M. Sinclair's son) as secretary/treasurer. The newly restructured company issued \$1.5 million in capital stock that helped serve as an "invigorated source of capital financing for an expanded physical plant."

From 1900 to 1909, significant upgrades and expansions were made. In January 1900 T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd. announced the first

\$100,000 in improvements to expand the plant. The most prominent, a new smokestack that became the iconic symbol of the plant. Constructed in 1909, the new stack was described as being "unlike any other in this country" based on its construction.³⁰ The 185-foot structure featured a 41-foot brick foundation surmounted by a 140-foot stack made up of tiles forming a 10-foot bore. White tile adorned the sides of the stack with "Sinclair" inlaid in large letters, which was legible at long distances.³¹ The word "Fidelity" was also inlaid in the structure. Boiler room improvements were also made, doubling the capacity of the power plant.²⁹



Figure 16.
Sinclair's signature smokestack circa 1912. (Reproduced with permission from Farmstead Foods Collection with permission from Brucemore, Inc.) It is important to note that residents identified the smokestack as a major feature after the flood of 2008 and there was a significant fight to save the structure from its demolition in August 2010.

The tradition of integrating new machinery and buildings with existing parts of the physical plant continued with each improvement. These improvements and expansions modernized meatpacking at the Sinclair plant by eliminating hand labor as much as possible and initiating the “best and most economical methods” for processing and producing meat products.³² New technology included the replacement of old style belts and pulleys

by electric power, ice and refrigerating machines, and the addition of new machines in the killing and cutting rooms for pork and beef operations. Prior to the new methods, almost every aspect of meat processing was completed by hand. This ranged from the slaughter of hogs, cattle, and lambs to the curing, cutting into various cuts (hams, pork loins, etc.), skinning, to packaging the products for shipment.

A new cold storage facility (Building #42: Ice Factory/Beef Cooler) and belt line rail surrounding the plant were completed in 1906; in 1908 a block-long covered railroad dock (Building #2) was constructed. By 1906 T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd. was the largest independent meatpacking plant in the U.S.³³

In 1907 Sinclair was an early adopter of a new safety enhancement, a sprinkler system,

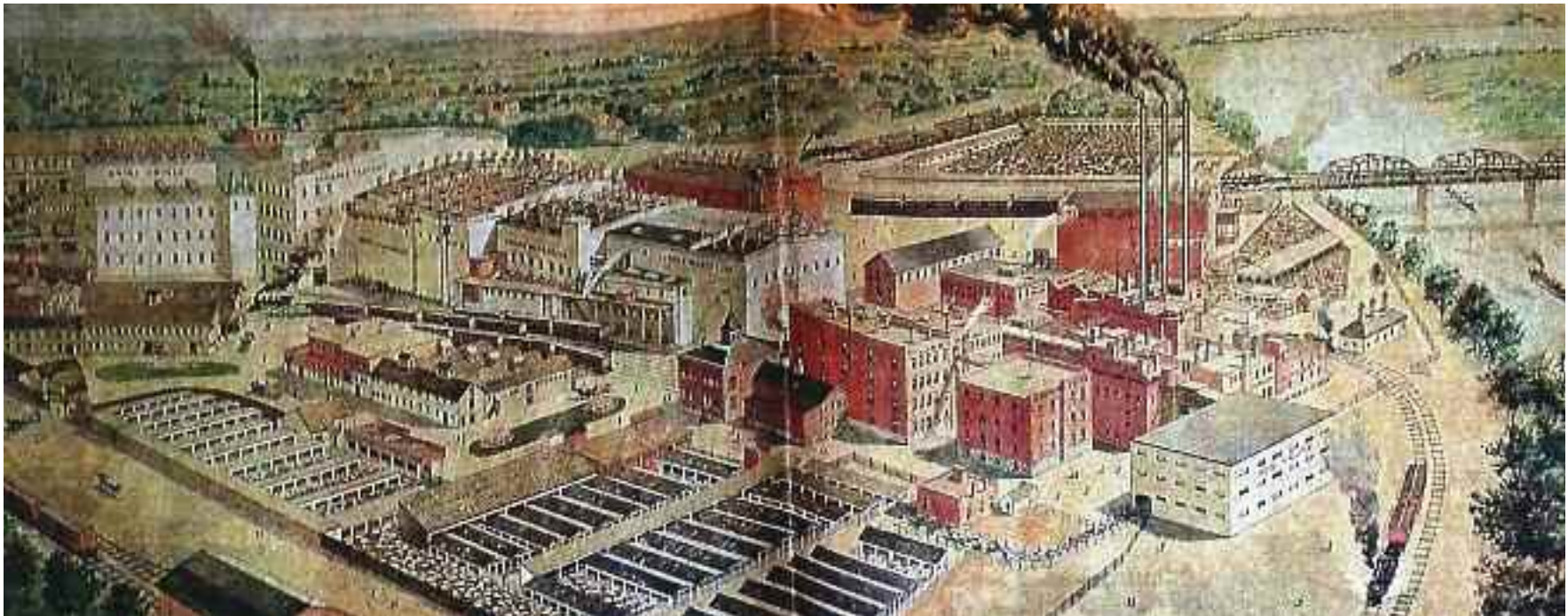


Figure 17.

M. Sinclair & Co. circa 1900. From "Iowa Today" insert of *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, March 11, 1990.

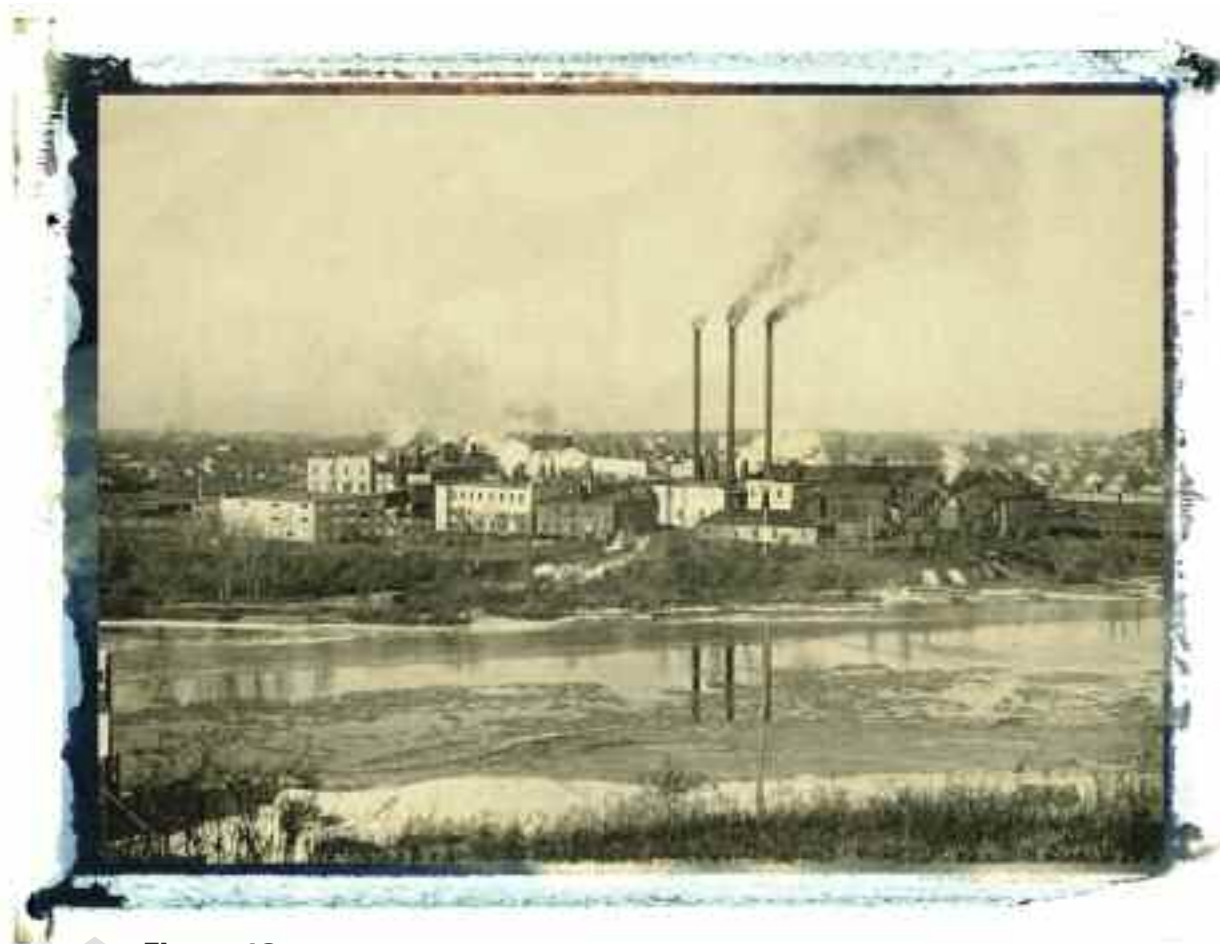


Figure 18.

"T.M. Sinclair & Company Packing Plant, The largest independent meat packing plant in the country" View North from across the Cedar River (Views of Cedar Rapids, Portland, Maine: L. H. Nelson Company, 1906 Reproduced with permission from Farmstead Foods Collection of Brucemore, Inc.)

installed "in order to make sure that business would not be interrupted by such a calamity [as fire]," which had been avoided since 1887.³⁴ In a company history, written for their centennial in 1921, Sinclair claimed that it was one of the first two packing houses in the nation to install such a system. In addition to avoiding costly work stoppages and loss of buildings as a result of fire, the sprinklers reduced insurance costs.

In 1909 the lard oil factory (Building #53) received a 55x65-foot three-story addition that doubled its capacity. A 28x80-foot, two-story addition to the tank and rendering factory was also erected. Each addition also included a basement. It was reported that:

T.M. Sinclair & Co. Ltd., annually expend[s] large sums of money to keep their plant abreast [of] the most progressive institutions and these items are a portion of their yearly contribution to the progress of the city.³⁵

The progressive description can be traced to its adaptation and implementation of modern techniques and machinery to improve their production capacity. It is also a testament to Sinclair's success in the industry and contribution to Cedar Rapids' economy.

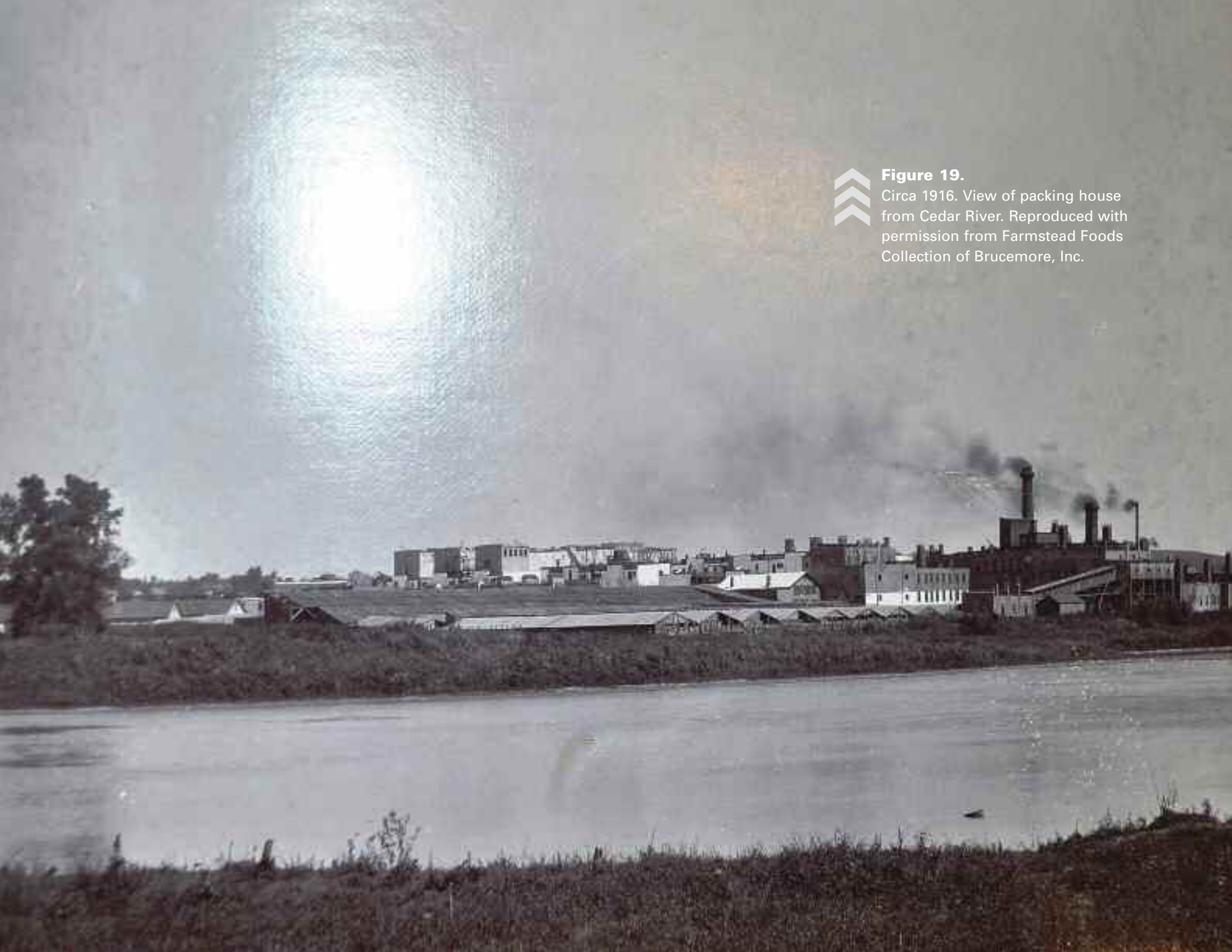


Figure 19.

Circa 1916. View of packing house from Cedar River. Reproduced with permission from Farmstead Foods Collection of Brucemore, Inc.

MARKET DIFFICULTIES & BECOMING

WILSON & COMPANY

1910-1935

**Figure 20.**

T.M. Sinclair & Company Packing Plant, ca. 1915. View is looking southeast across the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Tracks. The signature smokestack, built in 1909, is located in the background (top center). (Reproduced from Farmstead Foods Collection with permission from Brucemore, Inc.)



T.M. Sinclair & Co. 1910-1919

In 1910 the pork export market dwindled, causing major difficulties for T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd. and forcing the company to shore up its domestic market. Foreign markets had constituted a significant portion of its sales. With limited success in increasing its domestic trade, the company was sold to Sulzberger & Sons of Chicago, Illinois in 1913. The sale also arose from the company's belief "that it was at a disadvantage without a well-developed national marketing system."³⁶ Operations at the Cedar Rapids complex continued under the name T.M. Sinclair & Co. Ltd. In 1916

Thomas E. Wilson took over as president of Sulzberger & Sons and changed its name to Wilson & Company. As a wholly owned independent subsidiary of Wilson & Co., Robert Sinclair served as president from 1917 until 1930. Despite facing its own financial problems, Wilson was eventually able to restore the firm to profitability.

New construction expanded the space occupied by the plant to 40 acres by 1915. A reservoir (Building #55, 1913), boiler room (Building # 27A, 1919), and Loin Cooler & Storage Building (Building #80, 1917) were added to the physical plant. Employment, payroll, and production also increased.

Figure 21.

T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd. Plant in 1913
 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. From:
 Insurance Maps Iowa: Cedar Rapids, 1913,
 Vol. 45. Plate 54, (New York: Brooklyn,
 Sanborn Map Company, 1913).

The meatpacking process had become efficient by this period with the killing process taking just 20 minutes and following an assembly line process. Leonard Fackler described the production process in 1915 as follows:

The animal comes first to the "sticker" who expertly cuts the jugular vein. They then are carried thru two great vats of boiling hot water, which scalds the bristles completely from their bodies. Passing on, the dead porkers are in turn washed, scraped, cut open, dressed, washed again, split, beheaded, passing thru the hands of nearly fifty different men, each of whom ... does but one little part of the entire process. After they are fully dressed, they are sent, still on the moving conveyor to the cooling room, just twenty minutes from the time they were caught at the other end of the long killing room.³⁷

Half-hogs were moved into the cutting room via conveyers that dropped them into large metal chutes from chilling rooms located on the floor

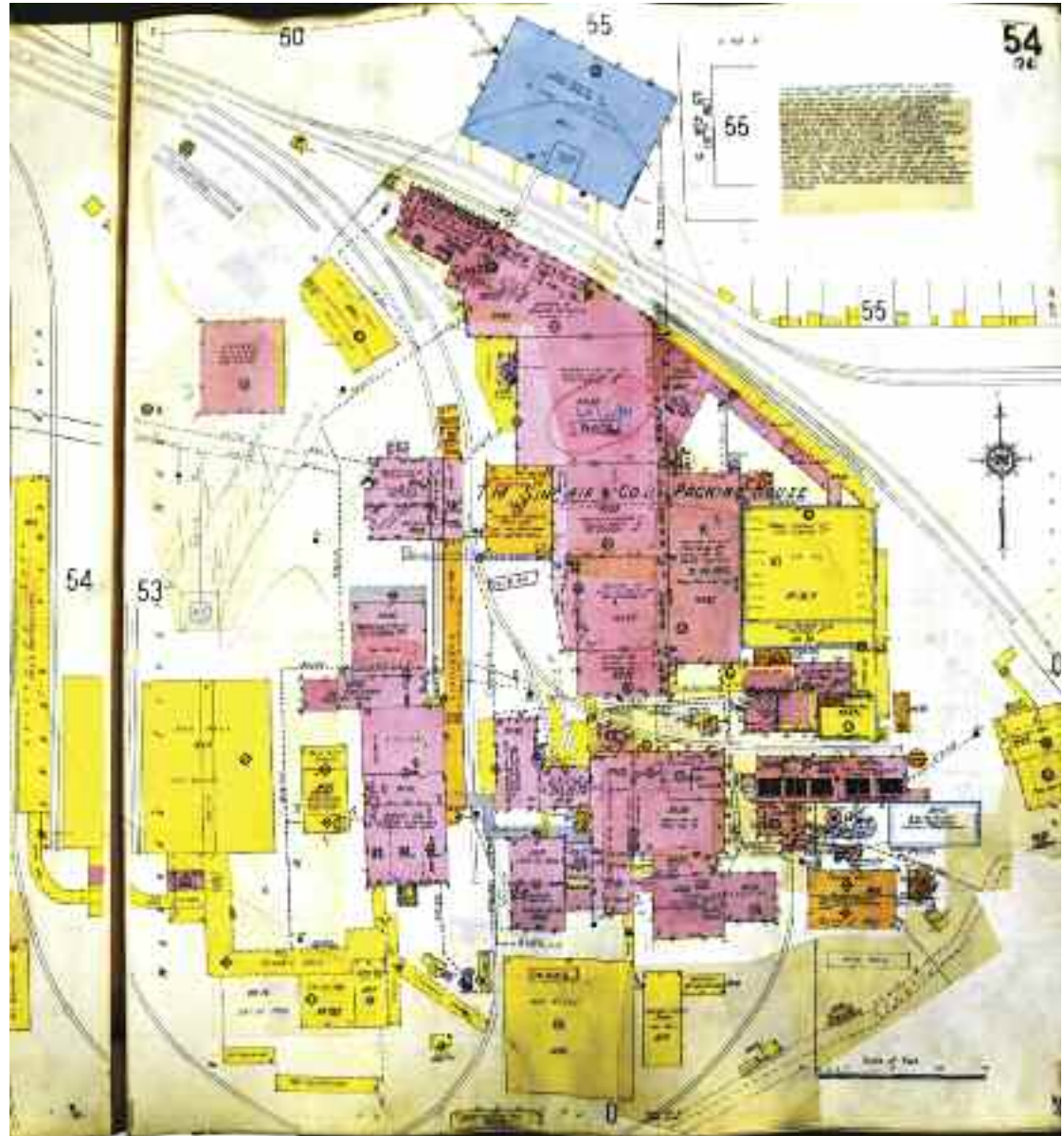


Figure 22.

Circa 1921 View of the Sinclair meat packing house.
From Semi-Centennial 1871-1921: T. M. Sinclair & Co.
Ltd., Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1921.



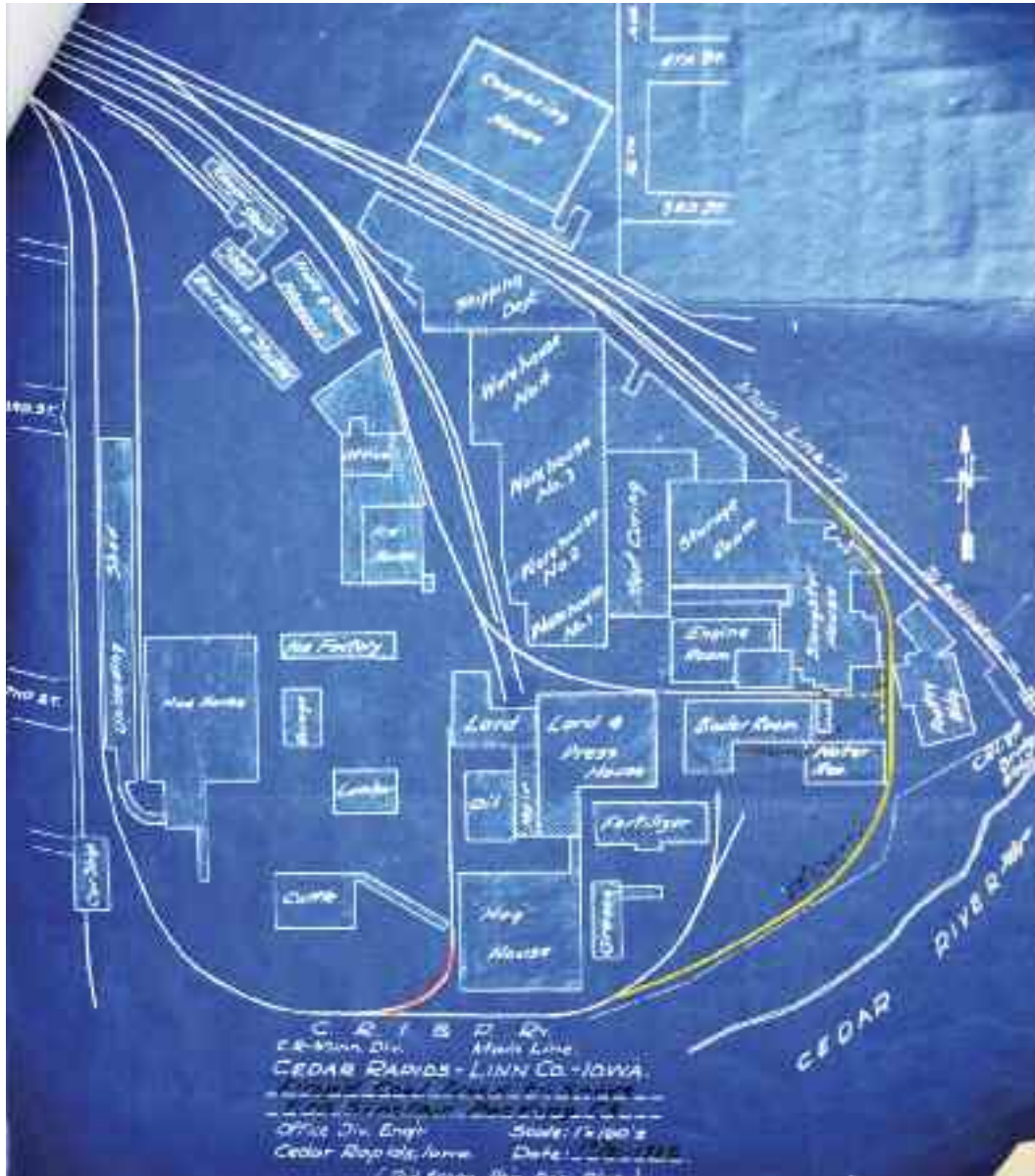


Figure 23. Blueprint showing layout of T.M. Sinclair & Co. plant in October 1925 From Abstract of Trackage Rights and Ownership: T.M. Sinclair & Co./C + NW RY & C.R. & P. Ry, September 12, 1930. (Reproduced with permission from Farmstead Foods Collection of BruceMore, Inc.)

above. In 1915 cutting room workers created over 600 distinct cuts of meat, with specialized cuts for foreign markets. The cuts then moved into the curing room where workers sorted them by size and type, dipped them in pickling brine, piled them in salt, and left them to cure from seven to 90 days. The type and quality of the cuts determined the duration required for curing the meat. Once this process reached completion, “the cuts were smoked, pickled, cooled, and wrapped according to the variety of product being produced.”³⁸ Smoked hams were marked with the “Fidelity” brand after one and a half to two days of smoking with loins packed in 25-pound pails and bacon in glass jars. Over 750,000 pounds of sausage were produced in 1915.³⁹

In 1915, 800 summer and 1,200 winter packinghouse workers processed an average of 4,000 hogs and 100 cattle daily along with an additional 2,500 sheep slaughtered per week.⁴⁰ Sinclair customized its cuts and packaging type and/or size based upon regional preferences throughout the United States. The packing house’s cooper shop, tin shop, and box factory produced a “variety of sizes of casks, tierces, barrels, boxes, cases, or tin cans” that enabled the packaging depart-

Figure 24.

Airplane view of the T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd. Plant (Cedar Rapids, Cedar Rapids: Chamber of Commerce, ca. 1928)



"By-products"

Sheep intestines produced ligatures used for closing wounds or in surgical procedures to close off blood vessels. Hog linings were used to create pepsin for aiding in digestion. Red bone marrow was used to help treat anemia. Soaps and oils for leather dressing were made using inedible beef or sheep tallow. Oleo-oil from beef (made oleo-margarine) served as an ingredient for the production of chewing gum and candy. Inedible parts of cattle, sheep, and pork were used in animal feeds and fertilizers. Lastly, distilled beef pancreas produced insulin. Around 140 different by-products were manufactured over the course of the plant's history.⁸³



ment to ship 25 carloads of meat daily to various markets across the nation in 1915.⁴¹

In 1917 Sinclair established a pension fund and in 1919 a welfare work and dispensary that treated a peak of 1,000 minor work injuries in a month.⁴² A cafeteria was also added for those bringing their meals for the noon lunch break. During World War I the meatpacking house helped meet the food demands of the Allies. T.M. Sinclair & Co. produced over 140 distinct by-products by 1925, with uses that ranged from pharmaceuticals to animal feed and fertilizer.⁴³

Sinclair & Co./ Wilson & Co. 1920-1935

Significant plant improvements and production increases marked the 1920s and 1930s, despite the economic malaise caused by the Great Depression. Expansion in the 1930s was fueled by an infusion of new capital resulting from T.M. Sinclair & Co. Ltd. closing its books to become a full branch of Wilson & Co.⁴⁴ In 1935 the Cedar Rapids plant changed its operating name to Wilson & Co.; the new painted name replaced "Sinclair & Co." on the signature smokestack.

Major new buildings appeared starting in 1920, helping to spur increased production and production capacity. In 1920 a garage and gatehouse were constructed near the 3rd Street entrance. By 1921 the plant reached 1,500 employees and the company's annual payroll reached \$1,430,309.83, almost double the 1915 payroll of \$644,531.42 in just six years.⁴⁵ Between 1928 and 1930, a series of new buildings established an expanded beef line that Sinclair used to exploit growth in the local wholesale trade by expanding their production capacity for beef products.⁴⁶ The most prominent new

buildings included a three-story Beef Kill & Coolers Building (1929-1930), refrigerated Central Loading Dock (1929), and Fab Cuts Storage Building (1929).⁴⁷

In 1931 a new sewer and pump house were added. The new physical plant additions primarily expanded production space and installed updated machinery while the process remained largely the same as before. The most significant changes included the continued decrease in hand labor required as human-operated machines performed the more difficult and time-consuming tasks. This in turn increased production speed. New ammonia tanks expanded cooling operations and electrical capacity increased with the Electrical Sub-Station (southeast corner of plant) in 1932, and a second gatehouse known as Fire Hall was built in 1935.

Production figures from 1932 and 1934 reflected the impact of the new improvements. In 1932 the company processed 706,615 hogs,

94,751 cattle, 36,009 calves and 92,956 sheep.⁴⁸ In 1934 a workforce of 1,200 to 1,500, with a payroll exceeding \$1,000,000, processed over 800,000 hogs and slaughtered 100,000 cattle.⁴⁹ The first unionizing efforts achieved success in the 1930s after years of failed attempts. The growth of T.M. Sinclair & Co. /

Wilson & Co. coincided with the growth of the meatpacking industry as a whole nationally in the 1930s to become one of the largest manufacturing industries in the U.S. With over 200,000 workers and annual production of \$2.5 million in the 1930s, the industry sustained this success through World War II.⁵⁰



Figure 25.

Aerial view circa 1935.
From undated Cedar Rapids Gazette. (Found in Collection of Carl & Mary Koehler History Center.)





Figure 26.

"Flow Chart showing Departments and Processing Steps on a Typical Pork-Packing Plant in the 1930s. (H.H. McCarty and C.W. Thompson. "Meat Packing in Iowa," Iowa Studies in Business, No. XII, June 1933)

WILSON & CO.

WW II TO STRIKE 1936-1960



Figure 27. (Left) Graph showing Wilson & Co. as the 13th largest U.S. manufacturer in 1942 and 3rd largest meat packer (Right) Chart showing how large Wilson & Co. is with all its divisions in 1942. From: Unit 1: Management Control of Yields and Costs Through Accounting," (Wilson & Co. management instruction manual). (Reproduced with permission from Farmstead Foods Collection of BruceMare, Inc.).



During the 1940s and World War II, the Sinclair/ Wilson & Co. Plant invested heavily in its physical infrastructure. At the time the structures occupying the site reflected a combination of building techniques and technologies from the first half of the twentieth century and latter half of the nineteenth century.⁵¹ The company retired several buildings in 1942 and constructed a new Hog Cooler & Pork Processing Building (#11), well house (Building #92), and water pump house (Building #95). The new pork line building was located in the center of the plant site. The following year a new guard house, brick entrance pillars, and gate were constructed to complete the

layout of the packing house's 3rd Street entrance.

Labor unrest paralleled the national boom of the meatpacking industry. In March 1948 the CIO United Packinghouse Workers Union called a national strike after bargaining negotiations failed with the major packing houses. At the time these included Wilson & Co., Armour & Co., Cudahy Packing Co., Swift & Co., John Morrell & Co., and Hy-Grade Food Products Co. The strike lasted 67 days and was marked by outbursts of violence outside Cedar Rapids. The strike caused a large disruption in Cedar Rapids because Wilson & Co. workers constituted the city's largest workforce.

The 1950s ushered in an era of change at Wilson & Co. and its Cedar Rapids packing house. In 1955 the company's Chicago branch closed and Cedar Rapids became the largest branch. The yard complex (the west side of the plant) underwent a reconfiguration, starting with a new yard house that was constructed in 1949-1950. This building consolidated scattered buyers' offices into

a single scale house and office building (Building #4 Yard Office). Additionally, a series of new livestock sheds were erected and a 100,000-gallon water tank was moved from the south side of the 3rd Street entrance via a special roadway to the north side. These changes were spurred by a postwar shift from rail to truck livestock delivery. In 1956 the Pork Packing & Cooling Building-Curing

Assembly, Smokehouse & Storage (#22) was finished in the center of the plant complex along with three new water wells and an addition to the Beef Kill & Beef Cooler Building (#41).

An important event, in the history of the plant, occurred on July 20, 1955, when a delegation of 12 Soviet Union representatives visited the plant for two hours. The dele-

gation also toured farms across Iowa and covered 12,000 miles in a dozen states seeking to gain technical information to improve their agricultural production.⁵² The visitors included Soviet Minister of Agriculture Vladimir Mastkevich and Director of Agricultural Research A. E. Tulupnikov. The Soviets marveled about the number of workers driving to their work in their own automobiles



Figure 28.
Aerial view in
1946. From
Wilson Certified
News, June-July
1946.

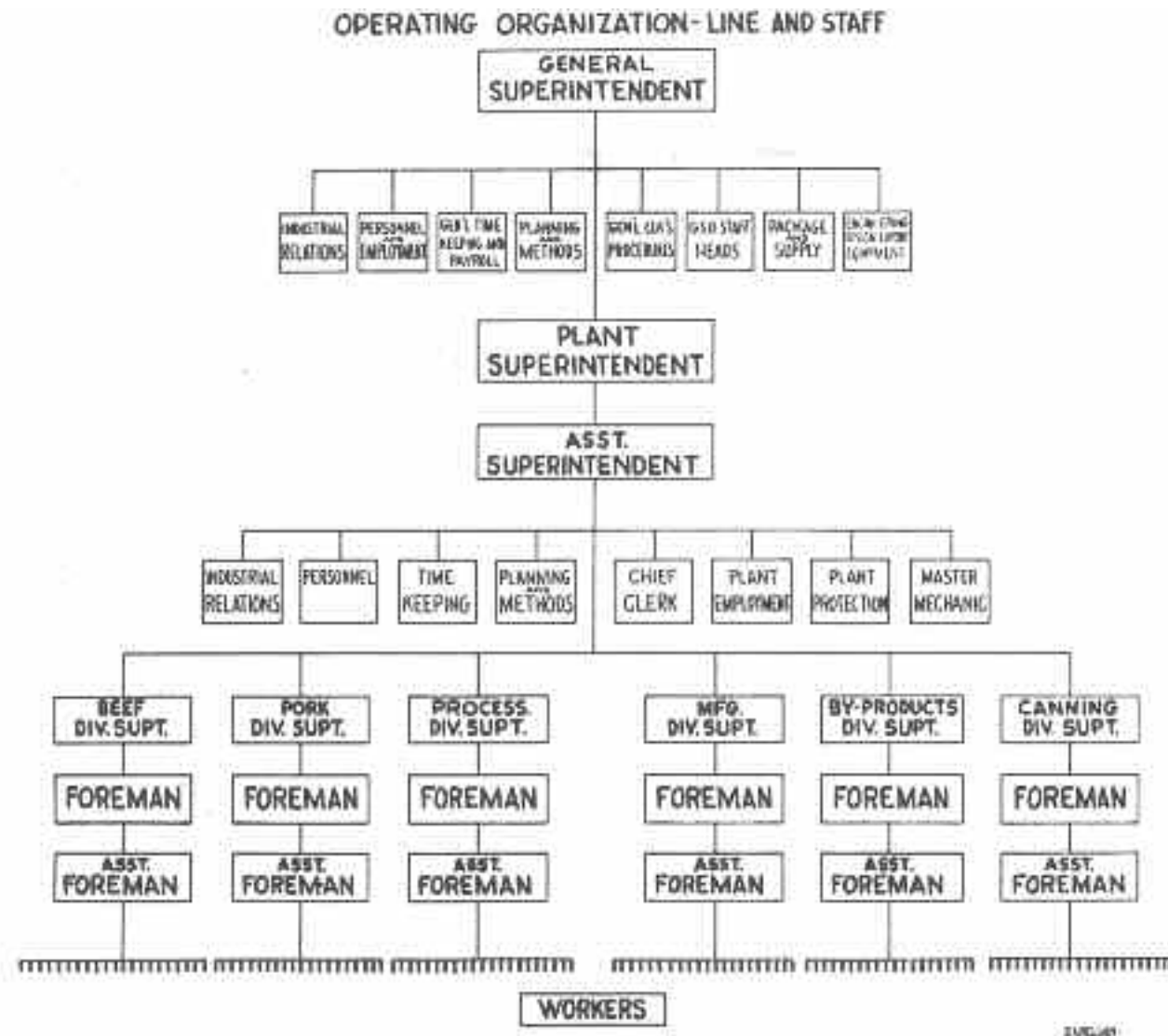


Figure 29.

Wilson and Company
Packing House
Organizational Chart
("Unit 1: Management
Control of Yields and
Costs Through
Accounting," Farmstead
Foods Collection,
Brucemore, Cedar Rapids,
Iowa, ca. 1945).



THE HEART OF THE HOME

Always, the dinner table is the warm, happy heart of the home. It is the place where the family gathers to share the joys of life.

It is the place where the family gathers to share the joys of life. It is the place where the family gathers to share the joys of life.

It is the place where the family gathers to share the joys of life. It is the place where the family gathers to share the joys of life.

Wilson's Certified Meats and Dairy products are the heart of the home. They are the products that make the heart of the home.

Wilson's Certified Meats and Dairy products are the heart of the home. They are the products that make the heart of the home.

Wilson's Certified Meats and Dairy products are the heart of the home. They are the products that make the heart of the home.



Figure 30. Illustration from Wilson Certified News, June-July 1946 boasting of their "Certified Meats" and "Clearbrook" Dairy products being "accepted as a symbol of protection." Also note the catchphrase "The Wilson Label Protects Your Table".

the high rate of pay, (more than three times that of Russian workers on similar jobs); the skilled efficiency of the processing operations, and, most of all, why there should be any competition in buying livestock and selling products.⁵³

During the 1950s, Wilson & Co. continued to market its products and brands under the motto "the Wilson label protects your table." This motto had started in the 1930s. The products included Wilson's Certified Hams, bacon, lard, sausage and an assortment of canned products. During World War II Wilson's canned products became very popular with American soldiers and remained so in the postwar period when the consumer base largely became housewives (see illustration). Canned products included hams, smoked pork,

lamb tongues, chili con carne, spaghetti and meat, Log Cabin® Franks, corned beef, pig's feet, and Vienna sausages.⁵⁴

In May 1959 Henry S. Amalong became the plant manager. He started in his position during a period of labor difficulties at the packing house. In June 1959, 700 workers walked off the job, launching a 109-day strike. Workers decided to strike as a result of stalled negotiations that failed to secure a new union contract. Two principle issues served as the basis for the dispute between management and the UPWA Local #3. These were overtime and a request for a 10½-cent wage increase. Ultimately, an agreement was reached in February 1960, ending the largest strike in the plant's history.

Figure 31.
1959-1960 Strike: Photographs
from November and December
1959. (Reproduced with permis-
sion from the Farmstead Foods
Collection of BruceMore, Inc.)



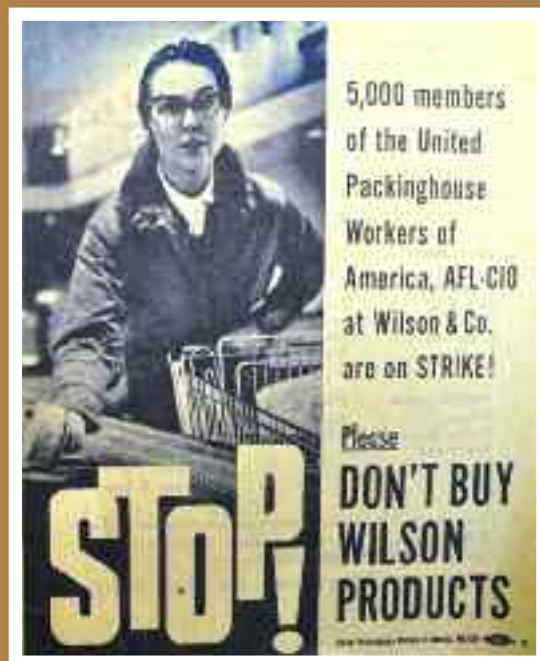
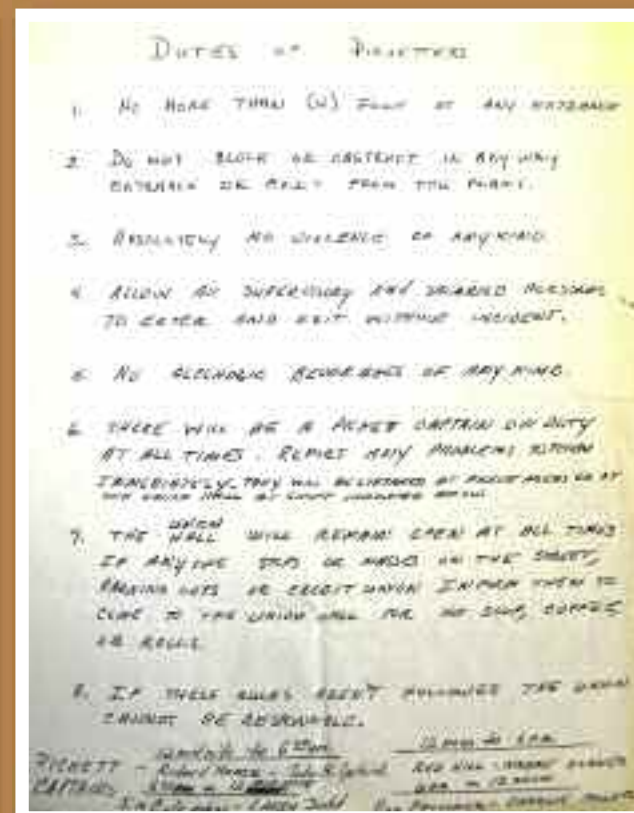


Figure 32.

Ephemera from 1959-1960 Strike at Wilson & Co.'s Cedar Rapids Plant. (Courtesy of State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa Labor Collection).



EXPANSION AND REORGANIZATION

1960-1979

The Cedar Rapids plant continued to expand, reorganize, and modernize in the 1960s. The Canning Manufacture, Hog Cooler, Sausage Building (#12) was completed in 1960 at a cost of \$500,000. The building was most commonly known as the “smoke sausage house” and had an addition finished on its southeast corner in 1967. The Beef Cooler Building (#41B) expanded in 1962. Updates to the docking facilities were completed in 1960 and 1962 with the addition of two new truck docks. In 1967 the company installed a new \$276,500 Sharp Freezer (Building #68) along with remodeling the Bulk Loading Dock (Building #20).⁵⁵

Wilson & Co. announced its intention to expand beef production by 75 percent in 1968.⁵⁶ The A&P Feed & Bone Gelatin Building (#72), Hog Hair Building (#73), and Fertilizer Factory/ Blood Drying & Grease Recovery Building (#35) modernized the handling of several by-products when completed in late 1968.⁵⁷ Modernization involved the installation and implementation of the most up-to-date and efficient machines and production methods while meeting all relevant government regulations for sanitary practices.



Figure 33.
Festival Line of Products:
From Wilson-Sinclair 1971
Annual Report.



Figure 34.
Corn King Line of
Products (Established
in 1880). From
Wilson-Sinclair 1971
Annual Report.



Figure 35.
Aerial view of plant looking SE from
3rd Street entrance in 1971. From
The Wilson News, November 1973.

The 1960s also ushered in another phase of company reorganization. Three divisions formed in 1965: Wilson Meat & Food Products Co., Wilson Athletic Goods Mfg. Co., and Wilson Chemical Industries Co. Also that year, Paul B. Wren became the plant manager for the Cedar Rapids packing house. In 1967 Ling-Temco-Vought, Inc. (LTV, Inc.) of Dallas, Texas, completed the purchase of Wilson & Co.'s three divisions after a contentious acquisition process. In 1970 the corporate structure shifted again. Wilson-Sinclair Co. formed the largest subsidiary with Henry Amalong named president. Forrest Mykleby replaced Paul Wren as plant manager two years later.

Labor disputes were usually mild and settled quickly during this period. In 1971 Wilson-Sinclair Co.'s 2,400 workers produced 500,000 pounds of fresh meat and 125 million pounds of processed meats for its principal Midwest and northeastern U.S. markets and secondary foreign markets.⁵⁸ Payroll totaled \$20 million and a total of 1.5 million hogs, 200,000 cattle, and 175,000 sheep were processed with a value of over \$150 million.⁵⁹

The newly restructured company initiated a multi-million dollar renovation plan in the 1970s. The new investment included exten-



sive interior remodeling of packing house buildings and a unique project completed in 1973, for a pork line building. The company reconstructed the Ham Boning, Ham Grading & Loin Converting Building (#23) after demolishing a building within a building. A new ice manufacturing facility (#44), Flotation Basin (#71A), a series of new storage silos for salt, dry blood, and bone gelatin, new Hog Hotel (#46), and Lard Pump Station (#101) and front gate scale were completed between 1972 and 1978.

Wilson-Sinclair Co. restructured again to become the Wilson Foods Corporation in 1976. As the corporation's largest packing plant, the Cedar Rapids plant completed the changeover in 1977. The company discontinued the signature Wilson Certified & Corn King (1880) brands and replaced them with the "Wilson Foods" brand. Beef and lamb slaughter operations ceased at the facility in 1979 in favor of increasing hog production.



Figure 36.

View of plant from 1978 *Cedar Rapids Gazette* file photo. From undated 1998 *Cedar Rapids Gazette*.

OWNERSHIP CHANGES,

DECLINE & CLOSURE 1981-1991

Figure 37.

Pre-1990 Aerial View of Sinclair/Wilson & Co. Plant looking southeast, (Private Photo Collection of Mark Hunter, Cedar Rapids)



In 1981 Wilson Foods Co. separated from LTV Corporation to become a wholly independent subsidiary. The now independent company faced \$63 million in debt resulting from profits that had not been reinvested by LTV. The financial problems from increased competition and a failed gamble to corner the pork market forced the UPWA Local P-3 (previously UPWA Local #3) to make wage concessions. In 1983 the company filed for federal Chapter 11 bankruptcy, a step that sparked the last major strike in June. The strike lasted three weeks. Workers protested the continued unraveling and reduction of their wages/benefits as a result of the bankruptcy

proceedings. IBP, Inc. and Kesef-Mazal Corporation attempted to take over the company in 1984, but both attempts failed.

Finally, in May 1984, former Land-O-Lakes executive Keith Barnes purchased the Albert Lea, Minnesota, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa, plants. The Cedar Rapids plant cost Barnes \$16 million and its operations shifted to Cedar Rapids Meat, Inc., a division of the newly constituted Farmstead Foods. Barnes announced the closure of the Cedar Rapids plant and Farmstead's bankruptcy filing on March 8, 1990. In March 1991 the packing house's equipment was sold in a bankruptcy auction.

WILSON-SINCLAIR COMPLEX

AFTER CLOSURE 1991-2013

Figure 38.

July 28 photo of Farmstead Foods plant exterior walls being knocked down by demolition team to provide firefighters access to the flames. (From *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, July 29, 2009.)



Several attempts were made to purchase the 19.2-acre Sinclair site after its closure in 1990 and the bankruptcy auction and 1991. On October 18, 1992, two teenage boys set fire to the General Office Building (#15, 1885), destroying the structure. Central States Warehousing acquired the complex in March 1993, converting it into a warehouse and industrial park. An assortment of tenants occupied some of the buildings. Between 1998 and 2005, a series of vacant buildings was demolished as Central States Warehousing worked to clean up the 30-plus-acre Sinclair meatpacking plant complex to allow new tenants, lessees, and businesses to move in.

In 1998, planners proposed turning portions of the Sinclair complex site and other nearby abandoned industrial sites into a recreational complex. The plan proposed a one-cent sales tax for a \$69 million project, which would add a farmer's market, ice skating rink, amphitheater, and other amenities in addition to retail shops, restaurants, and other businesses added by private developers. The proposed reuse strategy never reached fruition as the City of Cedar Rapids purchased the site for \$4 million in 2006-2007.⁶² Upon their purchase of the property, the city encountered significant issues at the plant complex that required substantial repair expenditures. Problems at the complex were



Figure 39.

Aerial view of plant remains after December 2009 fire. From "Last Gasp: Fire Could Fast-Track Demolition of Sinclair Plant," (*Cedar Rapids Gazette*, December 18, 2009.)

compounded in June 2008, when a major flood hit the city. The damage resulted in the complex being deemed structurally unsound. The city decided to raze the complex and worked to get Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding for the demolition as part of the city's flood recovery effort.

In 2009 two major fires hit the former Sinclair/Wilson & Co. meat packing complex severely damaging and destroying significant buildings. The first fire struck the plant on July 28, 2009. The blaze started in a large three-story building, the Fab Cuts Storage Building (#60), built in 1928. The cause of the fire

could not be determined, but firefighters believed it was suspicious because the utilities had been turned off. Reports stated that bags of seed corn and tightly bound cardboard prolonged the fire and necessitated demolition of portions of the walls so that firefighters could reach the source of the flames.⁶³

The second fire started six months later on December 15, 2009. This blaze sparked health concerns because the cold weather caused the smoldering ruins and smoke to linger, posing the risk of respiratory problems for anyone that inhaled the smoke and potentially hazardous materials released by fumes. The fire



Figure 40. Google Earth aerial map showing the T.M. Sinclair/Wilson & Co./Farmstead Foods Plant site in Cedar Rapids as it appeared in April 2014.



Figure 41. Pamphlet from Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission's 2010 Effort to "Save the Stack". (Courtesy of Carl & Mary Koehler History Center)

destroyed 125,000 square feet of interconnected buildings of varying age and building materials, creating a significant problem in fighting the fire.⁶⁴ The city feared that some of the burning buildings contained asbestos, which posed a dangerous health hazard both for the public and firefighters battling the conflagration.

FEMA ultimately approved the demolition of buildings at the T.M. Sinclair meatpacking complex in 2010. Included in the

structures set to be demolished was the plant's smokestack. Despite various efforts, to save the historic 101-year-old smokestack between January and August 2010, it was leveled in August 2010. The Cedar Rapids Historic Preservation Commission called the smokestack "an iconic part of the city's skyline and tribute to Wilson & Co., once one of the four largest meatpacking plants in the world."⁶⁵ The smokestack was significant as the last of its kind in Cedar Rapids and one

of the few left in Iowa. The 171-foot structure had been constructed with base of open brick arches and radial bricks filled with mortar. Twelve of the plant's buildings were determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, which necessitated up to \$200,000 in FEMA mitigation funds to compensate for the loss of historic structures. By the end of 2010, demolition of the Sinclair meatpacking plant was complete and the site is currently vacant.

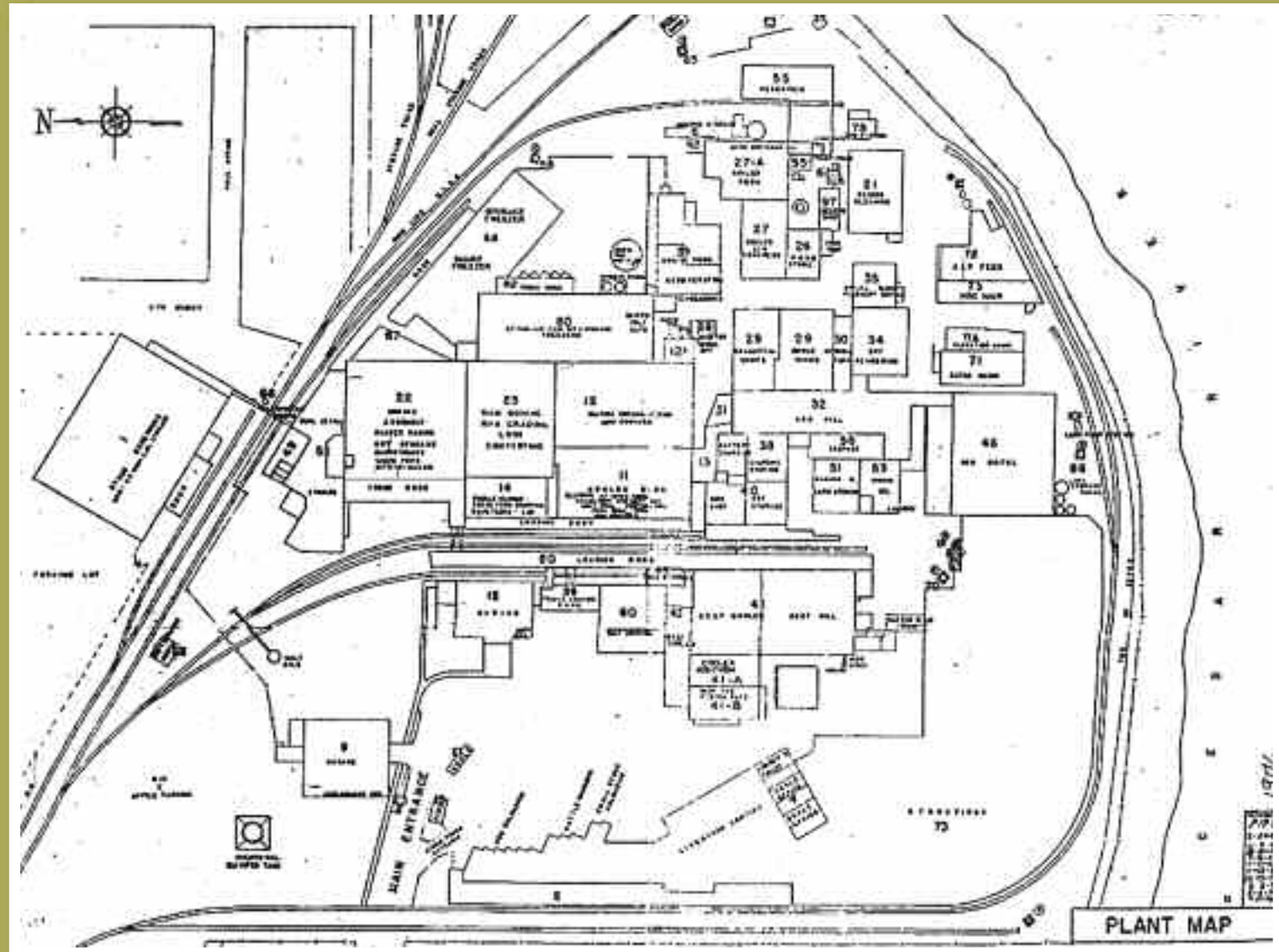


Figure 42.
 "Plant-Map-
 Wilson & Co., Inc.
 CR-1002"
 (1959 updated
 to July 1978)

Identified Resources - T.M. Sinclair & Co./Wilson & Co. Packing House (extant resources in bold)

| | |
|---|---|
| 1870s - 1890s | 1960s - 1970s |
| #26-Mechanical Storeroom-1876 | #19-28 Well-1968 |
| #38-Box Storage-1876 | #22-Pork Packing & Cooling Building - Curing, Assembly, Smokehouse & Storage-1968 |
| #27-Boiler Room-1880 | #41A-Beef Cooler Addition-1968 |
| #34-Dry Packing-1880 | #25-27 Well-1967 |
| #30-Engine Room-1880 | #10-Car Lines Building-1968 |
| #1-Stone Warehouse-1882 | #75-40 Well-1968 |
| #19-Animal to Building #1-1882 | 1960s - 1970s |
| #28-Mechanical Shops - Tins & Machine Shop-1884 | #12-Canning Manufacture, Hog Cooler, Sausage-1960 |
| #32-Slaughter House/Hog Kill Building-1884 | #13-Equipment Wash Room, Truck Repair-1960 |
| #15-General Office-1885 | #22-Transmission Shop-1960 |
| 1900s - 1910s | #22-Back Truck Dock-1960 |
| #57-Sausage Factory & Shipping - Storage-1900 | #41B-Beef Cooler Addition-1962 |
| #26A Cold Storage - ca. 1900 | #29-Refrigerated Truck Dock-1962 |
| #40-Bakery Churn and Box Manufacture/Storage-1902 | #26-25 Well House-1962 |
| #48-Sausage Factory/Storage-1905 | #35A-Hot Water Tank-1960 |
| #30-Insoluble Tank Room-1906 | #77-210 Well-1964 |
| #42-Ice Factory/Beef Cooler-1906 | #12A-Smokehouse Addition-1965 |
| #2-Railroad Unloading Dock-1908 | #20-Bulk Loading Dock-1967 |
| #63-Laundry - Animal Oil-1908 | #29-Sharp Freezer-1967 |
| Smoke Stack-1909 | #29-Feedlot Factory/Blood Churn, Grease Recovery-1968 |
| #31-Skating Room/Hog Kill-1910 | #72-A & F Feed & Bone Gelatine-1968 |
| #51-Curing Storage-1910 | #73-Hog Hair - drying & baling-1968 |
| #60-Household's Hams, Sausage & Storage-1910 | #102-211 Well-1970 |
| #55-Engine Room-1913 | #45-Old Garage/Tractor Repair-1971 |
| #56-Storage-1914 | #44-Ice Manufacturing-1972 |
| #62-Curing Room-1914 | #71A-Filtration Basin-1972 |
| #33-Tanks-1916 | #103-Salt Silo-1972 |
| #60-Lipin Cooler & Storage-1917 | #25-Horn Swing, Ham Grading & Lard Canning-1973 |
| #11-Sheep & Cattle Shed/Cat Shed/Hay Barn-1918 | #35-Dry Blood Silo-1975 |
| #65-Switchman's House-1918 | #46-Hog Hotel/Hog House-1976 |
| #71-Grease Catch Basin-1918 | #65-Winchman's House - North Gate-1976 |
| #27A-Boiler Room-1919 | #804-Land Pump Station-1976 |
| 1920s - 1930s | #74-Bone Gelatine Silo-1977 |
| #9-Main Garage-1920 | #29-Edible Tank Room-1978 |
| #21-Hog Casing Cleaning-1920 | #81-Front Gate Scale-1979 |
| #78-Electrical Sub Station Building-1920 | Construction Date Unknown |
| #60-Fab Cuts Storage-1925 | #3-Hog & Cattle House |
| #40-Central Loading Dock-1926,1952 | #4-Wagon Shed, Box & Barrel Storage |
| #14-Box Factory & Cafeteria - Trimming, Chill, Cafeteria & Locker Room-1930 | #34-Pork Processing (replaced by #12) |
| #41-Beef Kill & Beef Coolers-1930 | #25A-Fire Pump House |
| #8-Fire and Sewer Pump House-1931 | #40A-Loading Dock |
| #6-Antenna Storage Tanks-1932 | #49 & 43A-Smoke Houses |
| #16-Fire Hall - Front Gate-1935 | #54-Chicken House/Poultry Building |
| #27-Washing Shop-1935 | #57-Hole House #1 |
| 1940s - 1950s | #58-Galvanizing Shed |
| #54-2 Well-1941 | #64-Watch House |
| #11-Hog Cooler Building & Pork Processing-1942 | #70-Underdrift Well |
| #5-House Water Pump House-1943 | #75-Stockyard/Livestock Pens - pre-1948 |
| #56-Guard House - Front Gate-1943 | #75A-Cattleshed |
| Front Gates - ca. 1943 | #83-Crib |
| #37-Mason's Shop-1945 | #38-32-Undertiled buildings razed circa 1958 |
| #4-Yard Office-1948 | #23-Sheep Well House |
| #58-Manure Platform-1950 | Elevated Water Tank |
| #59-Paint Shop-1951 | Vinegar Tanks |
| #100-Oil Pump House-1951 | Lard Storage Tanks |
| | Unnamed Storage Garage - post-1978 |

SURVIVING BUILDINGS

AS OF 2006 SURVEY OF SINCLAIR MEAT PACKING PLANT

The section that follows contains contemporary photographs of the Sinclair/Wilson & Co. Plant's extant buildings when surveyed by Marlys Svendsen in 2006. All photographs and descriptions are taken from the 2006 inventory form and the photographs were produced by Bruce Meyer Productions. Each caption has a short description with the date erected, direction of view, building number, and a short explanation of the operational activities that occurred there. All but the Stone Warehouse (#1, 1882) have been demolished.



Figure 43. Chart of identified T.M. Sinclair/Wilson & Co. Packing House resources by decade built. Extant buildings/structures in 2006 are marked in bold. (From: T.M. Sinclair & Co. Packing House/Wilson & Co. Packing House Site Inventory Form 57-06794, by Marlys A. Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc. of Sarona, Wisconsin).

Figure 44.

#27 & #27A Boiler Room and House, #95 Water Pump House and Smoke Stack. View looking east in 2005. The Smoke Stack was built in 1909 while the #27 Boiler Room & House was built in 1880 with a 1919 3-story L-shaped addition and served as the oldest existing building on the site in 2006. Building #95 dated to 1943, but while located next to #55 Reservoir (1913 with 560,000 to 580,000 gallon capacity) was non-extant in 2006.



Figure 45.

#4 Yard Office. Completed in 1949, the two-story Yard Office had a concrete foundation, measured 80x42 feet, spanned six bays, and was used for business offices and to weigh livestock in its three large drive-through bays. The building was also an example of the Prairie Style of design applied to a factory building.



Figure 46.

#32 Slaughterhouse/Hog Kill Building (1884) & #53 Laundry & Animal Oil (1908 partially extant). View looking east (top) and west (bottom). The section of brick wall and with the tank was part of #53. The building connected to #46 Hog House/Hotel via a third floor overpass. The partially razed building exposed 4 brick deep brick exterior walls and internal structural system that combined cast iron posts and wood beams. Concrete block walls were added to the 2nd and 3rd floors of #32 on the section forming the driveway overpass in 1976 when a new Hog House/Hog Hotel was erected.



**Figure 47.**

#41 Beef Kill Building. Constructed from 1929-1930, the three-story reinforced concrete and brick building measured 10 bays long and six bays long or 195x100 feet. The building connected to the cattle pens and sheep shed (375A & #17, non-extant). The interior housed the beef coolers on the north half of the third floor and on the lower levels. The kill floor was located on the south half of the third floor. The basement functioned as a hide cellar and oleo storage room. The building had two cooler additions in 1962 (#41A & #41B).

**Figure 48.**

View north of #12 Canning, Manufacture, Hog Cooler, Sausage Manufacture Building, #12 A Smokehouse Addition, and #11 Hog Cooler & Pork Processing Building.

Building #12 was built in 1960 by Rinderknecht Construction Co. of Cedar Rapids for \$517,500, measured 170x105 feet and featured a structural steel system with reinforced concrete floors and brick exterior.

The interior was sectioned into alternating packing, salting, cutting, cooling, and storage areas. The #12A addition on the far-east end measured 30x38 feet and was built in 1965. The #11 Hog Cooler & Pork Processing Building was in 1942. The five-story structural steel, brick and reinforced concrete building measured 164 (8 bays) by 115 (5 bays) feet and housed blending, spice, fresh pork cutting, trimming and hog cooler rooms.



Figure 49.

#14 Box Factory (Shop) & Cafeteria. Constructed in 1929-1930 this building was part of the continuous group of buildings that comprised the Pork Line. The four story reinforced concrete (floors and piers) building with brick exterior had its fourth story added in ca. 1965 and measured 109x96 feet. The interior housed box and cardboards storage in the basement, box shops on first and second floors, and cafeteria on the third with a commercial grade kitchen on the north end. Between 1978 and 1992, the second and fourth floors served as the men's and women's locker rooms with showers, bathrooms, wood benches, and bulletin boards for assorted company, union, and personal notices.



Figure 51.

#22 Packing & Cooling Building-Curing, Assembly, Smokehouse & Storage. (Top) Building being built in 1956 (Reproduced with permission from the Farmstead Foods Collection of Brucemore, Inc.) This three-story building replaced an earlier warehouse and buildings #14, #23, #52, and #67 surrounded it on the south, north, and east sides. It measured 144x197 feet and had a concrete and stone foundation, wood and reinforced steel columns and beams structural system, brick exterior, 10 truck bays, and a two-story 18x24 foot stairwell section. Operations conducted in Building #22 included curing, assembly, sliced bacon, dry storage, smokehouses, and manufacturing of "Taste Popes" and "Bits-O-Bacon."

Figure 50.

#23 Ham Boning, Ham Grading & Loin Converting. SE view of first floor. Built in 1973, this building was surrounded on all four sides by buildings #12 (south), #14 (west), #22 (north), and #80 (east) with no exposed exterior walls. The 103x131 feet structure had a poured concrete foundation, steel frame, reinforced concrete deck floors with square concrete pillars, and interior floor plan defined by large open rooms. Detailing included concrete and glazed tile walls and painted corrugated steel ceilings. The building was used for ham boning, ham grading, loin converting, spice mixing, and bacon processing and curing.

Figure 52.

#75 Stockyards Livestock Pens: Located adjacent to #4 Yard Office Building. The concrete stockyards were built at various times prior to 1948 and had pens divided by animal type.

**Figure 53.**

#50 Central Loading Dock (1929 & rebuilt 1962) & #59 Refrigerated Track Dock (1962). Top & Middle: Central Loading Dock View SW and SE; Bottom: Refrigerated Track Dock View E.

Figure 54.

#52 Sausage Factory & Shipping Building and #49 Storage Building. Building #52 was a three story brick building with frame construction and stone foundation built in 1900 with an irregular triangular shape designed to align with the railroad tracks running along its north side. The south wall formed a saw tooth footprint that extended 247 feet along the northeast side. The second story functioned as a sausage factory originally with shipping operations on the first floor. A row of eight smokehouses housed in Building #58 (non-extant in 2006 survey) were originally connected to the northwest corner. From the 1930s to 1950s the building was used for shipping and storage operations. Building #49 was used as storage and dock building when completed in 1905 and was a two-story brick structure with 30x64 feet footprint.



Figure 55. #72 A&P Feed & Bone Gelatine Building, #73 Hog Hair Building, and #74 Bone Gelatine Silo. The first two buildings date to 1968 while the third (#74) was built in 1977. These structures were used in the processing of several inedible pork processing by-products.



Figure 56. #16 Fire Hall (left) and #96 Guard House (right). The #16 Fire Hall was built in 1935 and measured 16x30 feet. The #96 Guard House was constructed in 1943 as a 10x20 feet building. Both were located at the Main Entrance on Third Street SE.



Figure 57. #80 Loin Cooler & #82 Back Truck Dock (top looking west) and #68 Sharp Freezer & Railroad Dock (bottom looking west). Buildings #80 and 82 were finished in 1978 as a four story building measuring 234x81x35 feet, but in 1987 a substantial portion was replaced by the two-story pre-cast concrete building seen in the photograph. The remodel was completed by Turnbull Co. of Toledo, Ohio. In 2006, only the south brick wall survived from the original building. The building functioned as a cooler and smoke house until converted to a warehouse with five truck bays in the back in 1987. Abell-Howe Company of Cedar Rapids built the #68 Sharp Freezer in 1967 for \$276,500 as a freezer and railroad dock.



**Figure 59.**

#9 Main Garage This one-story brick building was constructed in 1920 with a 103x103 feet footprint and had an irregular-shaped 23x47 foot addition added between 1949 and 1976 to the north end of the east side. Primarily used as a garage (truck repair and storage) from 1931 to 1978, the building had a large open interior with two 500 gallon underground gasoline tanks and pumps. By 1978 the interior had been subdivided into the personnel department offices and storage areas that included storage areas, a nurse's office, and two self-contained garage bays.

**Figure 58.**

#78 Electrical Sub-Station Building. Constructed in 1926 as the "Transformer and Converter House," this one-story brick structure measured 22x26 feet.

**Figure 60.**

#71 Grease Catch Basin and #71A Flotation Catch Basin (1972). View of byproducts facility looking southwest from the service drive. The 105x40 feet #71 Grease Catch Basin was built in 1918 east of the #46 Hog Hotel and the #34 Dry Rendering Building (non-extant in 2006) stood directly north. The structure was located above the main 20x28 inch sewer and interceptor system that City of Cedar Rapids Engineering Department records indicate was built underground through the plant site in 1887. The system was abandoned in 1931 when a new interceptor line was installed on the West Side of Cedar Rapids.



LABOR & UNIONS

Unions played an important role in the history of the Sinclair plant, but they faced an uphill battle until the 1930s when unionization efforts had their first success. Earlier efforts were marked by failure. The first strike at T.M. Sinclair & Co. Ltd. began on January 24, 1903, when 120 men walked out four days. The workers protested a change in hog slaughtering that reduced the number of men needed. The workers returned to the same wage conditions and promised that they “would work faithfully and never strike in such manner again.”⁶⁹ In 1921 workers attempted to unionize for the first time under the auspices of the American Meat Cutters & Butcher workmen of North America, but failed when they attempted to strike because the company locked them out and their small numbers limited

their ability to collectively influence the company to meet their demands.

Milo Barta and Lewis Clark succeeded in starting a union at Wilson & Co. when they formed Federal Labor Union #18530 on the August 23, 1933, and affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). They achieved early success with 1,000 members joining and by November were affiliated with the Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America.⁷⁰ Company hostility and a language barrier (caused by the prevalence of Czech workers), caused difficulties in Barta and Clark’s early organizing efforts. Newspaper publisher Ted Lubacek resolved the language problem through his translation services.⁷¹ In November the union became affiliated with the Amalgamated

Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America, but became independent in 1935 as the Midwest Union of All Packinghouse Workers.

Between 1935 and 1937, the union increased its membership from 1,200 to 1,400 workers. In 1939 the Packinghouse Workers Local Industrial Union #3 formed with a CIO charter and gained recognition through a wildcat strike in 1941.⁷³ Two years later, they obtained a master agreement with Wilson & Co. and became the United Packinghouse Workers of America (UPWA) Local #3. In 1948, 1,000 of the Cedar Rapids plant workers joined the major meatpacking strike organized nationally for a 29-cent-per-hour wage increase. Strikers argued that they should share in the “Big Four’s” (Wilson & Co.,

Swift & Co., Armour & Co., and Cudahy Packing Co.) 130 percent increase in profits since 1945.⁷⁴ Violence erupted nationally during the strike but the situation remained peaceful in Cedar Rapids. The strike cut the nation's meat supply in half and President Harry Truman unsuccessfully tried to end the strike.

The Taft-Hartley Act's passage in 1947 caused changes in the relationship between unions and management by restricting certain organizing practices. The contract issues also became more complex, centered on productivity, safety, and time. The most important strike in the Cedar Rapids plant's history occurred from June 1959 to February 1960, with 700 workers going on the picket line. They protested over the

demand for a 10½-cent-per-hour wage increase, overtime, and other issues regarding time off and vacation. The strike included a boycott of Wilson & Co. products, company injunction lawsuits, limited violence, and a large media campaign by the union in an attempt to shape public perception.⁷⁵ Workers picketed at Wilson & Co.'s 14th Avenue SE and 3rd Street SE entrances, the union boycotted Wilson & Co. products, and some strikers were prosecuted for rock throwing. Ultimately, the UPWA (Local Number #3) achieved their demands and a new contract resolved the strike. The only issue not resolved was whether a rival union, the National Brotherhood of Packing House Workers, would take over the representation of workers in Cedar Rapids.⁷⁶

From 1960 to 1980, strikes were limited and relatively minor in nature. The last major strike came in 1983, when the union was under pressure due to the company's financial problems. The three-week strike called in June 1983 resulted from Wilson's Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing and proposed wage reductions. At the end of the strike, Local P-3's 1,700 workers approved a company-friendly contract. After the plant closed in 1990, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local P-3 dissolved with no major action occurring after the 1983 strike. After that period, the union acquiesced to company demands, despite President Gary Zimmerman's vow to fight for better contract terms once the company was on a more solid financial footing.⁷⁷

References and Bibliography

Several major resources were consulted for this publication. The 2006 *T.M. Sinclair & Co. Packing House/Wilson & Co. Packing House Site Inventory Form 57-06794*, by Marlys A. Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc. of Sarona, Wisconsin, provided significant insights into the history and development of the T.M. Sinclair meatpacking plant's history and the site's development. The extensive contemporary photographs for this site form found in this booklet were taken in October 2005 by Bruce Meyer, Bruce Meyer Productions of Sioux City, Iowa, including those photographs on pp. 44–49. They were the last systematic documentation made for the buildings prior to the Cedar River Flood of 2008. Additionally, the *Farmstead Foods Collection* at Brucemore, Inc., Carl & Mary Koehler History Center collections in Cedar Rapids, and the *Iowa Labor Collection* at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library in Iowa City proved to be invaluable resources. A variety of other primary and secondary resources were also consulted.

Newspapers

Cedar Rapids Gazette or *Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*
 "Into the Cauldron." June 25, 1887.
 "Killing Beef, A New Industry Added to the Already Large Business of T.M. Sinclair & Co." December 31, 1888.
 "Whirled to Eternity, Frank M. Stanz, and Employee at the Packing House, Wound Around a Shaft and Killed." December 16, 1891.
 "In a Boiling Vat: Horrible Accident at the Packing House This Morning." June 20, 1892.
 "Strike Today at the Packing House." January 24, 1903.
 "Packing House Strike Settled." January 28, 1903.
 "Building Finest Stack in State: Great Improvement at Plant of T.M. Sinclair Co., Ltd." *The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, October 20, 1909.
 "Here's Why a Meatpacking Strike" (advertisement by UPAW Local No. P-3). Circa April–May 1948.
 "Wilson Plans Expansion of Cedar Rapids Plant." September 25, 1968.
 "Impact on City Difficult to Describe on a Dollar Level." September 17, 1971.
 "Calvin–Sinclair, *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 5–21–1983
 "The Growth of Wilson Foods: A Chronology." February 9, 1984.

"Retooling for Play." Undated (circa 1998).
 C.R. Looking to Buy Land Next to Sinclair Brownfield." September 19, 2007.
 "Sinclair Blaze Stubborn, Firefighters Remain on Site." July 31, 2009.
 "Billowing Smoke Forces Continued Warning." December 17, 2009.
 "Smokestack Razing Could Begin Next Week." June 10, 2010.
Cedar Rapids Sunday Republican or *Cedar Rapids Republican*
 Leonard D. Fackler, "Cedar Rapids Industries~No 2 The T.M. Sinclair Co." December 12, 1915.
 "T. M. Sinclair & Co., the Chief of Cedar Rapids Industries: Few Realize its Scope." October 2, 1898.
Cedar Rapids Weekly Times or *Cedar Rapids Times*
 "Pork House." November 23, 1871.
 "Our Packing House." December 4, 1873.
 "Interesting Statistics Connected with Pork Packing in the West." April 12, 1877.
 "A Holocaust! The Packing House Visited by a Destructive Fire." March 13, 1879.
 "Obituary, Thomas M. Sinclair." March 31, 1881.

Books, Magazines, and Other References

Calvin Sinclair Presbyterian Church. "Church History." Accessed March 31, 2014, at http://calvinsinclair.org/site/cpage.asp?cpage_id=140022138&tsec_id=140004654.
The History of Linn County, Iowa. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1878, pp. 525–526.
 McCarty, H.H., and C.W. Thompson. "Meat Packing in Iowa." *Iowa Studies in Business* XII (June 1983):34.
 "Russian Farm Delegation Visits Cedar Rapids Plant." *Wilson Certified News*. September 1955, p. 6–7.
The Saturday Record, 1909.
Semi-Centennial 1871–1921, T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd. Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Laurance Press Co., 1921.
 Svendsen, Marlys A. "Bohemian Commercial Historic District." National Register of Historic Places Nomination (July 2002).
 ——. "T.M. Sinclair & Co. Packing House/Wilson & Co. Packing House Iowa Site Inventory Form" (Svendsen Tyler Inc., October 2006).
Views of Cedar Rapids. Photo caption, "T.M. Sinclair & Company Packing Plant, The largest independent meat packing plant in the country." Portland, Maine: L.H. Nelson Company, 1906.
Wilson Certified News, October 1949, October 1950.
 Zieren, Gregory. "'If You're Union You Stick Together': Cedar Rapids Packing House Workers in the CIO." *Palimpsest* (Spring 1995):34.

- ¹ *The History of Linn County, Iowa* (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1878), 525-526.
- ² H.H. McCarty and C.W. Thompson, "Meat Packing in Iowa," *Iowa Studies in Business* XII (June 1983), 34.
- ³ T.M. Sinclair & Co., Ltd., *Semi-Centennial 1871-1921* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: Laurance Press Co., 1921).
- ⁴ "Obituary, Thomas M. Sinclair," *Cedar Rapids Weekly Times*, March 31, 1881.
- ⁵ "Obituary, Thomas M. Sinclair."
- ⁶ "Pork House," *Cedar Rapids Weekly Times*, November 23, 1871.
- ⁷ *Semi-Centennial*.
- ⁸ *Semi-Centennial*.
- ⁹ *Semi-Centennial*.
- ¹⁰ "Our Packing House," *Cedar Rapids Times*, December 4, 1873.
- ¹¹ "Our Packing House."
- ¹² H.H. McCarty and C.W. Thompson, "Meat Packing in Iowa," *Iowa Studies in Business*, No. XII (June, 1933), p. 35) as cited in Marlys A. Svendsen, "T.M. Sinclair & Co. Packing House/Wilson & Co. Packing House Iowa Site Inventory Form" (Svendsen Tyler Inc., October 2006, p. 34).
- ¹³ "The Growth of Wilson Foods: A Chronology," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, February 9, 1984.
- ¹⁴ *Semi-Centennial*.
- ¹⁵ Marlys A. Svendsen, "T.M. Sinclair & Co. Packing House/Wilson & Co. Packing House Iowa Site Inventory Form" (Svendsen Tyler Inc., October 2006), 34.
- ¹⁶ "Calvin-Sinclair," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 5-21-1983; Calvin Sinclair Presbyterian Church, "Church History" (2014), accessed March 31, 2014, at http://calvinsinclair.org/site/cpage.asp?cpage_id=140022138&sec_id=140004654.
- ¹⁷ "Interesting Statistics Connected with Pork Packing in the West," *Cedar Rapids Weekly Times*, April 12, 1877.
- ¹⁸ *History of Linn County*, 525-526.
- ¹⁹ "A Holocaust! The Packing House Visited by a Destructive fire," *Cedar Rapids Weekly Times*, March 13, 1879.
- ²⁰ Svendsen, 34-35.
- ²¹ Svendsen, 34-35.
- ²² "Killing Beef, A New Industry Added to the Already Large Business of T. M. Sinclair & Co.," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, December 31, 1888.
- ²³ "Killing Beef: A New Industry."
- ²⁴ "T.M. Sinclair & Co., the Chief of Cedar Rapids Industries Few Realize its Scope," *Cedar Rapids Sunday Republican*, October 2, 1898.
- ²⁵ *Semi-Centennial*.
- ²⁶ John Sinclair was T. M. Sinclair's cousin, and Henry was another of his wife Caroline's brothers.
- ²⁷ *Semi-Centennial*.
- ²⁸ *Semi-Centennial*.
- ²⁹ Svendsen, 36.
- ³⁰ "Building Finest Stack in State: Great Improvement at Plant of T.M. Sinclair Co., Ltd" *The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette*, October 20, 1909.
- ³¹ "Building Finest Stack in State."
- ³² *The Saturday Record*, 1909.
- ³³ "T.M. Sinclair & Company Packing Plant, The largest independent meat packing plant in the country," *Views of Cedar Rapids* (Portland, Maine: L.H. Nelson Company, 1906).
- ³⁴ *Semi-Centennial*.
- ³⁵ "Building Finest Stack."
- ³⁶ Svendsen, 39.
- ³⁷ Leonard D. Fackler, "Cedar Rapids Industries~No 2 The T.M. Sinclair Co.," *Cedar Rapids Republican*, December 12, 1915.
- ³⁸ Svendsen, 38.
- ³⁹ Svendsen, 38.
- ⁴⁰ Svendsen, 38.
- ⁴¹ Svendsen, 38.
- ⁴² *Semi Centennial*.
- ⁴³ Svendsen, 38.
- ⁴⁴ Svendsen, 39.
- ⁴⁵ *Semi-Centennial*. Payroll figures included the Cedar Rapids plant as well as all other company facilities.
- ⁴⁶ Svendsen, 39.
- ⁴⁷ These buildings are where each type of fabricated meat cut was produced and stored.
- ⁴⁸ Svendsen, 39.
- ⁴⁹ Svendsen, 39.
- ⁵⁰ Svendsen, 39.
- ⁵¹ Svendsen, 39.
- ⁵² Svendsen, 40-41.
- ⁵³ Svendsen, 40.
- ⁵⁴ John Strohm, "Russia's Farmers Pay Us a Visit," *The Freeman*, January 1, 1956, accessed March 28, 2013, at http://www.fee.org/the_freeman/detail/russias-farmers-pay-us-a-visit
- ⁵⁵ "Russian Farm Delegation Visits Cedar Rapids Plant," *Wilson's Certified News* (September 1955), 6-7.
- ⁵⁶ *Wilson's Certified News* (October 1949 and October 1950).
- ⁵⁷ Svendsen, 48-49.
- ⁵⁸ "Wilson Plans Expansion of Cedar Rapids Plant," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 25, 1968.
- ⁵⁹ Svendsen, 48-49.
- ⁶⁰ "Impact on City Difficult to Describe on a Dollar Level," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 17, 1971.
- ⁶¹ "Impact on City Difficult to Describe on a Dollar Level."
- ⁶² Svendsen, 49-50.
- ⁶³ Douglas Newman, "Retooling for Play," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, 1998.
- ⁶⁴ Rick Smith, "C.R. Looking to Buy Land Next to Sinclair Brownfield," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, September 19, 2007.
- ⁶⁵ "Sinclair Blaze Stubborn, Firefighters Remain on Site," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, July 31, 2009.
- ⁶⁶ Cindy Hadish, "Billowing Smoke Forces Continued Warning," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, December 17, 2009.
- ⁶⁷ Cindy Hadish, "Smokestack Razing Could Begin Next Week," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 10, 2010.
- ⁶⁸ Svendsen, 35.
- ⁶⁹ "Into the Caldron," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, June 25, 1887.
- ⁷⁰ "Whirled to Eternity, Frank M. Stanz, an Employee at the Packing House, Wound Around a Shaft and Killed," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, December 16, 1891.
- ⁷¹ "Strike Today at the Packing House," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, January 24, 1903, and "Packing House Strike Settled," *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, January 28, 1903.
- ⁷² Svendsen, 39-40.
- ⁷³ Gregory Zieren, "If You're Union You Stick Together': Cedar Rapids Packing House Workers in the CIO," *Palimpsest* (Spring 1995), 34.
- ⁷⁴ Svendsen, 40.
- ⁷⁵ "Here's Why a Meatpacking Strike" (advertisement by United Packinghouse Workers of America, CIO, Local No. 3), *Cedar Rapids Gazette*, circa. April-May 1948.
- ⁷⁶ Svendsen, 40-45.
- ⁷⁷ Svendsen, 45-49.
- ⁷⁸ Svendsen, 45-49.
- ⁷⁹ Svendsen, 50.
- ⁸⁰ Marlys A. Svendsen, Svendsen Tyler, Inc., "Bohemian Commercial Historic District" (completed for City of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, July 2002).
- ⁸¹ Svendsen. "Bohemian Commercial Historic District."
- ⁸² Svendsen, 35.
- ⁸³ Svendsen, 38.

history of

T. M. SINCLAIR & COMPANY, MEATPACKING PLANT



Reassembled Smokestack at the Cedar Rapids Public Library, 450 5th Avenue SE.
(Courtesy of Mark Stoeffer Hunter)