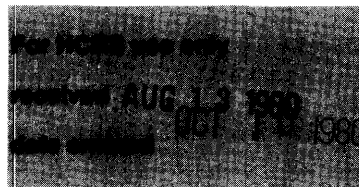


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections



**1. Name**

historic The Dekum  
and/or common Dekum Building

**2. Location**

street & number 519 S. W. 3rd Street  not for publication  
city, town Portland  vicinity of Third congressional district  
state Oregon code 41 county Multnomah code 051

**3. Classification**

|   |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Category</b>                                 | <b>Ownership</b>                            | <b>Status</b>                                       | <b>Present Use</b>                             |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district               | <input type="checkbox"/> public             | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture           | <input type="checkbox"/> museum            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure              | <input type="checkbox"/> both               | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress           | <input type="checkbox"/> educational           | <input type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site                   | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                   | <b>Accessible</b>                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment         | <input type="checkbox"/> religious         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object                 | <input type="checkbox"/> in process         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government            | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific        |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered   | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted          | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial            | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation    |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> no                         | <input type="checkbox"/> military              | <input type="checkbox"/> other:            |

**4. Owner of Property**

name Skidmore Development Corporation  
street & number 5 NW Front Avenue  
city, town Portland  vicinity of Oregon state 97209

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Multnomah County Courthouse  
street & number 1021 S. W. 4th Avenue  
city, town Portland state Oregon 97204

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title Portland Historical Landmark has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no  
date 1970  federal  state  county  local  
depository for survey records Portland Historical Landmarks Commission  
city, town Portland state Oregon

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## 7. Description

---

|  |                                       |   |   |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved    date _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair            | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   |   |

---

### **Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

The eight story Dekum Building, built in 1891-92 occupies a quarter block (100' x 100') corner site at Portland's most architecturally interesting street corner. Until 1978 when Justus Krumbein's cast-iron fronted Council Building (1883) was razed, the four corner buildings at Third and Washington represented outstanding examples of different architectural styles. In addition to the Dekum, the two other corner buildings remain: the Failing Building (1900) across Third Street, is an excellent example of the classical treatment of office buildings by prominent Portland architects, Whidden & Lewis; and the Commercial Style Oregon Bank Building (1910), originally the Spalding Building, designed by the well known New York architect, Cass Gilbert, across Washington Street to the north. Immediately south of the Dekum on Third Avenue is the elegant Hamilton Building completed in 1893 also designed by Whidden & Lewis. (Both the Failing and Hamilton Buildings are listed on the National Register). The contrast of the Richardsonian Romanesque of the Dekum, designed by McCaw, Martin & White, and the classical detail of the Hamilton built only a year later is not only striking but illustrates the significant changes in commercial architectural styles that would occur in subsequent years. (See photo #3 and 1898-1926 Sanborn Map).

### STRUCTURE AND PLAN

The subgrade structure is typical of the era -- stone rubble foundation walls, stone and brick interior bearing walls -- in the Dekum, four bays running north/south. Openings in bearing walls have segmental arch heads. A full basement with a concrete floor extends to the curb lines on the north and east. Original glass sidewalk vault lights are intact, as is the sidewalk elevator on the east. The first floor is supported by 4" x 13" fir joists at 16" on center. Joists were covered by wood diagonal sheathing and finish flooring.

Somewhat unusual is the first and second floor column and beam structural system which was designed to provide large open spaces for the original department store tenant, Lipman, Wolfe & Co. Four equally spaced 12" diameter cast-iron columns rest on the basement bearing walls creating five east/west bays and a grid of approximately 20' x 25'. Columns support wood girders running north/south, wood beams at 6-1/2' spacing and fir floor joists above. Exterior bearing walls are stone and measure 52" thick at the second floor.

Entries to the department store were at grade level at the center of each street front. Primary access to the upper stories is the entrance at the south end of the Third Avenue wall. Seven steps lead to a deep landing in front of the recessed entrance which in turn opens to a small elevator lobby. Beyond is the stairway which was originally open to the lobby but was subsequently walled off as a fire

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protective measure. A secondary entrance of similar design was located in the westerly bay on Washington St. This entrance now serves a private office, however, the stairway is intact and is used as an emergency exit.

Above the second level the floor plans are nearly identical -- a square loop corridor is located off center toward the southwest on both axes allowing the largest office spaces to face the streets on the north and east. Inside the corridor loop is an office bay and a 25' x 40' light well that extends from the third floor to the hipped skylight at the roof. Structure above the second floor is conventional -- masonry exterior bearing walls, interior 2 x 6 stud bearing walls, and wood posts, beams and joists.

#### INTERIOR FINISHES

Except for the cast-iron columns the only original ground floor elements that can be seen are in the elevator lobby and the main stairway. (Original ground floor ceiling detail is mostly intact above later suspended ceilings.) The small lobby has an unadorned barrel vaulted ceiling (12'-11" high) with a cornice at the spring line, both of which continue from the recessed entrance landing. At the rear of the lobby are the paired elevator housings that project halfway into the vaulted space. Walls and ceiling are finished with plaster. The flooring is carpet over the original ceramic tile which matches the tile in the entrance landing. The plain marble baseboard is also an extension from the landing.

West of the lobby is a three quarter turn stairway with landings. Risers, treads, skirting and wainscot are white marble, as are the side walls and paneled ceiling that extends to the first landing. Pilaster tops have carved foliage decoration similar to exterior motifs -- above is a continuous cornice mold. (See photo #8) (Early accounts of "The Dekum" claimed that all materials used in the building were native to Oregon. This is true except for the stairway marble which was quarried in Vermont, and the grey marble in the rest rooms which could have come from several sources, but not Oregon.) The railing consists of a round cast-iron hand rail, ornate cast-iron newel posts and iron strapwork infill below the rail featuring a lower parallelogram grid and a running upper course of spiral coils.

Though partitions have been added, some of the original spaciousness and structural articulation of the second floor is still evident. Cast-iron columns, identical to those on the ground floor, have a smooth surface on

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the lower three quarters of the shaft. The upper quarter is fluted, and is topped by a cast-iron capital in a characteristic "Romanesque" foliage pattern. Girders and beams are trimmed with wood moldings, and the original 1 x 6 V-groove ceiling boards are exposed in most spaces. The second floor ceiling is 13'-2" high. Rectangular window openings on the second floor have double hung sash, one light over one. Sash in the arched openings is a combination of fixed and casement. Mullions and the deep (28") reveals are paneled, as are the bases below the sills.

The stairway from the second to the eighth floor is similar in layout but different in detail from the first floor stair. Treads, risers, paneled newel posts, hand-rail and paneled wainscot are all of wood. Only the strap iron infill below the handrail matches the lower stairway. The second stairway in the northwest corner is identical in plan and detail.

While most of the upper floor office interiors have been altered -- some many times -- the corridors remain essentially as originally designed. Walls and ceilings are wood lath and plaster. Typical doors, 42" x 96", have a large, chipped plate glass upper panel, and three horizontal solid lower panels. Above are transoms with a variety of clear and obscure glasses. Surrounding the door and transom is a casing with classical profile, over which is a continuous picture molding. Above, at the doors and reights are classical cornice moldings that fit to the ceiling (11'-2" high). Double hung reights, one over one, have casings and trim identical to doorways. All corridor walls have a paneled wainscot and baseboard identical to that in the stairways. Woodwork is fir and cedar in a variety of finishes -- original varnish, grained, and more recent paintwork. Street front windows above the second floor have double-hung sash, one light over one, with casings matching those around doors.

EXTERIOR

Except for subtle variations in carved stone detail, the two richly decorated street facades were originally identical. Since 1912 when Lipman, Wolfe & Co. (now Frederick & Nelson) moved to new quarters, the ground floor store fronts have been altered many times.

The nearly symmetrical facades are organized vertically in a primary A-B-A-B-A mode, a system unrelated to the regular column and beam layout of the interior. Horizontally the building is divided into three main units -- the lower three floors

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of stone, mostly rock faced ashlar; the fourth through seventh floors finished with brick and terra cotta, and terminated by a cornice; and the eighth floor and parapet, also of brick and terra cotta.

Exterior stone is medium grey "Siskiyou" sandstone quarried in southwest Oregon. Brick is pressed red, and was manufactured at kilns in Newberg, Oregon, and the terra cotta trim is unglazed, red-ornage, slightly lighter in color than the brick.

Center bays at the ground floor have one story round arch openings that originally framed the recessed entranceways to the department store. Smooth faced half round pilasters and bases have richly carved capitals in foliage and volute motifs. On the east facade, the left and right capitals contain integral date inscriptions, "AD", and "1892" respectively. At the outer edge of the intrados is a carved wreath course in an intertwined foliage and strapwork design. Typical voussoirs are rock faced. The keystone has a carved face that merges with the typical foliage decoration which in turn is blended into the rough surface of the stones above. (See photo #7.) Over the center arches at the second floor are paired rectangular windows with a columnar mullion similar in detail to the ground floor arch pilasters.

At the outer entrance bays, which project slightly as pavillions, the openings are framed by flat arches with very shallow. "S" curve side walls that extend to capitals carved in typical foliage patterns. Capitals are supported by smooth faced colonettes that return inward to the end of the stairs and bear on a stone base aligned with the entrance landings. Below the capitals at the front, the original pilasters were rock faced. This finish was "cleaned off" in the early years to a vertical tooled finish to provide a better surface for advertising signs (see photos #1 and #2.). Above the entrance openings are name panels with carved letters, "THE DEKUM", which are topped by projecting smooth finish courses with running circle patterns. At the outer corners of the bays are half round projecting elements, richly carved with wreath and foliage designs and a cherub face at the bases which align with the capitals. At the second floor are round arch windows with a single fixed sash.

The wider "B" bays are framed with two story pilasters and 3-centered arches. Dividing the stories are paneled wood spandrels with applied terra cotta foliage decorations. Spandrels rest on projecting elements of the main pilasters which have typical carved capitals. Windows in the second floor arches are equally divided by wood mullions.

The corner "A" bays are similar in detail to the adjacent "B" bays, but have round arch windows at the second floor and the paneled spandrels do not have terra cotta decoration.

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A continuous stone course at the third floor window sills completes the two story "base" of the structure. Third floor windows are rectangular double hung, one light over one-- "A" bays have two windows and "B" bays, three. Articulating the primary bays are colonettes in clusters of four with carved capitals. Within the outer "A" bays windows are separated by paired colonettes. The center bay has a single columnar mullion dividing the windows as at the second floor below. "B" bay windows are separated by triple colonettes with typical carved capitals. Above the colonettes are plain bearing blocks which support large stone lintels, above which is a continuous belt course that finishes the three story stone unit.

The vertical divisions established at the third floor level are continued in the four story mid section by continuous brick pilasters that terminate in round arches at the seventh story windows. "B" bays are slightly recessed creating "pavillions" at the outer and central "A" bays. Pilasters in the outer bays have terra cotta capitals in the characteristic foliage motif. The terra cotta ornament extends upward from the outer corners to the eighth floor sill course and fills the corner arch spandrels. (See photo #4.)

Pilasters in "B" bays do not have capitals, and the brick work continues directly into the arches. Above the arches and under the eighth floor sill course is a band of quarter round "modillions".

The center bays are divided by single round brick engaged columns which terminate at the sixth floor window heads. Above, filling the entire horizontal spandrel is a sculptural terra cotta ornament, again with typical foliage designs. The seventh floor windows are in a single round arch openings with two equally spaced wood mullions. (See photo #5.)

Typical horizontal spandrels in the mid unit are recessed from the pilasters and feature a simple brick panel, and a double row billet molding of pressed brick under terra cotta window sills.

Delineation of the primary bays at the eighth story is by simple pressed brick trim around the window units which again increase in number and diminish in width except at the center bays where the paired windows are continued from lower stories. Outer "A" bays have three windows divided by round brick engaged colonettes with terra cotta capitals. "B" bays have four windows with simple brick mullions. All eighth floor windows have flat arch heads.

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At the base of the parapet is a continuous terra cotta cornice under which is an arcaded course with quarter round decorated terra cotta corbels. The parapets at the corner bays project slightly, repeating the pavillion effect below. They are further emphasized by vertical brick panels and extensions of the pilasters which are finished with terra cotta caps.

#### UTILITIES

Heat for the Dekum Building is by steam radiation from cast-iron radiators located under windows, most of which are intact. Originally the building had its own boilers, but like most downtown buildings of the period conversion was made to the Pacific Power & Light Co. central steam system, and the boilers were removed. There is no remaining evidence of original lighting, or electrical generating equipment.

#### ALTERATIONS

In addition to the alterations previously described, the Dekum Building underwent a rehabilitation project in the early 1970s that included exterior cleaning, sash painting, work in the elevator lobby, and the present oak framed glass entrance doors.

Currently in progress is the beginning of a rehab program that will include: new storefronts in a design appropriate to the original architecture; extension of the fire sprinkler system; new elevators; new HVAC; and restoration of corridor surfaces and trim.

## 8. Significance

| Period  | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric          | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499            | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599            | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education              | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/<br>humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                 |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce     | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900–                | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)         |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   |  |

**Specific dates** 1891-92 **Builder/Architect** McCaw, Martin & White

### Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Dekum Building achieves significance as an excellent example of Richardsonian Romanesque architecture designed by the pre-eminent practitioners of the idiom, McCaw, Martin & White. Of further significance is the association with the buildings namesake and builder, Frank Dekum, a pioneer merchant, banker, and developer.

The Richardsonian Romanesque and its "Sullivan-esque" variants enjoyed a brief but prolific period in Portland's architectural development. During the years 1889-95, sixteen major commercial and institutional structures were built in these styles, thirteen of which are still standing. Of these "The Dekum" was the most exuberant example. The complex organization of the street facades, the placement of decorative elements, and the extent and quality of carved stone and terra cotta ornament made it unique among its peers. Upon completion in the fall of 1892, the Dekum Building cost \$300,000 (\$50,000 over estimates), a sum considered extravagant for the time. The Oregonian on Jan. 19, 1892 headlined an article on construction progress,

### "DEKUM'S BUILDING MARVEL OF ARCHITECTURAL BUILDING"

McCaw & Martin, and F. M. White, as partners or as separate firms were responsible for six of the major Richardsonian Romanesque/Sullivan-esque designs noted above. William F. McCaw was born in Dublin, Ireland, in March 1850. In 1856 his family moved to Belfast where his father established an extensive business in architecture and construction. McCaw was educated in private schools and at age 12 he took his first lessons in drawing at Belfast's Model School. Three years later he took up the study of architecture with his father where he studied all phases of design and construction. In 1872 young McCaw left his homeland for Toronto, Canada, where he found employment as head draftsman in the office of William Irving where he remained for three years. He then opened his own office which he maintained until 1881. At that time, due to failing health, he came to the Pacific Coast, arriving in Portland in April 1882 with a letter of introduction to Warren H. Williams, one of Portland's most prominent architects of the 70s and 80s. McCaw joined the Williams firm for a few months then entered into a short lived partnership with E. M. Burton, another major Portland architect. Subsequently he returned to the Williams office where he remained until January 1884. He again opened his own office



# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See continuation sheet

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**  
**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property .23 (less than one)

Quadrangle name Portland, Oregon-Washington

Quadrangle scale 1:24000

### UMT References

A 

|      |   |   |         |   |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---|---------|---|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1    | 0 | 5 | 2       | 5 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 5        | 0 | 4 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Zone |   |   | Easting |   |   |   |   | Northing |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

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G 

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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

H 

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| Zone |  |  | Easting |  |  |  |  | Northing |  |  |  |  |  |  |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

Lots 1 and 2, Block 48, Portland

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state code county code

state code county code

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title George A. McMath, A.I.A.

organization Allen McMath Hawkins, Architects date March 20, 1980

street & number 213 S.W. Ash Street, #210 telephone (503) 228-5154

city or town Portland state OR-97204

# 12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

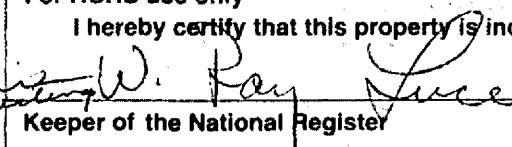

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

national  state  local

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature 

title Deputy SHPO date July 25, 1980

|   |                      |
|---|----------------------|
| For HCRS use only   |                      |
| I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register                    |                      |
|           | date <u>10/10/80</u> |
| Keeper of the National Register   |                      |
| Attest:  | date <u>10-7-80</u>  |
| Chief of Registration <u>Regional Coordinator</u>   |                      |

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and was soon joined in partnership with Albert Wickersham for a brief period, then continued on his own until 1888 when he formed a partnership with Richard Martin Jr. who McCaw had met in Warren Williams' office. Martin had entered the Williams office in 1880 as a young man and stayed until 1887 when he joined Alexander Millwain for a short time. One source credits Martin with the design of the 1882 Starr Block while he was in the Williams office.<sup>2</sup> One of McCaw & Martin's earliest designs was the 1889 Skidmore Building, an interesting transitional structure in a combination of the Richardsonian and the earlier Victorian Italianate. Also that year the firm designed the New Market Annex, Portland's first example of Richardsonian Romanesque.<sup>3</sup> (Both the Skidmore Building and the New Market Annex are designated as "Primary" buildings in the National Historic Landmark, Skidmore/Oldtown Historic District.) In June of 1891, during construction of the Dekum Building, F. Manson White, who had been an employee of McCaw & Martin, became a partner in the firm.<sup>4</sup> One other prominent building was erected under the name of McCaw, Martin & White, West Hall at Portland University, a National Register property, also completed in 1892. White left the firm in 1892 and established his own office in the Worcester Block. The following year both McCaw & Martin and F. Manson White opened offices in the new Dekum Building.<sup>5</sup>

According to his obituaries, White was born in England in 1869 and moved to the United States during his early years. He studied architecture at Cornell and MIT, and with his uncle, Stanford White of McKim, Mead & White. The obits further state that he worked on designs for some of the World's Fair Buildings in Chicago in 1893, that he designed the interior of the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, and that he came to Portland to design the interior of the First Presbyterian Church<sup>6</sup> (a National Register Property) which was a McCaw & Martin project completed in 1889.

Soon after establishing his own firm White designed three important buildings in the Richardsonian/Sullivanian manner, the Imperial Hotel (now Plaza Hotel)<sup>7</sup> in 1894, the 1893 Sherlock Building<sup>8</sup> and the Auditorium Building<sup>9</sup>, (the latter two are listed on the National Register). White maintained his practice for many years and prior to his retirement in 1947 he spent a few years as architect with the Portland School District. White died in April, 1952, at age 83.

McCaw & Martin continued their partnership until 1896 or 97 when McCaw either died or retired and moved from Portland (he is not listed in City Directories after 1897). Richard Martin Jr. continued the business in the same offices in the Dekum Building until 1912-13 when he too disappears from Portland City Directories.

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Frank Dekum, a German emigrant of modest background, came to be one of Portland's foremost pioneer citizens. He was born in Palatine, Bavaria, on November 5, 1829 where his family had lived for many generations. In 1837 the family of seven children came to America where they settled on a farm in Illinois. At age 17, Frank Dekum left the farm for St. Louis where he apprenticed with a confectioner, earning a mere three dollars per month. Three years later in February 1852, Dekum, with his friend Fred Bickel, headed for California by steamer and the Panama route, arriving in San Francisco in mid June. He tried gold mining at French Gulch and Middletown for nearly a year, then returned to San Francisco and on to Portland by sailing vessel. Dekum arrived in the small rivertown of 1500 inhabitants in March 1853, with two dollars in his pocket. He soon found employment in a bakery and within a few months he sent for Fred Bickel and they established Dekum & Bickel, Portland's first confectionary business which also included a restaurant and sales of retail and wholesale fruit. Dekum & Bickel had prospered for 25 years when Frank Dekum sold his interest to Bickel and retired from the firm, but not from his other business activities which had begun in the 70s. <sup>10</sup>

In 1871 he built the first Dekum Building on the northwest corner of Front and Washington Streets, a quarter block three story brick and cast-iron structure designed by E. M. Burton. At the time it was considered the finest business block in the state. Among the tenants was the dry goods house of S. Lipman & Co. which later became Lipman, Wolfe & Co. for whom the lower two floors of the 1892 Dekum Building were designed. Four years later with Simeon G. Reed, Dekum built another major structure known as Dekum and Reed's Block on the west side of Front Street between Ankeny and Burnside. When completed in 1875 the three story structure was the largest commercial building in Portland. In 1883 at the northeast corner of Third and Washington he built the "Council" Building (also known as the Breeden Building), a three story, 50' x 100' cast-iron fronted structure designed by architect Justus Krumbein.

Dekum was also involved in Portland's banking community. He was one of the incorporators and vice-president of the Portland Savings Bank, established in 1880. Six years later Dekum and his associates expanded into commercial banking and organized the Commercial National Bank. At that time Dekum became president of Portland Savings. He was also an original stockholder in the local syndicate that completed the Portland Hotel.

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Frank Dekum was also active in community affairs. He was a charter member of the German Aid Society founded in 1865, an organization for which he served as president for many years. In 1878 he helped organize the Mechanics' Fair Association and was instrumental in developing their Exposition Building which was located on the site immediately north of the present Civic Stadium. Dekum also had an interest in the natural environment, most notably songbirds. In the late 80s he began a movement to import and protect birds from Germany and other European countries. Through his efforts the German Song Bird Society was formed and Portlanders were introduced to goldfinches, thrushes, greenfinches, nightingales and, regrettably, starlings.

The crowning achievement of all his business and community activities was the construction of the Dekum Building. He spared no effort or cost on the grand structure that was described at the time as, "the monument to his life." Unfortunately, Frank Dekum was only able to enjoy the building for two years as he died in October 1894 at age 64.

The Dekum suffered a fire on March 2, 1903, and in July of the following year the building was purchased by Charles Sweeney for \$350,000. In 1948 the Sweeney Investment Co. sold the building to John Mahnon, managing owner of the Commercial Blueprint Co. Major remodeling was done during Mahnon's ownership, however, significant historic elements were maintained. A few years later the Dekum was purchased by Abe F. Bidgoff, and in 1964, the building was sold to Stan Terry Enterprises for approximately the original cost of \$300,000. Terry had grand plans for restoration, but only completed the exterior cleaning and some minor alterations to the main entrance way on Third Street. In 1971 the Dekum Building was acquired by the present owners, Bill and Sam Naito who are presently undertaking the rehab project described in Section 7.

During the early years, in addition to Lipman, Wolfe & Co. on the first and second floors, the Dekum tenants were mainly dentists and physicians. The 1910 City Directory lists 32 dentists and 22 doctors. In later years as specialty medical buildings were developed most of the doctors and lawyers moved out and the tenancy became a mix of small shops on the ground floor, and business and professional offices on the upper floors. More recently The Dekum has become the favorite of community service organizations and the design professions. Current tenants include: Common Cause, 1000 Friends of Oregon, the Oregon Consumer's League, several architects, engineers

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and graphic designers, and the joint offices of the Portland Chapters of the A. I. A., A. S. L. A., A. S. I. D., the Designers Roundtable and the Producers Council which occupies a large portion of the second floor.

Notes:

1. Hines, H. K., An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1893), p. 677.
2. Reed, Henry E., Cavalcade of Front Street, Portland, 1941.
3. Thompson & Burrell letters, David B. Thompson letters, Mss. 1681 & 1681 B, Oregon Historical Society, Portland Oregon. (Several documents noting McCaw & Martin as architects for the New Market Annex - one letter states the building cost as \$54,316 and McCaw & Martin's fee as \$1,943.07.)
4. Hines, P. 677.
5. During recent years there has been considerable local controversy over the connection between F. Manson White and McCaw & Martin, particularly as it relates to the Dekum Building. The controversy stems from conflicting newspaper accounts, biographies and City Directories.

The first known notice of the new Dekum Building is in the Oregonian of March 14, 1891 which states, "At Third and Washington the excavation for the foundation of a handsome 8 story building to be erected by Mr. Frank Dekum from plans prepared by Messr's McCaw & Martin is underway. . . ." (The attribution to McCaw & Martin is not inconsistent with the completed building being done by McCaw, Martin & White as the Hines biography states that White did not become a partner until June 1890.) The Oregonian article on the Dekum of January 19, 1892, written while construction was well underway does not mention the architects for the building. (A reference in the Oregonian Index states that the Dekum Building was completed in October of 1892).

The City Directories contribute the most confusion: the 1890 Directory lists, "White, Fred M., draughtsman, McCaw & Martin" -- assuming the C. D. entries are usually a year after the fact, this entry is consistent with the claims of White's obituaries that he worked on the interior of the First Presbyterian Church in 1889. The 1891 Directory lists White as, . . . "foreman, McCaw & Martin". In 1892 the Directory states under Architects, "White,

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F. Manson, 546 Worcester Block". An ad also appears on page 974 of the 1892 Directory,

" F. MANSON WHITE  
ARCHITECT AND SUPERINTENDENT  
Temporary Location: Room 546 Worcester Block  
Permanent Address: New Dekum Building"

There are no City Directory listings for an architectural firm of McCaw, Martin & White. The most likely reason for the omission was White's brief tenure as a partner, approximately one year.

Perhaps the most authoritative source is the Hines biography on McCaw published in 1893 which states in part, "In 1888 the firm of McCaw & Martin was established and, in June, 1891, the firm of McCaw, Martin & White, which is one of the prominent architectural firms of the city. They designed the Dekum Block, Portland University buildings (West Hall), Woman's Home, Gilman House (addition), Skidmore Block and many of the more elegant residences." The biography does not mention White's separation from the firm which suggests the data was gathered in 1892 while White was still a partner. There is no reason to suspect that the statement on White's partnership is not true as the Hines biography is much like the "Who's Who" of later years where the subject (McCaw) paid a fee and approved the copy. A further and "solid" confirmation of White's partnership at the completion of the Dekum Building is the cornerstone on West Hall which reads:

"ERECTED MDCCCXCI  
McCaw, Martin, & White  
Architects"

West Hall opened a few weeks prior to completion of the Dekum Building. The extent of F. Manson White's involvement in the design of the Dekum Building is not known. He was most certainly in the office during the design phase and his very competent work on the Sherlock and Auditorium buildings and on the Imperial (Plaza) Hotel in 1893-94 suggests he may have made a substantial contribution to the design.

6. Oregon Journal, April 24, 1952, p. 10 (obit).

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7. The Oregonian, April 26, 1952, p. 7 (obit.)
  8. Ibid.
  9. Vaughan, Thomas, and McMath, George A., A Century of Portland Architecture, Portland, 1967, p. 107 and 200.
  10. Hines, pp. 1032-34.

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- Oregonian, March 14, 1891
- Oregonian, January 19, 1892, p. 6
- Oregonian Index
- Oregon Journal, October 1959, article by Louise Aaron
- Oregonian, July 8, 1964
- Vaughn, Thomas and George McMath, A Century of Portland Architecture. Portland, 1969. 2nd Edition. pp 86, 87, 196.
- Fred Bickel Papers, Mss. 535, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon. (re: Fred Dekum)
- Hines, H. K., An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon. Chicago, 1893. p. 677 (re: W. F. McCaw) p. 1032-1034 (re: Frank Dekum).
- Oregonian, June 1, 1934, p. 5
- Oregonian, June 10, 1946, p. 10
- Baird, "Dekum Material: Portland", Mss. 1057, Oregon Historical Society, Portland, Oregon, pp. 1 - 7.
- Gaston, Joseph, Portland, Its History and Builders. Chicago - Portland, 1911. Vol. II, pp. 307-308.
- Scott, H. W., Ed., History of Portland Oregon. Syracuse, N. Y. 1890. pp 162, 189, 385, 409, 411-12, 545. Dekum portrate facing page 202.
- The Oregon Journal, Dec. 17, 1979.  
Street. Portland, 1941. (re: Richard Martin)
- Covert, James T., A Point of Pride: The University of Portland Story. Portland, 1976, p. 14.



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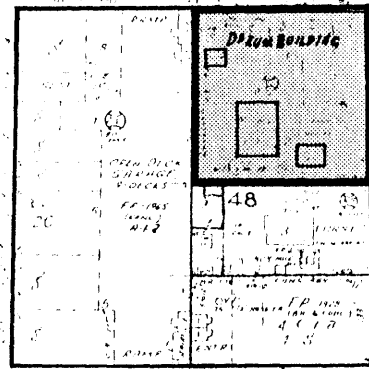
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- 
- Oregon Journal, April 24, 1952, p. 10. (obit for F. Manson White).
  - Oregonian, April 26, 1952, p. 7. (obit for F. Manson White).
  - Oregonian, October 20, 1894. (obit. for Frank Dekum)
  - Thompson&Burrell Letters, David P. Thompson Letters, Mss. 1681 and 1681B. (re: McCaw & Martin, and the New Market Annex. )
  - Read, Henry E. Cavalcade of Front Street. Portland, 1941. (re: Richard Martin)

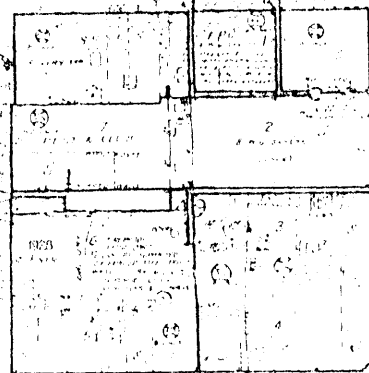
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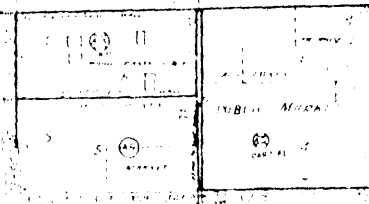
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S. W. MORRISON

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S. W. YAMHILL



SANBORN MAP  
1975

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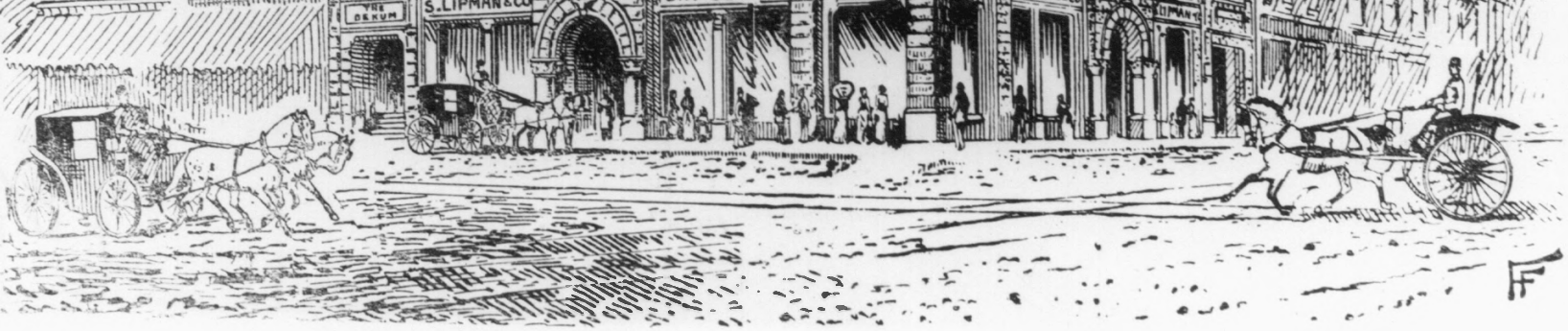
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S. W. 4TH

S. W. 3RD

AUG 13 1980

# THE DEKUM BLOCK



1. Dekum Building
2. Portland OR  
*MULTNOMAH COUNTY*
3. Ore. Hist. Soc.
4. March 1980 photo  
Of 1892 litho.
5. Ore Hist. Soc.  
#36078
6. Looking southwest  
from N. W. Mag.  
April 1892
7. #1/s



1. Dekum Building

2. Portland OR

*MULTNOMAH COUNTY*

3. Unknown

4. c. 1925

5. Ore. Hist Soc.

#Gi 6121

6. Exterior looking  
southwest

7. #2. / 8



1. Dekum Bldg.
2. Portland OR  
*MULTNOMATH COUNTY*
3. George McMath
4. March 1980
5. George McMath
6. Exterior-looking  
southwest.
7. #3/8





1. Dekum Bldg.
2. Portland OR  
*MULTNOMAH COUNTY*
3. George McMath
4. March 1980
5. George McMath
6. Detail @ upper two stories - looking west.
7. #4/8



1. Dekum Bldg.
2. Portland OR  
*MULTNOMAH COUNTY*
3. George McMath
4. March 1980
5. George McMath
6. Detail @ center bay  
7th floor-looking  
west
7. #5/8



THE DEKUM

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1. Dekum Bldg.
2. Portland OR  
*MULTNOMAH COUNTY*
3. George McMath
4. March 1980
5. George McMath
6. Entrance - looking  
west
7. #6/8



1. Dekum Bldg.
2. Portland OR  
*MULTNOMAH COUNTY*
3. George McMath
4. March 1980
5. George McMath
6. Center bay arch -  
ground floor -  
looking west
7. #7/8





1. Dekum Bldg.
2. Portland OR  
*MULTNOMAH COUNTY*
3. George McMath
4. March 1980
5. George McMath
6. Marble detail-  
ground floor stair.
7. #8./8

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