



A photo of the Anundsen Publishing front office from 1904. (Submitted photo)



The top of the building's facade for many years featured the names of the company's two primary publications, Decorah Posten, and Ved Arnen, until the current, more modern facade was installed in 1957. (Submitted photo)

Decorah's historic downtown

108 Washington St. –Anundsen Publishing Company building

In the fall of 2014, the Decorah Historic Preservation Commission (DHPC) began a lengthy process to nominate the city's business district to the National Register of Historic Places. The district consists of some 130 buildings, mostly on Water, Washington and Winnebago streets.

Over a period of seven months, a group of about 15 volunteer researchers gathered information and photographs of the buildings. It was turned over in May to project

National Register status will be granted by the U.S. Department of Interior by the end of 2017.

In the coming weeks, DHPC member Judy van der Linden will coordinate a series of articles on particular buildings written by volunteer researchers. This article was written by volunteer researcher James Iversen and edited by van der Linden.

The Anundsen Publishing Company building at 108 Washington St. houses what may be the oldest business establishment in Decorah owned by one family.

Brynild (or "B") Anundsen was born in Norway in 1844 and came to the United States in 1864. He settled in La Crosse, Wis., and served in the Civil War in 1864 and 1865. He had learned the printing trade as a teenager in Norway, and in 1866, began the publication *Ved Arnen* (By the Fireplace), using a small printing press that he and

his wife purchased. Anundsen moved to Decorah in 1867 and re-established his printing business here. He started the fa-

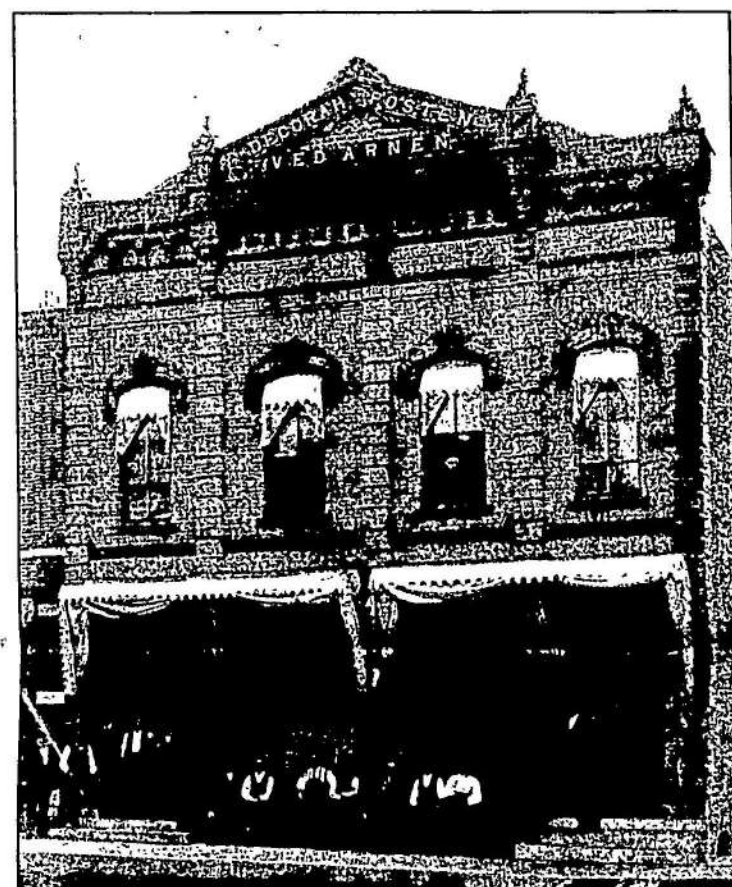
mous Norwegian language newspaper *Decorah Posten* (The Decorah Post) in 1874, which became the largest circulation Norwegian-Danish oriented newspaper in the United States. It continued publication for 99 years.

In 1887, "B" purchased the building at 108 Washington Street for his business. The ornate, two-story brick building was already at least 17 years old – it appears on an 1870 birds-eye view map of Decorah – but its exact year of construction and the name of the person who built it aren't known.

The inside of the building was also stylish. A photo of the front office from 1904 shows a room with what appears to be a high, decorative pressed tin ceiling, wallpaper borders, electric lights and ceiling fan, outfitted with the expected wooden desks, chairs and manual typewriters.

The top of the building's facade for many years featured the names of the company's two primary publications, *Decorah Posten*, and *Ved Arnen*, until the current, more modern facade was installed in 1957. Although the building's street-side appearance was changed dramatically by the new facade, the brick wall facing south to the alley still looks almost identical to that shown in photographs from the turn of the century.

In one photo of the building from 1896, "B" himself leans out a second story window, while 19 other persons – presumably employees of the publishing company – sit or stand outside the front door and windows. In 1900, the city of Decorah had only 3,246 residents, but

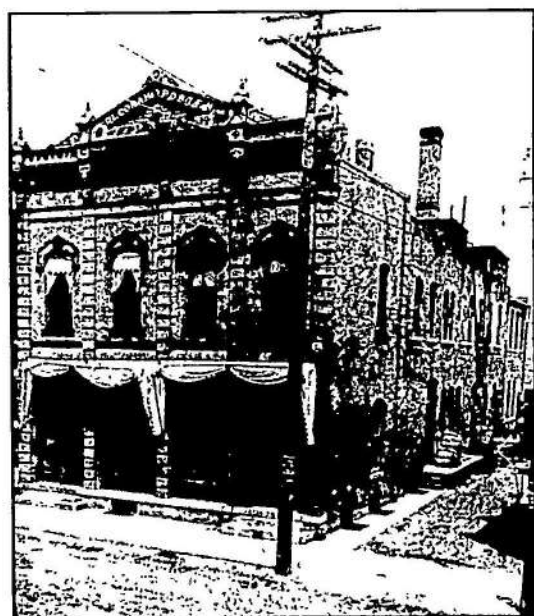


In this photo of Anundsen Publishing in 1896, "B" Anundsen leans out a second story window, while 19 other persons – presumably employees of the publishing company – sit or stand outside the front door and windows. (Submitted photo)

Decorah Posten by then had 35,000 subscribers throughout Iowa, the nation and Norway.

The Anundsen Publishing Com-

pany is still at this location, and the president of the company, Erik Anundsen, is Brynild Anundsen's great-grandson.



Although the building's street-side appearance was changed dramatically by the new facade in 1957, the brick wall facing south to the alley still looks almost identical to that shown in photographs from the turn of the century.

consultant Jan Olive Full of Iowa City, who is incorporating it into the formal nomination and hopes

RSVP seeks tax prep volunteers

Northeast Iowa RSVP is seeking volunteers who are interested in becoming certified to provide free income tax assistance for the low to mid income and elderly.

For more information, contact Kathy or Kim at 563-382-3717.

END OF YEAR MACHINERY & HOUSEHOLD CONSIGNMENT AUCTION

Saturday, December 17 • 9:00 a.m.
1668 Jordan West Road • Decorah

Visit us at cedarvalley.com
or visit us on facebook for more info

Located at Cedar Valley Inn
1668 Jordan West Road
Decorah Office (563) 382-3717
www.cedarvalley.com