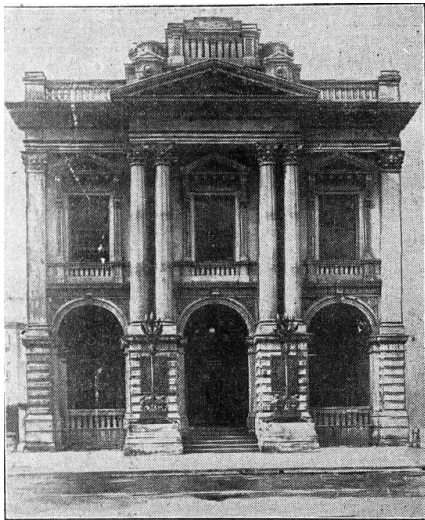


## Farmers and Mechanics Bank/ Schieks Café

**1891, 1908**

The original Farmers and Mechanics Bank building was located at 115 Fourth Street South, on the edge of the Downtown Minneapolis business district (between Marquette and Second Avenue South). Constructed in 1891, as a one-story building with a second story addition added in 1908, the building has seen a variety of uses over its 130 years from its start as a bank, to numerous restaurants, and its present use as a gentlemen's club.

The site of the Farmers and Mechanics building sits just blocks from the river and has been occupied as long as the city itself. The *Minneapolis Times* from April 8, 1891, mentioned the site as "the old Gale property." Gale is a reference to Harlow (H.A.) Gale, a prominent Minneapolis businessman who owned the property at latest by 1873. H.A. Gale today may be better known as the namesake for Gale's Island on Lake Minnetonka, a small island just to the south of the more famous Lake Minnetonka Big Island.

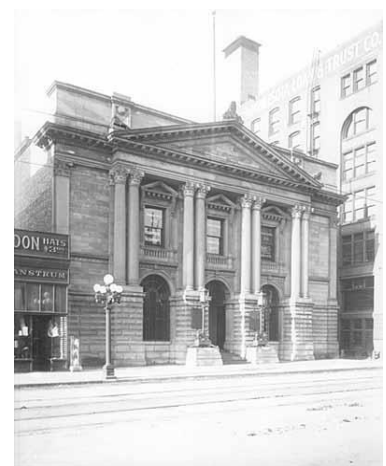


*Minneapolis Journal, November 26, 1903*

Founded in 1874, Farmers and Mechanics was the states' largest savings bank. The bank was looking for a larger and more prominent space in the early 1890s. They purchased the site at 115 S Fourth St. and constructed their new headquarters between 1891 and 1892. The original building was just one story.

The prominent architectural firm, Long & Kees, (architects of the Minneapolis City Hall) was chosen to design the building. Long & Kees designed the bank in the Beaux-Arts style with a white limestone exterior. Beaux-Arts originated in Paris and was a popular and influential style at the time, remaining so until the early Twentieth Century. Drawing on elements of Neoclassicism, Renaissance, and Baroque architecture, the Beaux-Arts style is best known in the United States for national landmarks in New York, the Grand Central Terminal, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

The building's limestone exterior is articulated by five bays separated by rusticated, block patterned, stone piers. The piers support paired fluted Corinthian pilasters. The entrance, located in the center arch, was originally sheltered by an open loggia formed by balustraded open arches. The loggia has since been enclosed.



*Minnesota Historical Society*



Star Tribune, September 24, 1961

Farmers and Mechanics quickly outgrew its new building, and in 1908, an expansion was added. The expansion quadrupled the size of the original building in floor area, while maintaining the Beaux-Arts exterior appearance. The front of the building was elongated, and a second floor was added to the back of the building.



Farmers and Mechanics continued to use the building until 1942, when the bank again

outgrew its space, following which a new bank was built nearby at 88 South Sixth Street.

After the Bank moved, the building was leased to the Federal Reserve for several years. In 1945, General Mills purchased the building and used it as offices for its employees.

In 1959, the building was sold to Schieks Café, and converted into a restaurant, beginning its chapter as a restaurant and entertainment venue.

Schieks' purchase of the site occurred during an urban renewal period in Minneapolis, when much of the surrounding area was gutted to alleviate blight in the urban core. Schieks Café itself was a historic establishment, having been founded in 1887. It had been forced to move from its original location at 45 South Third Street after the razing of its original site. Schieks is thought to have been Minneapolis' oldest restaurant, holding the City's first liquor license.



Schieks Café was long known as a high society dining spot, where many of the City's wealthiest gathered. Perhaps the most impressive part of the dining experience at Schieks was the Singing Sextet, which for thirty-one years performed multiple shows a day, featuring some of the best voices in the city with performances that included singing, dancing, and multiple costume changes.

Schieks ran into financial difficulties and was closed in 1971. A revolving door of restaurants characterized the next decade at the former Farmers and Mechanics building, until 1979, when

Schieks was again resurrected. This rendition of the historic restaurant survived a decade and distinguished itself by having a disco club on the second floor, Graffiti.

In 1984, the building was registered with the National Register of Historic Places.

In 1989, Schieks again struggled financially as downtown dining declined, and the building was converted to a gentleman's club. Called Schieks Palace Royale, the business operated until 2011 when it was purchased by the current owners, RCI Holdings. RCI is a national brand of adult entertainment. The venue was renamed the Downtown Cabaret, which continues in operation today.