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# DOWNTOWN OCALA HISTORIC WALKING TOUR

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## GARY BLOCK

**4 SE BROADWAY STREET OCALA, FL 34471**

Gary Block was one of the first buildings built on the Downtown square following the disastrous 1883 fire. The current building is a combination of two historic commercial buildings. The three-story north-facing building was constructed in 1884. The adjoining two-story south-facing building was constructed in 1888. The two were combined in 1948, and the building took on an "L-shape." It is known as "Gary Block" after Dr. Thomas P. Gary, Ocala's first mayor.

During its early years, Gary Block housed the Palace Drug Store and the S.R. Birdsey & Co. Hardware Store on the first floor. The second floor was occupied by various professional offices, and the third floor housed Ocala's first telephone company.

In 1929, the building was purchased by McCrory & Co to establish the store as a part of its national chain. The second floor continued to be used by a variety of offices, but by 1937, McCrory's had taken over the use of the entire building, and the building was expanded in 1948 to include the separate south-facing structure. Today, the building only has 2 stories because of a fire in February 1969 that destroyed the top floor. McCrory's occupied the building until 1991, when the building was converted into a law office.



*Gary Block (Palace Drug Store Sign Visible)*



*McCrory c.1955*

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