Idaho's capital city emerged from a gold rush supply point at the foot of the Boise Mountains at a crossroads of the Oregon Trail. Opposite: Boise City Hall plaza fountain below the US Bank Building; Next: Vince's Barber Shop in Hyde Park.
Quintessential Boise is dedicated to the proposition that streets and their buildings are keys to the life of a city and that good architecture, like good books, should engage the public in readable and provocative ways. The book emerged from coffee-house conversations among an architect, a newspaper columnist, a newspaper reporter and a history professor. Charles Hummel, the architect, is the son, grandson and nephew of men who designed some of Boise’s most iconic landmarks. A legendary designer himself, Hummel, age 85, thinks deeply about how people use and appreciate buildings. Tim Woodward, the columnist, has been a champion of authentic places since his early reporting on Boise’s urban renewal in 1972. Reporter Jeanne Huff worked closely with Hummel and Woodward to identify object lessons. Todd Shallat, the historian, is a student of the physical layout of streets. Together, the team set out to devise a rating system for understanding the social impact of architecture. Part history and part social science, with contributions from more than a dozen of Boise’s best photographers and artists, the book launches a series about cities and the dynamics of growth.

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