PRESERVATION
RACINE NEWS

SUMMER 2024
Volume 35

CENTURY BUILDINGS FOR 2024

This year is the thirty-sixth time Preservation Racine will celebrate National Preservation Month by presenting our annual Century Building Certificates to the owners of buildings that are at least one hundred years old and are located in the County of Racine. Long-time Preservation Racine member Don Rintz, after attending a preservation meeting in Madison, Wisconsin, brought back the idea of celebrating century buildings. Our local program was developed from his initial idea. We owe a debt of gratitude to Don and the people who were farsighted enough to know how important our landmark sites are and to encourage their protection and care.

The National Preservation Month theme this year is "People Saving Places." Preservation Racine will host this year's event on Monday evening, May 6, 2024, in the Great Hall at the DeKoven Center, 600 Caron Butler Drive, Racine, Wisconsin. The reception to honor the building owners will begin at 6:00 pm, followed by the program at 7:00 pm. All members and friends of Preservation Racine are invited to attend.

1012 Wisconsin Avenue

The Italianate house at 1012 Wisconsin Avenue is probably one of the oldest and most distinctive houses in the city. It is located a little south of 10th Street on the west side of Wisconsin Avenue, facing the entrance of the large Masonic Temple addition at the rear of the former Durand Mansion.

The house is in School Section Block 23, on a wide parcel which is comprised of the south half of Lot 4, on which the house itself is located, plus the north half of Lot 5, with lovely lawn and garden space just to the south of the house.

1012 Wisconsin Avenue, Racine
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

In 1850 the entire Lot 4 had been sold by the State of Wisconsin to Owen W. Williams, a carpenter, and his wife Jane. In 1866 they sold Lot 4 to Sarah C. Upham for $1250. She shows up in the next city directory (1868-69) as living on the west side of Wisconsin between 10th and 11th Street—likely on her Lot 4 there.

At that time, houses were often not numbered, since much of the area was platted but not yet built upon, and a block might eventually have a just few elegant large mansions or maybe ten normal-sized family houses. Therefore the scattered houses were often listed in the city directory according to their location at an intersection or their position within a block. As a result, the early city directories were indexed only by people's names, not

their address, which often did not exist yet. Thus one could find a person's location by looking up their name, but there was no index of addresses to find who was living there. This often makes things quite difficult for today's researchers!

An 1870 census record which did not list addresses showed a Sarah Upham, age 32 (born about 1838 and occupation "keeping house") living in the 2nd Ward of Racine with her children, Frank, 11, and Cora, 7. Also living with her were Linas Miller, 58—presumably her father, as we shall learn—and Mary Raymond, 17, perhaps a relative and/or nanny or housekeeper. Sarah had a personal estate of $8000 and real estate value of $2000, considerable wealth for a young single woman.

At the same time, however, a Sarah Upham, age 70, was also listed in the census as living in the same Ward 2 in Racine, but in a different residence as the first Sarah Upham. Surprisingly, there were also seven other people, ages 7-34 with three different surnames at that location, perhaps an apartment or boarding house. So apparently there were two Sarah Uphams, one or both who were sometimes known as Sarah C. Upham, who were perhaps related to each other —and perhaps confused with each other. We researchers were certainly confused!

Real estate title records show that in 1876, ten years after purchasing Lot 4, Sarah Upham sold off the south half of it (where 1012 Wisconsin is now located) for $800 to Arthur H. Amos, a dentist who lived nearby on Chippewa (which was later renamed Park Avenue). The low price seems to indicate that it was vacant land. The 1876 city directory, however, does not even list a Sarah Upham living at her property on the west side of Wisconsin between 10th and 11th that year. However, it lists Mrs. S. C. Upham, widow, as residing at 296 Wisconsin, which would have been downtown. This was apparently the residence for the elder Sarah Upham and the other three families who were listed in the 1870 census—but where was the younger Sarah Upham in 1876?

The next city directory, 1878, revealed that Sarah Upham was the widow of Nathan Upham, and she once again (or still?) lived on the west side of Wisconsin, now specifically two houses south of 10th Avenue. Also living with her was Frank R. Upham, a clerk —apparently her son, from the 1870 census information —who would have been about 19 years old by then. The city directories did not list minor children, but they did list young adults still living at home, as well as their occupation, or "student" if they were attending post-secondary schooling.

The dentist Arthur Amos, who had bought the south half of Lot 4 in 1876, was soon thereafter listed in the 1878 city directory along with Helen Amos, the widow of William Amos (perhaps his parents?) on the west side of Wisconsin, three houses south of 10th —which would have been right next door to Sarah Upham and just south of her. From this information, we may presume that Dr. Arthur Amos built his house — this impressive Italianate house which later was numbered 1012 Wisconsin Avenue — on the south half of Lot 4 about 1876-77.

In 1879, only one Sarah Upham was listed in the city directory, again living downtown at 296 Wisconsin. A few years later in 1881, Sarah C. Upham sold off the north half of Lot 4, presumably her residence, to Ed Stebbins for $1650, and thereafter she was no longer listed in the city directory.

A 1907 obituary yields another clue: former Racinian Mahlon Miller, son of L. (Linus?) H. Miller, who had previously had insurance and real estate businesses in Racine, was noted to be survived by several relatives including his sister —Mrs. Sarah Upham, formerly of Racine but at that time living in Marshfield, WI, so perhaps that's where she went after her children were grown. Additional genealogical research is needed!

By 1885 Dr. Amos' house had the number 1012 Wisconsin, and Arthur and the widow Mrs. (William) Helen Amos as well as Martin Smith were listed there together. In 1887, more than ten years after being first listed as living on the west side of Wisconsin, three houses south of 10th Street, Dr. Amos sold his property on the south half of Lot 4 to Martin L. Smith, principal of nearby Franklin School, and Dr. Amos was no longer listed there.

The Smiths continued to live there until 1918 when Milton Wayne Everett also lived there, joined in 1923 by Frances (née Smith), as well as Martin Smith in 1931, when ownership of the property was passed to the Smiths' daughter Frances Everett. She lived there with her husband, M. Wayne Everett, who was secretary/treasurer of the Wisconsin Agricultural Publishing Company. She was later widowed but continued to live there until the early 1970s.

Then from about 1974, Richard and Jeannette Moe resided there. They apparently were neighbors who had lived next door at 1016 Wisconsin Avenue from 1959 through 1973. In 1977 widow Frances Everett sold the south half of Lot 4 to the Richard and Jeanette Moe family, who lived there until Jeannette Moe sold "Part of

Lot 4" to Gerald and Eleanor Smith in early 1990, and 1012 Wisconsin became their home.

The north half of Lot 5, which now is an attractively landscaped garden and lawn, has another convoluted history. Suffice it to say that Lot 5 had numerous owners from 1849 on, and eventually there were two large frame houses on that property. The north half of Lot 5 with 1016 Wisconsin Avenue was split off in 1902 and had various owners and residents; it was sold in 1993 to Thomas Gawle and Eleanor Smith, and then in 2007 to the current owners, Gerald and Eleanor Smith. The house at 1016 was removed, and the south half of Lot 4 and the north half of Lot 5 became one large parcel. A few hours at the UW-Parkside archives perusing the tax rolls and plat books could likely yield more clues and information about this entire property's past ownership and residents, but that will have to wait for a researcher with more time and patience.

The 1908 Sanborn fire insurance map is the first one found online that shows this address; earlier insurance maps did not include details of this southeast portion of Racine. The footprint of the house at 1012 Wisconsin Avenue in 1908 was essentially as it is today: a nearly square two-story frame building, with a small centered front porch, and a one-story addition on the back (which was later enhanced by an open porch and a second-story dormer).

This house is located in the Southside Historic District and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1977 and on the State Register in 1989. It is described in the nomination papers as having carved stilted segmental arch hoods, double brackets at the eaves, an enclosed segmental arch roof entrance porch with a round window in the side [actually both sides] and a side polygonal bay [on the south].

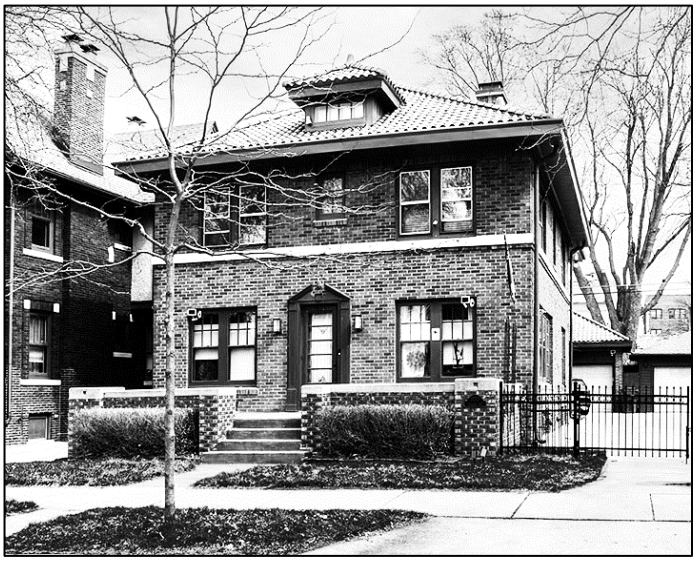
This distinctive house was recognized in the *Architectural and Historical Survey of the City of Racine*, published by the Racine Landmarks Preservation Committee in 1977, which stated that it is of architectural significance and ought to be preserved at all costs. "With its elegant proportions, nicely detailed paired brackets and scroll-sawn window headers, this frame house is one of the best examples in Racine of the simplified, symmetrically arranged cubic type of Italianate residence."

Preservation Racine is immensely pleased to recognize this stately and well-preserved house as a Century Building – how could we have missed it all these years? It has been lovingly restored, maintained and landscaped by its current owners (and Preservation Racine members), Ellie and Gerald Smith, to be enjoyed by passersby and more generations of owners in the future.

Debbie Yale and Janet Carter

1017 College Avenue

The Frank H. and Rose Miller house at 1017 College Avenue was built in 1916 in the Prairie School style. By 1902 Frank Lloyd Wright had created this new kind of house. The Miller house presents the earlier and simpler form of this style. It is a two-story, with a full height attic and a green tiled, low-pitched hipped roof with wide eaves. There are centered, tiled, hipped roof dormers on all four sides. The façade is symmetrical with a centered entrance focal point; the windows are paired on the front, but the sides show groupings of three and four. Typically, these styles have a one-story full-width porch, but in this case, there is a full-width patio surrounded by a short, capped brick wall. A cut stone decorative band surrounds the house at about 2/3 of the way to the roof that adds to the Prairie School characteristic horizontal mass emphasis. An extra feature is the architecturally matching brick garage with a green tiled hipped roof.



1017 College Avenue, Racine
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

The property has an interesting backstory. Sheridan Kimball acquired Lots 3, 5 and 6 of Block 23 of the School Section in 1850. The North ½ of Lot 6 is where the house stands (1017) and the parklike side yard, the South ½ of the lot was 1023 College Avenue. Sheridan's widow was living at 1023 College in 1890. There were smaller houses on both parts of the lot by 1894 being rented out. Catherine's heirs sold both properties in 1900; the north half to Daniel and Isabelle Bull and the south

half to Irving L. and Ada Easson for $1,125 and $1,000, respectively.

The Millers purchased 1017 College Avenue in January of 1912 for $4,300. Frank was the secretary-treasurer of The Commercial Press Company at that time. He had started as a printer and rose quickly to foreman and then superintendent by 1906. The 1906 city directory shows Peter Huetten had become president of the company; Huetten was Frank's father-in-law. By 1908 Frank had bought into the company and was secretary-treasurer. It appears that Huetten sold his interest in the company to Frank and his brothers Leo, J. Benjamin and Anthony. Frank remained secretary-treasurer, Leo F. Miller Jr. became president and J. Benjamin Miller vice president until Frank became president in 1921 and Leo was treasurer.

Frank and Rose had plans to upgrade their house and early in 1916 they sold the building to Axel Nielson who intended to move it to a lot he owned on Flett Avenue. He got the permit from the Board of Public Works to move the building, but the neighbors objected, saying moving "an old house to that thoroughfare would not add to its beauty…" The permit was revoked, Nielson threatened to sue and another meeting was called. The Street Committee stood by their evaluation "that it was a well-built little cottage and in good repair." The permit was ultimately denied and presumably the "well-built little cottage" was demolished. The Millers signed a $10,000 construction contract with builders Nelson & Hanson of West Sixth Street in April 1916 to build a new house.

There is another interesting story about how the south half of the Lot 6 was rejoined to the north half. Ada Easson had died in June of 1926; her husband remained in the house. In April of 1931 his nephews, Russell and Edward James Zahn, who had been raised across the street at 1004 College Avenue bought the house and kept it as rental property. Their aunt Sylvia Easson Burnham lived there and worked for Commercial Press Company. The Zahns sold the house to the John H. Palmeter Old Ladies Home in January of 1938 for $185 plus assuming the $3,000 mortgage. It was apparently used as a rental income property. The 1939 city directory no longer listed the 1023 address, so it was apparently demolished also. In December of 1941 the "Old Ladies Home" sold the lot to the Millers.

The Millers continued to live in the house until Frank fully retired. He had also been the alderman for the Second Ward for the last ten years. They sold the house in 1946 and moved to the Park Lane Apartments at 1024 Main Street. Unfortunately, Frank died on October 21, 1948 at 69. The property changed hands seven times since 1946; owners included company superintendents, vice presidents of engineering, personnel directors, school teachers and insurance agents. The current owners, Travis and Jessica Dunk, purchased the house in the fall of 2022. They love their Prairie style house with plaster crown molding, hardwood floors and ceiling beams, a butler's pantry, built-in cabinets and leaded-glass French doors. Preservation Racine is pleased to honor them and their house this year with a Century Building Certificate.

Debbie Yale

1135 Main Street

1135 Main Street, Racine
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

One of the most celebrated houses in Racine is being chosen for a Century Building award by Preservation Racine: the Eli R. Cooley House (alternatively known as the William Kuehneman House). It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973 according to the Wisconsin Historical Society and on the Wisconsin State Register in 1989. The house was on Preservation Racine's Tour of Historic Places in 2004, and with its prominent location on Main Street, it stands out as a noteworthy example of Greek Revival architecture.

The all-white frame exterior has survived approximately 167 Racine winters emerging in 2024 as a beautiful example of the Greek Revival style and was completed c.1851. It was built for Eli R. Cooley and his wife Anna and is presumed to have been designed by Racine architect Lucas Bradley. There is no positive proof of this, but it has all the earmarks of his work such as that exhibited in one of Bradley's many local projects, the First Presbyterian Church of Racine. Mr. Cooley was the

last president of the Village of Racine and the third mayor after Racine was incorporated as a city.

There have been numerous owners of the property including Samuel H. Johnson of Buffalo, New York who bought the likely unimproved lot before 1850. Sometime between 1851 to 1853 Eli R. and Anna Cooley built on the property where they then lived for several years. They sold the house to Elias Jennings, a local tanner. The house was the home of notable Racinians, including George and Roxilana Bull, who later commissioned the building of Blake House located at 936 Main Street. Blake House is now headquarters for Preservation Racine. Others who have had title to the property were Samuel Bull and Judge Charles Dyer. George and Roxilana Bull sold 1135 Main to Stephen and Ellen Bull. Since the land was first noted on Racine Property Records, it has changed hands 32 times.

The house fell into disrepair in the 1930s when it was being used as a rental property until it came into the loving hands of William F. and Amanda E. Kuehneman in 1942. They are credited with restoring it carefully into the work of art that it is today. About the time of the restoration, 760 feet of land on the north side of the structure was added to the lot size to accommodate the north wing.

Features of the building include four fluted Doric columns under a simple pediment with a sculpted frieze under the top of the temple-style main structure. The two wings on each side of the main structure give it symmetrical balance. On each side of the front entry are leaded glass side panels to admit light into the interior.

The present owners are listed as Kimberly Kane, President and CEO of Kane Communications Group and Carl E. Sheeley of who we thank for maintaining this significant dwelling.

Linda Schubert

304 Sixteenth Street

One of this year's Century Building Award houses has been standing for 100 years albeit in two different locations. The Pearl and Willard Walker House located at 304 Sixteenth Street was originally built in 1924 and existed on the northeast corner of Ninth and Lake Streets at 42 Ninth Street for the first 60 years of its life. In 1985 the house was saved from demolition by George and Debbie Blaustein, who paid Gateway Technical Institute $288 to purchase the house.

The couple moved the house to the lot at Sixteenth Street and Wisconsin Avenue, which had been the gardens of the next door Palmeter's "Old Ladies Home" (as it was originally called) located at 1547 College Avenue. This land was originally owned by Eliza and John Palmeter, a childless couple who lived in Racine from the early 1860s and devoted their estate to providing a home for elderly women of limited means. John died in 1889 leaving his estate to Eliza, who incorporated the John H. Palmeter's Old Ladies Home before she died in 1895. The building opened in 1905, but eventually closed due to financial constraints in 1993. It is now the Women's Resource Center providing services to domestic violence survivors.

304 Sixteenth Street, Racine
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

Now standing at 304 Sixteenth Street, the Pearl and Willard Walker House is a Tudor Revival style designed by Fitzhugh Scott from the Milwaukee-based architectural firm of Scott and Mayer. Scott is known for designing notable buildings in Milwaukee such as the Allen-Bradley headquarters and the Blatz Temple of Music in Washington Park.

The house's exterior is a fine example of this architectural style popular in the 1920s, comprised of stucco on the upper half with decorative timbering on the publicly visible facades and plain stucco on the garden side and half of the west side of the house, which are not visible from Sixteenth Street. The lower half of the house has brick walls and directly east of the charming arched front entry door is a large brick chimney—features characteristic of the Tudor Revival style.

Willard was a twin son of Margaret and William Walker. In 1908 William bought the Racine Economy Spring

Company in partnership with his twin sons, Willard and Warren. The name eventually changed to Walker Manufacturing, which originally manufactured springs for farm wagons, then in 1912 began producing jacks for automobiles. In the 1920s the company started making auto parts and switched in the 1930s to manufacturing mufflers, which became famous around the world.

Gordon Walker, son of Willard, wrote in the "*Grassroots History of Racine County*" that before the turn of the century his grandfather William Walker bought "property on the north side of Ninth Street east of Lake Avenue and extending eastward to Lake Michigan." In 1909, Margaret and William Walker built a Prairie Style house originally at 845 Lake Street, which was relocated in 1986 to Sixteenth Street and College Avenue.

Willard's house was built next door to his father's. According to historical records, Pearl and Willard were living on another property near 42 Ninth Street before this house was built. Before it was moved to 304 Sixteenth Street, the original location of the house had its east-facing sunroom overlooking the lake with magnificent gardens cascading down the hill with rock walls and wrought iron railings.

The Walkers lived in the house with their two children Gordon and Margaret. Willard died in 1952 and years later Pearl died. The house was then sold to Gloria and John F. Thompson, who lived there with their two children Sarah and Johnnie. The house was then acquired by Gateway Technical Institute, which rented it out to tenants from the 1970s to the early 1980s until using it as a blood donation site with blood being collected in the dining room.

When upkeep and heating bills became too costly for Gateway, the school's board members set a deadline to sell the three properties on the land– the Pearl and Willard Walker House, the Margaret and William Walker House and a third house. Interested parties also had to pay for relocation of the houses. Local architect George Blaustein hated the thought of the Pearl and Willard Walker House being razed, so he and his wife bought the house as well as the land to relocate the house to and paid for the move on September 4, 1985. Although the new site was only nine blocks, the move took more than 16 hours.

After the Blausteins relocated the house to its current location, the address of "#42" remained above the front door for some time causing, a lot of confusion for pizza delivery drivers. In 2001 the house was sold to the Salley family, but it was in 2004 when Bev and Don Schumacher bought the house that much of the restoration work was done and is still evident today. They documented much of the history and details of the house, plus collected oral histories from many people who lived in the house, including stories from the Walker granddaughters who visited the house when it was on Preservation Racine's Tour of Historic Places in 2010. The Schumachers left this excellent collection of documents with the house when they moved. The house is now owned by Jeanne Denney, who is pleased to accept the award for the house's 100th birthday this year.

Debra Schug

1708 Wisconsin Avenue

The Max Bloch house is located in the heart of the Southside Historic District and one block from Lake Michigan. Is the Max Bloch house an English Tudor or a Craftsman style? Both architectural styles are documented in different sources to describe the house at 1708 Wisconsin Avenue. Actually, the house is a combination of the two, being fully described as having the first-floor brick, the second floor and sides half-timbered, with a half-timbered side oriel —a projecting bay window that is cantilevered or corbeled out from the wall, not extending down to the ground. The house has a double gable front and a Craftsman front porch.

1708 Wisconsin Avenue, Racine
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

In 1912 Max Bloch was the first owner of the house. He lived there with his wife, Ella M., and their two children. He was born in Bohemia on February 26, 1877 and was a resident of Racine for 51 years. He was the secretary/treasurer of the Hartmann Trunk Company, and a member of the Beth Israel Congregation and the Elks

Club. He passed away in August of 1942. Ella continued to live in the house until 1965.

Russell P. Schuchmann, an engineer for AC Electronics, owned the house from 1967 to 1977. He had about a dozen patents to do with centrifugal pumps, power steering and sensors on automobiles. His wife Mary Schuchmann together with Margo Drummond co-authored the 1975 booklet *Renewing Our Roots: A Guide to Racine: Central City, Southside*.

Records show that Karen Uecker, a teacher at Horlick High School, owned the house in 1978 and 1979. Jeffrey Uecker, also a teacher, is listed as the owner from 1980 to 1986. In 1987 Paul D. and Sharon L. Klonowski bought the house and lived there until 1995. Paul was a salesman for Western Publishing.

John R. and Karen Dodge only lived in the house from 1997 to 1998, but they added a garage, sensitively designed to complement the house. John was a lithographer for Fox Company in West Allis. In 1999 Mark E. Fesenmyer purchased the house. Mark was an internal medicine physician at Ascension All Saints Hospital in Racine. His specialty was in gastroenterology. He lived in the house until 2001.

Brian C. and Amy C. Ray owned the house from 2003 to 2014. Brian is a veterinarian and Amy the manager at the clinic they own. In about 2011 Maushae Byles rented the house from the Rays for some time. A native of Racine, he is a 6' 5'' basketball player who was a small forward for the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) Jaguars in the NCAA.

In 2014 Yasin R. Mahdi purchased the property from the Rays. He was a candidate for 2nd District Alderman in 2016. As president of the UAW Local 180 labor union, he was instrumental in contract negotiations during one of the longest strikes in US history, the nearly nine-month long CNH Industrial strike in 2022-23. He is also the Chief Executive Officer at the Credit Maestro of Greater Milwaukee.

Currently the house is occupied by tenants Laura and Taylor Strickling and their young daughter Elizabeth. Laura is a professional classical singer who has been nominated twice for a Grammy award. Taylor was the founding Director of the Law School at the American University of Afghanistan, then practiced law in the US Virgin Islands, but is now the Chief Operating Officer of Blank Slate Technologies. The family is grateful to Yasin Mahdi for entrusting them with the house —which they admire for its historic beauty —and to the entire neighborhood, where they have enjoyed making friends and building community.

Nat Cycenas

2507 Spring Street

In 1924 one of Racine's first settlers, Christian Mertens, sold 12 lots of his farmland along Spring Street to Nicholas and Josephine Freres. Spring Street (formerly Milmine Road) was named for the freshwater springs located in a ravine to the west of this property. At that

2507 Spring Street, Racine
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

time Spring Street was a two-lane dirt road.

In the 1920s the area three blocks west of the Kinzie Avenue entrance to Island Park was known as the Mertens and Freres Addition and lots were for sale. The ads by the agents I. O. Mann & Son Company stated "The contract was let for laying water mains in front of the addition and for grading streets to the east. The new $500,000 McKinley School one block from this addition is now being erected." Lot prices were as low as $350 with terms of $10 down and $5 per month.

During this era two story gable-front folk houses were built in the Northeast where the Greek Revival style was popular. The front-gabled shape replicated the pedimented shape of Greek temples. A similar shape, also descended from styled Greek Revival-style houses, became common in rural areas in the Midwest when the railroad expanded and materials were available. However, in the Midwest an additional side-gabled wing was added at right angle to the gable-front to give a compound gable-front-and-wing shape. A shed-roofed porch was placed in the L made by the two wings. These were often

stepped in shape, meaning that the roof ridge of the gable-front was higher than the wing.

This is the style of house Nicholas and Josephine built on their newly acquired property on the corner of Freres Avenue and Spring Street c. 1923. It is a one and a half story Gable-Front-and-Wing Family Folk House with a hall-and-parlor plan (two rooms wide and one room deep) on the first floor and bedrooms in the upper half story. It has a shed roof and a gabled dormer window on the west side of the second story. A smaller gable-roofed kitchen was added to the back of the house later.

Freres' seven children were raised in this house (4 girls and 3 boys). The events of this family were often detailed through the years in the Racine Journal Times. The school happenings, the engagements, the marriages, the births, the obituaries, property sales, their company … they were a busy active family.

In 1923 Nicholas Freres and Knud Poulsen, toolroom employees at Webster Electric Company, decided to set up a shop in a garage on Belmont Avenue near McKinley School. This partnership was named Sterling Tool Company. The company, which became known for innovative and precision tool work operated in the garage until 1926 when it moved to 932 South Memorial Drive. In 1948 Nicholas bought out Knud Poulsen and incorporated the business in which Freres' three sons (Robert, James and Donald) were already involved. Nicholas died in 1964, his son Robert in 1962. But the company went on to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1973 with son James Freres as president, Josephine as vice president and son Donald as secretary-treasurer.

The house at 2507 Spring Street has had only two owners in its 100 years. In 1974 Josephine sold the house to Donald and Kathryn J. Eckert. It had been Kathryn's dream to "own that house one day" … even before she and Donald were married. Happy circumstances led to their opportunity to acquire the house in the year after their marriage. They raised two children there. Because Kathryn had always admired the house, she was determined to maintain every original detail. They had it sided but insisted the siding be the same width as the original wood siding. The porch was redone according to code but is the same style as when the house was built with a simple spindled railing supported by the original classical column pillars. The windows have been replaced in the same style as the original. Donald died in 2010 and Kathryn continues to maintain the house with love and care keeping it in the same pristine condition as when the Freres built it 100 years ago.

Heather Egan

1524 Main Street

The handsome Arts and Crafts style house, with panoramic views of Lake Michigan, was built in 1914 by D. Eugene and Henrietta Callendar. The Journal Times published a listing of real estate transfers on November 11, 1913, reporting that D. Eugene and his wife received a "warranty deed: consideration $1" from Thomas P. Jensen and his wife. It is curious to note, that using the Tract Index Record from the Racine County Courthouse, this property facing Lake Michigan in various sizes changed hands dozens of times before a house was constructed, since first recorded in 1849. Notable Racine names such as Henry Mitchell and H. M. and Jessie C. Wallis at one time owned some of this land. It does ask the question, whether this acreage was used for land speculation. In 1909 Mr. Callendar was the general manager of the Racine Gaslight company. By 1912 it was reported that he had been promoted to general manager of the Racine plant as well as Kenosha Gas and Electric company, Kenosha Electric Railway and the Kenosha Central Heating company. This same article concludes with

1524 Main Street, Racine
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

accolades "no better man could be picked for the position."

Whether it is a tribute to the location of this house or its livability, owners tended to occupy this house for Actually, extended years. Mary Jelliffe, a widow, had been living at 1514 South Wisconsin Avenue, moving to this house in 1921. Her family continued to live here for many years, with generational ownership. After Mary died, the house was deeded to her daughter Sarah; after Sarah passed away, the house was transferred to her sister, Florence Brokaw and then to Florence's daughter Mary

Brokaw Kranick. In the 1950s it appears the sisters rented out part of the house. Walter Bridgeman, a technical service manager for S C Johnson lived here briefly, followed by Ernest G. Lake, Superintendent of Schools and Secretary of the Board of Education, who lived here for several years. Bruce and Mary Kranick owned the house for almost twenty years, followed by Rose and Peter Christensen who lived in this house for almost thirty years. Both men were part of industry. From May of 2004 until the current owners purchased this house, the Walter and Anna Sierzego and then the W. Martin and Kathryn Aiken families called this house home.

This beautiful stucco and decoratively timbered house features many of Craftsman architectural elements: warm earthly colors, covered front porch with finely crafted porch columns resting on piers, low pitched gable roof with overhanging eaves, triple dormers big enough to have more than one window, decorative brackets and a fireplace or two.

The present owners, Hudson N. Cavanagh and Gretchen S. Neubauer purchased this exceptional house in September 2023. Greta is the minority leader of the Wisconsin State Assembly; she has been a member of the Assembly since January 2018, representing the city of Racine and eastern Racine County. Hudson is the Sole Proprietor at Hudson Cavanagh LLC. We are celebrating another historic building that contributes to Racine's reputation as "The Belle City on the Lake."

Vivian Merlo

1819 College Avenue

This Century house, according to the Wisconsin Historical Society, is a Prairie style building. Its dark red brick exterior and horizontal lines are true to the Prairie style characteristics. It also has a low-pitched, hipped roof with wide overhanging eaves. On the west side of the house facing College Avenue, there is a small hipped roof over a row of five windows and the third floor has a two-window dormer placed symmetrically with the first-floor windows. The north side of the house has an exceptionally large brick chimney. The unique feature of this house is the main entrance. It does not face College Avenue but is on the south side of the house. A brick walkway leads up to an open porch with large, square brick columns which support the second story open-aired porch right above it. The house was built in 1921 and shares a brick driveway with the house to the south.

The first residents of the house were Richard R. Birdsall and his wife, Mary Harriet Jones Birdsall. Richard was born in 1864 in Toronto, Canada and moved to Racine in 1880, stayed a year and returned to Toronto. He stayed in Canada for a year and then returned to Toronto. He married Mary, nicknamed Hattie, in 1887 and they had four children: R. William, Athaleen, Nettie and Richard R. Jr. Richard Sr. was a highly successful street grading and paving contractor. He owned Birdsall Griffith Construction which later became R. R. Birdsall Construction. Mary, as well as all the children, worked for the company in many capacities.

1819 College Avenue, Racine
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

Along with running his own company, Richard Sr. was also president of the Racine Foundry in 1916 and vice-president of the Simms Foundry in 1918. He was a 32nd degree Mason and a Knight Templar, belonged to the Elks and the Modern Woodmen of America. The family attended the Plymouth Congregational Church and they actively participated in the community.

In 1927 the house next door at 1823 College was built and its first residents were Harold D. Mann and his wife, Athaleen Birdsall Mann, the Birdsall's daughter. This could possibly explain the shared brick driveway since both houses spread out over most of the lots.

Richard Sr. died in 1942 and Mary remained in the residence until her death in 1949. They are both buried in Mound Cemetery. After Mary's death, the house was empty for approximately three years and from 1952 to 1973, there were five different owners. Richard and Rosemary Lewis purchased the house in 1973 and have been wonderful caretakers for over 50 years.

Beth Roeseler

205 South Third Street, Waterford

This gracious Queen Anne house is a classic of the Waterford Queen Anne style, with its generously proportioned front gable that shelters a wide-angled structural bay beside a balconied porch. There is little added decoration, but this is not needed, owing to the balanced proportions of the house. It is a real beauty.

205 South Third Street, Waterford
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck.

The house was built for Henry A. and Josepha Halbach in 1899 on land purchased in 1898 from Miss Lena Johnson. Henry Halbach had a dry goods store on Main Street from 1873, and finally retired as the oldest and longest-established businessman in Waterford in 1937. The family continued to live in the house until 1957, when Henry

died, having recently celebrated his 64th wedding anniversary. The estate sold the property to Mervin W. and Joyce P. Rhody, and soon afterwards, Joyce opened Rhody Pastry, which she ran until 1995.

Lena Johnson, who sold the land to Mr. and Mrs. Halbach, was also remarkable. She purchased the land in 1880 at the age of thirty, when she was already the head of her family household, which included her parents, and two younger sisters. She does not appear to have built on it – perhaps she intended it for retirement, as her family had lived in Waterford since c.1870. Her father, Charles J. built the Methodist Episcopal Church (now Heavenly Haven Antiques) on Main Street, where Racine's Reverend J. W. Carhart gave the address at the first evening service. Lena herself ran the highly-regarded Reading and Coffee Rooms on Main Street in Racine, as well as the café in the short-lived Blake Opera House. After the opera house burned down, Lena opened the Sixth Street Café next door to John Wagner's equally highly regarded hotel and restaurant. In 1897, having started business ventures in Denver and Los Angeles, she moved herself and her sisters Anna and Minnie to San Diego, frequently returning to visit Racine and her father in Waterford. In 1902 Lena married Sven Adolf Larson in San Diego, where she took in up to five lodgers at a time while he continued running his own business as a fisherman until she died in 1914. Sven remained alone until 1918 when he married the widow Lena Willis (née Philena Brown) who brought her daughter Beatrice with her. The official records therefore continue to show Mrs. Lena Larson, thus creating so much confusion that neither Lena's family knows what became of her, while Sven Larson's family do not know anything about his wife, "Lena"! Ancestry.com has information gaps in all three family records. The second Mrs. Lena Larson died in 1948, and Sven died in 1954.

The present owners, James Timothy and Mary Kathleen Ryan, acquired the house in 1987 and have maintained it in beautiful order. We are glad to celebrate this richly storied house with them now that it is over 130 years old!

Pippin Michelli

200 South Kane Street, Burlington

This house is an excellent example of the Shingle style, an upmarket variant of the Queen Anne style, and this house has all the defining features: the varied and asymmetrical roofline clustering around a central hipped area, the emphatically textured shingles on the second floor and porch walls (and once also on the roof), the use of wide flattened arches, large-paned windows, often with decorative smaller panes around their edges, carved details like the barge boards, dentilled window hoods, brackets and the distinctive flared base to the upper story. The setting for this example is perfect, on the corner of a wide boulevard as it intersects with South Kane Street, and with a wide alley directly behind it: almost as if it is on a miniature estate.

It was built in 1893 for Edward E. Mills, originally a Racine man whose family worked in various departments of the Mitchell & Lewis Company. It seems likely that this is where he was working during his teens and early twenties when he lost one hand in a factory accident, probably in about 1879. In 1880, "Ed" took himself to Chicago to study law and relocated to Burlington in 1882, soon after he had been admitted to the bar. He impressed wherever he went, was very active in Burlington's civic affairs and was generally much liked. In 1891 Mills married Julia Henderson, and they purchased this land

200 South Kane Street, Burlington
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

two years later to build their house. At the time, it was numbered 501 Kane Street South, and when they sold the house to the First Plymouth Congregational Church in 1905, it was numbered 464. It functioned as the parsonage for the next 46 years, when it was sold – apparently in need of some refurbishment – in 1951. The new owners were Roy and Patricia Schaller, who announced that they were remodeling it (although there is no exterior difference between its appearance today and that in a photograph dating to 1910) and immediately sold it to Harold J. and Lena C. Weiler. "Doc" Weiler was a former naval air force lieutenant and World War II veteran and was now the feisty town attorney, much involved in developing Burlington's lake and resort area. Perhaps his biggest secondary activity was presiding over the Racine County chapter of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis [polio], and their annual "March of Dimes" fund raiser. In 1960 Weiler suddenly surrendered his law license for Wisconsin and went to live in Albuquerque, where he again practiced law until he retired.

In 1962 Burlington reorganized its entire street naming and numbering system (affecting 2,214 house numbers, and several streets), and 464 Kane Street South became 200 Kane Street South.

In 1991 the house was acquired by David and Rebecca Uhen, who have kept it in immaculate order, as it deserves to be. The house is an exquisite example of the Shingle style, and we congratulate the Uhens for their stewardship of this civic jewel.

Pippin Michelli and Jon Eeg

517 Milwaukee Avenue, Burlington

Researching this little building has been an enjoyable immersion in Burlington history! An 1878 quote from Burlington native Henry Allen Cooper, who would go on to serve thirty-six years in the U.S. House of Representatives, shows why this building was important. "Twenty-five years ago [1853], Burlington was a quiet village, having two schoolhouses (one vacant), three churches (one vacant), *thirty-two saloons (all occupied)*" and "three or four hundred people." *Italics mine.*

The first land claims in what is now the city of Burlington were made in 1835 and 1836 around the confluence of the White and Fox Rivers. In 1837 Ephraim and Pliny Perkins, father and son, came to the area; they purchased land and an unfinished dam and sawmill. They quickly completed both, built a small grist mill and had their first land platted. The Perkin's Addition, sometimes called Perkin's First Addition, was recorded in what would become the Racine County Register of Deeds office on May 24, 1839. Lot 1 in Block 2, where our building is situated, was sold in January of 1840 to Samuel Vaughn. He sold it to John R. Kendall almost three years later for $80. Kendall was a tireless promoter of Burlington and died unexpectedly in January of 1853 while in Madison working for the betterment of the village.

517 Milwaukee Avenue, Burlington
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

The property, now with a stone building on it, was purchased by Wendelin Miller for $1,000 in April of 1854. According to the Burlington Downtown Historic District, which was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2000, it was built c. 1850. Kendall had built it, apparently as a saloon, as it has been one most of its life. When the parcel immediately to the south of the

building was sold in 1858 and again in 1870, the description stated it was bounded on the north by "the stone saloon building." Wendelin Miller died in 1867; there was a court ordered sale of the building in June. John Reis paid $1,302.55 for the stone saloon. Born in Germany, Reis had come to Burlington in the 1840s as a shoemaker.

When Reis acquired the property, it was 128.5 feet long running to the western edge of Lot 2. In 1887 and 1892 Sanborn Insurance maps show a frame building attached to the back of the saloon that housed a bowling alley. George Schumann bought the saloon in April of 1882 for $1,650; its address was then 210 Geneva Street. By 1892 a cream brick veneer had been added to its façade. The 1898 map shows a frame porch added to the front of the building; the bowling alley was gone, replaced by an unattached storage building. Schumann built another building between his saloon and George Wagner's blacksmith shop in 1894; the blacksmith shop became Zimmerman's Standard Press building. Ben Holmes used the new Schumann building, at 208 Geneva Street, for his cigar factory. The remaining portion of the frame building attached to the saloon had been given a brick veneer and it was extended around the cigar factory.

George Schumann died on April 4, 1899 leaving a wife, Elizabeth, and nine children. Elizabeth retained ownership of the saloon until June of 1923. During this time her sons and sons-in-law ran the saloon as Schumann Bros. and one son worked at the cigar factory. The street numbers were reassigned and the saloon was now at 705 Geneva Street. By 1904 the porch was gone and by 1909 the storage building was also gone. In 1914 the saloon was called Schenk & Prasch and the cigar factory was Schumann & Ammon, both at 705 Geneva; a restaurant run by Conrad Waldvogel was in the old cigar factory. Elizabeth sold the building to John Rose for $5,500 in 1923 and her sons and sons-in-law had found new employment.

John Rose was the owner of the land and businesses to the south on Chestnut Street. Rose died in 1924 and left everything to his wife Cecilia. She died in 1933 leaving all their property to their five children. Daughter Celia bought out her siblings' interest in the saloon building which she owned until 1953; that year it was Barney's Tavern run by Barney Pieters. Celia sold the saloon to Allen and Ida Castleberg (sometimes called Castlebury in records), who sold to Leon Daniels and Harold Tenhagen in 1965. It was called the Harmony Bar from the early sixties to 1979. Geneva Street was renamed and renumbered in 1962; the building's address became 517 Milwaukee Avenue. There were nine more title transfers from 1985 to 2022 when the current owners Melissa Smith and Mark Helder purchased it under the name Cyclesmith Holdings LLC. Crissy Loberg operates her business The Water Lily out of the building. The Water Lily is a thoughtfully curated home décor shop with artwork, small furniture, pottery, pillows, vintage accessories, coffee table books and other specialty items.

It is unknown when the commercial Greek Revival saloon building with an open pedimented front gable facade was altered into a turn of the century storefront facade. Large plate glass windows became common storefront distinguishing features starting in the 1870s, but transom windows were not a decorative feature until the mid-1900s. The bulkhead under the windows, pilasters, a recessed center entrance, matched tall, glazed main entrance and second floor doors are also common storefront characteristics.

Preservation Racine was happy to investigate this historic building and share it with Melissa, Mark, Crissy and the public. Many thanks to the Racine County Register of Deeds office and Burlington Historical Society online resources.

Debbie Yale

134 South River Street, Waterford

124 South River Street, Waterford
Photo courtesy of Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck

This lovely Queen Anne frame house was built in 1895 by a young, enterprising blacksmith. John Rein was the oldest of eight children born to German immigrant William Rein, also a blacksmith, who had settled in Burlington in 1852. John was twenty years old in 1878 when he rented a blacksmith shop in Waterford and started his own business. In 1880 he purchased a lot in

Mill Site No. 1 for $150, which was just west of the Main Street bridge before South River Street. He built the blacksmith shop for an additional $150. He owned and operated the shop until 1940.

Also in 1880, John married and bought Lot 7 of Block 11 on the corner of South River and Washington Streets, just a short walk from his blacksmith shop. The land was first platted in 1842; Block 11 consisted of 5 very long, narrow lots 275 feet by 80.7 feet. Both Block 8 and 11 were subdivided again and recorded on November 30, 1878. An alley was added down the center of the blocks and now both consisted of 8 lots. John's Lot 7 was now 189.5 feet by 70 feet.

Over the next ten years his business did well and he and his wife Mary had a daughter, Mamie, in 1890. However, after the birth Mary got blood poisoning and died. Mamie was apparently raised by relatives since she was never listed in the Census Records as living with her father.

In April of 1895 a newspaper article announced that John had begun work on a new house on his South River Street property. He married Lizzie Smith of Burlington at St. Thomas Catholic Church in November of that year. John sold the western 60 feet by 70 feet portion of the lot adjacent to the alley in 1917 to Joseph and Anna Zehnpfennig. John Rein died in March of 1941; his daughter, now Mrs. Edward Held of Menominee Falls, sold the house to Norway Township farmer Thomas Overson for $2,500 in August of 1941. Overson was a seventy-three-year-old widower. He died in September of 1948 and one of his children, Loraine B. Sheard and her husband Lee purchased the house. Loraine sold the house in 1958. The property had five more owners and a foreclosure before current owners Brian and Kathleen McLaughlin purchased it in December of 1995, marking its one hundredth birthday.

The cross-gabled Queen Anne style frame house has been meticulously maintained and preserved. The steeply pitched gables and front dormer present fish scale shingles and slat siding in a complementary color to the clapboard siding of the rest of the house. With the band of fish scale shingles wrapping around the east and south sides, interspersed paired and single double-hung windows and the corner entrance and porch create the rich multi-surfaced, asymmetrical façade that Queen Anne buildings are known for. The windows and front door present exquisite hood moldings of finely detailed construction and painting. Both the front and south side porches and bay have rich, eye-popping details. They include: spindles interspersed with x-shaped segments; uniquely carved bracket supports; tiny medallions; delicate chamfered support columns and a charming screen door. The single-story back portion of the house appears to be original, as its construction materials match the rest of the house.

The McLaughlins spent four summers stripping and sanding the clapboard siding to remove one hundred years of paint. It was then entirely painted. Their tireless commitment to detail and authenticity shines in this exquisite house.

Debbie Yale

From the President

This is my last message to you all as outgoing president. It's been an interesting ride, starting out with Covid, and then seeing the development of the Pat Murphy rooms at the Blake House – now looking lovely! I've learned that my job as president is not to lead with ideas and intentions but to facilitate those of the group. Knowing that I did not have to leave my mark in the way of achievements or projects made the job so much easier and more pleasant, and we have seen some satisfying progress in the duration.

Now it's time to hand on to the next president. At the April membership meeting we elected Bob Anderson as the new president, promoted Larry Dickerson to vice-president, and elected Luann Kohlmann as our third board member at large. We are delighted to welcome them all and promise our future support.

Bob Anderson has been 2nd Ward alderman and we felt this experience of working with the city out of a historic district would be a perfect fit for us. He will be joining us in the fall because his wife Diane is running to represent Wisconsin's 1st Congressional District in the U. S. House, and this is taking all his time. We wish her every success and I cannot wait to see her putting them all in order!

Larry is a relatively new board member, whose research into historic Racine brought him into our orbit. He does everything competently and well and we are very pleased to have him as the new vice president.

Luann has a long-term background in banking and a lot of energy, and here too we welcome the skills and experience.

I am staying on as past president, and temporary acting president, so this is not goodbye but hello to new board members and shifting roles.

Pippin Michelli

Made in Racine – Mangles

How about a quick quiz? Ready? So, what has two large wooden rollers, heavy springs, cogwheels (gears with teeth), a wooden handle, two foldable wooden platforms and is extremely heavy? If you guessed a mangle, you would be correct (the fact that the word "mangle" was in the title certainly didn't influence your answer, right?)

So, what exactly is a mangle and what is it used for? Well, the dictionary defines a mangle as a "mechanical laundry aid consisting of rollers in a sturdy frame, connected by cogs and powered by a hand crank or electricity." Their function was two-fold ... wringing water from wet laundry and to press sheets, tablecloths, towels and some clothing.

Here is some information obtained from the Racine Mangle Company's catalog from 1906. "They not only produce a smooth and uniform finish throughout the surface of the goods mangled, but bring out the figure and design on table linens, etc., and cause the goods to always retain their pure whiteness, having the same appearance as when new. Ordinary ironing can be done on these mangles in ONE-SIXTH the time required by flat irons. Fully two-thirds of the week's washing can be put through these mangles, such as table and bed linens, towels, handkerchiefs, spreads, blankets, underwear and all plain articles. They do away with the drudgery of ironing by the old method." Talk about a slick sales pitch!

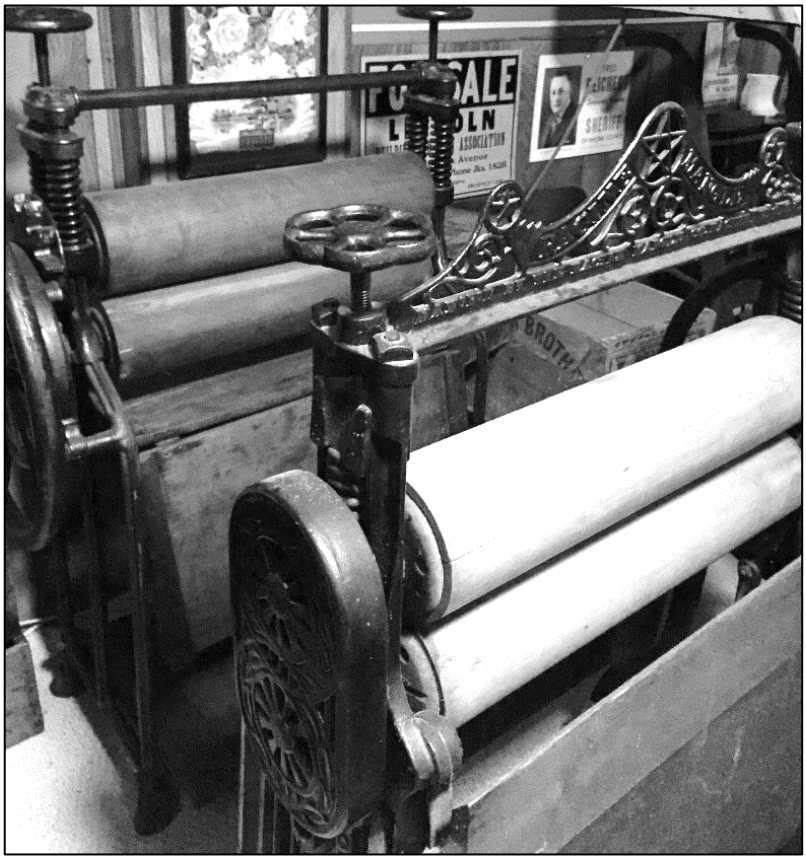


Photo courtesy of Jim Mercier

Of course, their catalog has many glowing testimonials from customers who can't say enough about their machine! As an example, this one came from Our Saviors Hospital in Jacksonville, Illinois - "Gentlemen: we consider the 'Racine' Mangle an indispensable article in our laundry. During the six months we have been using it, it has more than paid for itself! We find a saving not only in fuel, but in the amount of labor required, and the results are certainly all that could be expected. - Yours very truly, The Sisters of the Holy Cross." Now, you know THEY wouldn't lie!

The Racine Mangle Company was located on the west side of Racine Street, between 16th and 17th Streets (the former Racine Hardware Manufacturing Company complex) and was the largest of Racine's four mangle manufacturers. Another mangle manufacturer was the Collier Manufacturing Company, which was located at 1218 Washington Avenue (the building is still standing, and is located just south of the tracks, on the west side). Others were the Domestic Manufacturing Company, which had a factory near 18th and Holborn Streets and the American Mangle and Roller Company, with a downtown sales office at 400 Main Street.

The heyday of these Racine-based manufacturers started in the late 1880s and ended just after World War I. Many mangles with "Made in Racine" tags were shipped by rail to all parts of the country.

Mangles began to decline in popularity when electric washing machines with attached wringers (remember your old Maytag?) became readily available in the early 1920s. With the exception of some Third World countries, these old mangles can now only be found in museums, antique shops and private collections.

As a side note, I have two of these old mangles in my basement collection of old Racine memorabilia. With their combination of cast iron and maple wood, it's no wonder that it took four men to move them downstairs. Heaven help those who have to move them up someday!

Jim Mercier

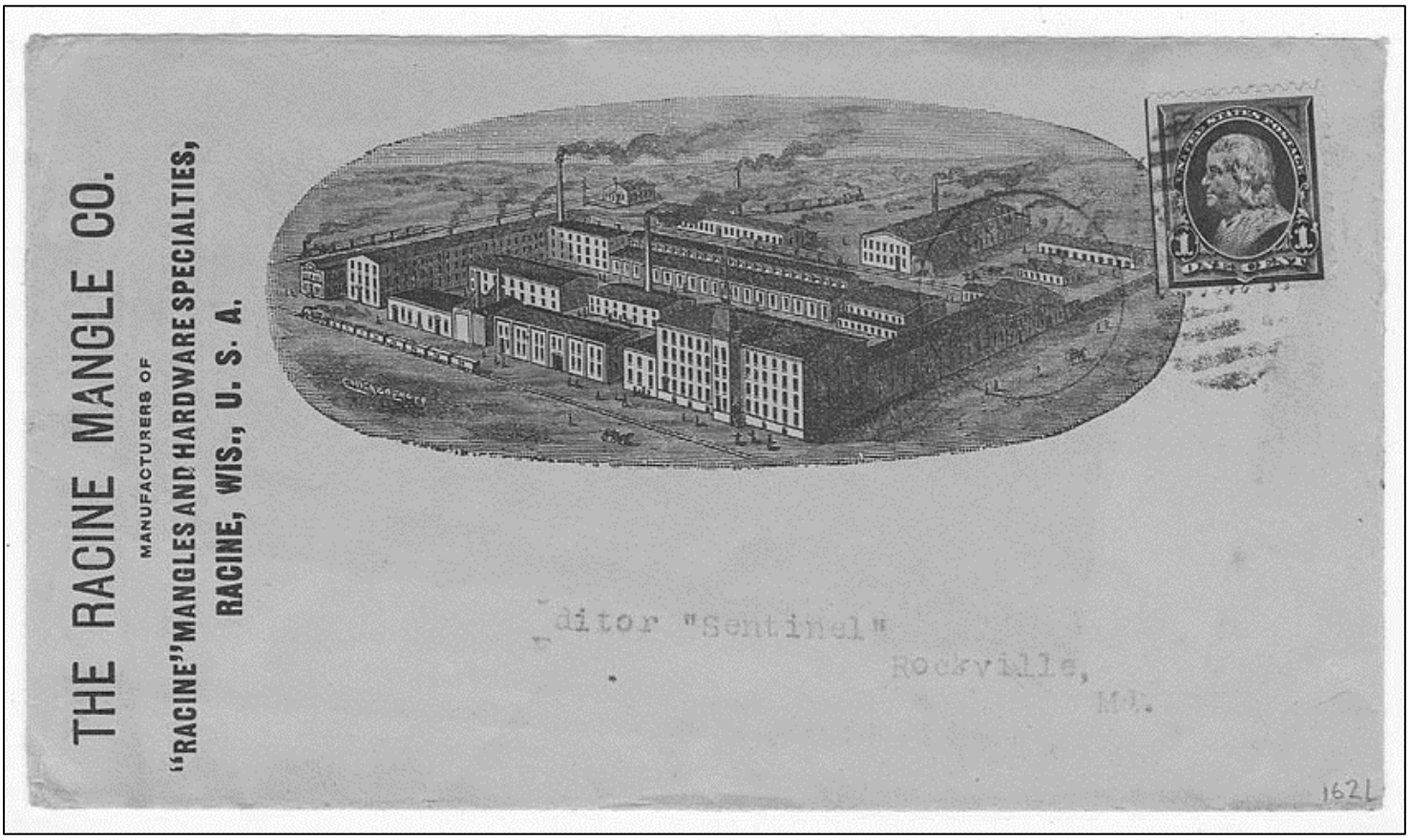


Photo courtesy of Jim Mercier

Carol Hansen and Brad Jaeck
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Brad and Carol of Photographic Design Gallery and Framing, 6th Street, Racine have been generously donating our photographs for the Century Buildings program - and also for our Annual Tour of Historic Places - every year for many years, and we cannot sufficiently express our gratitude and thanks.

These photographs are an important part of each program, and we frame and gift them to each building owner.

Thank you, Carol and Brad, for so kindly donating your time and expertise!

PRESERVATION RACINE, INC.

Published quarterly by
Preservation Racine, Inc., P.O. Box 383
Racine, WI 53401

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