

**PERMANENT HISTORIC DESIGNATION STUDY REPORT  
GETTELMAN BREWERY  
MAY, 2017**

**I. NAME**

Historic: Gettelman Brewery

Common Name:

**II. LOCATION** 4400 West State Street

**Legal Description -** Tax Key No. 3860202200  
ASSESSOR'S PLAT NO 125 IN NE ¼ SEC 26 AND NW ¼ SEC 25-7-21 BLOCK 1 THAT PART LOT 2 LYING ELY OF THE FOLLOWING DESC LINE COM N LI W STATE ST & 375.68' E OF E LI N 46<sup>TH</sup> ST-TH NELY & AT RIGHT ANGLES TO THE N LI OF W STATE ST 150'-TH NLY & AT RIGHT ANGLES TO N LI LOT 2 TO THE N LI OF SD LOT 2 BID #10

NOTE: This designation applies to the former Gettelman buildings, their current green buffer area at the west, the front "yard" greenspace out to State Street and a buffer zone of ten feet at the east and north ends of the site to allow for access and maintenance of the building. It is not intended to include the truck parking areas.

**III. CLASSIFICATION** Site

**IV. OWNER** Millercoors LLC  
Attn: Tax Dept.  
PO Box 482  
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0482

**ALDERMAN** Ald. Michael Murphy 10<sup>th</sup> Aldermanic District

**NOMINATOR** Dave Boucher

**V. YEAR BUILT** Late 1850's, 1877 (historic photos; historic timelines)

**ARCHITECT:** Unknown

NOTE: In the recently completed Milwaukee Industrial Properties Intensive Survey, prepared by Mead & Hunt for the Wisconsin Historical Society (2016), the Miller Brewery Complex has been identified as potentially eligible for National Register listing. The inventory of buildings in the complex includes the Gettelman Brewery buildings. (pages 79-80) This project was undertaken

to identify National Register eligible properties in order to help streamline the application process for the Historic Tax Credit program.

## VI. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

### THE AREA

The Gettelman Brewery is located in what is today referred to as "Miller Valley". It is an area characterized by factories, the large complex of the Miller Brewery and the small Gettelman Brewery. Some smaller frame residential buildings can be found further west along State Street. Buildings are clustered along today's State Street in a low lying area between large bluffs and the Menomonee River. There was some farming initially but manufacturing was drawn to the area due to the access to the Menomonee River, the Madison, Watertown and Milwaukee Plank Road / Watertown Plank Road (today's State Street, chartered 1848 and completed to Watertown in 1853) and later the railroad lines of the Milwaukee and Waukesha Railroad (later part of the Milwaukee Road). Track was laid along the west side of the Menomonee River in 1851, then as the river looped, the tracks were on the north side of the river west of today's North 47<sup>th</sup> Street. Surviving buildings today house a variety of businesses, some still manufacturing, some re-purposed into bars and restaurants. The structures range from one to three stories in height. Old quarry sites in the vicinity of North Hawley Road and North 68<sup>th</sup> Street have been filled and built upon in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### DESCRIPTION

The Gettelman Brewery buildings that survive today are located on the north side of West State Street and addressed as 4400 West State Street. They are set back from the street behind a narrow ribbon of grass that forms a front lawn for the buildings. A narrow concrete sidewalk extends from the front of the buildings toward State Street but stops short of reaching the public sidewalk along State Street. A chain link fence extends across the property along State Street with two gates allowing access to the property. An east-west sidewalk crosses this lawn near the front of the buildings. Foundation plantings are located at the front and there is ivy covering much of the front and west side of the buildings. There is no other landscaping on the premises.

The Gettelman Brewery today consists of two buildings, an L-plan cream brick solid masonry house to which is attached a large three-story solid masonry building.

The L-plan house dates to c. 1856 with repairs following a fire in 1877. It served as the original home for George Schweickhart and his wife Margaret and their six children. It later served as the home of the Gettelman family before they constructed a larger more embellished Queen Anne style house sometime before 1891. Although modified somewhat over time, it remains essentially as it appears in early photographs of the brewery. It was built to face east with the main entrance and front porch along that side. Today's "L" originated as a rear wing. In the twentieth century the building's main entrance was shifted to the south elevation facing State Street.

The two story portion of the house has its gable end facing toward State Street. The one-story attached wing has a gable roof that runs parallel to State Street. A small front-gabled bay extends from the south slope of the wing's roof. At the intersection of the "L" with the two story portion of the building is an enclosed porch that now forms the main entry facing State Street. The roofs are sheathed in asphalt shingles. A corbelled brick chimney is located at the apex of the roof on the two story portion of the building.

The south elevation of the two story portion of the house (fronting State Street) features two windows on each of the two stories. Corbelled masonry forms hoods over the segmentally

arched openings of the windows. Above the second story windows is a medallion that reads A. Gettelman Brewery Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This was installed by Miller Brewing.

On the east, or right, elevation are located two windows and an entry door on the first story and three windows stacked above on the second. The same corbelled masonry pattern is repeated here over the windows. Window openings have been slightly blocked down to accommodate rectangular headed sash. The entry door has a blocked down transom. Sashes were removed from the second story window openings the week of March 27, 2017 and are covered with plastic. There are no window openings on the west or left elevation of the two story section due to the intersection of the one story wing.

To the left of the two-story portion of the house is located the one-story cream brick wing or "L". There had originally been a one-and-a-half story rear wing in this location when the main orientation of the house faced east. At the junction of the two portions of the house is located a wood porch. Originally built as an open porch it was enclosed with windows sometime between 1950 and 1951. The main enclosed porch covers this wing's State Street front. The west or left elevation features two tall windows whose stone sills rest about one foot above grade. The rear of the wing or north facing portion features several windows similar in size to those at the west. Sashes are set into rectangular openings and feature two-over-two sash with the muntins arranged horizontally. The gabled bay that bumps out toward State Street on this "L" features a rectangular opening with three sashes. These openings do not have the corbeled window hoods that are present on the older portion.

Large vines cover the State Street and west elevations.

Changes to this original Schweickhart / Gettelman home can be chronicled in historic photos. The original hip roof front porch at the east elevation was removed by the 1920s. The door opening on the east side is still extant although the transom has been blocked up. Window openings and corbeled hoods remain intact on the east and State Street elevations. The sash within these openings has been changed over time. It appears that the sash were originally two-over-two but now have one-over-one sash. The rear wing has been modified, or, more likely, completely rebuilt but using cream color brick. It originally appeared as a story and a half structure. The front bay of this wing was added sometime between 1926 and 1961. Despite the modifications, the building retains its residential character as it did historically, an intentional choice made by the Gettelman family.

The three story flat roofed solid masonry structure of cream colored brick attached to the former house is essentially a rectangular structure with an extended bay off of the northwest corner. It rests on a limestone block foundation. Portions of it may date to the founding of the brewery in 1858 but a majority may have been reconstructed after a disastrous fire in October 1877. The only details on the south facing State Street facade are the window openings. There are four window openings with brick hood molds, two on the first story and two stacked above on the second. These are original openings and can be seen in historic photos. The first story pair is boarded up. The second story pair has brick infill. Centered above the roof of the two-story portion of the house is a rectangular opening that is boarded up. To the left or west is a larger opening at the third story that is boarded up.

The west elevation features five tall, evenly spaced windows on the first story and the same number stacked above. The window openings are rectangular and have stone sills. They are filled with what appear to be tall, two-over-two sashes with horizontal muntins. A very large metal vent projects out of the building between the floors above the third or middle window. A large security light is attached to the building below the vent. Another vent emerges at ground level. Large vines are growing along this west façade.

The rear or north elevation of the three-story structure has a shallow bay that extends out from main block of the building. On its narrow west side is an entry door at grade and one rectangular

window opening at each of the two stories above. This portion of the building once was connected to another structure in the brewery and with the demolition of the other section or sections infill was done with concrete block. East of this extended bay, the building is not visible.

The east elevation of the three-story structure features a variety of window openings and an entry door. The first story entry door, near to the southeast corner, has been blocked up with brick. It is flanked by windows with segmentally arched brick hoods. The openings are filled with six-over-six sash. A third window is located at this first story about midway in the façade. The second story has three window openings stacked above those of the first and they too have segmental arched hooded openings. These have been bricked in. Three more are located on this second story. At the third story is a window that matches those below and has six-over-six sash.

Today's three story structure originated as a one-and-one-half story building with a gabled roof whose gabled end faced State Street. Its windows matched those on the house and likewise had shutters. It had a large rectangular ventilator or cupola and was attached to other structures at its north end. This building grew taller and joined another structure with a tall chimney. It was identified as the malt house in Nancy Moore Gettelman's history of the company, but before that it likely had been the brewhouse when the brewery first started up. (Nancy Moore Gettelman, pages 64-65). Photos show that this structure grew even taller over time as the brewery expanded and remodeled. It was brought down to its current height after 1951.

The alterations to this building over time were consistent with the changes required for an operational brewery. Some original details remain such as the door and window openings with segmental corbeled hoods and a few remaining six-over-six sashes. It still bears resemblance to its 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century appearance.

#### HISTORY OF GETTELMAN BREWERY

This summary of the history of the Gettelman Brewery is not meant to break new ground in the research of the brewery. Its purpose is to provide background for determining significance of this site. Many fine brewery historians such as Leonard Jurgensen have explored the details and rooted out inaccuracies from past accounts. As such, this report relies heavily on Mr. Jurgensen's work as well as Nancy Moore Gettelman's [A History of the A. Gettelman Brewing Company](#) and compilations by brewery architectural historian Susan K. Appel, Ph.D.

There remains a mystique about the brewing industry that is unlike other manufacturing, say of steel, machine parts, and clothing, although automobiles come in at a close second. A consumable product, beer has always had associations with feeling good, social gatherings, and even healthfulness, something that is as true today as it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. One need just look at the current advertising that promotes social inclusiveness, fun activities, good times, and interesting occupations. It is now even cache to pair different beer with different food. Brewery historians track the architecture of the buildings, the architecture of their saloons/outlets, malting formulas, bottle styles, label design, distribution networks, advertising and the rise and fall of the brewery families and their descendants.

Milwaukee has been known as beer city for generations, although the number of breweries has declined over the decades. Depending on the sources, there were over two dozen in 1859, nineteen in 1866, thirteen in 1879 and seven following World War II. The trend has been for smaller breweries to simply close or else succumb to buy outs from the bigger companies. The Gettelman Brewing Company stands out from the others. It was a moderately sized enterprise, concentrating on a good product with regional distribution and remained family run until its end. Heads of the company, after founder George Schweickhart 1856-1874/1876), included his son-in-law Adam Gettelman (1876-1925), Adam's son William Gettelman (1925-1929), Adam's son Frederick "Fritz" Gettelman (1929-1954), and Fritz's sons Thomas R. Gettelman and his brother Fred Gettelman Jr. (1956-1961). Each generation added their unique stamp to the brewery and

left a legacy that continues today with MillerCoors producing Milwaukee's Best, a brand that Gettelman introduced in 1895.

## THE FOUNDING

Investment came to this portion of the Menomonee Valley with the completion of the Watertown Plank Road in 1853. Before the road, this area had been virtually inaccessible by land due to the steep bluffs. Even after the completion of the road, the steep climb out of the valley posed a challenge to transporting products to transportation networks to the east. This narrow flat valley bottom was located in the Town of Wauwatosa and quite a distance from the burgeoning city of Milwaukee to the east.

The proximity to the Menomonee River promised good prospects for winter ice harvesting as well as good well water, land for growing hops and barley, and pasture land for the horses needed to pull the beer wagons. Two partners decided on establishing a brewery at this location in 1854. Charles W. Reitzenstein and Frederick W. Colditz acquired a 3-acre parcel and began to build a brewery, completing a 48-foot by 100-foot foundation and a 48-foot by 60-foot vaulted beer cellar before succumbing to a cholera epidemic in September, 1854. (Leonard Jurgensen, Timeline)

The site was not to sit vacant for long. George Schweickhart (born Muhlhausen, Alsace France, July 25, 1824) and his wife Margaret acquired the property for \$1,800 on September 8, 1856. The Schweickhart family had been brewers for hundreds of years but the family left Europe to immigrate to the United States in 1833 when George was nine. The family settled near other Alsatian immigrants near Buffalo, New York and turned to farming. Eventually George and a brother owned and operated a brewery in Buffalo. There George married Margaret Schultz. The two left Buffalo to come to Milwaukee with the intent to farm. When they discovered the beginnings of the brewery on the Watertown Plank Road they decided to go into brewing once again. A second beer cellar was constructed, still extant and a brewery and brick residence were also built. Like many other brewers and business owners of the period, constructing the family residence adjacent to or nearby one's place of business was fairly common and the histories of Pabst, Blatz, Schlitz and Miller share this common theme. The Schweickhart house, unlike the others, still stands.

The business was named Schweickhart Brewery but was also sometimes called the Menomonee Brewery, although not to be confused with the Menomonee Brewery at the south side of the Menomonee Valley owned by Charles T. Melms. In its first year of production, the Schweickhart Brewery reportedly brewed 13 barrels per week. It eventually had the capacity to produce about 1,500 barrels of beer a year and more as time went on and had storage capacity for 800 barrels. Schweickhart also constructed a malt house where he produced his own malt.

## THE 1870s

The decade of the 1870s was one of expansion, disaster, recovery and change in ownership structure.

In 1871 Schweickhart undertook a large expansion of his facility, constructing a new ice house, a new brew house and converting the old brew house to a malt house. Another ice house was added at a cost of \$14,000.

It is in the 1870s that Adam Gettelman became the guiding force in the brewery. Gettelman, whose family name was originally spelled Goettelmann, was born in 1847 to parents who had emigrated from Germany in 1837. Adam left the family farm in Germantown at age 16 and settled in Milwaukee and began work at the State Brewery, earning \$25 per month. He subsequently worked at the Western Brewery in 1866 and was said to have attended the John

Ennis Brewing School. Adam then apprenticed with Schweickhart and, in the classic tale found in many brewery histories, married Magdalena Schweickhart, the boss's daughter in 1870. Adam Gettelman proved a master at running the business. Not long after the above mentioned expansion (dates vary in different sources), Schweickhart decided to transfer the brewery to his two sons-in-law, Adam Gettelman (Magdalena Schweickhart) and Charles Schuckmann (Catherine Schweickhart). While Schuckmann had half ownership, he was partners with Moritz Seligmann and operated a wine and liquor business on today's Juneau Avenue. Adam Gettelman actually ran the brewery. Schweickhart went on to concentrate on his other business ventures including a stone quarry located further west along the old plank road.

Disaster struck the brewery on Tuesday October 30, 1877 when a fire originated in the malt house and quickly spread to other buildings. The Milwaukee fire department was notified by a man in horseback and Chief Lippert and his crew battled the blaze for three hours. Lacking hydrants, they pumped firefighting water directly from the river. The two-story brick malthouse was totally destroyed along with its contents of 15,000 bushels of barley and the "kiln outfit". Unburnt grain was lost as it had to be sold for feed. The story-and-a-half, 40-foot by 60-foot brick brewery was lost. The two-story brick ice house at the northern end of the complex had damage estimated at \$50. The brick Schweickhart residence sustained about \$500 damage. Damage to the beer stored below in the "basement" or cellar had yet to be estimated when the Milwaukee Sentinel reported on the incident on Wednesday morning October 31, 1877. It is thought that losses would ultimately come to \$40,000 but that the brewery was insured for only \$15,000. The article went on to say that the brewery had recently been transferred to Gettelman and Schuckmann and the Schweickhart "devoted his entire time to his large stone-quarry interests in the town of Wauwatosa." The fire was also reported in The Inter Ocean (Chicago, Illinois) on October 31, 1877. ("The Menomonee Valley Brewery of Gettelman & Co. Destroyed by Fire", Milwaukee Sentinel 1877 October 31 page 8 column 1; <https://www.newspapers.com/image/34852726>).

The fire did not put an end to the business. In an article dated November 3, 1877 it was reported "Gettelman & Company, with characteristic enterprise, have perfected arrangements for the reconstruction of their brewery in the Menominee [*sic*] Valley. The copper work has been let to Fred Richter, and the carpenters and masons are figuring on the plans for the new buildings." (Susan Appel Timeline citing Milwaukee Sentinel 1877 November 3, Milwaukee County Historical Society Brewery Collection, Box 1, Gettelman History file)

#### THE 1880s and 1890s

The Gettelman brewery would recover from its fire losses and find its niche among the top nine breweries in the city. A Milwaukee Sentinel article from May 20, 1884 reported that 1,006,030 barrels had been produced in the city by the end of April 1884. Gettelman was at bottom of the list behind Ph. Best Brewing Co., Jos. Schlitz Brewing Co., Val Blatz, F. Falk Brewing Co., Fred Miller, Jung & Borchert, Cream City Brewing Co., and J. Obermann Brewing Co. While Best produced 374,770 barrels in 1884, Gettelman in comparison produced 12,750. ("Million Barrels of Beer. The Amount Sold by the Great Breweries The Past Year-Relative Increase", Milwaukee Sentinel Tuesday 1884 May 20 page 3)

Another ice house was constructed 1880/1881 along with a new brew house that would double the capacity of the old one. In addition, a bottling works for Gettelman was established by Herman Scherff in 1882. This bottler worked under contract with the brewery and the bottling works was located away from the brewery at another location. In 1883 a mechanical refrigeration unit was installed, made by the Weisel & Vilter Manufacturing Company. It was still in operation in 1941. (Leonard Jurgensen, Timeline; Susan Appel Timeline; Nancy Moor Gettelman)

Production of beer, as counted in barrels, continued to increase steadily through the 1880s. (Susan Appel Timeline)

Adam Gettelman would eventually have sole ownership of the business and renamed the brewery the A. Gettelman Brewery/A. Gettelman's Menomonee Brewery in 1885. Charles Schuckmann had previously agreed in writing on December 27, 1877 to transfer his ½ interest in the brewery to Adam Gettelman although this was not registered until 1887 two years after Schuckmann's death in Austria. The brewery was officially incorporated as the Adam Gettelman Brewing Company on Tuesday March 17, 1887 (Leonard Jurgensen Timeline)

Many improvements were made to the brewery during Adam's time as company head. It was also a period in which Gettelman plunged into the world of beer advertising, an increasingly important concept that was used to "brand" a beer and encourage sales. Adam launched the ad campaign "\$1,000 Natural Process Beer" in 1891. The campaign offered anyone \$1,000 who could prove that their premium beer used ingredients other than pure malt, hops and water. It was a time when the brewing industry was introducing other grains into their formulas. The trademark image of a left hand holding a glass of beer originated with Adam's cousin-in-law Martin Schultz, a farmer who had lost his right hand in a farming accident. No one was ever able to claim the reward. In 1892 the company introduced "Hospital Tonic" which was claimed to be good for one's health. (Nancy Moore Gettelman; Susan Appel Timeline; Leonard Jurgensen Timeline; "A Century of Brewing", page 4)

Also during his leadership, a railroad spur was extended to the property in 1895, the completion of which was celebrated with the hammering of a "golden" spike. Once on display at the company offices, the spike disappeared decades ago. This spur line made it much easier to ship product and bring in materials to the site. In the same year the company introduced "Milwaukee's Best" brand. In a collaborative effort with Miller Brewery, the two businesses were connected to Milwaukee water through pipes extended out of the city limits at 35<sup>th</sup> Street in 1898. This alleviated the potential for their on-site wells running dry. It was the on-site wells that provided water for brewing purposes. The Menomonee River water had been used for cleaning but by this time was already heavily polluted. The water line, originally paid for by the companies, reverted to city ownership after this part of the Town of Wauwatosa was annexed to Milwaukee.

## THE 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

Adam Gettelman, much like his father-in-law George Schweickhart, took interest in other ventures and after his sons William and Frederick were of age, he left much of the management to them by 1917. Adam concentrated on the operation of the West Side Bank of Milwaukee which he had founded. Adam died on February 14, 1924 at the age of 77. William moved from vice-president to the presidency of the company. His brother Frederick "Fritz" succeeded him as president in 1929. ("A Century of Brewing" page 4)

Like other breweries, Gettelman had to adapt to Prohibition and did produce non-alcoholic or near beer beverages during this period as well as malt syrup. It was during this time when the brewery was less active and the work force was reduced that Frederick "Fritz" Gettelman was able to spend more time following his inventive nature.

Frederick "Fritz" Gettelman always wanted to be a mechanical engineer and showed his abilities from his early 20s while assistant to his father. He designed and fabricated prototypes on the site, using the former Schweickhart/Gettelman house that had been converted into offices. Frederick "Fritz" Gettelman was later awarded the Wahl-Henius Award in 1951 in "recognition of his pioneering contribution to the improved brewing practice, and the engineering of brewing equipment." (Nancy Moore Gettelman)

Among his achievements:

- Patented chain-type basket pasteurizer for milk and beer. Called the Badger Pasteurizers, the product was adopted by Vilter Manufacturing Company of Milwaukee and sold throughout the United States, Canada and Mexico among other countries.
- Designed and patented a snow plow that was produced under his name
- Designed and patented a steel beer keg, complete with belly-band for easy rolling. Rights were given to A.O. Smith for production. His design differed from those already in use by being able to fit American brewery equipment.
- Designed and patented large, one piece glass lined storage tank
- Designed the first steam-brush bottle washer that sterilized bottles then delivered them to beer fillers and capper
- Invented an ice cutter that could be mounted on a truck
- Designed farm tillage machine later presented to UW Agriculture professors
- The Milwaukee Journal July 2, 1933 also referred to special equipment installed in truck bodies that kept beer cool in summer and warm in winter
- Consulted with American Can Company over putting beer in cans after Prohibition

Like many of the breweries that survived Prohibition, Gettelman ramped up its production and gradually expanded its complex. An addition to the old bottle house was constructed in 1937, using brick from the late 1880s Queen Anne style mansion the family had built and then demolished. The bottle house contained up to date modern bottling equipment that included Fritz's bottle washer and glass-lined tanks in the basement.

## THE FINAL YEARS

Although the brewery remained a regional brewer by design, it was nimble in the face of changing times. "We don't want to be the biggest. We're satisfied to be the best" was the philosophy. Much of this had to do with Fritz's sons; Fred Gettelman Jr. entered the management of the brewery in 1939 and his brother Tom in 1941. Both had training as brewmasters. Fred was board chairman by 1958 and handled things at the plant. Like his father, he was mechanically inclined. His brother Tom was president by 1958 and took care of sales and public relations.

After the brothers became active in the company, there were many innovations in advertising and beer packaging that helped to create demand for Gettelman beer and were tailored to changing consumer tastes and preferences. Modern sales techniques were employed. The brewery introduced a new 8-ounce beer bottle called the "Fritzie" in 1946. Its logo character was based on the small, bearded gnome-like elf with pointed cap that appears in German fairy tales and lore and the new bottles became very popular. The company produced cone topped cans because it was more efficient to use existing bottle fillers than change machinery. A special six pack carrier was designed to carry the cans. Gettelman was the first to adopt a beer package sale with non-returnable bottles in 1949. Gettelman was the first to use commercial television to give the company broad exposure and sponsored televised wrestling matches at the Eagles Club in 1947. Then it sponsored pre-game programs for the World Series in 1949. Painted signs on buildings were tailor made to each individual site. "Get...Get...Gettelman" could be seen around the city and region on seventy-five walls. The company cautiously entered the Chicago market and also the Boston market with some distribution in California.



Plant modernization was also a priority. In 1948 the old malt house and the old Schweickhart/Gettelman home were remodeled into a modern office building. The old equipment from the malt house had been sold to a brewery in Mexico during World War II. In the late 1950s, new beer storage tanks replaced the historic wood ones; a 150-ton electric refrigeration machine replaced the last of the company's old ones. A new canning line was added in 1950. By 1960 the brewery was canning about 11% of its production, bottling about 36% of its production and kegging the remainder in barrels.

Frederick "Fritz" Gettelman died on June 23, 1954 at the age of 67 ending a unique chapter in the brewery's history. "Fritz" Gettelman has been described as "one of the most illustrious figures the brewing industry has known" and served as director or president of many of the national, state and local brewery associations. His successors found a rapidly changing industry. While adapting and innovating new forms of advertising and consumer packaging and making improvements to the plant, sons Fred and Tom could see the future. Keeping a family owned and modestly sized enterprise going in the era of post war expansionism could not be successfully sustained. The 76-day Milwaukee brewery workers strike in 1953 made it difficult for the company to recapture distributors although there was some expansion into other states. They also had to face rising labor costs and rising costs of advertising in the face of the large breweries.

In February, 1960 the brothers started talks with their neighbor Miller Brewing. Miller, originally a regional brewer, was beginning to expand nationally acquiring other plants. Miller saw the need to diversify beyond their premium High Life brand and Gettelman promised a popular priced beer. The negotiations for a sale carried on through the year. The Milwaukee Sentinel then announced on January 15, 1961 that Miller purchased Gettelman for over a million dollars. Gettelman would continue to produce its products at its historic plant. The Gettelman brothers would stay on to manage the plant and the 80 brewery workers were to get a raise. Gettelman's sales at the time were 132,285 barrels in comparison to Miller's 2,376,543 barrels.

This final chapter ended with the closing of the Gettelman plant in 1970. It was subsequently used by Miller for warehousing and shipping and all but a few buildings were demolished. By 1992 the former Gettelman office building housed Miller's engineering staff. In 1992 Miller created the Plank Road Division with brands "Icehouse" (1993) and "Red Dog" (1994). In 1995 Miller branded the Gettelman plant the Plank Road Brewery and moved that division's sales and marketing headquarters to the Gettelman site although no actual brewing took place there. Signage identified the location as The Plank Road Brewery. Plans to open a pilot brewery on the premises and give tours fell through. In 2007, the former Gettelman bottling house, not part of this nomination, was converted into Miller Employee Fitness Center and Clinic. In 2012 a proposed non-profit suggested to Miller that the Gettelman buildings be converted into a Beer & Brewing Museum. Those plans fell through. (Leonard Jurgensen Timeline)

Today the buildings remain vacant. Recent asbestos removal, observed in progress on March 31, 2017, led to removal of the upper story windows in the former Schweickhart/Gettelman house and the window openings are now covered in plastic. Around the Gettelman building is an asphalt paved parking area for semi-tractor trailers. Miller's plan to demolish the Gettelman buildings was reported in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on March 24, 2017 and prompted this nomination. Miller wants to use the property for a truck staging area.

## THE BUILDINGS

As was true of any manufacturing/production site, the buildings at the Gettelman Brewery changed over time to incorporate new technologies and new functions. The main buildings were of solid masonry construction while outlying buildings were wood frame. The masonry buildings tended to feature corbeled cornices and arched or segmentally arched window openings, all topped by various penthouse structures, ventilators and cupolas. The frame buildings were of utilitarian design. The operations included a boiler house, stock houses,

structures for malting and storage of hops and grain, ice houses, a bottling works, a cooper shop, two office buildings (one being the former residence and former malt house, the other a stand alone structure close to State Street), various storage buildings, various structures for automobile and wagon storage. Sadly, permit records no longer exist for these buildings so documentation of the architects and contractors who designed and built these structures is lost. Its smaller size in comparison with the complexes of Blatz, Pabst, Schlitz or Miller does not mean the Gettelman was not significant.

To quote from Gettelman's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication

*That the Gettelman brewery--while increasing its capacity per year by over 190,000 barrels since its founding—has not grown physically in the same proportions as have some of the other Milwaukee breweries has been largely a matter of the choice and design of Adam Gettelman, after whom the company takes its name. Proud of its being a Gettelman brewery, he wanted it never to expand beyond the capacity of a family operation, preserving the traditions that had become synonymous with the Gettelman name. ("The A. Gettelman Brewing Company. A Century of Brewing. 1854-1954". As reprinted from The Brewers Digest, page 1)*

With the sale of the brewery to Miller Brewing in 1961, the Gettelman buildings continued producing beer for awhile but were closed by Miller in 1970. Thereafter, most of the complex was demolished. Preserved were the original Schweickhart/Gettelman house and the attached former malt/brewhouse/office structure which happen to be the two earliest structures in the complex and the ones that appear to have had the most significance for the family.

The house built by George Schweickhart is the small cream brick building visible on the grounds today. It thus dates to c.1858 and is thought to have been rebuilt in part after the 1877 fire. At the time of the fire there are references to it being the residence of Adam Gettelman's father-in-law. It was lived in by the Gettelman's as well and there are references in Nancy Moore Gettelman's book about Fritz Gettelman working in the building where he had been born. Per Leonard Jurgensen's research, William, Adam P. and Louis Gettelman were living at this house in 1906. We do know that the family did build a grand, towered Queen Anne style house sometime in the late 1880s. It was located on a hilltop overlooking the brewery and can be seen in the 1891 lithograph/engraving of the brewery complex. It can also be seen in the background in some of the photos taken of the brewery buildings. It was later demolished in 1937 and the bricks recycled to build an addition to their bottle house. Even the hill upon which the house stood was taken down to provide a parking area for the brewery trucks. By this time family members lived away from the brewery. In 1929 Frederick "Fritz" Gettelman built a Tudor Revival style mansion in the Washington Highlands.

The 1948 remodeling of the original house was described in Gettelman's "Century of Brewing" published in 1954. The living room became the office reception room with walls paneled with the cypress taken from old beer storage tanks. "Fritz" inaugurated the remodel but insisted his office remain in the second story room in which he had been born and in which he had come up with many of his inventions. Permit records show that the remodeling was designed by William G. Herbst & Associates.

Attached to this house is what had been the former brew house then malt house, then storage and later office. So its origins date back to c.1858 with repairs after the 1877 fire. Historic photos show this building was altered over time as the roof was raised and additional stories added for malting and related purposes. The upper floors were later removed but the stone foundation blocks and hooded window openings as well as some of the sash remain today. The underground lagering cellars remain, one of which dates to 1854.

## VII. SIGNIFICANCE

The Gettelman Brewery at 4400 West State Street is significant as the last remaining vestige of one of Milwaukee's important and long-lived breweries. Established in 1854, the brewery expanded on its site and once could count a number of buildings in its complex but it never grew into the type of complex we see at the Schlitz, Pabst, Miller or even Blatz complexes. By intent, the brewery stayed a local then regional business run by family members so there was never the drive to keep expanding production, outlets and distribution or acquire other breweries. Modest size does not equate with insignificance.

It is significant that the cream brick house at the front of the brewery remains in near original form. It meant a great deal to the family and was a touchstone to their origins. After the family moved to a larger and more fashionable dwelling overlooking the brewery, and even after moving away to locations further away, the house remained standing. There is no other example in Milwaukee where the brewery owner's original house, adjacent to their original brewhouse, still stands. It provides the tangible evidence from which to study the very early years of Milwaukee's brewing history and provides excellent contrast with the enormous plant of the MillerCoors just up the street. The juxtaposition of the two tell a story about the spirit and drive of German immigrants who brought their centuries long brewing traditions to a new land and made use of burgeoning technologies to create a product that remained popular over time. Both breweries were essentially local/regional well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the case of Miller, the drive pushed to international markets and mergers and consolidations. In the case of Gettelman, the well-tended family business ultimately could not be sustained in the face of giant competitors.

In Nancy Moore Gettelman's book about the history of the brewery, she points out again and again how the house/office served as a place of inspiration for Frederick "Fritz" Gettelman where he developed many patents for equipment, machinery, even snowplows. Many of these products were soon adopted by other breweries and Fritz's achievements were recognized in his lifetime by professional brewery organizations.

## VIII. THE ARCHITECT

No architect has yet been identified as the designer of the house or the adjoining malthouse.

## SOURCES

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(Also see references cited in the Appel and Jurgensen Timelines)

## **IX. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Gettelman Brewery at 4400 West State Street be given permanent historic designation as a City of Milwaukee Historic Site as a result of its fulfillment of criteria e-1 and e-9 of the Historic Preservation Ordinance, Section 320-21(3) of the Milwaukee Code of Ordinances.

- e-1 Its exemplification and development of the cultural, economic, social or historic heritage of the city, state of Wisconsin or the United States.

Rationale: The Gettelman Brewery buildings represent the last remaining portion of what had been a significant and long-lived brewery in the city of Milwaukee. Its production had helped to establish Milwaukee's reputation as beer city. It is also almost an anomaly among the city's breweries in that it remained family owned from beginning to end and the family was content at producing a good quality product for a regional market.

Likewise, Gettelman although smaller than Schlitz, Pabst or Miller, was nimble and innovative with new brewery machinery invented by Frederick "Fritz" Gettelman that became used by other companies as well as forward looking advertising that broke new ground in using television, radio, TV spots as well as clever signage on buildings and buses and billboards. These inventions and innovations took place in the buildings that survive today.

There is also a tie in with the national history of breweries, started by German immigrants who had brought with them centuries of accumulated brewing knowledge. This knowledge evolved with the new technologies that developed and flourished in America. Many, at least for a time, remained family businesses and there was a consciousness of giving back to the community and promoting tradition as a positive value.

Although local historic designation does not extend to building interiors, the lagering beer cellars below the brew house/malt house/office building are still extant. This is the last brewery location where such underground cellars survive. This type of lagering cellar was once common in the days before mechanical refrigeration was introduced in 1880. The first cellar was described as having been built by the founding partners in 1854. A second was constructed later. One was refurbished into the Rathskeller in 1937 and was

the place where “Fritz” Gettelman hosted the Master Brewers of America in town for a convention that year. Miller’s caves are different from Gettelman’s. They were cut into the hillside and were not located below a brewing building.

- e-9. Its unique location as a singular physical characteristic which represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood, community or the city.

Rationale: The Gettelman Brewery buildings have been a landmark since their construction in the late 1850s. As one of the earliest complexes along the Watertown Plank Road, the Gettelman was easily recognizable. In recent decades, with the demolition of the production buildings, the surviving buildings stand out all the more. Miller rebranded the buildings as the “Plank Road Brewery” for a time and capitalized on the quaint appearance of the buildings to make associations with earlier and simpler times. The Gettelman buildings were used in their logo.

### **Preservation Guidelines for the Gettelman Building**

The following preservation guidelines represent the principal concerns of the Historic Preservation Commission regarding the temporary historic designation of the Gettelman Building at 4400 West State Street. The intent of the commission is to preserve the historic, existing exterior features of the building.

Building maintenance and restoration must follow accepted preservation practices as outlined below. Any exterior changes including repair of ornamental trim but exclusive of routine painting will require a certificate of appropriateness. Most certificates are issued on a staff-approved basis and only major new construction or alteration requests typically will go before the Historic Preservation commission. The Commission reserves the right to make final decisions based upon particular design submissions.

#### **A. Roofs**

Retain the roof shape. The house portion of the Gettelman has cross gabled roofs clad with asphalt shingles. The former malt house portion has a flat roof. The well-crafted chimney at the apex of the gable on the house is to be retained.

The installation of skylights where they would be visible from the street are not permitted as they would have a negative impact on each portion of the building. Skylights however may be added to the roof if they are not visible from the street or public right of way. No changes can be made to the roof shape which would alter the building height, the roofline or its pitch. Locate mechanical systems and vents on portions of the roof not visible at all from the public right of way and paint them out to minimize impact. If the building gets re-roofed, consultation with historic preservation staff is required to review and approve the new roofing material, flashing, drainage and gutters. Should a satellite dish be installed it should be placed where it is not visible from the street, preferably at the rear. No rooftop construction or addition is allowed, as this would have a negative impact on the historic character and proportions of the building. The construction of other rooftop features requires review by Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

#### **B. Materials**

1. Masonry

- a. Unpainted brick or stone or terra cotta must not be painted or covered. Painting masonry is historically incorrect and could cause irreversible damage if it was decided to remove the paint at a later date. Note the house and the former malt house are clad in cream color brick. Limestone blocks form the foundation of the malthouse and are visible on the east elevation. Neither should be painted. Covering masonry with other materials (wood, sheet metal, vinyl siding, stucco, etc.) is not allowed.
- b. Re-point defective mortar by duplicating the original in color, hardness, texture, joint finish and joint width. See the masonry chapters in the books, As Good As New or Good For Business for explanations on why the use of a proper mortar mix is crucial to making lasting repairs that will not contribute to new deterioration of the masonry. Using much harder, contemporary Portland cement mortar will not make a lasting repair and can damage the historic brick and stone. Replaced mortar joints should be tooled to match the style and width of the original. Do not use mortar colors and pointing styles that were unavailable or were not used when the building was constructed. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before starting any re-pointing.
- c. In the future, should masonry cleaning be necessary, it should be done only with the gentlest method possible. Sandblasting or high pressure water blasting or the use of other abrasive materials (baking soda, nut shells, dry ice, etc.) on limestone, terra cotta, pressed brick or cream brick surfaces is prohibited. This method of cleaning erodes the surface of the material and accelerates deterioration. The use of accepted chemical products to clean masonry is allowed and a test panel is required before general commencement of the work. Work should be done by experienced individuals, as the chemical cleaning process can have a negative impact on the masonry. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before any cleaning would begin.
- d. Repair or replace deteriorated masonry with new material that duplicates the old as closely as possible. The use of EIFS (exterior insulation and finish systems) which is synthetic stucco is not permitted. Consultation with historic preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before attempting work on the masonry.

2. Wood/Metal

- a. Retain original material, whenever possible. Do not remove architectural features that are essential to maintaining the building's character and appearance. The original wood porch on the east elevation had been removed by the 1920s. It is not necessary to replicate it. Should the owner want to recreate it in the future, Historic Preservation staff can assist so that a Certificate of Appropriateness can be issued.

- b. Retain or replace deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the appearance of the old as closely as possible. Covering wood or metal with aluminum or vinyl or other substitute material is not permitted. Spot replacement or spot repair of any deteriorated elements is encouraged rather than complete removal and replication. Structural wood epoxies are suggested for the lasting repair of damaged or decayed areas of wood trim such as at the front porch of the house. Any new elements must replicate the pattern, dimension, spacing and material of the originals. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required before beginning repairs as some materials may actually harm the historic features.

C. Windows and Doors

1. Retain existing window and door openings. Retain the existing configuration of panes, sash, surrounds and sills, except as necessary to restore them to the original condition. Do not make additional openings or changes in existing fenestration by enlarging or reducing window or door openings to fit new stock window sash or new stock door sizes. Do not change the size or configuration of the original window panes or sash. Use storm windows or protective glazing which have glazing configurations similar to the prime windows and which obscure the prime windows as little as possible. The use of structural wood epoxies is strongly encouraged to repair any minor damage or decay to wood windows.
2. Most of the windows currently visible on the house appear to be replacements of the originals and do not match the windows seen in historic photographs. The once-open porch facing State Street has been closed in with multi-paned glazing. These can remain. Several windows on the former malt house feature six-over-six sash and appear to be original or very early in the building's history. When the current replacement windows on the house fail or need replacement or the windows on the former malt house need replacement, wood sash will be required to fill the openings. Clear low-e glass is acceptable but not tinted glass. New glass must match the size of the historic glass. Do not fill in or cover openings with inappropriate materials such as glass block or concrete block. Many windows on the former malt house have been closed in with brick. This condition can remain. Reinstalling windows in these openings is possible but the new windows must be wood and match closely to what can be documented or else match the historic time period of the building. Do not use modern style window units, such as horizontal sliding sash or casements, in place of double-hung sash or the substitution of units with glazing configurations not appropriate to the style of the building.

Any surviving original windows on the buildings must be retained and repaired if at all possible. Vinyl, vinyl clad, metal, and metal-clad or fiberglass prime window units are not permitted. Wood combination/storm screen units or fixed storm windows that fit the shape of the original opening are permitted.

Any changes to doors and windows, including installation of new doors and windows, require consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness.

3. Steel bar security doors and window guards are generally not allowed where they are visible from the street. If permitted, the doors or grates must be of the simplest design and installed so as to be as unobtrusive as possible. No roll down or scissor-style security grates are allowed. A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for this type of installation.

D. Trim and Ornamentation

There should be no changes to the existing historic trim or ornamentation except as necessary to restore the building to its original condition. A replacement feature must match the original member in terms of scale, design, color, appearance and wood species. Spot repair is preferable to wholesale replacement of details. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required before any changes or repairs are made to the building.

E. Additions

The house could not sustain any additions to its front (south), east or west elevations. The rear of the house is already attached to the former malt house. The south and east elevations of the former malt house retain many original features and any additions there would be inappropriate. Any other proposed addition to the former malt house requires the approval of the Commission. Ideally an addition should either complement or have a neutral effect upon the historic character of the building. Approval shall be based upon the addition's design compatibility with the building in terms of window proportion and placement, building height, roof configuration, scale, design, color, and materials. Additions must be smaller than the original building and not obscure the historic building.

F. Signs/Exterior Lighting

The installation of any permanent exterior sign or light fixture on the building shall require the approval of the Commission. Approval will be based on the compatibility of the proposed sign or light with the historic and architectural character of the building. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff is required to assist in the selection of exterior fixtures. Plastic internally illuminated box signs with a completely acrylic face are not permitted. Existing light fixtures can remain.

G. Site Features

The house and former malt house currently occupy a small sliver of land within a larger asphalt truck parking area. Some landscape possibilities are possible at the front of the property but they should not detract from the historic buildings or obscure them from view. Any proposals for this area require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

H. Guidelines for New Construction

It is important that new construction be designed to be as sympathetic as possible with the character of the structure. The property may be able to support small-scale accessory structures, like a gazebo, or fountain. Consultation with Historic Preservation staff and a Certificate of Appropriateness is required.



1. Site work

New construction must respect the historic site and location of the building. It should be accomplished so as to maintain the appearance of the building from the street as a freestanding structure. Any new construction would ideally be located to the rear since the character defining features of the building would prevent any construction at the side or front elevations.

2. Scale

Overall building height and bulk, the expression of major building divisions including foundation, body and roof, and individual building components, such as overhangs and fenestration that are in close proximity to a historic building must be compatible to and sympathetic with the design of the building. New construction is to be smaller in size and shorter in height than the historic building.

3. Form

The massing of the new construction must be compatible with the goal of maintaining the integrity of the original historic building as a freestanding structure.

4. Materials

The building materials which are visible from the public right-of-way and in close proximity to the historic building should be compatible with the colors, textures, proportions, and combinations of cladding materials used on the historic building. The physical composition of the materials may be different from that of the historic materials, but the same appearance should be maintained and materials not available when the building was constructed should be avoided.

- I. Guidelines for Demolition

Although demolition is not encouraged and is generally not permissible, there may be instances when demolition may be acceptable if approved by the Historic Preservation Commission. The following guidelines, with those found in subsection 9(h) of the ordinance, shall be taken into consideration by the Commission when reviewing demolition requests.

1. Condition

Demolition requests may be granted when it can be clearly demonstrated that the condition of a building or a portion thereof is such that it constitutes an immediate threat to health and safety and is beyond hope of repair. This would generally be in case of a major fire or a natural catastrophe.

2. Importance

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is of historical or architectural significance or displays a quality of material and craftsmanship that does not exist in other structures in the area.

3. Location

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building or portion of it contributes to the neighborhood and the general street appearance and has a positive effect on other buildings in the area.

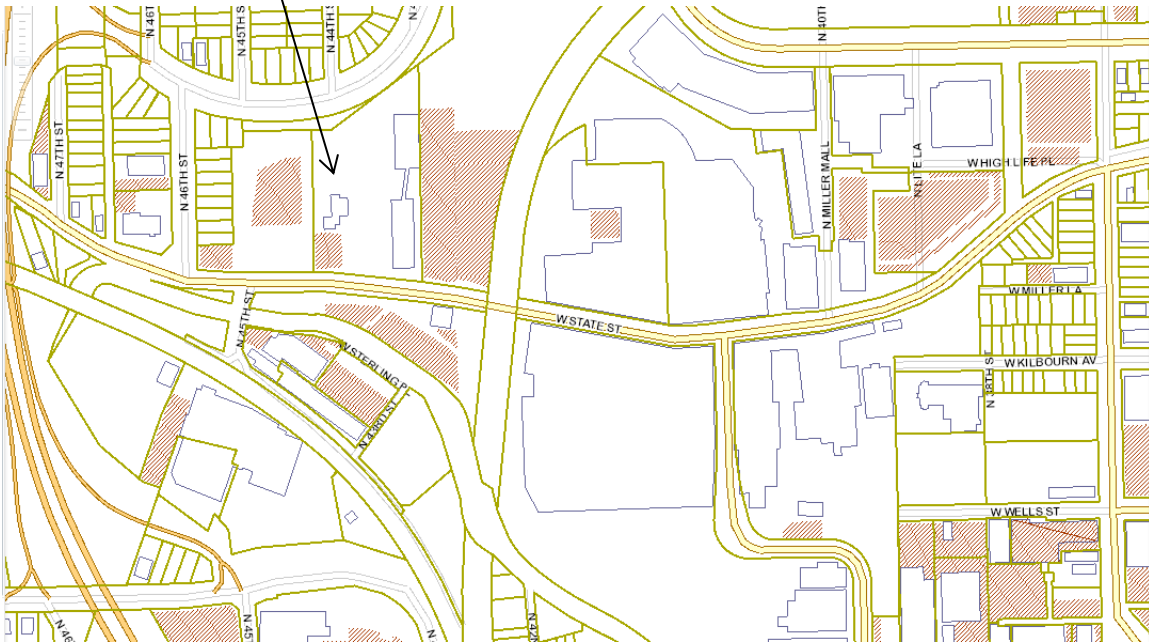
4. Potential for Restoration

Consideration will be given to whether or not the building is beyond economically feasible repair.

5. Additions

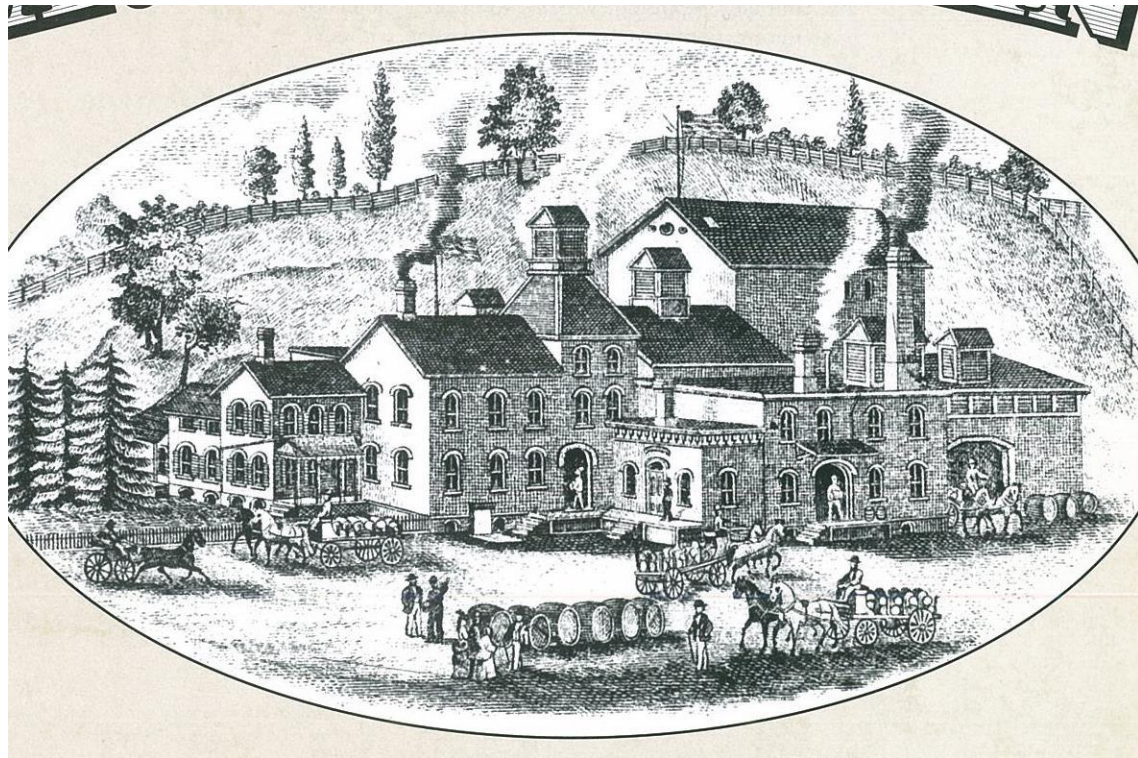
Consideration will be given to whether or not the proposed demolition is a later addition that is not in keeping with the original design of the structure or does not contribute to its character.

Gettelman Brewery 4400 West State Street





Source: Nancy Moore Gettelman



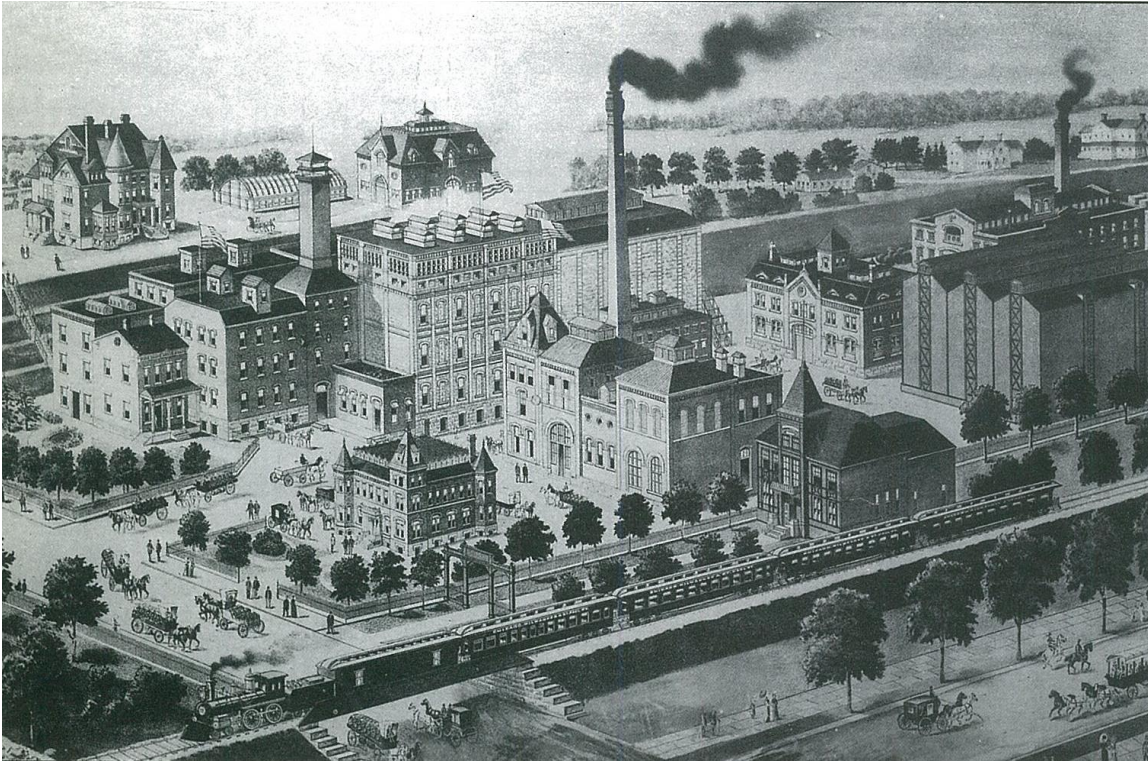
Source: Nancy Moore Gettelman



Source: Nancy Moore Gettelman



Source: Nancy Moore Gettelman



Source: Nancy Moore Gettelman, The Art Gravure /Etching Co. Milwaukee, 1892



Source: UWM MS 107 Box 4 Folder 5,



Source: Milwaukee County Historical Society, c. 1951



