



**611- 625 N. Milwaukee Street PIONEER BUILDING (1864-65/1925-1926)**

Record of COAs

02/27/1998—Compressor at alley elevation

05/19/1998—New awnings

11/20/2000—Rehabilitate front entrance, remove black marble veneer at entrance  
(625) (not dome)

03/12/1996—Signage

03/15/1996—Signage

Record of Open Violations

None

National Register Listing 09/23/1986

Contributing Building

Local Designation 11/17/1987

No objection to the proposed designation was voiced at the public hearing before the HPC on April 21, 1987

City Assessed Value \$2,255,000 Tax Delinquent

History

The core of this building was constructed in 1865 for the Milwaukee Musical Society and a new façade and interior floors were constructed in 1925-1926. This 1920s façade is considered contributing to the East Side Commercial Historic District.

The Milwaukee Musical Society was established 1850. After its performance space, Albany Hall, was destroyed by fire on March 1, 1862, they embarked on a subscription drive to build a better auditorium. The Musical Society Hall (also known as the Academy of Music) was built at today's 625 N. Milwaukee Street for \$60,000 and opened on January 29, 1865. Local architect Edward Townsend Mix designed the building based on plans initially drawn by a New York architect named Peterson. It was the first theater in Milwaukee to have an auditorium on the ground floor and was one of the few in the country used solely for performances and not other commercial activities. The building was eventually sold to private interests and featured vaudeville acts, some legitimate theater and even motion pictures. Over time changes were made to the façade. It was last known as the Schubert Theater.

In 1925-1926, the building's owner, McGeoch Building Company, took out permits to remove the auditorium interior and construct a new façade at a total cost of \$75,000. The permit was not for the complete demolition of the old building but rather taken out as an alteration. New fireproof floors were installed at this time and the building featured storefronts on the ground level and offices above. The building was called the Pioneer Building since that time. H. Russell Zimmermann has found only a few traces of the old Academy of Music remaining on the interior and he documented this in his January 13, 1980 Milwaukee Journal article "Few traces remain of lavish Music Hall."

Early tenants in the Pioneer Building included a jewelry store, dress shop, wholesale milliner (Blumenfeld-Locher Company), beauty salon, and offices for real estate brokers, lawyers and insurance agents. The U.S. Forest Service occupied the third floor and part of the second in the 1930s. Restaurants have occupied space on the ground floor including the Colony Inn (1920s, 1930s), the Swashbuckler (1960s), Pier 611 Steak House (1960s) Gutho's Triple Crown (1970s).

There were some significant tenants in the Pioneer Building. The Woman's Exchange was one of these. Established in 1882, the Exchange was a consignment center where genteel ladies in straightened circumstances or women otherwise confined to the home were able to sell handmade goods upon payment of an annual membership fee. The consignment center received ten percent of the sale of the items sold. The goal was the creation and preservation of women's independence and the maintaining of self respect for those who might otherwise have to rely on charitable assistance. Very progressive in its outlook, the Exchange stressed the monetary and economic value of a woman's time and efforts and emphasized that home crafted products were of a value on par with men's occupations. The Exchange soon branched out to run a restaurant and sponsor classes. The restaurant moved to 611 N. Milwaukee Street in 1936 taking over the former Colony Inn. The Woman's Exchange corporation disbanded in 1965 and the store and restaurant closed on September 1<sup>st</sup> that year.

Possibly the most significant tenant was the Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle that occupied the fourth floor. The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle was founded in 1921 and was Milwaukee's first English language Jewish newspaper. Its first issue was published on December 16, 1921 by Irving G. Rhodes (1900-1977) and Nathan J. Gould. The paper was originally located in the Mack Block at Water Street and Wisconsin Avenue. There had been earlier Jewish newspapers in Milwaukee, the Zeitgeist (German language, 1880-1882) and the Wochenblat (Yiddish, 1914-1932) but the Chronicle emerged after World War I to serve a sizable community interested in local affairs as there was no other paper to report on matters of interest to middle class Jews in Milwaukee. The non-religious and non-partisan paper claimed in its first issue "The Chronicle represents no particular section or group of the Jewish people. It is a medium of expression for ALL the Jewish people of every shade of opinion. It will not propagandize; It will only report. It shall be all that its name implies—A JEWISH CHRONICLE." The paper did not emphasize the differences within the Jewish community but rather matters that unified it. The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle's publisher since 1972 has been the Milwaukee Jewish Federation. It is still in publication. It occupied the Pioneer Building into the 1930s and went on to another location on Milwaukee Street in the Third Ward.

This location was an important hub of publishing in the city. Across Milwaukee Street was located the Evening Wisconsin Building (razed). At the southeast corner of Michigan and Milwaukee Streets was located the Milwaukee Journal (razed). Various printers and binders occupied the McGeoch Building at the northwest corner of the intersection, right next door to the Pioneer Building. In his history of the McGeoch Building (Milwaukee Journal June 17, 1984) H. Russell Zimmermann wrote that "more than 40 printers, engravers, binders, typographers, publishers and newspaper offices [were] listed within a one block radius" of the corner of Michigan and Milwaukee Streets. The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle probably located here in the Pioneer Building because of the proximity to businesses that supported the publishing industry.

Other ground floor tenants in the Pioneer Building over time have included a gift shop, Sanctum Regnum (1970s), Easter Seal Society Store (1980s), the Hand of Glory (1990s)

and the House of Magic (1990s). Upper floors have included Swanson Productions, a beauty salon, Kromer Cap Company, and printing companies among other offices.

Alterations to the Pioneer Building, as built 1925-1926, have been minimal over time. The front windows of No. 611 were in-filled with brick in late 1966 to accommodate a new restaurant that was moving into the former Woman's Exchange space. The main entrance to the building lobby was remodeled around 1960. The building is a good example of simple commercial style architecture, intact from its construction date with all but one storefront in original or near original condition.

<b>Recent Ownership Records 625 N. Milwaukee (Musical Society Hall/Pioneer Building)</b>
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1985 September 1—Investment Properties, Ltd c/o Cons. Capital Income Trust, Attn: Lauri Foster/John W. Harragan (1203) / 2000 Powell St., Emeryville, CA 94608

1988 May 4 –Sheriff Sale to Consolidated Cap Income Trust

1992 April 16—National Income Realty Trust sells to Robert E John

2000 August 10—Robert E John sells to Switch & Data WI One LLC

2006 February 14—Switch & Data WI One LLC/c/o Levin Properties Inc. to Frank J. Andrews Milwaukee NOWI LLC

2009 January 26—Frank J Andrews Milwaukee NOWI LLC c/o Bruce W. Layne to Milwaukee NOWI LLC (registered effective 02/14/2006, Registered Agent: Jill Domecki, 7722 W. Greenfield Avenue, West Allis, 53214; Principal Office 425 S. Lapham Street, Oconomowoc, WI 53066



627 N. Milwaukee Street  
Also addressed over time as 627-629  
and 629 N. Milwaukee Street



631 N. Milwaukee Street  
Also addressed over time as 629-631



Dr. James Diefendorf Building (1867)  
Courtesy Milwaukee Central Library

**627 N. Milwaukee Street Dr. James Diefendorf Building (1867) South Half**

Record of COAs

None

Record of Open Violations

November 2010 to replace defective window sash and repair/replace two defective window panes.

National Register Listing 09/23/1986

Contributing

Local Historic Designation 11/17/1987

No objection to the proposed designation was voiced at the public hearing before the HPC on April 21, 1987

627 N. Milwaukee Street Current Assessed Value \$194,000. Taxes paid in full.

History

What are today two distinctly different looking buildings were actually built as one unified block in 1867. The ownership eventually split so that the south bay had a different owner from the north bay. Each bay had three windows with the north bay having additional footage to accommodate an entrance to the upper floors. Split ownership was common in buildings that appear to be one structure. An example is later in this report and one local historic designation, the James Brown Double House, was split between two owners after the initial construction. The original owner of this building was Dr. James Diefendorf (spelling varies) who came to Milwaukee to open his medical practice in 1857. He had many appointments during his tenure here. He was a trustee for the Blind Institute, he was a delegate to the Union Party convention, he was appointed assistant surgeon of the First Infantry in 1861. He was also the medical examiner for the pension commission. He must have endeared himself to the residents of Milwaukee by offering free medical service to the families of volunteer soldiers during the Civil War.

Dr. James Diefendorf had his house and office at this site prior to the fire of October 22, 1865 that destroyed most of the block. Newspaper accounts indicated that his insurance would cover his losses. On July 11, 1867 the Milwaukee Sentinel reported that his building, which adjoined the Music Hall, was not making progress but would be completed by the end of the summer. Dr. Diefendorf died soon after on January 11, 1868, suffering a paralytic stroke a week before his death. Tax rolls show that the building he constructed was in the hands of his estate for years thereafter. Sometimes Samuel Fields, a real estate investor, is shown as paying the taxes on the property and he may have been retained to manage the building. Field also owned the building at today's

327 E. Wisconsin Avenue. Around 1874, J. B. Kellogg is shown as owner of the north half of the building. Kellogg married a Harriet Jane Diefendorf from Ft. Plain, New York, in October 1852. This is presumably Dr. Diefendorf's sister or daughter so the building stayed in the family.

Occupants at 627 N. Milwaukee Street, the south portion of the Dr. Diefendorf Building, varied over time. Early tenants included:  
William A. Munn's tin shop (1869-1876)  
Western Church News, Rev. E. R. Ward, editor (also pastor of Christ Church) (1876).  
James L. Judge, a plumber and gasfitter (1876-1877)  
Miller (Lawrence McV.) & Smith (Herbert W.), book and job printers (1897)

Since this location was immediately adjacent to the Academy of Music Hall, it was almost inevitable that a drinking emporium would locate here. The 1880 tax rolls show that the Schlitz Brewing Company took ownership at this time and operated a saloon and restaurant on the ground floor. Various proprietors included Fritz Calies (1880-1883), Richert (Charles L.) & Langlois (Frank) (1884-1885), McEvoy Bros. (1889-1893), Constantine Oeser (1894) and Paul Hoppe (1896, who also lived on the premises).

During Prohibition, confectioner Tony Zulli occupied this south half of the building. Later tenants included Mrs. Anna Siemens (children's clothing) (1930) and Harry Elman Inc. (furs) (1940)

Alterations have occurred to the storefront at 629 N. Milwaukee but the remainder of the building is essentially intact including the brackets at the cornice. It is an excellent example of the Italianate style from the period right after the Civil War.

<b>Recent Ownership Records 627 N. Milwaukee Street (south half of Dr. Diefendorf Building)</b>
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1980 February 1—Robert A. Levine and Howard D. Spector, 312 E. Wisconsin Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53202

1994 August 19—Robert A. Levine to Howard D. Spector

1997 June 5—Caryl G. Spector to Howard D. Spector

2006 June 21—Howard D. Spector to Marshall Block Inc (registered November 5, 1065, Registered Agent: Robert A. Levine 111 E. Wisconsin Avenue Suite 1710, Milwaukee, WI 53202; Delinquent October 1, 2008, Administrative Dissolution October 11, 2010)

2007 January 23—Marshall Block Inc to MBI Properties LLC (registered September 28, 2006, Registered Agent Robert a. Levine, 111 E. Wisconsin Avenue Suite 1710, Milwaukee, WI 53202

**631 N. Milwaukee Street Dr. James Diefendorf Building North Half**

Record of COAs

03/06/2008—Signage

05/07/1991—Signage

Record of Open Violations

None

National Register Listing 09/23/1986

Non-Contributing

Local Historic Designation 11/17/1987

No objection to the proposed designation was voiced at the public hearing before the HPC on April 21, 1987

City Assessed Value \$319,000. Taxes paid in full.

History

See information about Dr. Diefendorf above.

Some of the earliest occupants of this north half of the building included the Music Hall Billiards Room (might have operated out of both store fronts) (1868-1869), attorney Jonathan Arnold (1868-1869) and Mrs. Mary B. wood, a cloak maker (1868-1869).

Other tenants included:

Fritz Calies, saloon (1876)

Mrs. Lucinda Jones, dressmaker (1874-1875)

James Johnson, physician and health offices (1874-1875)

August Rolf, physician and surgeon (1876-1877)

Storer (Mary L.) & Shaw (Dora L.), dressmakers (1880-1884)

Western Church Weekly (1880)

H. W. Smith & Co., book and job printers (1881)

Sullivan (Christ.) & Detjen (Joseph), merchant tailors (1883-1884)

Herbert (George W.) & Eron (Anton), tailors (1894-1896)

Robert B. Boyd, real estate (1899)

A saloon is listed in the ground floor space, first in 1876, then consistently from 1885. Proprietors included Charles Kraus (1885-1888), Kraus Brothers (Charles and Fred W.)(1887), James McEvoy (sample room and restaurant, 1894), Samuel Margoles (1896), and Thomas Ducey (1897-1898). It is not known for sure if the south half and north half storefronts were combined into one large saloon but is likely.



Permit records for the building show occupancies for a variety of businesses in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

Gift shop, confectionery and floral goods (1930)

Children's clothing (1930)

J. P. Erwin Niedringhaus Antique Silver (1934)

Furrier (1935)

Smartwear Emma Lange (1930s-1950s, this was the side entrance to the main store around the corner on East Wisconsin)

Wall Galleries, retail sales and auction of antiques and household furniture (1977)

Heassler Hardware Company (1971)

Barsamian Oriental Rugs (1990s)



Photo 1960. Courtesy of Milwaukee Central Library

This north half of the Dr. Diefendorf Building no longer has its 1867 appearance. Permit records show some storefront level alterations occurred in 1930. The front of 631 N. Milwaukee was completely rebuilt when Smartwear Emma Lange's occupied the premises. This reconstruction appears to have been done in 1937 and Roy O. Papenthien is the architect of record. The work connected the Milwaukee Street building to Smartwear Emma Lange's main store on East Wisconsin Avenue and coordinated with the Deco front that was put on that building. The L-shaped configuration remains today.

**Recent Ownership Records 629-631 N. Milwaukee Street (part of Diefendorf's Building)**

1980 February 1—Robert A. Levine and Howard D. Spector

1994 August 19—Robert A. Levine to Howard D. Spector

2006 June 21—Howard D. Spector to Marshall Block Inc. MBI Properties  
LLC see above



**633 N Milwaukee Street Samuel A. Field Building (1877)**

Record of COAs

None

Record of Open Violations

None

National Register Listing 09/23/1986

Contributing

Local Historic Designation 11/17/1987

No objection to the proposed designation was voiced at the public hearing before the HPC on April 21, 1987

History

The small Victorian Gothic style building at 633 N. Milwaukee Street was listed as a separate parcel in the early tax rolls. It is now part of the tax key parcel that includes 327 East Wisconsin Avenue. The Milwaukee Street façade was always joined to the earlier Wisconsin Avenue building and for much of its history it served as an auxiliary entrance to the Wisconsin Avenue storefront. S. A. Field owned this parcel, described as the East half of the South 1/3 of Lot 2 in the Plat of Milwaukee, as early as 1868. In the flurry of rebuilding that occurred after the October 22, 1865 fire, this parcel remained open and undeveloped and shows up as vacant in historic photos of Milwaukee Street. The real estate was valued at \$1,350.

In 1877 Field constructed this building, assessed at \$2,000. No architect has been discovered for this building but it is an excellent example of the Victorian Gothic style with its boldly corbelled masonry cornice and segmental masonry hoods over the 4-over-4 sash. Architects Edward Townsend Mix and Frederick Velguth were among the few architects utilizing this style during the 1870s.

The earliest known occupant of 633 North Milwaukee Street was G. J. Hart & Co., a retail dry goods merchant who also occupied the storefront at 327 East Wisconsin in 1877. He was followed by Phillip T. Puposkey who operated an art emporium on the premises in 1879 and 1880. City directories show he lived upstairs. Another business that utilized both premises was Sanborn (E. Arthur) & Clason (Clarence), stationers and wholesale copper and steel plate engravers. They were in the building 1889-1890. Dry goods and notions merchant Carroll & Keogh Company was in both storefronts from 1894 through 1899 and possibly later. City directory listings in the 20<sup>th</sup> century stop showing a separate listing for this Milwaukee Street address and it probably continued as an adjunct of the Wisconsin Avenue storefront. One former employee of the Hallmark shop that occupied the Wisconsin Avenue storefront related that in recent decades she and other employees entered work through the Milwaukee Street front.

The building façade is in a remarkable state of preservation with the corbelled cornice, storefront cornice and upper windows intact. The storefront itself has been altered but is reversible, much as the dozens of other storefront examples that have come before the commission in past years, including Johnson Bank next door..

#### **Recent Ownership Records 633 N. Milwaukee Street**

Now part of tax key for 327 E. Wisconsin Avenue. This property is shown as connected to the Wisconsin Avenue storefront as early as the 1876 Rascher Fire Insurance Map. See list for 327 East Wisconsin Avenue.



**319-323 E. Wisconsin Avenue Follansbee Block (1867)**

Record of COAs
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None

Record of Open Violations
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None

National Register Listing 09/23/1986
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Contributing

Local historic Designation 11/17/1987
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No objection to the proposed designation was voiced at the public hearing before the HPC on April 21, 1987

Current City Assessed Value \$740, 000 Taxes Paid in Full
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History
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The building addressed today at 319-323 East Wisconsin Avenue was historically known as the Follansbee Block after its builder, Alanson Follansbee. Follansbee was a native of Uxbridge, Massachusetts, who apprenticed in the bakery business in Boston before relocating to the Midwest. After a few years in Chicago and in Galena, Illinois, Follansbee moved to Milwaukee in 1847 and opened the Wisconsin Street Bakery which grew into one of the largest in the area. It was located at 42-44 Wisconsin (old number) on the north side of E. Wisconsin Avenue. In 1865 he formed a partnership with Augustus T. Riddell as A. Follansbee & Company, and they opened a steam bakery in the 800 block on North Broadway. A small bakery was also located at 117 Wisconsin (old number) in 1865 and was associated with Lansing Follansbee, possibly a son or some relative or a misspelling of Alanson's name.

The Follansbee's invested in real estate in addition to their business and owned property, including a tenement and barns as well as 117 Wisconsin on the block bounded by E. Wisconsin, E. Michigan, N. Broadway, and N. Milwaukee Streets.

On the evening of Sunday, October 22, 1865, an arsonist set fire to the Follansbee barn, and the resulting blaze destroyed most of the block, which has consisted chiefly of frame dwellings and stores, many of which dated back to the earliest settlement of the city. The brand new music hall (site of today's Pioneer Building), which was a masonry building, was spared. About a dozen families were said to have been left homeless after the fire including an African American family who had occupied Follansbee's tenement building.

Fortunately, Follansbee's main business located two blocks north was unharmed. By January 5, 1866 he had made the decision to construct a new commercial building on his

Wisconsin Avenue frontage and relocate the bakery outlet to West Wisconsin Avenue between Second and Third Streets. In July, 1867 the newspapers reported that Follansbee would shortly begin work on the new \$30,000 commercial building at the southwest corner of Milwaukee Street and Wisconsin Avenue and that it would be “nearly uniform” in appearance with the structure that J.A. Noonan was building at the west end of the block. On August 3, 1867 Follansbee sold the east 60 feet of his frontage to John Francis Birchard, probably to help finance the project. Birchard, in turn, sold the west 26 feet of his parcel to real estate dealer Samuel S. Field on August 28, 1867. Excavation for the foundation was underway when two workmen were buried under falling earth on the evening of September 2, 1867. Both survived, although one had severe injuries.

Historic photos show that a varying fenestration identified the three portions of the building, although they were unified by a prominent, dormered, mansard roof with end pavilions that was just being completed in late November of 1867. Follansbee fell ill before his building was completed and was apparently bedridden for the last year and a half of his life as his obituary on April 12, 1869 reported that he had never gotten to see his “beautiful block.”

A search through newspaper accounts has failed to identify the name of the architect for the project although Edward Townsend Mix was one of the few local designers who are known to have favored the Second Empire style. Although Birchard and Field owned the east half of the land on which the building was constructed, city directories and newspaper accounts consistently refer to the entire structure as the “Follansbee Block” through 1885, after which time the designation was applied to a new commercial building that the Follansbee family erected on Milwaukee Street behind T. A. Chapman’s department store.

The east portion of the Follansbee building was finally called the “Birchard Block” beginning in the 1907 city directory. There had been another building known as the “Birchard Block”, erected by Harvey Birchard that existed from 1860 at the southwest corner of Plankinton Avenue and West Wisconsin Avenue. It was known by that name through 1906 even after being annexed by the Plankinton House Hotel some decades before. The center portion of the building, owned by Samuel Field, appears to have never been commonly known as the Field Block.

James Francis Birchard (1819-1894) used his east portion of the building for his wholesale and retail furniture business until his bankruptcy in 1877. He retained ownership of the building, however, and leased to a number of tenants. Birchard heirs altered the building by removing the mansard roof and adding a story in 1899. This portion is today Johnson Bank and not included in the proposal by the developer.

The Follansbee Block was built to the standards of its time and provided for ground floor retail space, upper offices and top floor halls that would be rented for special events and to various organizations. There is reference in the Milwaukee Sentinel in 1876 that one of the halls was being partitioned off into “apartments suitable for office purposes.”

The earliest tenants in Follansbee's Block included Joseph Magie, a merchant tailor and wholesale/retail gas fixture dealer William E. Goodman. In an article on the building by H. Russell Zimmermann (Milwaukee Journal Sunday March 24, 1974) he indicates that "Goodman's was the largest establishment of its kind in the city and the chandeliers and wall sconces for a great many Milwaukee homes were purchased in his showroom."

Occupants in Follansbee's Block in 1878 included attorneys, a physician, and a grocer. In 1886 tenants included artists a fancy goods/variety store, attorneys and real estate agents. In 1898 tenants included artists, a physician, a shirt manufacturer, wholesale jeweler, a fur goods manufacturer and attorneys. By 1921 there were women's clothing shops, various insurance agents, a music teacher and interior decorator among others. The most prominent tenant was the Smartwear Emma Lange Shop that occupied the premises from the late 1920s through the 1960s.

The Follansbee Building underwent alterations by the Follansbee heirs and later owners. The west bays were remodeled into the Art Deco style in 1932, designs supplied by the prominent firm of Kirchhoff and Rose. These were done to accommodate the Smartwear Emma Lange Shop, a prominent ladies ready-to-wear clothing store. It was one of a number of such shops to cluster in proximity to T. A. Chapman's Department Store, once located at the southeast corner of East Wisconsin Avenue and Milwaukee Street. Chapman's was known for its high end merchandise and catering to "the carriage trade." Walgreen's, the last tenant, made changes to the storefront in 1983 when it moved in.



Photo 1956. Courtesy Milwaukee Central library

The Follansbee Building still is recognizable as a Second Empire style building, albeit with a Deco façade. The mansard roof is still in place although it has been simplified. The alterations to the façade were done by one of the most important architectural firms



in the city and have acquired importance in their own right. The building is considered contributing to the National Register designation.

<b>Recent Ownership Records 319-323 E. Wisconsin Avenue</b>
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1980 February 1—Robert A. Levine and Howard D. Spector

1994 August 19—Robert A. Levine to Howard D. Spector

1997 June 5—Caryl G. Spector to Howard D. Spector

2006 June 21--Howard D Spector to Marshall Block Inc

2007 January 23—Marshall Block Inc to MBI Properties LLC



**327 E Wisconsin Samuel A. Field Building (1867)**

Record of COAs

09/05/2007—Replace molding and two windows at 2<sup>nd</sup> story bay (No. 327)

Record of Open Violations

None—2010 Violation for mounting fire extinguisher properly and discontinuing illegal extension cords now closed.

National Register Listing 09/23/1986

Local Historic Designation 11/17/1987

No objection to the proposed designation was voiced at the public hearing before the HPC on April 21, 1987

Current City Assessed Value \$441,000 Taxes Paid in Full

## History

See History above.

For the purposes of this report, we will refer to this building as the Field Building, although this portion of the block as well as the section to the west was commonly referred to as the Follansbee Block. As pointed out, the fenestration pattern was varied to set off the different ownership structure of the block. Such collaborative efforts made for buildings that were more substantial in construction (here solid masonry) as well as architecturally prominent.

After the construction was completed on the building it was occupied by Field's business, Silkman & Field, Real Estate, and by Charles J. Russell, an importer of coffee, tea, spices and fancy groceries.

Dressmakers, George J. Hart & Co. dry goods and Leopold R. Roeder, an insurance agent occupied the premises in 1878. Hart also utilized the storefront on Milwaukee Street as cited above. By 1886 there were dentists and a book agent as tenants. Physicians, lawyers and a dressmaker were in the building in 1898.

An important feature of the Field Building was its upper hall. It was known as "Castle Hall" in its early years and served as the gathering place for Knights of Pythias Milwaukee Lodge No. 1 who met there on Friday nights. The Knights were a nationwide fraternal organization established in Washington in 1864. Milwaukee's first branch was founded in 1871. The Knights of Pythias had met next door in Follansbee's Block but moved to this location around 1876, just at the time the Milwaukee Sentinel reported that the halls in the Follansbee Block were being converted to offices. Another group also utilized the hall on Thursday evenings and was known as the Diamond Bros. Chamber No. 1. By 1880 the hall was listed in the directories as "Field's Hall." The Crystal Springs Good Templars, a temperance group, were meeting here on Tuesdays by 1889.

One well-known occupant of the Field Building was Susan G. Frackelton. Frackelton (1848-1932) was a Milwaukee native and a pioneer in the American Arts and Crafts Movement. She started out decorating imported china in her parents' crockery import business but later opened a shop of her own and developed and threw her own pottery. She published a china painting manual, *Tried By Fire*, and received a patent for a kiln that was designed for use in private homes rather than commercial studios. Collections of her work can be found at the Milwaukee County Historical Society and the Wisconsin Historical Society among others. The Milwaukee County Historical Society writes "By the 1890's, she gravitated towards pottery throwing and painting, receiving numerous exposition medals and awards for her unique style. The Frackelton "Blue and Grey" is characterized by its grey glaze and blue painted decorative patterns. This style helped move functional pottery into the realm of "art pottery". A medium that sees pottery as an art form, not as a functional tool." Frackelton was in the building from 1882 through at least 1888 and demonstrates how women were beginning to have an influential role in business and the arts.

Later occupants include Weber's, a confectionery, who was in the building in the 1920s and 1930s and possibly later. Weber's also occupied the Milwaukee Street storefront per fire insurance maps. Bloedel's Jewelry had occupancy in the 1970s, Betsy's Hallmark store in the 1980s and the current tenant is Downtown Books.

The Field Building retains most of its historic character and is recognizable as a Second Empire style building. The second story bay window was added in 1901 when Field was still listed as the owner. The first story storefront can be restored or brought back to a 19<sup>th</sup> century appearance, much as was done to the Birchard Building next door when Johnson Bank moved in.

<b>Recent Ownership Records 327 E. Wisconsin Avenue</b>
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1980 February 1—Robert A Levine and Howard D. Spector

1997 June 5—Caryl G. Spector to Howard D. Spector

2006 June 21—Howard D. Spector to Marshall Block Inc.

2007 January 23—Marshall Block Inc to MBI Properties LLC