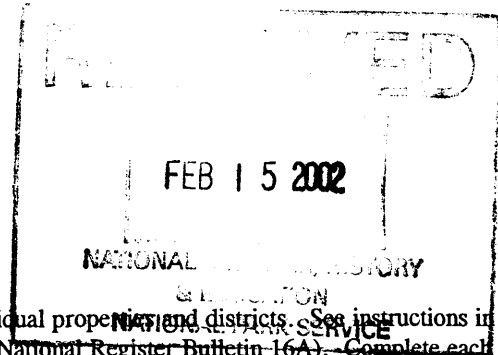


*Replicant
 of Madison
 nomination*

**United States Department of Interior
 National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
 Registration Form**



This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Main Street Historic District
 other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	various, see inventory	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Lake Geneva	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Walworth	code 127
			zip code 53147

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Alicia L. Love Oct. 22, 2001
 Signature of certifying official/Title Date
 Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer-WI

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
 (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Main Street Historic District

Walworth

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

entered in the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register.

See continuation sheet.

removed from the National Register.

other, (explain:)

Edson H. Beall

1-11-02

[Signature]

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- structure
- site
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

contributing	noncontributing
20	5 buildings
	sites
	structures
	objects
20	5 total

Name of related multiple property listing:
(Enter "N/A" if property not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

Number of contributing resources is previously listed in the National Register

1

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/financial institution
- COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/business

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

- COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store
- COMMERCE/TRADE/business
- COMMERCE/TRADE/restaurant

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

- LATE VICTORIAN/Italianate
- Late 19th & 20th Century Revival/Classical Revival
- Late 19th & 20th Century Revival/Colonial Revival

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

- Foundation Stone
- walls Brick
- Concrete
- roof Asphalt
- other Cast Iron

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The Main Street Historic District is made up primarily of the 700 block of Main Street, which is the center of the historic downtown of Lake Geneva, a small city on the northeast end of picturesque Geneva Lake. Lake Geneva is in southeast Walworth County, a largely rural county in southeastern Wisconsin that is dotted with several small communities. Lake Geneva is also about 10 miles from the Wisconsin-Illinois border and, for much of its history, the city has been the summer destination for tourists and wealthy families from the Chicago area. The large Geneva Lake extends south and west of the city, and it is surrounded by small villages, large estates and residential subdivisions. North and east of Lake Geneva, the area is primarily agricultural, although resorts, clubs, and residential and commercial developments have extended into the countryside around the city in recent years.

Several major state highways run through Lake Geneva, converging in the city's downtown commercial district. They include State Highway 50, a major east-west route in southern Wisconsin. Traffic from these highways, along with the large numbers of tourists and shoppers who frequent the city's downtown business district and lakefront, makes Main Street an extremely busy thoroughfare, particularly during summer months. During peak hours on weekends and summer weekdays, the intersection of Main and Broad streets, the western boundary of the district, is as busy as an intersection in the downtown of a major city.

Both inside and outside of the district, Main Street is a wide street that allows for two-way traffic. It is fully improved with concrete curbs and gutters and there are wide concrete sidewalks in front of the commercial buildings along the street. Angle parking is allowed along the 700 block inside of the district, and for several blocks west of the district. Because of the demand for parking in downtown Lake Geneva, parking is short-term and strictly enforced and there is a constant turnover of cars in these spaces. It is rare when there are many open parking spaces in downtown Lake Geneva. Although Main Street is modern and filled with traffic, the current street is the same size as it has been since it was platted as part of the original Geneva settlement in 1837-40.

The topography of most of Lake Geneva's downtown is flat, including the land within the district boundaries. It remains relatively flat throughout the remainder of the city's downtown and into the residential area west of the downtown. But, just east of the district, the land slopes sharply down, and slopes gently toward the lakefront south of the district. Since the district is commercial, there is little formal landscaping, except for some small trees that have been planted

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

at intervals in the sidewalks. Lighting is provided by "period" light fixtures on antique style metal poles. There are no open spaces or parks within the boundaries of the district.

Despite the large amounts of traffic and people usually seen in downtown Lake Geneva, the Main Street Historic District has a cohesive, historic appearance. There are two reasons for this cohesiveness. First, the district has a low ratio of contributing to non-contributing buildings. Of the 26 buildings in the district, only five (19%) are non-contributing. Most of these non-contributing buildings are small and do not detract from the overall historic streetscape. And, one of the large non-contributing buildings is only non-contributing due to its recent reconstruction. Its appearance is that of an early twentieth century business block, an appearance based on historic photographs.

Second, the cohesiveness of the district is helped by factors outside of the district boundaries. East of the district is an area of less dense commercial development that has an appearance significantly different from the district itself. To the north of the district is a continuation of Lake Geneva's downtown, particularly along Broad Street, which consists of primarily modern and remodeled buildings. Also to the north of the district is the beginning of a residential neighborhood. To the west of the district is also a continuation of Lake Geneva's downtown, but like Broad Street, this area of Main Street features primarily modern and remodeled buildings. West of this area is also a residential neighborhood. South of the district is an area of modern and remodeled commercial buildings and large apartment buildings near the lakefront.

Lake Geneva has one of the most economically successful and vibrant downtowns in the area. The large numbers of visitors helps local businesses in Lake Geneva stay economically viable and have attracted some chain stores to fill the historic commercial buildings that would normally be found in larger city shopping malls. Some traditional historic businesses, such as grocery stores, are not found in Lake Geneva's downtown, but the historic district's buildings house a wide variety of stores that reflect both historic and modern retailing, including specialty clothing stores, gift stores, and other businesses that give the city a reputation as a unique and special place to shop.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED BUILDINGS

Italianate

711 Main St.
Hanna Block, 1871¹

The Hanna Block is a two-story commercial building constructed in the Italianate style. Originally constructed of cream bricks, the building has been painted white with green accents. At the roofline, the building has a brick corbeled cornice "supported" by four brick pilasters with bracketed brick corbeled capitals that make up part of the cornice. Below the cornice is a brick corbeled belt course, and a similar belt course sits under the second story openings. These round-arched openings are decorated with round brick arches. The original four-over-four light sashes have been replaced with round-arched single lights.

The original storefront of this building is still extant. It is constructed of three large round brick arches that rise from pilasters decorated with Corinthian capitals at the center. Filling the arches that flank the entrance are round-arched show windows. According to an historic photograph, the original windows sat on narrow wood-paneled aprons. The current show windows are round-arched, but run all the way down to the floor. The central arch covers the recessed entrance, and set into this arch is a transom that features original Gothic-arched lintels.

T. J. Hanna came to Lake Geneva in 1845 and established the first cabinet shop in the village. He built this shop into a successful furniture store and undertaking business. His son, S. S., joined the business in 1861, and, in 1871, Hanna started construction on this building, one of the early brick blocks in the city's downtown. S. S. Hanna continued the family business until around 1912. The most popular business in this building during the twentieth century was the Smart Shop, which began in the late 1930s or early 1940s and operated until the 1980s.²

¹ Tax Rolls for the City of Lake Geneva, on file in the Area Research Center of the Anderson Library, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI; James Simmons, *Annals of Lake Geneva*, Lake Geneva: The Herald, 1897, p. 97.

² Simmons, p. 97; Tax Rolls; City Directories for 1907, 1941, 1965, 1971, 1975, 1981, on file in the Lake Geneva Public Library, Lake Geneva, WI.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

701-709 Main St.
Walker Block, 1872³

The Walker Block was the first large three-story brick block constructed in downtown Lake Geneva. It is a cream brick building constructed in the Italianate commercial style. The building is topped with a cornice of brick corbeling that resembles brackets. The two upper floors are dominated by rows of round arched openings filled with original four-light double-hung sashes. The openings are trimmed with round, brick arches. On the third floor these arches are connected to the round brick arches decorating shorter, narrow, arched reveals that sit between the openings, creating an arcaded effect. On the second floor, the openings are divided by brick pilasters with simple brick corbeled capitals sitting in a brick corbeled belt course. The openings of the second and third story are carried over along the Center Street, or east, elevation of this corner building.

The storefront of the Walker Block has been altered. It features stone veneer walls flanking several modern show windows that are filled with modern divided lights in a Colonial Revival effect. The large corner storefront has large divided-light show windows sitting on aprons of stone veneer. The entrance to this storefront is at the corner and the stone veneer wraps around to the east elevation of the building. The west storefront has smaller divided light show windows flanking a central entrance. The entire storefront is covered with a modern fixed awning. Although not historic, the storefront is attractive and well-maintained. At the rear of the building is a non-contributing addition that dates from the 1950s.

Austin Walker was a pioneer of Walworth County, settling in the Town of Linn in 1851. In 1854, Walker came to Lake Geneva and began a grocery store and boot and shoe shop. Eventually, he dealt only in boots and shoes. He closed out this business in 1869, then after a short time in Chicago, he returned to Lake Geneva in 1871, and had this building started in 1872. The first tenants in the new building were Ferguson's dry goods store and Buhre's jewelry store, along with Walker's general store. On the third floor, Walker's Block had a large hall, which soon became the most popular meeting place in town. Known as Walker's Hall, it dominated only for a short time, until 1874, when the new Metropolitan Block was built down the street and included a lavish new hall. In 1858, Walker's son, O. H. joined his father's business and remained in that business until 1896. Although O. H. Walker retired in 1896, he retained title to the building until well into the twentieth century. Many businesses have occupied this building during the twentieth century, including one of the local newspapers, the *Lake Geneva Regional News*.⁴

³ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 4 May 1872, p. 3, 19 October 1872, p. 3.

⁴ Albert Clayton Beckwith, *History of Walworth County, Wisconsin*, Indianapolis, IN: B. F. Bowen & Co., 1912, pp. 622-624; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 19 October, 1872, p. 3; Tax Rolls; City Directories.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

770 Main St.

Metropolitan Block, 1874; William L. Jenny, Architect; O. T. LaSalle, Builder; Renovated:
1984-86⁵

The Metropolitan Block was the premier commercial block in downtown Lake Geneva during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The three-story building was constructed of Racine pressed cream bricks in the Italianate style. After several decades of decline in the mid-twentieth century, it was historically renovated in 1984-86. The building features an ornate brick corbeled cornice that features several motifs, including circles, dentils, crosses, and small arcaded arches. The third story openings are very tall and narrow and sit under smooth limestone segmental arches decorated with incised details. The segmentally arched openings are filled with historically accurate four-light replacement sashes. The second story openings are shorter, but have similar details. Both rows of openings are decorated with belt courses and repeat along the Broad Street or west elevation of the corner building.

The first floor of the building has a replicated historic storefront of large show windows and a corner entrance with a projecting brick segmental arch and decorative awning that covers the entrance's transom. Next to the main entrance on the west elevation is a smaller show window. Also along the west elevation, a large awning covers a staircase leading to the basement. At the southwest end of the building is a set of modern, medium-sized openings and an entrance covered with awnings. Under the awning, the original smooth limestone segmental arches that topped the original openings in this area of the building are still extant. A staircase leads up from the street to the entrance and porch that spans these openings.

When the Metropolitan Block opened in 1874, it quickly replaced Walker's Block, built only two years earlier, as the most prestigious business address in town. The new Metropolitan Hall, a meeting place taking up the entire third floor, could seat 400 people and had a stage with all the appointments. The main business in the first story was H. H. Curtis' drug store, which would later become Arnold's drug store. Also included in the new building was a harness shop, a barber shop, a doctor's office, the offices of the *Geneva Herald*, and a 150-seat lecture hall.⁶

The Metropolitan Block remained an important business address into the twentieth century. In 1910, Max Lazzaroni became the owner of the building and operated an ice cream parlor on the first floor. In 1937, the ice cream shop was replaced with a tavern for the Clair Hotel, which was

⁵"Metropolitan Block," *Lake Geneva Herald*, 31 October 1874, p. 3; Tax Rolls.

⁶"Metropolitan Block."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

established on the second and third floors. Bowling alleys and pool tables were installed in the building's basement and part of the building was also used for the Schultz Brothers variety store, housed next door. Gradually, the building deteriorated, but in 1984 Karl Otzen purchased the Metropolitan Block and during the next two years, he transformed it into a modern commercial and office building that retained its historic features. The success of this renovation can be seen over 15 years later, as the building has not lost any of its attractiveness.⁷

As part of the development of this building, the old Schultz Brothers store next door (760-766 Main St.) was also renovated. Because this building had been inappropriately remodeled in the past, it was structurally unsound and had to be rebuilt, but the new exterior was based on its early twentieth century appearance. Although it is primarily new construction, this building is an attractive and historic-appearing addition to Lake Geneva's downtown. Because it is a modern reconstruction 760-766 is noncontributing.

736-738 Main St.
Wachter & Ford Block, 1881-1882⁸

The Wachter & Ford Block was also known historically as the "Emporium Block." It is a two-story double-storefront block constructed of brick that has been painted. The paint covers the original red brick walls that were accented with cream bricks in a polychromatic effect reflecting the Victorian Italianate style. The building originally had a gable parapet that rose from the center of the building. It was accented with a decorative stone plaque and cream bricks. Two red brick chimneys also rose from each end wall. Both of these features have been removed. Still extant is the cornice of arched brick corbeling that resembles arches. The paint covers up the original cream brick accents at the top of each arch in this cornice, as well as the cream brick accents in the segmental brick arches over the second story openings. Cream bricks and stone accents also decorated the tops of the wide but shallow pilasters that sit between the openings and the decorative arched brick accents flanking each opening.

One of the most important extant features of this building is its historic storefront details, primarily the tall iron columns that provide the storefront's structure. The historic show windows have largely been replaced with modern glazing, but the size of the windows and the structure of the storefront has been maintained. Iron columns flank the show windows and also the building's central entrances, which serve two separate stores. Historic photographs show that the two entrances were once one large central entrance for a single store. The iron columns have

⁷ "An Architectural Work of Art," *Lake & Country*, Lake Geneva: Keefe Real Estate, Winter 1989-90, p. 5-7.

⁸ *Lake Geneva Herald*, 30 September 1881, p. 5, 17 November 1882, p. 5; Tax Rolls.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

classical decoration with bases, fluted columns, and capitals with rosettes. The iron columns support an exposed iron header that runs across the entire building.

Wachter and Ford were dry goods merchants who operated one of the largest businesses in Lake Geneva during the late nineteenth century. Eventually Wachter withdrew from the firm and it was operated by Ford and Phillips for a few years before being operated by S. C. Ford alone. Although Ford continued to own the building, around 1900, his business had been replaced by two new tenants, the newly formed Farmer's National Bank and the Host Brothers Meat Market. A few years later, the National Bank purchased their half of the building, then in 1920, they purchased the entire building. The Farmer's Bank never survived the bank holiday in 1933, but the Host meat market continued to operate until 1965, when the son of the original owner retired. Since that time, the building has had offices and retail businesses in each of its storefronts.⁹

732-734 Main St.
Jones-Kaye Block, 1883-1884, 1891¹⁰

The Jones-Kaye Block was built in two sections, almost ten years apart, yet each side of the building is identical except for a slight variation in the color of the red brick. The two-story building has a plain cornice, but historic photographs indicate that it had an elaborate pressed metal cornice that featured a parapet rising well above the roofline. The cornice also featured large brackets. The decoration above the second story openings is still extant and consists of pedimented hoodmoldings accented with carved decoration at the gable peak and bulls-eye block corbel stops. These openings are filled with replacement single-light sashes.

Both of the storefronts of this building have been modernized, but they probably date to the pre-World War II era and they reflect the historic character of the building. They feature large show windows sitting on aprons. Their transoms are covered, on the east by a sign and on the west by a fixed awning. The east storefront also features an angled show window that leads to recessed entrances to the store and the second floor. The most historic feature of the building's storefronts, though, are the extant cast iron columns that flank the show windows. These iron columns support an exposed iron header and are decorated like classical pilasters. They have bases, fluted columns and Corinthian style capitals of acanthus leaves that are executed in an Art Deco style.

⁹ Tax Rolls, *Lake Geneva Herald*, 7 September 1900, p. 1; "Bank Purchases Office Building," *Lake Geneva News*, 13 May 1920, p. 1; "Farmers Bank is Closed; Silent on Liquidation," *Lake Geneva News*, 11 January 1934, p. 1; Interview with Mrs. Ernest Host, 30 November 2000; City Directories.

¹⁰ *Lake Geneva Herald*, 30 November, 1883, p. 5, 4 April 1884, p. 5, 24 April 1891, p. 5, 31 July 1891, p. 5; Tax Rolls.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 8 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

The west half of this building was constructed in 1883-84 for W. H. Jones and his dry goods firm of Jones and Holmes. Shortly after its construction, Jones left for the Dakotas and sold the building to local developer Addin Kaye. In 1891, Kaye completed the east half of the building in a manner identical to the west half. At the turn of the twentieth century, the building was occupied by Fred B. Grant's furniture and undertaking business, a business that started with Grant's father, H. N. in 1882 and lasted under Fred until May of 1921. At that time, Grant sold the business to Clark B. Habecker and Wallace J. Musselman. Later, the business became Habecker and Derrick, and they remained at this location until the late 1940s. In 1949, Campbell's women's and children's clothing shop opened in the building and remained there into the 1980s.¹¹

704 Main St.
Bank of Geneva-Seymour Block, 1883, 1907¹²

The Bank of Geneva constructed the main block or front section of this building in 1883. It is a two-story Italianate style block with almost all of its original details intact. The building is constructed of cream bricks that have been painted on the front (north) and east elevations. An elaborate cornice tops the building. It features large brackets supporting a projecting cornice decorated with dentils. A paneled frieze completes the cornice details. Similar cornices decorate the two projecting bays on the second story of the front elevation, but they have additional classical details under the friezes. The bases of the bays are also covered with panels that are decorated with pendants. The other second story openings (one between the bays and on the east and west elevations) are decorated with prominent cornice moldings and brackets. These openings are filled with single light sashes. First story openings on the east elevation were once similarly decorated, but the moldings have been removed and the original sashes have been replaced with modern glazing. An extant first story opening sits in the west elevation.

The two original storefronts of this building were identical to the extant storefront at the east end of the front elevation. These storefronts flanked a set of entry doors that were similar to the entry doors of the extant original storefront. The original storefront details include large show windows on aprons flanking a double wood and glass entry door with a transom. Iron columns decorated with brackets and rosettes accent the storefront. The remodeled storefront takes up the space of the original east storefront and the central entrances. It features modern columns flanking modern show windows. The entrance is at the east end of the building and is recessed behind a fixed awning.

¹¹ *Ibid.*; City Directories; "Fred B. Grant Sells Out His Business Here," *Lake Geneva News*, 19 May 1921, p. 1.

¹² Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 9 November 1883, p. 5; *Lake Geneva News*, 3 January 1907, p. 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 9 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

The rear addition, built in 1907 is an example of the Classical Revival style and will be discussed later in this section under the heading "Classical Revival."

The Italianate section of this building was constructed in 1883 for the Bank of Geneva, a private bank operated by businessman E. D. Richardson. The bank was thought to be a solid financial institution based on Richardson's reputation, but upon his death in January of 1892, it was found to be insolvent. Between 1883 and 1892, the Bank of Geneva took up the east storefront of this building, while the west storefront was rented to the local express office. Upon the failure of the Bank of Geneva, the east storefront was rented to Henry Rogers' jewelry store, a business he had started in Lake Geneva in 1883. Under Henry Rogers and his son, the jewelry store stayed in this building until well into the twentieth century. Around 1900, local businessman John Seymour purchased this building from the Richardson estate, adding the Classical Revival rear addition in 1907. During the mid-twentieth century, the building was used for a local cleaners and for offices. Later, an art gallery and real estate office occupied the building. The only significant remodeling has been to the eastern two-thirds of the storefront. The rest of the building has been preserved and is, arguably, one of the most beautiful buildings in the city.¹³

Commercial Vernacular

741 Main St.
Hammersley Block, 1885-1886; 1929¹⁴

The Hammersley Block is a two-story commercial vernacular building that shares party walls with both of its neighbors. It has a red brick front and is decorated with a pressed metal cornice that features dentils and a sawtooth motif. Above the second story openings are heavy label moldings that suggest the late Italianate style. Openings are filled with single-light sashes. The original storefront of this building was typical of the era: large show windows with transoms, iron columns, and a central entrance. In 1929, though, the building was given a "modern" copper and glass front that has been identified as being from the Brasco Manufacturing Company of Chicago.

The new storefront appears in a catalog from the Brasco company published in 1927. It features a much deeper central entrance so that the display windows are considerably longer. The storefront has a thin copper framework and low copper aprons under the show windows so that

¹³ *Ibid.*; City Directories; "Richardson's Bank Insolvent," *Lake Geneva Herald*, 15 January, 1892, p. 5; "Four Score Years," *Lake Geneva News*, c.1910, p. 1.

¹⁴ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 20 November 1885, p. 5; 2 July 1886, p. 5; "Hammersley's Drug Store Front Now Being Remodeled," *Lake Geneva News*, 18 April 1929, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 19 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

the primary construction material is glass. Above the show windows at the front of the building there is a multi-light transom and between the long show windows there is an arched ceiling. The two entry doors flank a narrow showcase and the entire entrance is topped with a large fanlight. This beautiful storefront is in excellent condition.

The Hammersley Drug Store was one of the most prominent businesses in downtown Lake Geneva. The business began with W. H. Hammersley in 1865, who operated the drug store until 1905, only one year before his death. He was located in the old building on this site, which he replaced in 1885-86. Upon his death, his son, also William H., succeeded him in the drug store. In 1920, his sons, Seymour and Henry, entered the business and operated it until a fourth generation took over, operating the store until the 1980s.¹⁵

Classical Revival

731 Main St.
Frank Moore Block, 1903¹⁶

The Frank Moore Block is a two-story commercial building that is faced with Bedford Limestone and has details from the Classical Revival style. The top of the building has a simple applied cornice with brackets. The second story openings consist of two parts, a rectangular opening filled with single-light sashes and accented with tabbed stone surrounds. Above the sashes are flat lintels topped with round-arched transoms. The transoms are currently enclosed and are decorated with stone arches.

Three round stone columns topped with Corinthian capitals and two similarly decorated pilasters supported the original storefront of this building. Above the columns and pilasters was a stone header that was engraved "Paints Tinware F. S. Moore Hardware." Between the columns and pilasters were large show windows sitting on stone aprons, and the building entrances were decorated with transoms. The current storefront has been modernized, but parts of the original storefront may still be extant underneath modern materials. The columns and pilasters have been covered with modern materials, and the large show windows have been replaced with smaller windows and wood paneling. The engraved stone header may also be extant under paneling and an awning. The entry door is a period wood and glass commercial door.

¹⁵ "Forty Years in Business," *Lake Geneva News*, 28 September 1905, p. 1; "W. H. Hammersley," *Lake Geneva Herald*, 13 April 1906, p. 1; "W. H. Hammersley Associates His Sons With Him," *Lake Geneva News*, 8 April 1920, p. 1.

¹⁶ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 26 June 1903, p. 1; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 16 October 1903, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 11 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

Frank S. Moore was one of the premier and longest-lasting hardware merchants in Lake Geneva. He began working for a pioneer hardware firm when he came to Lake Geneva in 1871, taking over the business by 1890. This new building, constructed in 1903, was a result of his business success. Moore's Hardware was eventually sold to other people in the early twentieth century and even though there were several new owners over the years, the business remained Moore Hardware at this location until the 1970s.¹⁷

704 Main St.

Bank of Geneva-Seymour Block (Addition), 1907; Builder of Addition: Reinert, Baumbach & Malsch¹⁸

The Seymour Block addition to the Bank of Geneva is a two-story building with Classical Revival Details. The building has a pressed metal cornice with dentils and an elaborate frieze decorated with swags and medallions. The building is decorated with locally-produced rusticated concrete block pilasters on the east elevation. These pilasters are topped with Ionic capitals. Between the pilasters are paired single-light sashes on the second story. The first story openings have been altered and filled with modern single light glazing. There are no storefronts in this building addition.

John Seymour, a local businessman, erected this addition to the Bank of Geneva Block a few years after he acquired the main building. Although the two sections are of different architectural styles, the scale and elaborate details of the addition complement the scale and elaborate details of the main block. This addition was primarily used for office space, but is part of a large retail store on the first floor today.¹⁹

725-729 Main St.

Stannard-Chelini Block, 1908-1909; Builder: Reinert, Baumbach & Malsch²⁰

This double storefront block was constructed together, but for two different owners. It is a two-story commercial building constructed of locally-produced rusticated concrete blocks and has simple Classical Revival details. A simple classical cornice sits at the top of the building. It features small modillions and dentils under the frieze. A concrete block belt course sits under

¹⁷ "Frank S. Moore Hardware," *Lake Geneva News*, 8 April 1909, Special Easter Section; "Change in Business," *Lake Geneva News*, 16 March 1916, p. 1.

¹⁸ *Lake Geneva News*, 3 January 1907, p. 4.

¹⁹ Tax Rolls; City Directories.

²⁰ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 25 September 1908, p. 5; 23 October 1908, p. 1; *Lake Geneva News*, 21 January 1909, p. 1; "A Growing Industry," *Lake Geneva News*, 8 April 1909, Special Easter Section.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 12 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

the cornice. The second story openings are decorated with concrete tabbed surrounds and concrete jack arches. Single-light sashes fill the second story openings. Concrete tabs accent the ends and the center of the building, suggesting stone quoins.

The original storefronts for this building were typical of the turn of the twentieth century. They included large show windows on aprons, entrances with transoms, and cast iron pilasters supporting an exposed cast iron header. Sometime during the mid-twentieth century, these storefronts were altered by the addition of a stainless steel storefront. The stainless steel structure and aprons support modern show windows and cover the transom above the awnings. The steel is grooved, giving it a modern, almost streamlined, effect. Although it is a modern storefront, its design is of interest and it is in good condition.

George Stannard was a local barber who occupied the west storefront during the early twentieth century. Barney Chelini was a well-known confectioner who operated a successful ice cream parlor and fruit store in Lake Geneva for two decades. Chelini came to Lake Geneva from Chicago in 1902, and opened his business in an old building on Main Street. In 1905, he was joined by his brother Charles. Later, Chelini took on other partners, but he was always the main owner of the business. Chelini's part of this building was a "state-of-the-art" confectionary and ice cream parlor, as can be seen by a historic photograph published at the time the building was completed. The store had large glass cases for merchandise and a large bar where soda and ice cream were dispensed. Tables and chairs were available for the customers. The store also had a wood floor and an elaborate tin ceiling. Chelini stayed in business at this location until 1925, when he sold out to some Milwaukee businessmen. Some time during the 1920s, the National Tea Company grocery took over Stannard's half of the building and in 1931, the grocery acquired Chelini's half and remodeled it for their store. By the 1960s, the building was being used for the Ben Franklin variety store. The stainless steel front may date from either the 1931 remodeling for the National Tea Company or was done later for the Ben Franklin store.²¹

Colonial Revival

771 Main St.

Wisconsin Power and Light Company Building, 1929-1930; Architect: H. V. VonHolst;
Builder: T. S. Willis²²

²¹ *Ibid.*; "Chelini Bros." *Lake Geneva News*, 8 April 1909, Special Easter Section; "Chelini Sells to Milwaukee Firm," *Lake Geneva News*, 30 April 1925, p. 1; "Work Is Started Remodeling Store for National Tea," *Lake Geneva News*, 12 February 1931, p. 1; City Directories.

²² "Power Company Will Build Two Buildings Here," *Lake Geneva News*, 27 June 1929, p. 1; "Contract for Power Company Building Let," *Lake Geneva News*, 12 September 1929, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 13 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

This office building was constructed in the Colonial Revival style. It reflects the old building that stood on this site for decades, the Greek Revival style Lake House hotel. The two story main block fronts on Main Street. It has a gable roof with returned eaves at the west elevation. A large two-story gable-roofed wing extends north from the main block along Broad Street. Gable-roofed dormers project from both the south and west elevations of the roof. The building has a stucco finish over the upper two-thirds of the walls, and a red brick veneer over the lower third of the walls. The second story of the building has many symmetrical openings filled with six-over-six-light double-hung sashes trimmed with brick jack arches and shutters that were originally painted green. The original roof covering was slate.

The main entrance on the first story is at the corner and sits behind an overhang of large round arches supported by red brick veneered piers. Decorative wrought-iron fanlights sit in the large arches. At the center of the south elevation on the first story is a large show window decorated with a metal hipped-roof overhang and an old-fashioned awning. To the east of this opening is a round-arched opening decorated with a round brick arch and a fixed awning. The opening is filled with a large show window. Several large rectangular openings sit along the first story of the west elevation of the building. They are also decorated with original metal hipped-roof overhangs and fixed modern awnings. At the back end of the west elevation is a round-arched entrance. The former office building and retail store is divided into several shops today, but local sources indicate that the interior still retains much of the elaborate woodwork that was placed in the original building.

The Wisconsin Power and Light Company had a regional office in Lake Geneva for many years before building this new office building on Main Street. Replacing the historic, but deteriorated Lake House hotel, the new building was a showplace, built just prior to the Great Depression of the 1930s. The building had offices for company personnel, but also included some interesting features that reflected the way electric companies served their customers in that era. The first floor included a large display room for the sale of consumer electrical products and a model kitchen and dining room to show off the products. A large lounge was also provided for visitors to the building. In the basement was an assembly room that was used for electrical product demonstrations, cooking schools, and meetings. This area also included a model laundry. The power company remained in this building until the mid-1970s, when they cut back their services and personnel in Lake Geneva and relocated to their service building elsewhere in the city.²³

²³ *Ibid.*; "New Building of W. P. & L. Co. Open Saturday," *Lake Geneva News*, 17 April 1930, p. 1; City Directories.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 14 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

BUILDING INVENTORY

<i>Address</i>	<i>Historic Name</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Date of Construction</i>	<i>Status</i>
150 Center St.	P. H. Kohn Block	20 th Century Commercial	1914 ²⁴	C
152 Center St.	Retail Building	Contemporary	c.1984 ²⁵	NC
701-709 Main St.	Walker Block	Italianate	1872	C
704 Main St.	Bank of Geneva- Seymour Block	Italianate- Classical Revival	1883 1907	C
711 Main St.	Hanna Block	Italianate	1871	C
712 Main St.	Davis-Walter Block	Italianate	1869 ²⁶	C
717 Main St.	Phillips Block	Commercial Vernacular	1870, c.1920 ²⁷	C
719 Main St.	Kaye Estate Building	Commercial Vernacular	1900 ²⁸	C
720 Main St.	Sheldon Block	Italianate	1876 ²⁹	C
724 Main St.	Powell Block	Commercial Vernacular	1883 ³⁰	C
725-729 Main St.	Stannard-Chelini Block	Classical Revival	1908-09	C
731 Main St.	Frank Moore Block	Classical Revival	1903	C
732-734 Main St.	Jones-Kaye Block	Italianate	1883-84,1891	C
736-738 Main St.	Wachter & Ford Block	Italianate	1881-82	C
737 Main St.	P. H. Moore Block Builder: O. T. LaSalle	Italianate	1885 ³¹	C
741 Main St.	Hammersley Block	Commercial Vernacular	1885-86	C
744 Main St.	Moore Block 3	Commercial Vernacular	1886 ³²	C
748 Main St.	Moore Block 2	Contemporary	1880, c.1970 ³³	NC
749 Main St.	First National Bank Builder: Hoggson Brothers	Classical Revival	1921 ³⁴	C

²⁴ "Buy Down Town Property," *Lake Geneva News*, 16 April 1914, p. 1.

²⁵ Lake Geneva Historic Preservation Commission.

²⁶ Tax Rolls; Simmons, p. 97.

²⁷ Tax Rolls; Simmons, p. 139.

²⁸ *Lake Geneva Herald*, 21 September 1900, p. 1, 8 February 1901, p. 1; Tax Rolls.

²⁹ Tax Rolls.

³⁰ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 20 April 1883, p. 5.

³¹ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 20 November 1885, p. 5, 4 December 1885, p. 5.

³² Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 14 May 1886, p. 5.

³³ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 1 October 1880, p. 5, 28 January 1881, p. 5; field observation.

³⁴ "New National Bank Building Shows Beauty," *Lake Geneva News*, 29 December 1921, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 15 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

BUILDING INVENTORY

<i>Address</i>	<i>Historic Name</i>	<i>Style</i>	<i>Date of Construction</i>	<i>Status</i>
752 Main St.	Moore Block 1	Italianate	1874-75 ³⁵	C
755 Main St.	Arnold Block	Commercial Vernacular	1909-10 ³⁶	NC
	Builder: Reinert, Malsch & Baumbach			
756 Main St.	Retail Building	Commercial Vernacular	c.1930 ³⁷	C
757 Main St.	Majestic Theatre	Commercial Vernacular	1912 ³⁸	NC
	Builder: Reinert, Malsch & Baumbach			
760-766 Main St.	Retail Building	Commercial Vernacular	1986 ³⁹	NC
770 Main St.	Metropolitan Block	Italianate	1874, 1986	C*
771 Main St.	Wisconsin Power & Light Building	Colonial Revival	1929-30	C

*Listed on the National Register of Historic Places on 4/19/90

³⁵ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva Herald*, 14 November 1874, p. 3, 17 July 1875, p. 3.

³⁶ Tax Rolls; *Lake Geneva News*, 7 October 1909, p. 1, 7 April 1910, p. 1.

³⁷ Sanborn-Perris Maps, on file in the Archives of the State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin; field observation.

³⁸ *Lake Geneva News*, 2 May 1912, p. 1, 19 September 1912, p. 1.

³⁹ Lake Geneva Historic Preservation Commission.

Main Street Historic District
Name of Property

Walworth
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for the National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Commerce

Period of Significance

1871-1950 (Note 1, Section 8)

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

various, see Section 7

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

SIGNIFICANCE¹

The Main Street Historic District is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under criteria A and C for both architectural and historical significance. It is being nominated under criterion A for historical significance because the district has been the center of Lake Geneva's commercial development since its founding during the 1830s. Commercial activity was the foundation of Lake Geneva's historic economy throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and remains so today. Even though some industries developed in Lake Geneva during its historic era, the commercial development that accompanied the city's growth as a summer residential colony for wealthy families and as a prime tourist destination, far overshadowed the city's industrial development. This district, with a period of significance spanning between the years 1871 and 1950, reflects the important commercial history of the community.

The Main Street Historic District is also being nominated under criterion C, for architectural significance, because it has fine individual examples of late nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial architectural styles, primarily the Italianate style. The district also has fine examples of brick and concrete block commercial construction, and many of its buildings are the work of two important local builders. More importantly, as a whole, this district has a high level of historic integrity, with buildings that have much of their period details intact, including several buildings with original, period, or architecturally interesting twentieth century storefronts.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The history of the Main Street Historic District is directly related to the history of the City of Lake Geneva and its growth and development parallels the growth and development of the city. Because of its size and beauty, Geneva Lake was a well-known body of water to early explorers and traders of southeastern Wisconsin, but no permanent settlement at the lake was begun until the mid-1830s. In October of 1835, John Brink, a government surveyor, made a claim at the Lake Geneva site, but left, planning to return in the spring of 1836. In February of 1836, Christopher Payne came to the same site and also marked a claim. Brink, along with his partners, claimed all of Section 36 in the Town of Geneva, which included the water power on the White River and all the land later occupied by the original village plat. Payne and his

¹ This note is related to information given on the first page of Section 8 of the form. The period of significance encompasses the earliest date of construction to 1950. These dates included all dates of construction for buildings in the district, along with historic additions and remodelings of the buildings. They also include the dates when these buildings housed their most significant historic commercial activities.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

partners claimed the northwest quarter of Section 36, which included the Geneva Lake outlet and the water power on the White River. Because these claims overlapped, a dispute emerged over whether Brink or Payne had the legal claim to the Lake Geneva site, especially the water power. Payne eventually won out when Brink's party relinquished their claim to the northwest quarter of Section 36 and sold the remainder of their claims in the section. Over the next year, though, most of the men involved in the successful claim also sold or traded their interests and by 1837, seven different men emerged as the owners of Section 36. They were R. Wells Warren, Greenleaf S. Warren, Philip Maxwell, James Maxwell, Lewis B. Goodsell, Andrew Ferguson, and George L. Campbell.²

The seven owners of Section 36, in 1837, hired Thomas McKaig to survey and make a plat for the village of Geneva (the original name of the community), which McKaig completed in May of 1840. As part of the plat, McKaig included space for parks, a cemetery, churches, and a school. The road between Kenosha and Beloit (modern-day State Highway 50) was platted as a major thoroughfare and named Main Street.³

Lake Geneva's downtown commercial district began with the first frame building constructed in the settlement. Andrew Ferguson erected this building in 1837 near what would become the east edge of the community's downtown commercial district, the corner of Main and Center Streets. Ferguson's frame building housed the first commercial business in the community, a general store. Nearby, in May of 1837, a saw mill was built on the water power. In 1838, Charles M. Goodsell built a grist mill on the water power, the first in the county. This grist mill operated until 1847, then was rebuilt. In 1859, Harvey E. Allen built the Red Mill, which later became a woolen mill, then returned to grist use as an oat mill.⁴

After Ferguson opened his store, he was quickly joined by other commercial enterprises near or on Main Street, including several blacksmiths, a wagon maker, a cooper, and several woodworking shops. In 1839-40, Lewis Curtis opened the community's first drug store. During the early 1840s, other commercial businesses were established in Lake Geneva fledgling downtown, including Simeon Spaford's hardware store, L. D. Halo's general store, and T. C. Smith and N. S. Donaldson's general store. By 1847, the population of Geneva was 1,238 and a small, but thriving commercial center had developed along Main Street between Broad and Center, primarily in small frame buildings. In 1849, Geneva had two grocery stores, two meat

² C. W. Butterfield, *History of Walworth County*, Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1882, pp. 852-853; Albert Clayton Beckwith, *History of Walworth County Wisconsin*, Indianapolis, IN: B. F. Bowen & Company, 1912, pp. 328-329.

³ Beckwith, p. 329.

⁴ Butterfield, pp. 865-866; Beckwith, p. 331.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

markets, five general stores, two drug stores, two hardware stores, a furniture shop, a boot and shoe shop, and a harness shop.⁵

During the last few decades of the nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, Lake Geneva became known for its hotels that catered to the tourist trade. But, the earliest hotels and inns in the community were typical of this type of commercial business in small pioneer communities throughout Wisconsin. The first building constructed specifically as a hotel was G. W. Warren's Geneva House (later known as the St. Denis) that opened in January of 1838. Prior to the building's opening, Warren's large log house was used as an inn. Because of the large numbers of pioneers traveling into southern Wisconsin, Warren's Geneva House was not large enough to accommodate all the travelers, and Andrew Ferguson operated a small inn. In 1837 G. S. Warren built the Lake House (the site of the Wisconsin Power and Light Building).⁶

In 1843, the Geneva House changed hands, then changed hands several times between 1844 and its demolition in 1895. The Lake House had a more successful history. The building was expanded and remodeled several times over the late nineteenth century and continued to operate into the twentieth century. After 1870, the development of Lake Geneva into a summer tourist destination and residential colony for wealthy families from Chicago began in earnest. Taking advantage of this trend was David T. Whiting, who built a large and elegant hotel by the lakeshore at the foot of Broad Street, only about two blocks from the downtown. The Whiting House was the most fashionable hotel in Lake Geneva and catered almost exclusively to the summer trade. Unfortunately, it burned in 1894, and it was a number of years before a new hotel was built on the lakeshore in Lake Geneva for the tourist trade.⁷

In 1844, Lake Geneva was incorporated as the Village of Geneva, but several village powers returned to the Town of Geneva until 1856, when the village received a new charter. The village re-incorporated in 1879, but after 1856, it operated in a typical fashion until it was incorporated as a city in 1886. The decade of the 1850s was generally one of growth in southern Wisconsin, driven by the success of wheat farming, a cash crop that peaked during the Civil War era. Most southern Wisconsin communities grew during the 1850s, especially if they were lucky enough to get a railroad link. The first attempt to get a railroad through Lake Geneva in 1853 failed and local investors lost their money. In 1856, the Chicago-Elgin-Galena line came to Lake Geneva, but it was not successful and the tracks fell into disrepair. Despite the lack of adequate rail links,

⁵ Simmons, James, *Annals of Lake Geneva*, Lake Geneva: The Herald, 1897, pp. 89-94; Patricia Butler and Sharon Crawford, *Geneva Lake Area Intensive Survey: An Architectural/Historical Report*, Geneva Lake Land Conservancy: 1985.

⁶ Butterfield, p. 866.

⁷ Beckwith, 329-330.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

though, Lake Geneva prospered as a small community that largely relied on its surrounding agricultural base. By 1857, the community had a small, but thriving commercial district along the 700 block of Main Street, the location of the Main Street Historic District. This commercial district included six general and grocery stores, two drug stores, one hardware store, two cabinet and furniture shops, and eight doctors and lawyers. The buildings of this block were of frame construction, many being only one-story in height. But some prominent buildings, like the large multi-story Lake House, anchored the small downtown.⁸

Between the 1830s and the 1870s, Lake Geneva developed much like other communities in southern Wisconsin. It had mills, a small commercial district, and its economy was primarily dependent upon the rural agricultural economy. The resources of Geneva Lake were largely untapped, but all that would change beginning in the early 1870s. Several factors came together to make this change. First, the uncertain railroad link to the community was finally made permanent in 1871, resulting in reliable transportation to and from the village, particularly from Chicago. Second, the beauty of Geneva Lake and its potential for recreation was being discovered by the middle and wealthy classes who had more leisure time to pursue these activities. Third, the Chicago fire of 1871 caused some families from that city to temporarily relocate to Lake Geneva while their homes and businesses were being rebuilt. Soon, the word got out to others in Chicago of the beauty of Geneva Lake and the undeveloped land around it, as well as the convenient rail transportation to the city. Wealthy families began building summer "cottages" on the lake, which were actually the size of mansions, and entrepreneurs began developing resorts or "parks" for summer visitors. The construction of the Whiting House in 1873 was a direct result of the demand for lodging for summer tourists in Lake Geneva. Large resorts or "parks," like Kaye's Park, along the lakeshore, were also built for the more transient tourist trade. By the 1880s, Geneva Lake had an abundance of summer homes and estates and the local newspaper in Lake Geneva continually lamented the lack of enough hotel rooms for more transient summer tourists.⁹

The effect on Lake Geneva of the development of the Lake as a wealthy summer colony and tourist destination was significant. Industry in the village remained small and generally limited to the area of the old water power, but the influx of new summer residents and tourists resulted in an expanded and improved downtown commercial district. Centered in the 700 block of Main Street (the Main Street Historic District), Lake Geneva's downtown commercial district expanded into the cross streets of Center and Broad streets, but more importantly, about half of

⁸ Butterfield, pp. 896-897; Butler and Crawford; 1857 map of Lake Geneva with a listing of businesses, in the possession of the Lake Geneva Historic Preservation Commission.

⁹ Butler and Crawford; Butterfield, p. 881.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 5 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

the small, frame buildings in the 700 block of Main Street were replaced by brick blocks between 1870 and 1890. The expansion of the downtown commercial district during the 1870s and 1880s is most likely a result of the afore-mentioned expansion of the summer and tourist population, which would have added to the customer base for Lake Geneva's merchants. The village still served local farmers, but it was not the only important community in Walworth County that could and did serve this trade. The village, itself, did not have a large residential area, either, because of the lack of large industries in the village during the nineteenth century.

One of the few industries that expanded in the village during this time was the ice harvesting industry, and this industry also helped the downtown economy. When the resources of Geneva Lake became known in Chicago, including the lake's fine water quality, entrepreneurs quickly began to take advantage of this resource and ice harvesting became an important winter activity in the village. Most of the ice houses were located near downtown Lake Geneva and the winter employment of this industry helped supplement the employment people received from the summer residents on their estates. The increase in the use of Geneva Lake's resources during the late nineteenth century, along with the new summer residential and tourist population were important factors in improving the village's commercial economy during this time, and the continuation of these trends during the twentieth century resulted in a strong downtown commercial district, the heart of which is contained in the Main Street Historic District.

By looking at historic maps and the building construction dates of the historic district, the effect of the above-discussed changes to the Lake Geneva area can be seen in the city's downtown. In 1870, only a few buildings in Lake Geneva's downtown commercial area were constructed of brick, and only two small brick blocks had been built in the historic district. But, during the next two decades, over one-half of the brick buildings in the historic district would be constructed, dramatically changing the look of both the district and the entire downtown. The initial buildings in this boom were small, including the Davis-Walter Block (712 Main St.), built in 1869, and the Phillips Block (717 Main St.), built in 1870. Another small block, the Hanna Block (711 Main St.), was added to the historic district in 1871. But the next two blocks built in the historic district reflect the growing maturity of Lake Geneva's downtown, and perhaps, the early stages of the new economic opportunities coming to the village. In 1872, the three-story Walker Block (701-709 Main St.) was completed, only to be outdone by the completion of the Metropolitan Block (770 Main St.) in 1874. Two smaller blocks, the Sheldon Block (720 Main St.) and the Moore Block 1 (752 Main St.), completed the construction activity in the district during the 1870s.

The early and mid-1880s was a peak period of building activity in the district, and although the buildings constructed during this period were not as elaborate as the Metropolitan and Walker

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 6 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

Blocks, many were of significant size and importance. Leading the way was the Wachter & Ford Block (736-738 Main St.), a two-storefront block completed in 1882, also known as the "Emporium Block." The Emporium Block became one of the most prominent commercial blocks in downtown Lake Geneva. In 1883-84, one-half of the Jones-Kaye Block was erected. Completed in 1891, and sitting next to the Emporium Block, the double-storefront Jones-Kaye Block was also an impressive addition to the district. The combination of the new P. H. Moore Block (737 Main St.) and the Hammersley Block (741 Main St.), not identical, but built with similar details in 1885-86, was a major improvement to the north side of Main Street, because they both replaced old frame buildings. P. H. Moore added two small brick buildings to his 1874-75 Moore Block 1 (744 and 748 Main St.) on the south side of Main Street in 1880 and 1886, improving the appearance of the district near the Metropolitan Block. The Powell Block (724 Main St.), built in 1883, filled in the southeast side of Main Street. Finally, the construction of the beautiful and elaborate Bank of Geneva Block (704 Main St.) in 1883 made a dramatic statement at the east end of the district.

By the 1890s, much of the physical appearance of the Main Street Historic District was in place, particularly along the south side of the street, which had almost all brick blocks. The north side of the street still had pockets of frame buildings and vacant lots, but many of its brick buildings were in place. As throughout its history, Lake Geneva's downtown was centered in the 700 block of Main Street, the historic district, but also included some buildings, primarily frame ones, along Center and Broad streets. The 1890s saw little major construction in the district, but between 1900 and 1930 several new, large buildings completed the historic development of the district. Also during this period, the city's downtown expanded more extensively into the 800 block of Main Street and along Broad Street.¹⁰

In 1900, the construction of the Kaye Estate Building (719 Main St.) began the redevelopment of the center of the north side of Main Street in the district. In 1903, the impressive stone front Frank Moore Block (731 Main St.) was built nearby, then filling in the space between these buildings in 1908-09 was the Stannard-Chelini concrete block double storefront building (725-729 Main St.). These new buildings made a complete streetscape of brick, stone, and concrete block buildings on the north side of Main Street. The remainder of the street would be completed during the next 10 years.

In 1909-10, the new Arnold Block (755 Main St.) was completed next to Hammersley's store, then in 1912, the Majestic Theater (757 Main St.) was built next to Arnold's building. But, it

¹⁰ Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps, 1892, 1900; on file in the Archives of the State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 7 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

was not until 1921, almost a decade later, that another building was constructed on the north side of Main Street. It was worth waiting for, as it was the impressive Classical Revival First National Bank (749 Main St.), the most important financial institution in the city.

By 1925, the appearance of the historic district was over 90 percent completed. The only building in the district that still reflected the pioneer character of Lake Geneva's downtown was the old Lake House on the corner of Main and Broad streets. In 1929-30, this building would be replaced by the modern and impressive Wisconsin Power and Light Company Office Building (771 Main St.).

Because much of the 700 block was completely filled and redeveloped by the mid-1910s, additional expansion in Lake Geneva's downtown had to occur elsewhere, outside of the historic district. Much of this development took place along Broad Street and in the 800 block of Main Street, west of the historic district. The Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps of 1912 and 1926 shows this expansion. On the 1912 map, there were several, primarily free-standing, brick buildings along Broad Street near its intersection with Main Street. These included two modern garages, obviously new additions to the downtown. By 1926, though, a dramatic change had taken place in this area. Several new brick blocks with party walls had been built along Broad Street, both north and south of Main Street and some very large brick blocks had been erected along the south side of Main Street in the 800 block. One of these blocks was for the large Montgomery Ward department store and another was for a large automobile dealership. A smaller amount of redevelopment also took place along Center Street, in particular, south of the old Bank of Geneva Block on the corner of Main and Center streets. A large addition had been made to the Bank of Geneva in 1907, removing some small, old frame buildings. A few more frame buildings were removed in 1914 for the construction of the P. H. Kohn Block (150 Center St.). Because of its proximity to the district, the Kohn Block was included in its boundaries.

The expansion of the city's downtown commercial district and the modernization of the few remaining older buildings in the historic district illustrates that Lake Geneva's downtown had a thriving commercial economy during the first few decades of the twentieth century. This thriving commercial economy corresponded with the continued expansion of the summer residential colony of wealthy families from Chicago around Geneva Lake and the continuation of the city's development as a prime tourist destination. The completion of a large new hotel around 1910 (the Lake Geneva Hotel) along the lakefront, just south of the city's commercial district, was a sign that Lake Geneva was heavily invested in a tourist economy during this era. The fact that the downtown kept expanding without a major expansion in the city's industrial economy reflects the fact that the development around Geneva Lake was driving the city's commercial enterprises.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 8 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

Like much of the state, the Great Depression of the 1930s slowed the city's economy, but other than one bank failure, few long-time businesses closed and the downtown remained surprisingly strong. Again, this reflects the dependence of the commercial economy on the area's part-time residents, wealthy families who were less effected by the hard economic times. The local newspaper reported that many working families in the city suffered from the effects of the Depression, but also indicated that during the summer months, the city still had mass influxes of tourists. In fact, with the record heat during the summers of the mid-1930s, Geneva Lake attracted more tourists than ever.

After World War II, Lake Geneva's reputation as a summer colony for wealthy families and as a tourist destination was cemented. Industry still took a back seat to commerce in the city's economy, and the development of motels and resorts that catered to the summer trade continued to advance the tourist economy of the city. During the 1960s and 1970s, most of Wisconsin's downtowns suffered economically, as traditional businesses moved out and were not replaced by other businesses. New supermarkets and discount stores, along with shopping malls in nearby larger cities, attracted local shoppers and hurt downtown stores. Lake Geneva's downtown suffered from some of this economic fate, but with less impact. The summer and tourist trade helped maintain the city's downtown and the subdivision of many of the large estates around the lake into residential housing tracts brought more residents into the area. The result was that unlike most Wisconsin communities, many old businesses remained in Lake Geneva's downtown into the 1980s and new businesses more quickly took their places.

But, eventually, even Lake Geneva's downtown changed, primarily during the 1980s and 1990s. Many old businesses finally closed or moved and new retailing areas on the outskirts of the city were developed, drawing trade away from downtown. But, the lakefront was still a major attraction and soon new retailers moved into downtown buildings to take advantage of tourists. During the last decade, Lake Geneva has become known for its downtown's mix of interesting and unique specialty shops, and many people come to the city just to shop, while taking in the sites of the lakefront. Others who come initially to enjoy the lakefront are also attracted to the city's downtown shopping. Some historic preservation efforts, particularly the restoration of the Metropolitan Block and the improvements in many other historic downtown buildings, have helped to promote Lake Geneva's downtown as a fun and unique place to shop.

As in the past, the heart of the city's "new" downtown is the Main Street Historic District, the 700 block of Main Street. It is here that the best historic buildings are still extant and where the majority of the city's commercial activities still take place, despite a movement of modern retailing to the outskirts of the city. Given the fact that Lake Geneva's prominent natural resource, Geneva Lake, will continue to draw both summer and year-around residents, there is

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 9 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

little doubt that the city's downtown, and especially its historic district, will remain a center of commercial activity during the 21st century.

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecture

The Main Street Historic District is architecturally significant because several of its individual buildings are good examples of popular nineteenth and early twentieth century architectural styles and because, as a whole, the district presents a streetscape of historic buildings that reflect the commercial architecture of the period 1870 to 1930. The district has a high level of integrity, with much of its historic fabric intact. Typically, commercial historic districts show most of their integrity on their buildings' upper stories. This is the case in Lake Geneva, but many buildings of the historic district also feature fine original or period storefronts or high-quality twentieth century replacement storefronts. The district also has fine examples of local building construction materials and techniques, including brick and concrete block construction, and the work of local builders, including a firm that manufactured its own concrete blocks and erected several early twentieth century buildings in the district.

Architectural Styles

The most architecturally significant buildings in the district from the nineteenth century are examples of the Italianate commercial style. According to Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan*, the Italianate style was popular between 1850 and the mid-1880s. The style is seen on Wisconsin's downtown commercial buildings primarily in the use of brackets attached to friezes or bracketed metal cornices. Brick corbeled cornices that were constructed to resemble brackets are also popular features of Italianate commercial buildings. One of the major features of Italianate commercial buildings, though, is the arched second story opening, usually decorated with round or segmental brick arches, or label moldings of wood, stone, or brick.¹¹

Three of the largest and most decorative buildings in the historic district are fine examples of the Italianate style. Built between 1872 and 1883, the Walker Block (701-709 Main St.), the Metropolitan Block (770 Main St.), and the Bank of Geneva Block (704 Main St.) are different, but equally interesting, examples of the style. The Walker Block is typical of a simple Italianate style block. Its brick corbeled cornice resembles the brackets of the Italianate style and its upper

¹¹ Barbara Wyatt, ed., *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin, Vol. 2*, Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, Architecture, p. 2-3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 10 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

stories are dominated by the round arched openings spanning both the front and side elevations of the building. On the third story, these arches are connected with arched decoration in a dramatic arcaded effect. On the second story, the building's pilasters add elegance to the look of the building. What is most impressive about this building, and what makes its integrity very high, are the extant second and third story openings filled with original four-light sashes with their original details in the round arches. Although the storefront has been modernized, the overall high level of integrity of this building adds to the architectural significance of the district.

Even better preserved is the renovated Metropolitan Block, completed in 1874 and renovated 112 years later. Like the Walker Block, the Metropolitan Block features a brick corbeled cornice. Rather than brickwork that resembles traditional brackets like on the Walker Block, the Metropolitan Block's arcaded arches suggest much more delicate brackets. Like the Walker Block, the Metropolitan Block features numerous upper story openings that span both the front and side elevations of the building. The difference is that the Metropolitan Block's third story openings are very tall and narrow and feature segmental smooth limestone arches rather than round brick arches. The second story openings are shorter, but otherwise identical to the third story openings. Both buildings are constructed of cream brick, but the Metropolitan Block, built of special Racine Pressed Brick has a more refined, smoother surface appearance than the Walker Block. The renovation and adaptive reuse of this building, completed in 1986, has returned it to much of its original historic appearance and elegance. A few changes have been made to the first story exterior, and some features had to be replicated, but the attention to detail applied in this tax credit project makes the building a showplace of historic preservation in the historic district.

Unlike the Walker and Metropolitan Blocks, the Bank of Geneva Block, completed in 1883, is smaller, but it has much more applied decoration. The other two blocks show their Italianate style primarily in their openings and simple brick cornices, but the Bank of Geneva Block has more elaborate applied Italianate details. The bracketed pressed metal cornice, which repeats on the projecting bays, is finely executed and impressively decorated, as are the projecting label moldings over other openings. What makes this building most interesting, though, is the size of the cornice and the unusual bays. The round or segmental arches of the Walker and Metropolitan Blocks are more typical of small-town Italianate commercial buildings. The bays of the Bank of Geneva, with their pressed metal details and large amount of glass are an unusual and highly decorative feature of the building. It is also of interest that they are still extant. Such high-maintenance details are often victims of twentieth century remodeling. Also of interest is the extant original storefront that could be a model for the restoration of the original corner storefront. The overall high integrity of this building makes it stand out in the district as one of its most important examples of historic commercial architecture.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 11 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

There are several other buildings that have Italianate features, but are not as elaborate as the buildings mentioned above, although they add to the overall architectural significance of the district. These Italianate features are primarily seen in brick corbeled cornices and round or segmental brick arches over second story openings. They include the Davis-Walter Block (712 Main St.), which features both a brick corbeled cornice and round-arched openings; the Sheldon Block (720 Main St.), which also has round-arched openings; the Wachter & Ford Block (736-738 Main St.) that has a brick corbeled cornice and segmentally-arched second story openings; and the Jones-Kaye Block (732-734 Main St.), which has lost its elaborate pressed metal Italianate style cornice, but retains its decorative second story window hoodmoldings.

Although it is not the largest brick block in the district, one of the most architecturally important in the Hanna Block (711 Main St.), built in 1871. This block has simple, but typical Italianate details, including a brick corbeled cornice decorated with unusual side-facing brackets that form the capitals for second story pilasters, and round-arched second story openings. What is most important about this building, though, is its intact original storefront, which repeats the round arches of the second story openings in its storefront structure. Round-arched storefronts were common in the mid-nineteenth century. Often replaced in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century with storefronts featuring iron columns, large show windows, and large rectangular transoms, few round-arched storefronts can be seen in downtown commercial districts in Wisconsin. This example, which features Corinthian style columns and an intact round-arched transom with gothic-arched lintels, is a fine and relatively intact example of an unusual architectural resource.

Because only one-half of one of the buildings in the district was constructed during the 1890s, there are no examples of the Queen Anne commercial style in the district. Rather, the next style to have an impact on the district was the Classical Revival style. The Classical Revival style was popular in Wisconsin between 1895 and 1935. It was developed by prominent architects, many of whom studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. The style was further popularized at the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893 in Chicago, which featured a "white city," a group of formal, classical buildings painted white. Details of Classical Revival buildings include symmetrical form and massing and heavy, classical details. Because of the heaviness of the style, it is seen most commonly on public, commercial, and institutional buildings.¹²

The first building with distinctive Classical Revival details that was built in the district was the Frank Moore Block (731 Main St.), completed in 1903. The original building featured a front constructed of Bedford Limestone, which can still be seen on the second story. The classical

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 2-18.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 12 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

cornice emphasizes modillions and the second story windows are decorated with classical lintels and surrounds, along with detached round-arched transoms. The original storefront featured classical columns and pilasters. Although the upper story details are still extant, the classical storefront has been covered over with modern materials.

Although simple in its details, the Stannard-Chelini Block has a good level of integrity and reflects the Classical Revival style. Built in 1908-09, this double-storefront building has fine rusticated concrete block construction and a simple, classically-influenced cornice. The window decoration of tabbed surrounds and large jack arches also suggests a classical influence. The stainless-steel early twentieth century storefront replaced a typical cast iron storefront. It is in good condition and its streamlined design adds interesting twentieth century character to the building. Although simple, the Stannard-Chelini Block is a good example of how the Classical Revival style was used to give even plain commercial buildings a formal appearance.

The most well-preserved of the Classical Revival buildings in the district is the Seymour Block addition to the Bank of Geneva Block (704 Main St.), completed in 1907 and more than doubling the size of the original building. The Seymour Block addition is a fine example of Classical Revival decoration, in particular in the pressed metal frieze, which features swags, medallions, and dentils. The pilasters feature Ionic capitals in the classical manner and the windows are interrupted with spandrels, a feature often seen on Classical Revival commercial buildings. This attractive addition to a beautifully detailed Italianate style main block only adds to the total building's architectural importance in the district.

One of the most elaborate of the Classical Revival buildings constructed in the district was the First National Bank building (749 Main St.), completed in 1921. The original building featured a smooth limestone front dominated by large round-arched openings in the vault style of bank design. Corner pilasters featured fluted bases and Corinthian capitals supporting a frieze and full pediment decorated with massive modillions. Unfortunately, most of the details of the round-arched openings and most of the pilasters have been removed in favor of large, modern show windows, a remodeling that was done after the bank left the building in the 1960s. The remaining features of the building, including the full pediment, are attractive, but much of the building's fine classical details are not extant.

Related to the Classical Revival style was the Colonial Revival style, part of the period revival movement in architecture during the early to mid twentieth century. However, it is unusual to see fully-developed period revival style buildings in small town historic commercial districts since the period revival styles were more commonly used for residential architecture. Popular between 1900 and 1940, the period revival styles were based on older architectural styles and

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 13 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

included the Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, Tudor Revival, Spanish Colonial Revival, and Mediterranean Revival styles. Like their names suggest, these styles have details based on the historic styles they reflected. For example, Colonial Revival style buildings feature symmetrical form and massing, symmetrical fenestration of primarily multi-light sashes, gable roofs with returned eaves, and other motifs that reflect English Colonial architecture.¹³

The Wisconsin Power and Light Company office building (771 Main St.) is a fine example of the Colonial Revival architectural style, as interpreted for a commercial building. The style of the power company building suggests the style of the building that preceded it on the site, the old Lake House Hotel, a Greek Revival building of two stories that also presented its long wall to Main Street and had returned eaves on the west elevation. The newspaper articles of the period suggest that the new building was designed to replicate the old Lake House, but there were no direct quotes from the architect, H. V. Von Holst, that state this fact. In any event, the new building did suggest the old hotel and it was an unusual style for a small-town office building.

The Power and Light Company building has finely executed details from the Colonial Revival style, such as the symmetrical fenestration of six-over-six-light sashes, the gable roof with returned eaves, the gable-roofed dormers, and the arched openings. What is particularly unusual about this building is the recessed entrance under the arched overhang. Accented by red bricks and wrought-iron fanlights, the overhang presents a very different type of entry than the other commercial buildings in the district. The building has been well-preserved, even though it has been divided into several shops. The original exterior materials of stucco and red brick, the openings and accompanying decorations are all extant and in good condition. The large building anchors the northwest corner of the historic district and is one of the most attractive historic buildings in downtown Lake Geneva.

Historic Storefronts

One of the realities of downtown commercial districts in Wisconsin today is the fact that often a high percentage of the district's buildings have remodeled storefronts. Sometimes the remodeled storefronts are good examples of "period" storefronts, if not the original storefronts, but more often, the remodeled storefronts detract from the integrity of the historic buildings. In the Main Street Historic District, there are some modernized storefronts that fall into this category. But, overall, this district has a high percentage of original or "period" storefronts that add to the integrity of the district, instead of detracting from it.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-28—2-33.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 14 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

As mentioned earlier, the best example of an original storefront is the Hanna Block (711 Main St.), which still has its original 1871 storefront of large round arches rising from Corinthian columns. Arched storefronts of this type were common on mid-nineteenth century commercial buildings, and historic photographs show that at least one other building in the district had such a storefront before it was remodeled. This extant storefront is, therefore, not just an attractive feature of the building that adds to its historic integrity, but it also is an artifact that can be studied to learn about mid-nineteenth century storefront construction.

Another early storefront is the extant original storefront of the Bank of Geneva Block (704 Main St.). This storefront dates from 1883 and reflects a common late nineteenth century storefront that includes a cast iron column structure, large show windows, glass and wood doors, and a large rectangular transom. The storefront is in good condition and would be a good template to restore the remainder of the first story of the building.

Two of the finest "period" storefronts are associated with double-storefront blocks next to each other on the south side of Main Street. The Jones-Kaye Block (732-734 Main St.) and the Wachter & Ford Block (736-738 Main St.) both feature fine cast iron storefronts. The cast iron storefront of the Wachter & Ford Block has an exposed structure of numerous cast iron pilasters that are executed with classical details. The storefronts also feature large show window and entrances with extant transoms. Although the show windows have modern glazing, the size of the openings has not been altered.

Similarly, the double storefront of the Jones-Kaye Block also features large show windows and transoms that appear to date from the early to mid twentieth century. Unfortunately, the transoms have been enclosed, but the most important elements of the storefronts, the cast iron pilasters are still extant. These pilasters are also classically-influenced, but in a more modernistic way than the pilasters of the Wachter & Ford Block. The two double storefronts also have exposed cast iron headers, features often covered up with modern remodeling. The storefronts of the Jones-Kaye and Wachter & Ford Blocks may not been their building's original storefronts, and they have had some modernization, but as a whole, they both have a high level of integrity and add to the architectural significance and attractiveness of the district.

Two of the most interesting twentieth century "period" storefronts are on buildings on the north side of Main Street. The Hammersley Block (741 Main St.), a fine Commercial Vernacular building originally built in 1885-86, had a cast iron storefront similar to those described above. In 1929, the Hammersley family replaced this storefront with a "modern" copper storefront manufactured by the Brasco Manufacturing Company of Chicago. This new storefront was identical to one described in a catalog from 1927. It featured a thin copper structure, large

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 15 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

showcase style windows, and a deeply-recessed central entrance that allowed for maximum display space for merchandise. A classical fanlight is the only architectural detail of the storefront. This storefront is extant and is in excellent condition. It provides the large amount of show window space desirable for a modern retailer and has stood up well to over 70 years of use. Although it is not the original storefront of the building, it is an attractive and important "period" storefront that adds to the architectural significance of the district.

Another replacement storefront from the mid-twentieth century is the "streamlined" stainless steel storefront of the Stannard-Chelini Block (725-729 Main St.). Again, historic photographs show that the original storefront of this building was a cast iron structure with large show windows and transoms. Either in 1931 or a bit later in the mid-twentieth century, the cast iron storefront was replaced with this stainless steel storefront. The stainless steel structure and modern show windows give the building's first story a "streamlined" appearance popular during the mid-twentieth century. In good condition, this storefront, like the modern storefront of the Hammersley Block, is an example of good design from the mid-twentieth century, and it is an attractive "period" storefront that adds to the architectural significance of the district.

The type of storefronts in a commercial historic district can make a major difference in the overall historic appearance of that district. Storefronts that are almost totally enclosed detract much more from the historic appearance of a district than simple modernized storefronts that have retained large show windows and transoms. And, as this district illustrates, some twentieth century storefront replacements can be just as historic and attractive as the original storefronts of other buildings. Because the Main Street Historic District has so many fine storefront elements that are extant, it has a higher level of integrity than many other commercial districts.

Building Materials and Local Builders

One of the reasons the Main Street Historic District is so attractive is that so many of its buildings feature high quality building materials, particularly bricks and concrete blocks. Most of the brick buildings constructed during the late nineteenth century in the district are fine examples of brick construction. According to Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan*, the earliest brickmaking in Wisconsin was done in small kilns throughout the state. Because early brickmakers used local clays, the bricks from this era took on a variety of colors. The Milwaukee area is famous for its cream colored brick, but many other areas of Wisconsin also produced cream bricks. In particular, southeastern Wisconsin had significant concentrations of clays that produced cream bricks. In central and western Wisconsin, there were significant concentrations of clays that produced red bricks and communities in these areas of the state have large concentrations of red brick buildings. Eventually, large brickmaking firms took over the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 16 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

business from local kilns, and, due to changing architectural tastes and the lack of profits for local brick yards, local brickmaking declined in the state.¹⁴

Two of the earliest blocks constructed in the district, the Walker Block (701-709 Main St.) and the Metropolitan Block (770 Main St.), 1872 and 1874, are fine examples of brick construction. The Walker Block has typical cream bricks that were probably locally-produced, either in Lake Geneva or in a nearby community. These cream bricks are soft and have a texture that gives the building an attractive appearance. The Metropolitan Block was reported to have been built of Racine pressed brick, lauded as a premium building material at the time. This building has a less textured appearance than the Walker Block, but both buildings are of high quality and show off their brick construction well, due to their high level of integrity.

Historic photographs show that one of the most interesting brick buildings constructed in the late nineteenth century was the Wachter & Ford Block (736-738 Main St.). Under its current painted exterior, the building has red brick walls with an abundance of polychromatic cream brick accents. The use of red brick in southeastern Wisconsin was not common, and the bricks probably came from a different area of the state, or perhaps from an area in Illinois that produced red brick. The Jones-Kaye Block (732-734 Main St.) also has red brick walls, of two different shades, reflecting its dual construction date of 1883-84 and 1891. Again, the use of red brick is an attractive and unusual feature in this district.

What is most interesting about the brick construction in this district, though, is the fine quality of the construction techniques, particularly in the brick corbeling of many cornices and in the arches of second story openings. The above-mentioned blocks all have fine brick corbeling in the cornices and over many second-story openings, illustrating that high quality masons were responsible for the work.

The high quality of brickwork in this district may be the result of a similar local builder. During the late nineteenth century, one man was the most prolific builder in the community, O. T. LaSalle. Although he can only be documented as the builder of two blocks in the district, it is likely that he was responsible for others, as he was the leading builder at the time and his name was linked to many city residences and lake estate houses, as well. Other than the builder notices that he received in the newspapers, little is known about LaSalle, except that he died prior to 1908, when his son's obituary mentioned he had passed away. His son, Charles O.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-10—4-11.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 17 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

LaSalle went into business with him in the late nineteenth century, then took over the contracting business upon the death of his father. Charles LaSalle died in 1908.¹⁵

It is known that O. T. LaSalle built the Metropolitan Block (770 Main St.) in 1874 and the P. H. Moore Block (737 Main St.) in 1885. Obviously, the Metropolitan Block was his finest work, but the Moore Block is a good example of a smaller commercial building that was well executed. Because the Hammersley Block (741 Main St.) was built almost at the same time as the Moore Block (the newspaper reports that the buildings were begun at the same time, but not completed at the same time), it is likely that LaSalle built the Hammersley Block as well. It is also likely that he was responsible for other blocks constructed during the 1880s, including the Bank of Geneva Block, the Jones-Kaye Block, and the Wachter & Ford Block. In any event, it is apparent from the high quality of his known work that LaSalle was a fine builder who helped create the physical appearance of this district during its formative years.

During the early twentieth century, another local building firm, which also provided its own building materials, made a significant impact on the appearance of the historic district. This firm, Reinert, Malsch, and Baumbach were builders who, around 1906, began using their own locally-produced concrete blocks for buildings in Lake Geneva. They were responsible for at least four buildings in the district and were possibly the builders of a fifth.

Concrete dates to the Roman Empire, when Roman builders discovered that mixing quicklime, volcanic earth, water, sand, and an aggregate of brick and stone created a strong and durable building material after it hardened. However, this early concrete did not catch on as a building material. In colonial times, builders experimented with concrete and the material was used in the construction of the Erie Canal. But, due to the availability and low cost of stone, concrete construction was, again, not developed. During the 1840s and 1850s, a form of concrete called "grout" was developed in Wisconsin and used for some buildings in the state. Forming concrete into blocks was patented as early as the 1830s, but, again, this form of building material was never developed on a vast scale. The turning point for the development and mass use of concrete blocks came at the turn of the twentieth century, when concrete block presses were commercially manufactured. After this time, the production of concrete blocks became commonplace, and by the 1910s and 1920s, the use of concrete blocks for building foundations had almost replaced stone blocks. The use of concrete blocks for entire buildings was less popular, but many concrete block buildings were constructed during the early twentieth century. Concrete blocks

¹⁵ "His Labors Ended," *Lake Geneva Herald*, 25 September 1908, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 18 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

remained popular for commercial and institutional buildings throughout the twentieth century, but by the mid-twentieth century, few homes were built completely of concrete blocks.¹⁶

Reinert, Malsch, & Baumbach was one of the early firms in southern Wisconsin to promote the use of concrete blocks. Edward Reinert, Herman Malsch, and William Baumbach were experienced stone masons and bricklayers who formed a partnership in 1906 to make concrete blocks and to use this material to construct commercial and residential buildings in Lake Geneva. Their successful promotion of concrete blocks as a building material made them one of the most important builders in the city during the early twentieth century. Their first plant was a small building at a gravel pit east of the city, and in 1910, they built a plant near the railroad depot. By 1911, the company was producing many types of concrete blocks and was also making concrete columns, cornices, and angle blocks. They experimented with various textures and patterns in their blocks, even creating a block that they claimed imitated real granite stone. As the dairy industry expanded in Wisconsin, the demand for silos increased, and concrete blocks became a common silo building material. Reinert, Malsch, & Baumbach made a specialty silo block and there are probably many silos in Walworth County that feature the company's blocks. In 1913, William Baumbach retired, but Malsch and Reinert carried on the firm.¹⁷

The firm's first large commission in the district was the Stannard-Chelini Block (725-729 Main St.), built in 1908-09. This double storefront block was a showplace of the firm's concrete block. Its rusticated finish and classical details showed how attractive this type of building material could be. The next building the firm constructed was the Arnold Block (755 Main St.), which has, unfortunately, been covered over with siding. Another building the firm constructed, but which has now been covered over, was the Majestic Theatre (757 Main St.), built in 1912. The large Seymour addition to the Bank of Geneva Block (704 Main St.) was a fine Classical Revival style addition and has unusual rusticated concrete block pilasters. Another building possibly constructed by the firm was the P. H. Kohn Block (150 Center St.) built in 1914 of concrete blocks. Although no definite attribution can be made to the firm about this building, its fine Twentieth Century Commercial style and high quality concrete block construction strongly suggests the local firm.

Reinert, Malsch, & Baumbach also constructed several other downtown commercial buildings outside of the historic district boundaries and some houses in the residential sections of Lake Geneva. They also constructed buildings on some of the Geneva Lake estates during their career.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 4-8—4-9.

¹⁷ "A Growing Industry," *Lake Geneva News*, 8 April 1909, Easter Special; "An Enterprising Firm," *Lake Geneva News*, 26 January 1911, p. 1; "Change in Firm," *Lake Geneva News*, 13 February 1913, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 19 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

Of all of their buildings in downtown Lake Geneva, the Stannard-Chelini Block (725-729 Main St.) is the best example of their work. It is a well-executed and attractive example of concrete block construction that adds architectural significance to the district.

The architectural significance of this district is not encompassed by any one factor. Rather, it is a combination of the architectural style of its buildings; their overall high level of integrity, especially in many of the buildings' storefronts; and the high quality of buildings materials and the work of local builders that gives this district its unique historic appearance. Because of all of these factors, the Main Street Historic District is a historic streetscape of buildings that have a similar scale, similar building materials, and related historic architectural styles. This historic streetscape has a distinctive visual quality that separates it from its immediate neighbors. This visual quality is, in part, what helps the Main Street Historic District meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Commerce

The Main Street Historic District is significant for local history because it has been the center of commercial activity in Lake Geneva from the 1830s to the present time. Although the extant historic buildings in the district date from 1869 to 1930, and the historic period of significance ends in 1950, throughout its history, the 700 block of Main Street has been the focal point of the city's commercial economy. And, this commercial economy has been the most important part of the city's economic history.

The important commercial activities that took place in the historic district during the period of significance involved financial services and retailing. For much of the district's history, the Lake House hotel was a part of the 700 block of Main Street, but overall, the most significant hotels during the historic era, the Whiting House and the Lake Geneva Hotel, were located outside of the district's boundaries. Since the Lake House was replaced by the Wisconsin Power and Light Company building in 1930, it is no longer part of the commercial significance of the district. The hotels in Lake Geneva were important in the development of the city's downtown because they brought people to the businesses located there. But, because there are no extant hotels in the district, this area of commerce is not included in this significance statement. Rather, the importance of hotels is covered in the Historical Background section of this report.

Financial Services

The Main Street Historic District is significant because it was the center of the city's historic financial services until after World War II. Early banking services were provided primarily by

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 20 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

wealthy individuals who made private arrangements with individuals to loan or invest money. Some of these wealthy individuals established private banks in the mid-nineteenth century, banks that were largely unregulated and prospered solely on the reputation and financial acumen of the owner. The first formal bank in Lake Geneva was a private banking house founded by a wealthy individual.

E. D. Richardson, a wealthy Yankee immigrant, established his private banking house in 1848. Besides banking services, Richardson also sold insurance. In 1871, Richardson's bank was robbed of \$30,000 and some funds he had in Chicago perished in the Chicago fire. Although the criminals were caught, the money was not recovered, and later, this incident would prove to be the beginning of financial problems for Richardson's Bank of Geneva. However, based largely on Richardson's personal reputation, he continued his banking services and people placed their trust in his abilities. The construction of his new and impressive Bank of Geneva Block (704 Main St.) in 1883 promoted the feeling that Richardson's bank was strong.¹⁸

On January 2, 1892, Richardson died and, within a couple of weeks, it was found that the Bank of Geneva was insolvent. In fact, it was reported that if the depositors were lucky, they would receive 70 cents for every dollar they had in the bank, and that it would take several years for them to receive that amount. Because Richardson's bank was private, it was not under any supervision and the audit after his death showed that he had many worthless assets still on his books as good assets and that he had been banking on deposits, rather than on assets, for many years, perhaps since the robbery in 1871, when he probably should have reorganized the bank or declared bankruptcy. Even more unfortunately, most of his depositors were not businessmen who could more easily swallow a loss, but local farmers and individuals who depended on Richardson to keep their money safe.¹⁹

Perhaps what happened to Richardson was the reason that private banks were generally short-lived in Wisconsin. During the late nineteenth century, most private banks gave way to national or state-chartered banks, which provided the customer a more regulated industry. Although Richardson's bank was eventually a failure, he was an important businessman during the mid-nineteenth century, providing financial services to the community prior to the era of national and state banking. These financial services helped Lake Geneva grow during its formative period and the impressive Bank of Geneva building is historically significant because of its association with this early bank in Lake Geneva.

¹⁸ Butterfield, p. 875; "Richardson's Bank Insolvent," *Lake Geneva Herald*, 15 January 1892, p. 5.

¹⁹ "Richardson's Bank Insolvent."

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 21 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

The first nationally-chartered bank established in Lake Geneva was, appropriately titled, the First National Bank. Founded in 1884, the new bank started with a capital investment of \$50,000. The First National Bank had a much more successful history than the Bank of Geneva. By 1921, it had doubled its capitalization to \$100,000. Upon its founding, the First National Bank set up offices in half of the Davis-Walter Block (712 Main St.), built in 1869. The bank remained at this location, eventually purchasing the building in 1894, until 1921, when its new and impressive home at 749 Main Street was completed.²⁰

The new home of the First National Bank was befitting its status as the premier financial institution in the city. An impressive Classical Revival building constructed in the vault style of bank architecture, the new facility was designed by prominent bank architects and builders, the Hoggson Brothers of New York and Chicago. At first, the fact that the new building was not going to be constructed by local builders caused some negative comment in the community, but it was clear that the bank officials wanted a showplace that only a national firm could provide them. With a facing of smooth Bedford Limestone and heavy, classical details, the new First National Bank gave the impression of stability, strength, and tradition. This image was verified during the early 1930s, when the beginning of the Great Depression stressed all banks and caused many to fail. Indeed, after the "bank holiday" in March of 1933, called for by President Roosevelt to stabilize the banking industry, the First National Bank lived up to its reputation for stability by immediately getting the federal government's permission to reopen. The First National's competition at the time, the Farmers National Bank, could not immediately reopen, and even though local businessmen tried to revive it, the Farmers Bank never did reopen.²¹

By the early 1960s, the First National Bank had a capitalization six times what it had in 1921, and in 1963, the bank planned for the construction of a new bank building. Their current bank was "land-locked" with no room for expansion, particularly in the area of drive-up facilities, a necessity for banking in the late twentieth century. In 1964, the bank moved into its new quarters just north of Main Street and east of Broad Street. The new building had a modern architectural style and plenty of room for drive-up banking. The First National Bank was, in recent years, purchased by the large Firststar Bank Corporation, and it still operates under that name in its 1964 facility.²²

Both historic locations of the First National Bank in the district are historically significant for their relationship with this financial institution, the most successful and important one in Lake

²⁰ "New Home is Result of 38 Years Success," *Lake Geneva News*, 2 February 1922, p. 6.

²¹ "How the Bank Building Was Planned For and Built," *Lake Geneva News*, 2 February 1922, p. 6.

²² *First National Bank*, pamphlet on file in the local history files of the Lake Geneva Library, c. 1964.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 22 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

Geneva. The first location (Davis-Walter Block, 712 Main St.) of the bank and its impressive 1921 building (749 Main St.), are historically significant because they represent the historic growth and development of the First National Bank. The 1921 building has lost some of its architectural integrity, but its historic associations give it an important historical significance.

In 1900, another national bank was organized in Lake Geneva. The Farmers National Bank was established primarily by businessman D. S. Allen, and it was in his Metropolitan Block that the bank was first located. By 1905, though, the bank had moved to its permanent location in half of the Wachter & Ford Block (736-738 Main St.). In 1920, the Farmers Bank purchased the entire block, but continued to occupy only one-half of the building. As stated above, in March of 1933, during the federal bank holiday, the federal government discovered that the Farmers Bank was not solvent enough to reopen. A group of local citizens and businessmen tried to re-capitalize the bank and convince the federal government to reopen it, but their attempts were unsuccessful and in January of 1934, the bank was placed in the hands of receivers for liquidation.²³

Although the Farmers National Bank did not survive the Great Depression, it was an important financial institution in the district for over 30 years. Its location in the Wachter & Ford Block adds commercial significance to an already-important commercial building that had housed prominent dry goods stores.

After 1933, the First National Bank was the only bank in the community for over 25 years. In 1959, the monopoly was broken with the founding of the Citizens National Bank, which built a modern bank building on Broad and Geneva streets. Today, many other banks have established branches in Lake Geneva, as banking has expanded throughout the country. These banks are all outside of the downtown, primarily because of drive-up facilities which require more space than is available downtown. But, between 1883 and 1933, the Main Street Historic District was the center of banking in the city, with three banks located in four different buildings over the years. This history of financial services in the district support the contention that much of the city's commercial activities revolved around the district's buildings during the period of significance.

Retailing

The bulk of the district's commercial historical significance is based on the growth and development of retailing in its buildings. This retailing ranged from large department and general

²³ "Organized a New Bank," *Lake Geneva News*, 7 September 1900, p. 1; "Bank Purchases Office Building," *Lake Geneva News*, 13 May 1920, p. 1; "Farmers Bank is Closed; Silent On Liquidation," *Lake Geneva News*, 11 January 1934, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 23 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

stores to small specialty clothing, drug, and grocery stores. Dry goods and department stores were usually the largest and most prestigious retailers because their wide variety of goods attracted shoppers who visited other downtown businesses. During the early to mid-twentieth century, general stores declined in favor of large department stores and most communities had at least one department store, either a locally-owned business, or a chain store, or both. But specialty stores were also important, selling goods not always found in the department stores and dispensing more personal service. A good mix of specialty stores was important to the long-term success of small town commercial districts.

The Main Street Historic District was the center of retailing in Lake Geneva. The buildings in the district housed a wide variety of retail establishments, many of them long-term businesses. Historic retailing was noted for its high turnover. Stores came and went frequently, and only the best and most tenacious retailers stayed in business more than a few years. The duration of a store is one way to assess its historic significance, because long-term retailers made the greatest contribution to the city's commercial economy. Another way to assess significance is to look at the type of stores that were long-lasting. Stores that offered essential goods and services also made important contributions to the city's commercial economy.

General stores were the first businesses in Lake Geneva and were the precursors to the later department stores. A dominant department store never developed in Lake Geneva. In the early twentieth century, the Montgomery Wards chain store built a two-story department store in the 800 block of Main Street, and this store was the most popular department store during the mid-twentieth century. During the nineteenth century, two large general stores developed in the district that became important department-dry goods retailers.

The first was S. C. Ford's store. Ford was a native of Walworth County who started a dry goods business in the fall of 1876. In 1881-82, he built, with his partner in the business, the Wachter and Ford Block (736-738 Main St.). During the 1880s, this building was named for its general store, the Emporium Block, and Ford advertised this business extensively. He later partnered with Phillips, but, by 1896, he owned the business alone. By 1900, it appears that Ford was no longer operating the Emporium store, as the building now housed the newly-formed Farmers Bank and the Host Brothers meat market.²⁴

Another long-time dry goods business in the district was the Pettit and Peacock Store. The main partner, Allan Peacock, was a native of Illinois who came to Lake Geneva in 1903 and by 1906 he was a partner in a dry goods business on Main Street. Peacock eventually owned the store on

²⁴ Butterfield, p. 903; Advertisements in the *Lake Geneva Herald* through the 1880s.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 24 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

his own and operated it until 1933, when it was sold. By the 1940s, the building that Peacock had occupied (760-766 Main St., before it was rebuilt) was being used for another department store, the Schultz Brothers chain discount store, which remained there into the 1980s.²⁵

Unfortunately, the location of Peacock's dry goods store has been rebuilt and is a non-contributing resource in the district, but the old Emporium Block is still extant and it is contributing in the district. It is historically significant for its association with the old S. C. Ford dry goods and department store business, the Emporium.

Although department stores did not dominate the historic district during the period of significance, several other long-time retailers did. Among them was the hardware store of Frank Moore. Frank Moore was born in Beloit and came to Lake Geneva in 1871. He worked in the pioneer hardware firm of Smith and Ingham and became a partner to Ingham when he purchased Smith's half of the business in 1878. Moore purchased Ingham's half of the business in 1890 and in 1903, he had his impressive stone front commercial building erected on Main Street (731 Main St.). In this location, the business remained for over 70 years.²⁶

In 1916, after 44 years in the hardware business, Frank Moore took on a partner, Andrew Malsch, and in 1919, Moore retired, selling the business to Malsch and Arthur G. Bullock. Although Moore retired from the business, it remained in operation as the F. S. Moore Hardware Company, or more commonly, as Moore Hardware. The business remained at Moore's Main Street location into the 1970s.²⁷ Because of its longevity, the Moore Hardware Store was one of the most important retail businesses in downtown Lake Geneva. There was one other long-time hardware store, but it was located outside of the district, and its historic building is not extant. The Moore Hardware Store was historically significant, and the building Moore constructed for his business in 1903 is significant for its long-time relationship with this business.

Two drug stores competed in Lake Geneva for generations, both dating from the mid-nineteenth century and lasting until the late twentieth century. The oldest was the Arnold Drug Store, which had its origins in one of the earliest businesses in the community. The store began with Lewis Curtis, who came to Lake Geneva in 1840 and started a drug store, which he operated, later with his son, H. H., until 1878. In that year, R. B. Arnold acquired the store, having begun as a clerk

²⁵ "Allen Peacock Dies Last Evening," *Lake Geneva News*, 5 December 1940, p. 12; "Lake Geneva to Have New Retail Dry Goods Store," *Lake Geneva News*, 26 October 1933, p. 1; City Directories for Lake Geneva, on file in the Lake Geneva Public Library, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

²⁶ "Frank S. Moore, Hardware," *Lake Geneva News*, 8 April 1909, Easter Special.

²⁷ "Change in Business," *Lake Geneva News*, 16 March 1916, p. 1; "New Hardware Firm Opens," *Lake Geneva News*, 29 May 1919, p. 1; City Directories.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 25 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

in the Curtis business and later graduating from a Chicago pharmacy school. The Curtis Drug store was one of the first businesses in the Metropolitan Block (770 Main St.) when it was completed in 1874 and Arnold kept the business at that location until 1909-10, when he had his own store building (755 Main St.) completed across the street. The Arnold drug store affiliated with the Rexall chain in the mid-twentieth century and remained in business until the 1980s.²⁸

The Arnold Building has, unfortunately, been altered and its original appearance changed so that the building is non-contributing in the district. However, the restored Metropolitan Block is extant and being the long-time home of the Curtis-Arnold drug store adds historical significance to this already-significant commercial building.

The second important and long-time drug store in Lake Geneva was the Hammersley Drug Store. W. H. Hammersley was a native of England who came to the United States in 1844. He was in business in New York with his father, who imported china and crockery. He remained in this business until 1863, when he came to Lake Geneva. In 1865, he began his drug store business, also selling books and stationery in a small frame building. In 1885-86, Hammersley had a new brick block constructed for his store (741 Main St.) and the business remained in this location for almost 100 years. In 1906, Hammersley's son, W. H. Jr. took over the business, then passed it on to his sons, Seymour and Henry, who had graduated from the School of Pharmacy at the University of Wisconsin. During the mid and late twentieth century, a fourth generation of Hammersleys carried on the drug store, affiliating with the Walgreen chain. The Hammersley Drug Store stayed in operation into the 1970s.²⁹

The Hammersley Block is one of the best-preserved buildings in the historic district. It still retains its 1929 copper storefront and most of its historic second story details. The Hammersley Drug Store was one of the longest and most popular of Lake Geneva's retail businesses, and W. H. Hammersley Sr. was a prominent member of the community. Because of its long-time association with the Hammersley Drug Store, the Hammersley Block is historically significant for commerce.

Several long-time furniture stores added to the variety of retailing in the district. The earliest was the pioneer firm of T. J. Hanna. Hanna opened one of the earliest cabinet making shops in Lake Geneva in the 1840s and built it into a successful furniture store and undertaking business. In 1871, he had the Hanna Block erected (711 Main St.) for his business that his son, S. S.,

²⁸ Butterfield, p. 898; City Directories.

²⁹ "W. H. Hammersley," *Lake Geneva Herald*, 13 April 1906, p. 1; "W. H. Hammersley Associates his Sons With Him," *Lake Geneva News*, 8 April 1920, p. 1; City Directories.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 26 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

continued until the early twentieth century.³⁰ The Hanna Block is historically significant because it was associated with the long-time and early furniture and undertaking business of the Hanna family. Furniture stores and undertaking services were essential in communities and often the two businesses were connected, prior to the era when funerals were held outside the home. The Hannas were the pioneers of this type of business in Lake Geneva, and their well-preserved 1871 building is an important landmark in the district.

Two other long-time furniture and undertaking businesses had their locations in the historic district. The earliest was the business of H. N. Grant, who began his furniture and undertaking store in 1882. In 1901, his son, Fred B. Grant, took over the business, operating it until 1921, when he sold it to Clark B. Habecker and Wallace J. Musselman. This firm, which eventually became Habecker and Derrick, is still in business today, operated by Derrick's grandson. The Grant furniture store was located in half of the Jones-Kaye Block (732-734 Main St.), possibly from the late nineteenth century until it was acquired by Habecker. Habecker and Musselman and Habecker and Derrick remained in this building until the late 1940s, when they moved to another location.³¹

During the twentieth century, another furniture and undertaking business was a prominent store in the district. John Wightman probably took over the old First National Bank building (Davis-Walter Block, 712 Main St.) in 1921, when the bank moved to its new quarters across the street. He remained at this location until the post-World War II era. In the early 1930s, he built a funeral parlor that was attached to his furniture store. At this time, furniture stores were separating their funeral business from the furniture business and, in many cases, becoming sole funeral parlors. Before that happened, though, many furniture stores built new funeral parlors that were attached to their furniture stores. These funeral parlors began to take funerals away from homes to specialty locations and today's modern funeral homes are a result. The Wightman business was one of the twentieth century businesses to make this transition, eventually locating their funeral home to a residential property.³² The Davis-Walter Block, already historically significant for its association with the First National Bank, is also historically significant as the location of the Wightman Furniture Store.

Clothing stores were essential and popular businesses in historic downtowns and Lake Geneva had several popular stores. One of the most long-lived was the Kohn and Jennings store, located

³⁰ Beckwith, p. 333; City Directories; Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps, on file in the Archives of the State Historical Society, Madison, Wisconsin.

³¹ "Fred B. Grant Sells Out His Business Here," *Lake Geneva News*, 19 May 1921, p. 1; City Directories.

³² City Directories; Advertisement for the opening of the Wightman Mortuary, *Lake Geneva News*, 18 May 1933, p. 3.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 6 Page 27 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI.

in the Moore Block 1 (752 Main St.). Lawrence Kohn came to Walworth County from Illinois as a boy and eventually he graduated from the Northern Indiana Normal School. However, he never had a career as a teacher; rather, he began working in the clothing store of J. W. Lone in Lake Geneva, then worked for O. C. Colby & Company's clothing and shoe store. In 1901, he formed a partnership with John T. Jennings and they purchased Lone's stock of men's and boys clothing and shoes. In 1938, D. Vincent Allen purchased the Kohn and Jennings clothing store, and it remained in the Allen family throughout the late twentieth century. Kohn and Jennings Men's Store remained in operation in Lake Geneva into the 1990s.³³ The Moore Block 1 is historically significant because it was the location of the Kohn and Jennings Clothing Store for almost 100 years.

Finally, grocery stores were probably some of the most essential and important businesses in downtowns during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They anchored downtowns until the development of supermarkets caused them to move out of downtowns in favor of large one-story buildings and parking lots. Historic grocery stores were notoriously short-lived, as profit margins were small and the public fickle in their buying habits. The chain supermarket eventually drove the "mom-and-pop" grocery stores out of business in the late twentieth century, but prior to that time, they, like the small groceries, were located downtown.

Of the historic grocery stores, probably the most prominent was the store of Smith & Lock. Paul F. W. Smith and Charles F. Lock began their business in the late nineteenth century in a small building on Center Street. By 1893, they had moved to a more prominent location in the Powell Block (724 Main St.), where they remained until 1928. In that year, Smith and Lock sold their business to Paul and Peter Mocinski, who continued to operate a grocery store in that location for several years. Later, the business was known as Gaskill's Grocery, then Hill's Grocery before the building was sold to a shoe store in the late 1950s.³⁴

A long-time small grocery store of the nineteenth and early twentieth century was Frank Johnson's grocery store. Johnson's store moved into the P. H. Moore Block (737 Main St.) sometime around the turn of the twentieth century and remained there for a number of years. Nearby, in the Stannard-Chelini Block (725-729 Main St.) one of the most prominent grocery stores of the twentieth century developed. Originally, in half of this store, Barney Chelini operated his popular confectionary and fruit store for almost 20 years. In Stannard's half of the building, George Stannard operated a barber shop for a time, but it soon became the location for one of the chain grocery stores moving into Lake Geneva in the early twentieth century, the

³³ Beckwith, p. 719; City Directories; Advertisement for Kohn and Jennings, *Lake Geneva News*, 12 June 1986, p. 3.

³⁴ "Local Grocery Store Sold to Mocinski Brothers," *Lake Geneva News*, 8 March 1928, p. 1; City Directories.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 28 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

National Tea Company. In 1931, the National Tea Company acquired the old Chelini half of the building (Barney Chelini had sold to new owners in 1925) and remodeled the double storefront block into a larger, self-service grocery. Self-service groceries, particularly those operated by national chains, were becoming popular during the mid-twentieth century and often required larger quarters. The National Tea Company remained in this location for several decades until the development of supermarkets in the post-World War II era resulted in grocery stores leaving downtowns. The building became a Ben Franklin discount department store, then a gift shop.³⁵

These three buildings were not the only ones in the district to house grocery stores, but they housed three of the longest-lived groceries and they have historical significance for their association with these important businesses. They represent the wide range of groceries in Lake Geneva, from a historic nineteenth century grocery to a traditional single-owner, high service grocery, to a modern self-service chain store. Lake Geneva had all of these types of stores, which were essential to the success of a community's downtown during the period of significance.

This brief overview of some of the Main Street Historic District's important commercial businesses illustrates that the district was, indeed, the center of commerce in the community, from financial services to all types of retailing. During the early twentieth century, the city's downtown expanded outside of the district, but it was in the 700 block of Main Street that the city's most concentrated commercial activity took place during the period of significance.

Just as the district is architecturally significant because it features a streetscape of historic commercial buildings, it is historically significant because this same streetscape has housed most of the city's important commercial businesses during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. And, although some of the city's retailing and most of its banking now takes place outside of the district, the buildings in the district are filled with retail and service businesses that make Lake Geneva a vibrant downtown shopping district that attracts people from all over the area and from Illinois. This type of downtown shopping is likely to continue well into the 21st century.

ARCHEOLOGICAL STATEMENT

Historic sources indicate that the Lake Geneva area was the site of considerable pre-historic Native American activity and that this district, in particular, was the site of some of the community's most important historic settlement activity. An archeological investigation was

³⁵ City Directories; "Chelini Sells to Milwaukee Firm," *Lake Geneva News*, 30 April 1925, p. 1; "Work is Started Remodeling Store for National Tea," *Lake Geneva News*, 1 February 1931, p. 1.

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 29 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

beyond the scope of this nomination, although it is likely that either pre-historic or historic resources may still be extant within the boundaries of the district.

PRESERVATION ACTIVITIES

This nomination was prepared for the Lake Geneva Historic Preservation Commission, with the support of the city council of the City of Lake Geneva. The Historic Preservation Commission is active in the preservation of Lake Geneva's historic resources and has engaged in many activities that help to promote and protect these resources. In recent years, the loss of some historic resources and controversy over land-use issues has helped raise awareness of historic preservation issues in Lake Geneva. Also, the possibility of an expansion of Main Street (Highway 50) to four lanes through the city's downtown, including this historic district, is one of the reasons that the Historic Preservation Commission is pursuing this nomination. It is hoped that the establishment of this district will help retain the city's historic downtown appearance.

Main Street Historic District
Name of Property

Walworth
County and State

Wisconsin

9. Major Bibliographic References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous Documentation on File (National Park Service):

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested previously listed in the National Register previously determined eligible by the National Register designated a National Historic landmark recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

State Historic Preservation Office
Other State Agency
Federal Agency
 Local government
University
Other

Name of repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2.5 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 16 382230 4716310
Zone Easting Northing

2 16 382360 4716310
Zone Easting Northing

3 16 382230 4716210
Zone Easting Northing

4 16 382360 4716210
Zone Easting Northing

See Continuation Sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 1 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 2 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 3 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

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- 4 December 1885, p. 5
- 14 May 1886, p. 5

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 9 Page 4 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

Lake Geneva Herald

2 July 1886, p. 5
4 April 1891, p. 5
31 July 1891, p. 5
7 September 1900, p. 1
21 September 1900, p. 1
8 February 1901, p. 1
26 June 1903, p. 1
16 October 1903, p. 1
25 September 1908, p. 5
23 October 1908, p. 1

Lake Geneva News

3 January 1907, p. 4
21 January 1909, p. 1
7 October 1909, p. 1
7 April 1910, p. 1
2 May 1912, p. 1
19 September 1912, p. 1

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 10 Page 1 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Main Street Historic District is bounded by the following: Beginning at the intersection of the west curb line of Center Street and the rear or north lot lines of 701-757 Main Street, then west along the rear lot lines of 701-757 Main Street to the east lot line of 757 Main Street, then south, west, then south along this line to the rear or north lot line of 771 Main Street, then east along this line to the west curb line of Broad Street, then running south along this line to the rear or south lot line of 770 Main Street, then east along this line to the west lot line of 760-66 Main Street, then south along this line to the rear or south lot lines of 712-766 Main Street and 150 Center Street, then east along this line to the west curb line of Center Street, then north along this line to the point of beginning.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundary of this district was drawn to include the intact historic streetscape of Lake Geneva's downtown commercial district, which is primarily the 700 block of Main Street. The boundary was drawn to include only those buildings that make up this intact historic streetscape, while not including modern and remodeled historic buildings that sit outside of the district boundaries. Lake Geneva's downtown extends to the northwest, southwest, and west of this district, along Broad Street and the 800 block of Main Street, but these buildings do not have the historic appearance of the buildings within the district boundaries. To the east of the district, there is a continuation of the city's downtown, as well, but this commercial area consists of buildings of a different age and type along with more vacant lots and open spaces. South of the district there is a large apartment building and to the north of the district are modern commercial buildings and the beginning of a residential neighborhood. The result of the boundaries drawn for this district is a compact historic streetscape with few non-contributing buildings

Main Street Historic District
Name of Property

Walworth
County and State

Wisconsin

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name/title	various	
organization		date
street&number		telephone
city or town	state	zip code

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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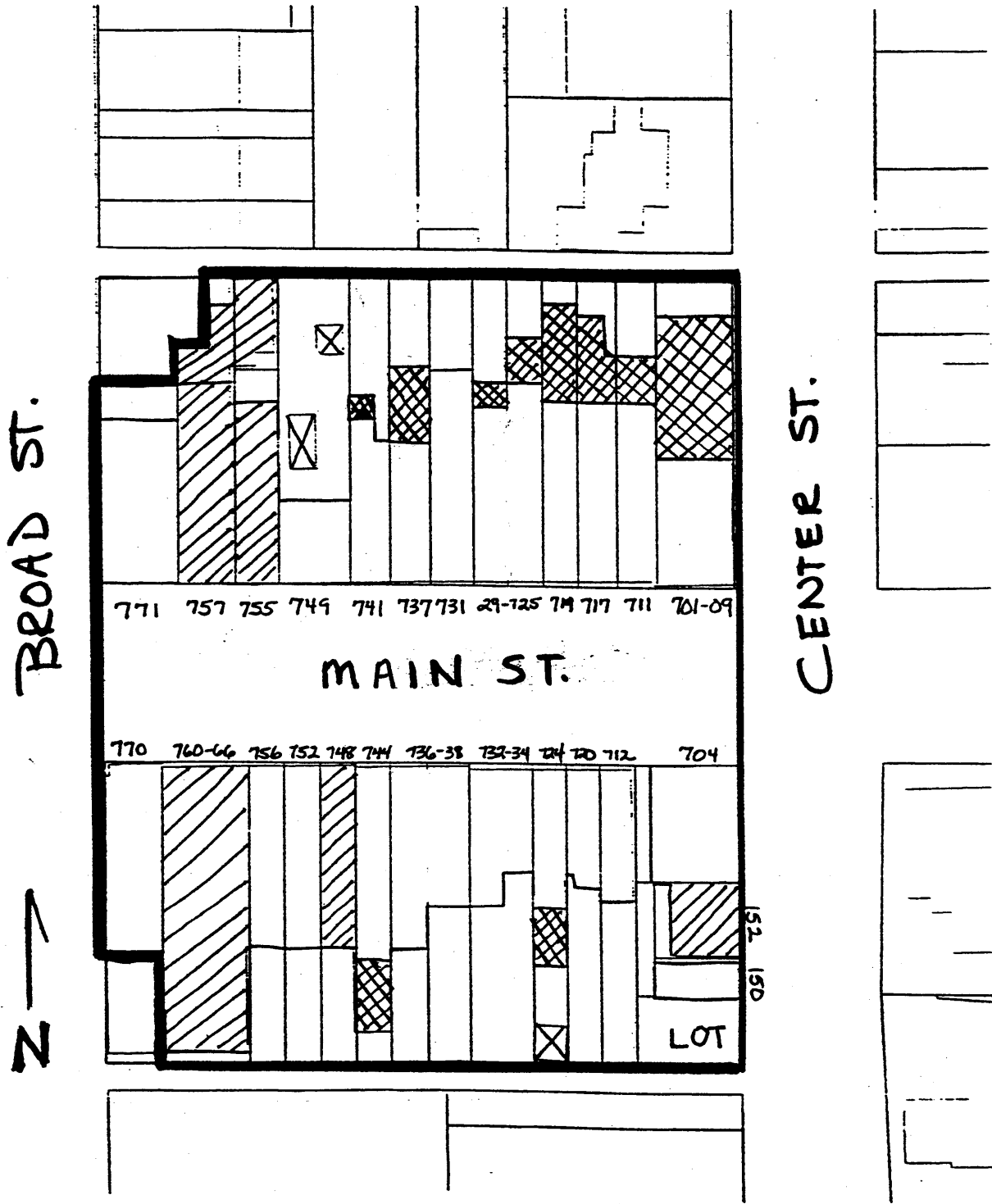
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section photos Page 1 Main Street Historic District
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, WI

MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT. Lake Geneva, Walworth County, Wisconsin. Photos by Lianna Eysnogle for Carol Cartwright, November 2000. Negatives on file in the Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin. Views:

- 1 of 12: 700 Block Main Street, north side, view from the southwest.
- 2 of 12: 755-771 Main Street, view from the southwest.
- 3 of 12: 711-749 Main Street, view from the southwest.
- 4 of 12: 701-771 Main Street, view from the southeast.
- 5 of 12: 725-29 Main Street, view of storefront from southwest.
- 6 of 12: 711 Main Street, view of storefront.
- 7 of 12: 700 Block Main Street, south side, view from northwest.
- 8 of 12: 736-748 Main Street, view from northwest.
- 9 of 12: 738 Main Street, view of storefront.
- 10 of 12: 704-732 Main Street, view from northwest.
- 11 of 12: 704 Main Street, view from northwest.
- 12 of 12: 150-152 Center Street, 704 Main Street, view from southeast.

MAIN STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT
Lake Geneva, Walworth County, Wisconsin



- Key:**
- District Boundary
 - ▨ Non-Contributing Building
 - ⊠ Out-building, not in building count
 - ▩ Non-Contributing Addition
- Not to scale