

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED NOV 9 1976

DATE ENTERED

JUL 13 1977

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1** NAMEHISTORIC
McClurg BuildingAND/OR COMMON
245 Main Place

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
245 Main StreetCITY, TOWN
Racine

VICINITY OF

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
FirstSTATE
Wisconsin 53403CODE
55COUNTY
RacineCODE
101

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Terry F. Ludeman and Aart VuykSTREET & NUMBER
245 Main StreetCITY, TOWN
Racine

VICINITY OF

STATE
Wisconsin 53403

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Racine County CourthouseSTREET & NUMBER
730 Wisconsin AvenueCITY, TOWN
RacineSTATE
Wisconsin 53403**6** REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYSTITLE
Wisconsin's Historic Preservation Plan, Volume II: The InventoryDATE
1975 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS State Historical Society of WisconsinCITY, TOWN
MadisonSTATE
Wisconsin 53706

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The McClurg Building, constructed in 1857-58, is a four-story red brick structure of Renaissance Revival design. A three-story implied central pavilion on the front is outlined with stone quoins which curve in a round arch at the top. A similar "pavilion" decorates the south facade. Quoins enrich all four corners of the building, too. The windows originally consisted of two narrow round-arched lancets with a trefoil design in the tracery under the arch. In both central "pavilions" a cast iron spandrel of elaborate foliate design connected the second and third floor windows and a cast iron roundel surmounted the fourth floor windows. Sometime later, probably after the fire of 1882 which gutted the building, the windows were changed to simple, paned, round-arched glazings.

In 1941 the openings were made smaller, rectangular sash were introduced, and the tympani were filled with garlanded panels. Segmental parapets decorated with urns and tiny orbs which once crowned the "pavilions" have disappeared. The present side cornices are late 19th century replacements similar to the original.¹

The most interesting feature of the exterior is its one-story cast iron store front, a relatively early extant example of the use of cast iron fronts. Tradition states that the brick and cast iron were shipped by boat from Buffalo, N.Y.² The front, therefore, may well have been cast by the Buffalo Eagle Iron Works Co., which specialized in shipping westward one-story fronts of similar design.³ The rich facade is in the popular Sansovinesque mode. Small columns supporting round-arched windows are flanked by large pilasters supporting a denticulated and modillioned entablature. Composite capitals, ornate keystones, and decorative moldings enrich the design. A doorway and shop windows of similar design on the south facade were removed at an unknown date.⁴

The interior of the McClurg Building was gutted by fire in 1882.⁵ Since then, extensive interior alterations have occurred periodically, accompanying changes in use, which have been varied and numerous. Around the beginning of World War I, an eating establishment was started on the first floor. In 1918, when Peter Nelson took over the building, he ran a cafeteria until 1924, when he converted it into a hotel and restaurant, its function yet today. The current owners, who acquired the property in early 1975, plan some restoration but no major remodeling.⁶ They have made changes on the first floor, moving the bar and dining facilities into the rear and enlarging the lobby area at the front. The establishment is to continue as basically a residential hotel. Exterior restoration has been minimal, consisting mostly of the removal of old signs which tended to interfere with the intrinsic attractiveness of the building.

1. Racine, Picturesque and Descriptive, (1888). An illustration shows that the roofline had no metal cornices at that time.
2. Racine Journal-Times, July 1, 1956.
3. Telephone interview with Margot Gayle, of Friends of Cast Iron Architecture, October 1, 1976. The Buffalo Eagle Iron Works Co. began operations Jan. 1, 1854 and published a large catalog in 1859.
4. Racine Journal-Times, c. 1962. Pictured in an article, "You've Come a Long Way, Baby!" showing 1906 and current photographs.
5. The Racine Journal, May 10, 1882.
6. Racine Journal-Times, Feb. 1, 1975.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1857-58; 1882; 1918

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Alexander McClurg

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Architecturally, the major significance of the McClurg Building lies in its having a one-story cast iron store front, which was almost certainly cast and shipped by the Buffalo Eagle Iron Works Company. That company specialized in westward shipments of single-story fronts of similar design.^{1,2} The use of such fronts at the time of construction of the McClurg Building was early in the United States and certainly rare in Wisconsin. In addition, the building is probably one of very few Wisconsin survivals of large buildings in the North Italian Renaissance Revival style. Since it is the only survivor of an 1882 fire which leveled all other structures in a large surrounding area, it is probably the oldest remaining commercial building in Racine's downtown district.

It was built in 1857-58 by Alexander McClurg,³ a local banker, "as the headquarters of the Racine, Janesville and Mississippi Railroad,"⁴ and continued to house railroad offices until the time of the fire in 1882. Newspaper accounts of the time refer to it as "the railroad building," although it was also used for other offices.⁵ The walls remained good despite the fire, and not long afterward M. M. Secor purchased the building. The interior was restored and the structure became known as the "Secor Block." "A number of 'firsts' followed."⁶

Set up in the building was the first Turkish bathhouse in this section of the country. The bathhouse was furnished with the most modern equipment available then and continued in use until 1941. Meanwhile, the second floor was rented to the county and was used for the first advocate's office. On the main floor the First Bohemian Bank of America, which went out of business in less than a year, was established. The first public library in the county was set up in the building in September of 1897, when 3,439 volumes were housed on the first floor. The first municipal court in the county, with Judge David J. Flett presiding, was set up on one of the upper floors at the turn of the century. Downstairs, William C. Tiede built the county's first vaudeville theater...Tiede introduced the first motion pictures to Racine and combined the movies with vaudeville. His first picture was "The Great Train Robbery." An eating establishment was moved into the first floor shortly before the outbreak of World War I. Vocational school classes continued to be held on the second floor until 1921... Peter Nelson, who had a record of 54 years of service in the restaurant business in Downtown Racine, took over the building in 1918. He ran a cafeteria until 1924, when he opened a hotel and restaurant.⁷

Although Nelson sold the building in 1956, it continued to be known as the Nelson Hotel until the new owners acquired it in 1975 and renamed it "245 Main Place."⁸ It is

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.2

UTM REFERENCES

A

1	6
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4	3	5	8	7	5
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4	7	3	1	0	1	0
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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B

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ZONE EASTING NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

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11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Donald N. Anderson, Historian & Registrar, Historic Preservation Division

ORGANIZATION

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

8 October 1976

STREET & NUMBER

816 State Street

TELEPHONE

608/262-0746

CITY OR TOWN

Madison

STATE

Wisconsin 53706

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Richard A. Emery

TITLE

Acting Director
State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE

10/29/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

W. D. Muntz
Charles [Signature]

DATE

7-13-77

DATE

7-8-75

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

unquestionably one of Racine's most important surviving early commercial buildings and has been designated an official Racine Landmark.

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1. Racine Journal-Times, July 1, 1956
 2. Gayle, Margot, interview, Oct. 1, 1976
 3. Christensen, "An Historic Downtown Building"
 4. Racine Journal-Times, July 1, 1956
 5. The Racine Journal, May 10, 1882
 6. Christensen, op. cit.
 7. Racine Journal-Times, July 12, 1960
 8. Pfankuchen, David, Racine Journal-Times, Feb. 21, 1975

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ITEM NUMBER below PAGE 1

9. Christensen, Charles M., "An Historic Downtown Building," typescript, n.p.,
(Racine, 1949)
"Fiery Chaos!" The Racine Journal, May 10, 1882.
Gayle, Margot, telephone interview by K. E. Hundt, October 1, 1976
"Nelson Hotel Site Boasts Long List of City Firsts," Racine Journal-Times
July 12, 1960
"Peter Nelson Sells His Hotel at 245 Main St. to John Wuhrman," Racine
Journal-Times, July 1, 1956.
Pfankuchen, David, "Former Southside pair acquiring Hotel Nelson," Racine
Journal-Times, February 21, 1975
Racine, Picturesque and Descriptive, (Neenah, 1888)
"You've Come a Long Way, Baby!" Racine Journal-Times, date unknown (c. 1962)
11. Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian, Historic Preservation Division
State Historical Society of Wisconsin 5 October 1976
816 State Street 608/262-2970
Madison Wisconsin 53706