National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

OMB No. 1024-001 Exp. 10-31-84	B
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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms* Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

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Exchange Square	Historic District		
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7. Description

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Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The Exchange Square Historic District, located in the geographic as well as historic heart of Brodhead, is a compact and cohesive group of nineteenth and early twentieth century commercial buildings which reflect the city's long-time role as a business and cultural center for southeastern Green and southwestern Rock counties. Characterized by two and three story brick structures (many sharing party walls) and Victorian architectural details, the district contains nearly all the extant structures important to the city's vigorous commercial growth from its platting by railroad promoters in 1856 until the Depression, including nineteenth century hotels, commercial blocks, opera houses, carriage works, blacksmith shops, and the railroad depot. The materials, scale, and density of the district clearly distinguish it from the quiet tree-shaded residential neighborhoods which surround it on all sides. Roughly bounded on the south by railroad tracks, the district stretches north one block on Center Avenue, one block east on Exchange Street, and includes all three sides of Exchange Square.

At the center of the district is Exchange Square itself, a broad trapezoid-like "square" immediately north of the railroad tracks (and shaped, in part, by the railroad's route). Now used primarily for parking, the Square is surrounded on three sides by richly detailed Victorian Italianate buildings constructed mostly between 1868 and 1873 during the district's most remarkable building boom. The cream brick buildings are distinguished by tall arched windows surmounted by strongly profiled hoods, brick pilasters and piers, decorative brick detailing at the cornices, and a variety of cast-iron details including storefront posts and lintels, window hoods, and bracketed cornices. A later addition to the Square--the Laube Building, built c. 1895 (Map No. 14, 1039 Center; northwest corner of Center Avenue and Exchange St.)--is constructed of pressed red brick with rusticated stone trim and an oriel tower reminiscent of the Queen Anne style, but it maintains a scale and rhythm compatible with its older neighbors. Collectively, the buildings on the Square form a dramatic enclosure that provides a visual centerpiece to the district, a historic marketplace and meeting-place in the middle of town. In the center of the Square, an island of grass and bushes provides a small green space.

The buildings on Center Avenue and Exchange Street are generally smaller and more restrained than those on the Square. Nineteenth century structures are characterized by ornamental brick cornices, arched windows with hoods, and an occasional cast-iron cornice or storefront detail. The few buildings from the early twentieth century generally employ broader windows, widely spaced brick piers, and unornamented roof lines **although** one building from the early twentieth century—1034 Center Ave., No. 33—reflects a vaguely "Meditteranean" character. Nevertheless, these later structures reflect the scale and materials displayed in the nineteenth century buildings. Even the most utilitarian structures on the periphery of the district—the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Depot (Map No. 1, Center Ave.), the Bartlett wagon shop (No. 8, 1012 W. Third Ave.), or the Laube and Durner blacksmith shop (no. 37, NW corner of E. Exchange St. and E. Second Ave.)—employ the same arched windows and brick hoods seen in their commercial neighbors.

Unlike larger communities, the business district of Brodhead never outgrew its nineteenth century perimeters and thus today retains its compact boundaries. With the exception of several warehouses and light industrial buildings south of the railroad tracks, the district contains the extant buildings associated with Brodhead's historic commercial life. Nor have recent economic pressures contributed to widespread

Significance

1400–1499 1500–1599 1600–1699 1700–1799 _X 1800–1899 _X 1900–	agriculture X architecture art C commerce c communications	community planning conservation economics education engineering exploration/settlement industry invention	politics/government	e religion science sculpture social/ humanitarian theater transportation _X_ other (specify) CULTURAL CENTER
Specific dates	Period of significanc	e Builder/Architect See	Below	

Specific dates 1860-1930

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The economic and civic center of Brodhead since the village was platted in 1856, the Exchange Square Historic District is a historically and architecturally significant group of buildings reflecting the community's rapid rise from railroad town to Green County's "second city." Built mostly between 1860 and 1930, the district includes the full spectrum of structures important to the post-Civil War economic expansion of Brodhead, ranging from blacksmith shop to railroad depot, from opera house to city hall, from department store to wagon manufactory. Collectively the buildings form a mercantile center of regional importance, a hub of transportation and trade, and a local center of civic and community life. Yet despite the variety of function and span of years, the district maintains a remarkable unity of scale, material, and design, underscored by outstanding examples of Italianate, Queen Anne, and early twentieth century commercial styles. Today, the historic character and integrity of the district is well-preserved, continued testimony to its role as the commercial center of southeastern Green County.

Historical Background

The history of the Exchange Square Historic District -- like that of Brodhead itself -- began in the offices of railroad promoters seeking a route westward from Janesville to Mineral Point in 1856. Unable to attract sufficient financial support from the nearby villages of Clarence or Decatur, the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad platted an entirely new town on a sandy plain between the two, named the village after chief engineer and town proprietor Edward Brodhead, and within a year brought the railroad through the heart of town. The response was immediate: settlers from surrounding communities as well as from the east arrived at once, and businesses were transplanted from neighboring villages to the new commercial center. Within the first eighteen months, lots were sold to the value of \$112,000 and, by 1858, Brodhead -- the "all-swallowing town" -- boasted over 600 inhabitants (partially at the expense of doomed Clarence and Decatur).

The success of Brodhead was sudden but not surprising. Platted at the height of the wheat era in southern Wisconsin, and surrounded by the fertile prairies of southeastern Green and southwestern Rock counties, Brodhead was poised to capture a ready-made agricultural market. Settlers had arrived in the region by the late 1830s; by 1850, Rock County had more than 50% of its land in farms, Green County nearly 40%, and area farmers made a substantial contribution to the state's prodigious wheat harvests in the foflowing decade.² The arrival of the railroad in Brodhead -- the first rail connection in Green County -- promised facilitated shipping for farmers seeking access to Lake Michigan markets. When a mill race (from the Sugar River) and a flour mill were built in 1862-63, Brodhead offered grain

(continued)

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Item 8, Continuation page 10.

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, Wis.

disfigurement. Although most ground floor facades and interior spaces have been modified at various points over the last century, cast-iron storefront posts and lintels have survived on several buildings (including, for example, Gombar/Laube Hall, No. 3, 906 W. Exchange St.; or the building at 1021 Center Ave., No. 18), and most buildings maintain integrity on their upper stories. Others, notably the depot and the Bartlett factory, have been restored to original condition in recent years. Free of all but three small intrusions, the Exchange Square Historic District retains its physical character as well as its historic function.

The Exchange Square Historic District is comprised of 38 buildings. The 35 contributing buildings are distinguished by their construction date (built during the district's significant period, 1860 to 1930) and the retention of original fabric and detail. Two of the non-contributing buildings by contrast, (926 W. Exchange St., No. 7 and 1035 Center Ave., No. 15) are of recent construction and share neither the scale nor character of the district's historic buildings. The third non-contributing building (1117 W. Second Ave., No. 9) has been completely refaced in non-historic materials, thus destroying the integrity of its original appearance.

The following inventory indicates the map no., street address, historic name and use (if known), construction date (if known), and classification code of each building in the district. Dates of construction were determined by property abstracts, tax records, contemporary newspaper articles, and historic maps. Historic names and uses were determined by consulting contemporary newspaper accounts, business directories, and Sanborn fire insurance maps. (See foot notes and bibliography for complete sources.)

INVENTORY

Map No.	Address	Historic Name/Use	Date	<u>Class.</u>
1	Center Ave.	Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Depot	c.1885	С
2	1101 Center Ave.	Young House Hotel	1868; ² addition c. 1905	С
3	906 W. Exchange St.	Gombar Hall (later, Laube Hall and Manager Opera House); public hall and hardware store	1868 ³	С
4	912 W. Exchange St.	GombarBlock saloon/store	c. 1868 ⁴	С
5	916–918 W. Exchange St.	general store G ombar-Laube Building	c. 1880 ⁵	С



1

Page

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, Wis.

Continuation sheet Item number 7 OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

For NPS use only received. date entered NOV 1984

Page 2

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Map No.	Address	Historic Name/Use	Date	Class.
6	922 W. Exchange St.	livery, blacksmith shop	c. 1880 ⁶	C
7	926 W. Exchange St.	telephone company building		NC
8	1012 W. Third Ave.	L.C. Bartlett & Sons wagon and carriage shop	c. ¹⁸⁶⁹ 7	С
9	1117 W. Second St.			NC
10	1111 W. Second Ave.	Broughton Opera House public hall	c. 1870 ⁸	С
11	1105-1107 W. Second Ave.	McNair Block (National Hall) dry goods and public hall	1869 ⁹	С
12	1103 W. Second Ave.	Lakin Block (later Kirkpatrick Block; after 1905, City Hall)	1868 10	С
13	913-929 W. Exchange St.	Fraze z- Gosling Block various retail stores	1869 11	С
14	NW corner Exchange and Center Avenue 907-911 W. Exchange St. 1039 Center Avenue	Laube Building retail and office space, Bank of Brodhead	c. 1895 ¹² -1904	С
15.	1035 Center Ave.	bank	c. 1970	NC
16	102 [°] 7 Center Ave.	Stair Department Store	c. 1910 ¹³	С
17	1023 Center Ave.	meat market	c. 1910 ¹⁴	С
18	1021 Center Ave.	grocery store		С
19	1019 Center Ave.	W.W. Roderick Block dry goods		С
20	1015 Center Ave.	hardware, drygoods, meat		С
21	1013 Center Ave.	various retail	c. 1860 15	С
22	1011 Center Ave.	various retail	c. 1860 ¹⁵	С
23 24 25	1007 Center Ave. 1005 Center Ave. 1003 Center Ave	garage gas station	c. 1925 16 c. 1925 17	С С С
26	1008 Center AVe.	Lo ^f tus Building Farm implements	c. 1904 ¹⁷	C

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered NUV 1 15

Page

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, Wis.

Map No.	Address	Historic Name/Use	Date	<u>Class.</u>
2 7	1012 Center Ave.	Monell Block newspaper; hardware; dry goods	1867- 1868	18 _C
28	1014-16 Center Ave.	Monell Block Addition retail; meat market	1867- 1868	19 _C
2 9	1018-22 Center Ave.	dry goods; farm implements	before 1887	20 _C
30	1024 Center Ave.	hardware	before 1887	21 C
31	1028 Center Ave.	various retail	c. 1920	22 _C
32	1030 Center Ave.	newspaper office	c. 1910	23 _C
33	1034 Center Ave.	confectionary	c. 1912	24 C
34	1042 Center Ave.	Terry and Amerpohhl Building department store	c. 1907	25 _C
35	807 E. Exchange St.		c. 1925	26 C
36	805 E. Exchange St.	garage	c. 1925	27 _C
37	NW corner E. Exchange and E. Second Ave. (801 E. Exchange St.)	Laube and Durner Wagon and Carriage Works Blacksmith Shop	c. 1890	28 _C
38 .	NE corner E. Exchange	Farmer's Hotel	1856	29 C
÷	and E. Second Ave. (1006 E. Second Avenue)	J	(and la	ter remodelled)

DESCRIPTION OF SELECTED CONTRIBUTING BUILDINGS

Map No.	Address	Historic Name	Date of <u>Construction</u>
7	Center Avenue	Chicago, Milwaukee, & St. Paul Depot	1885

The symbolic and economic center of the city, Brodhead's Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad Depot anchors the district on the southern boundary. Constructed in 1885¹ after the original depot (built in 1856 on the same site) was destroyed by fire, the cream brick structure (now painted yellow) has a gently pitched gable roof with widely projecting eaves well supported by large wooden brackets. Although simply rectangular

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, Wis. Continuation sheet Item number 7

in profile and massing, the building is ornamented with stilted, segmental brick window hoods above each opening. In addition, a small arcade of three round-headed windows appears in the west gable, a window ornaments the east gable, and a bay window projects from the north wall. A frame structure covered with one layer of brick, the depot has been restored to nearly original condition by the Brodhead Historical Society, which has operated the depot as a local history museum since 1981.

2 1101 Center Ave. Young House Hotel 1868 (rear addition, c. 1905)

Rising three stories at the prominent southeast corner of Exchange Square, the Young House dates to the first year of the Square's construction boom (1868).² The original (north) section, nearly cubic in dimension, is constructed of cream brick and features windows of tall proportion surmounted by heavy brick hoods. The original building is five window bays wide on the front (north) facade and the original east side facade. Fenes-tration on each floor is composed of a central round headed window, capped with receding archivolts, flanked on both sides by two segmental arch windows. The front and side entries were originally sheltered by pedimented porches (now removed and replaced with simple porches). In the first decade of the twentieth century, the building was nearly doubled in size with a south addition that echoed the fenestration and brick window hoods of the original building. A uniform cornice of denticulated brick crowns the building. Considered the city's finest hostelry during the district's period of significance, the Young House was well situated to host visiters arriving by rail or conducting business in town. Contemporary₃news accounts attribute the design to Brodhead's pioneer architect, Christopher Seeber.

3 906 W. Exchange St. Gombar/Laube Hall 1868-69

A fine example of the commercial Italianate style at mid-century, Gombar Hall (later known as Laube Hall and Manager Opera House) is distinguished by the variety and vigor of its detail. The cream brick facade is enlivened by brick pilasters, joined by a saw-tooth string course, which divides the upper facade into six window bays in which are set tall round headed windows surmounted by heavy brick hoods with receding archivolts. Each window is divided horizontally by a metal panel (embossed with ornamental swags) beneath a fan light. The storefront retains original cast-iron posts and a cast-iron lintel above the transom windows. The building is crowned by a heavy, bracketed cast-iron cornice. The most elaborately detailed building on the Square, Gombar Hall was built in 1868-69, and provided a second-floor hall that served as the town's original opera house.⁴ Fire insurance maps indicate that a fire in about 1908 damaged the building and necessitated some remodelling.



4

Page

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, WI Continuation sheet Item number 7 OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84



Page

c. 1870

5

4 912 W. Exchange St. Gombar Block

A good example of the commercial Italianate style in Brodhead, this two-story cream brick building is modest in scale but exuberant in detail. A bracketed and denticulated cast-iron cornice dominates the facade, projecting above the second story. Brick pilasters, crowned with brick capitals and connected by corbelled brick arches, divide the facade into three window bays into which are set round headed sash windows. The first floor still retains the original cast-iron posts which rise to a cast-iron lintel above the transoms. Built as an adjunct to Gombar Hall, this building **remained** in the Laube and Gombar families for many years.

5	916-918 W. Exchange St.	Gombar-Laube Block	c. 1880 ⁶
6	922 W. Exchange St.		c. 1880

These two story brick buildings share an identical cast-iron cornice, distinguished by dentils and brackets. Both buildings feature segmental arched windows with brick hoods and 916-918 W. Exchange retains cast-iron store front columns.

8	1012 W. Third Ave.	L. C. Bartlett & Sons	_c 1869
		Wagon and Carriage Factory	

A good example of nineteenth century industrial architecture in Brodhead, the Bartlett Carriage Factory, built c. 1869,⁷ is a simple two-story rectangular cream brick building with a low-pitched gable roof. The building exhibits the restrained detail appropriate to a utilitarian structure, but it is not without the suggestion of style. The simple massing is relieved by tall segmentally arched windows which punctuate the facade (six window bays across the side elevation; three arched openings across the front and rear) and which are crowned by heavy brick hoods, springing from corbelled inposts. Such detail on a functional building indicates the prevasiveness of the commerical Italianate style in the district. Used as a manufactory and storage structure for the Bartlett firm, this shop is the only structure surviving from the original complex of three buildings.

10 1111 W. Second St. Broughton Opera House c. 1870⁸

Like its neighbors on the west side of Exchange Square, the Broughton Opera House is an excellent example of the commercial Italianate style. The two story cream brick building is distinguished by tall round arched windows, crowned with keystones, on the first story and segmental arched windows, surmounted with stilted segmental hoods, on the second. Thin pilasters, united at each story by a string course, divide the facade into six window bays and brick dentils ornament the cornice. The first story windows have been partially hidden by store front remodelings. The hall, which occupied the first story, provided a forum for local entertainments as well as travelling performers.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, Wis. Continuation sheet Item number 7

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

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Page 6

1869

11 1105-1107 W. Second St. McNair Block

A complementary neighbor to the Lakin Block (city Hall) next door, this three story cream brick building is distinguished by commercial Italianate detailing and proportions. The facade is divided into five window bays by brick pilasters which rise from the top of the first floor to the cornice where they are joined by a string course. The round headed windows are tall in proportion and surmounted by corbelled brick hoods springing from imposts. The cream brick is unpainted, giving the building a warm color and rich texture. Although the cornice and ground floor have been altered, the building retains integrity of material and design in the upper stories. Built in 1869, the building was a dry goods store and the third story had a popular public hall (known as National Hall) which served as home to several fraternal and social groups in the late nineteenth century.⁹

12 1103 W. Second Ave. Lakin Block (City Hall) 1868

The three story brick Lakin Block, located on the west side of Exchange Square, exhibits the tall proportions and elaborate detail of the commercial Victorian Italianate style. Four brick pilasters, joined at their capitols by a string course, rise through the upper stories providing vertical emphasis and dividing the front facades into three window bays. (The side facade is punctuated with round headed windows but has no pilasters). Tall and narrow windows are capped by rounded hood keystones. Brick dentils ornament the cornice. The first major brick commercial block on the Square, Leonard Lakin's hardware store was built in 1868, and precipitated the building boom which resulted in many of the Square's present buildings.¹⁰ By the 1880s, A. D. Kirkpatrick ran his dry goods store from here, but the building took on a new life in 1905 when H. C. Putnam, a leading Brodhead businessman and politician, donated the structure to the city for use as a city hall, fire department, library, and meeting hall.¹¹ The first floor facade was considerably remodelled in 1962.

13 913-929 W. Exchange St. Frazee-Verback-Gosling Block 1869

One of the largest commercial blocks in the district, the Frazee Block is also one of the most distinctive: built in 1869¹², the half-block long cream brick building is distinguished by its commercial Italianate detail including an unusual pattern of interlacing brick arches at the cornice. Although the first story facades have been extensively remodelled in a variety of "contemporary" styles, the upper portion of the building retains complete integrity of fabric and design. Articulating the building's division into a series of storefronts, the second story fenestration is grouped into three sets of five windows. Each set is dominated by a central round headed window which is flanked on either side by two segmentally arched windows, all of which are surmounted by strongly profiled and corbelled brick hoods. The windows are further distinguished by their extremely tall proportions which provide a counterbalance to the long horizontal profile of the structure. But the most remarkable element of the

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, Wis. Item number Continuation sheet 7

building is the decoration at the cornice. The long facade is enlivened and unified by a a fanciful series of interlacing brick arches, springing from corbelled imposts, which create a design of overlapping rounded and pointed arches. The composition provides both coherence and movement to the north side of the square. News accounts of the day attribute the design to local architect Christopher Seeber.¹³ When construction began in 1869, William Frazee and S. M. Gosling agreed to a uniform design despite separate ownership.¹⁴ When completed, the block was a prime retail space and an early mercantile center of the city. After 1872, John Pfisterer, a long-time Brodhead jeweller, owned a part of the block and operated his store from the location.¹⁵

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c. 1895<sup>16</sup>
14
           NW corner E. Exchange St. Laube Building
           and Center Ave. (1039 Center Avenue)
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The last and largest structure to be built on Exchange Square, the Laube Building is a visual focal point for the entire downtown commercial district. Constructed of red brick and rising three stories, the building is distinguished by a two-story cylindrical oriel tower which surmounts the main entrance. The tower is crowned with a conical slate roof and cresting and its shaft features molded and decorative panels. The entry below is framed with rusticated stone piers, stone lintels cap each window, and a stone course runs across the top of the transom above the store windows, contrasting with the smooth and brightly colored brick. Each corner of the building is anchored with a brick pier, and a parapet on the south side facade breaks up the monotony of the fenestration. The cornice of the building is treated with decorative brick work in an exaggerated saw-tooth pattern. Although it reflects none of the Italianate detailing of the other buildings on the Square, the Laube building does share the same facade lines and scale. Newspaper accounts attribute the design to Beloit architect Frank Remp.¹⁷ Owned by local businessman Charles Laube, the block was an early home for the Bank of Brodhead and other merchants and offices.

18 1021 Center Ave.

19 1019 Center Ave. Roderick Block

Although denuded of its cornice and window hoods, 1021 Center Ave. is otherwise identical to its next-door neighbor, the Roderick Block. Both buildings are simple twostory cream brick structures with round arched windows. The Roderick building, however, is transformed by a heavy cast-iron cornice, which dominates the facade. The cornice is "supported" by molded brackets and rises in a peaked central gable bearing the legend "W.W. Roderick." The second story facade is divided into three bays by tall, round-headed windows, surmounted with ornate cast-iron hoods which provide an otherwise flat composition with depth. The ground floor has been remodelled in a more "contemporary" style, but an idea of the original storefront can be seen at 1021 Center Ave., where the original cast-iron posts remain intact. W. W. Roderick maintained a dry goods store.¹⁸



7

Page

National Register of Historic Places Inventorv—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, Wis.

Continuation sheet		Item number	7	Page 8
21	1013 Center Ave.			c. 1860

22 1011 Center Ave.

Although the exact date of construction is uncertain, these brick buildings are probably the oldest commercial blocks in the district.¹⁹ Three stories in height, the buildings are characterized by flat stone lintels, stone sills, and some iron elements on the storefront facade.

26 1008 Center Ave. Loftus Building

This two story brick building is distinguished by an ornate cast-iron cornice with "Loftus" inscribed on the central gable and brick corbels beneath the cornice.

2 7	1012 Center Ave.	Monell Block	1868
2.8	1014-16 Center Ave.	Monell Addition	1868

The three story Monell Block is one of the oldes brick commercial structures in the district. Built by George Monell in 1868²¹, the building features cast-iron window hoods and sills and some cast-iron storefront details. The original cast-iron cornice, however, has been lost. The design of the building was attributed to Christopher Seeber.²² The adjacent two-story brick building, constructed the same year, has a denticulated cornice and iron window hoods and sills. Monell operated a hardware and implements store.

29	1018-1022 Center Ave.	c.	1880
30	1024 Center Ave.	c.	1880

These two-story brick buildings feature elements typical to the districts nineteenth century commercial structures, including a bracketed wooden cornice and stilted segmental brick window hoods (at 1018-1022) and decorative brick cornice and wooden lintels (at 1024). Both locations housed hardware stores and other retail concerns.

34 1042 Center Ave. Terry and Amerpohl Building c. 1907

The largestwentieth century structure in the district, the Terry and Amerpohl general store building was designed by Janesville architect Frank Kemp in a style suggestive of the commercial architecture of the Chicago school.²³ Widely spaced brick piers (with fanciful brick "guoins") divide the upper story into broad tri-partite Chicago window (two on the front facade, six on the south side). Brick panels above each window provide ornament beneath the simple cornice. Unfortunately, ground story alterations conceal the original storefront facade.



OMB No. 1024-0018

10

Exp. 10-31-84

c. 1904²⁰

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green County, Wis. Continuation sheet Item number 7

3.7	NW corner E. Exchange	Laube and Durner Wagon and	c. 1890
	and E. Second Ave.	Carriage Works Blacksmith Shop	
	(801 E. Exchange St.)		

This small (24 x 64 ft.) two story brick structure housed the blacksmith shop for Laube and Durner wagon and carriage firm. The firm also had a storage shop and a two story wooden building in which the wood working and paint shops were located (now gone).²⁴ The building's front facade is characterized by corbeling and other brick patterns and segmental arch windows which are emphasized on the second story by a continuous brick string course. The structure retains complete exterior integrity.

38 NE corner E. Exchange St. Farmer's Hotel 1856 and E. Second Ave. (1006 East Second Avenue)

Erected in 1856, enlarged with a north addition in 1904, and considerably altered through the application of asbestos siding, the Farmer's Hotel was the first hotel in the community, strategically situated across from the Depot.²⁵ The structure served as a hotel throughout the district's period of significance, but its long tenure was rock_y. As early as 1870 the Farmer's Hotel (then known as the American House) had already gone through "no fewer than 25 proprietors" and several exterior and interior renovations.²⁶ A bracketed wooden cornice (of uncertain date) ornaments the original (south) portion.

Archaeological Resources: Because the Exchange Square Historic District has been developed since 1856, it is unlikely that significant archaeological resources survive undisturbed.





11

Page 9



16

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Continuation sheet Ba	rodhead,	Wisconsin	Item number	7	Page	ΤT
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10	The buildings at 1105 and 1103 Center Avenue first appear on the Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead of 1928.
17	The building first appears on the Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead of 1908.
18	Brodhead Independent, August 6, 1867; February 18, 1868.
19	Brodhead Independent, August 6, 1867; February 18, 1868.
20	Building appears as early as 1887 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead.
21	Building appears as early as 1887 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead.
22	Building first appears on 1928 Sanborn Perris map of Brodhead.
23	Building first appears on 1915 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead.
24	Building first appears on 1915 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead.
25	Brodhead Independent, June, 20, 1907.
26	Building first appears on 1928 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead.
27	Building first appears on 1928 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead.
28	Building first appears on 1893 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead.
29	History of Green County, Wisconsin, p. 804.

Footnotes for Description of Selected Contributing Buildings

1
Structure appears on 1887 Sandborn-Perris map of Brodhead; history of structure and
2 renovation discussed in Janesville Gazette, February 23, 1980.
Brodhead Independent, April 28, 1868; August 27, 1869.

³ Brodhead Independent, October 27, 1868.

⁴ Brodhead Independent, May 19, 1868; October 6, 1868.

⁵ Brodhead Indeependent, April 28, 1868.

⁶ Building appears oh 1887 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead; does not appear on 1873 <u>Atlas</u> of Green County.

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National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

For NPS use only received date entered NOV | 5 | Page 12

12

Exchange Square Historic District Continuation sheet Brodhead, Green County, WI Item number 7

History of Green County (1884), p. 813. 7 8 Building appears on 1873 Atlas of Green County. 9 Brodhead Independent, September 29, 1868. 10 Brodhead Independent April 21, 1868; September 22, 1868. 11 Brodhead Independent-Register, June 21, 1956. 12 Brodhead Independent, September 29, 1868; March 26, 1869; September 24, 1869; November 12, 1869. 13 Brodhead Independent, December 19, 1868. 14 Brodhead Independent, September 29, 1869. 15 Brodhead Independent, June 30, 1871. 16 Brodhead Independent, June 20, 1871. 17 Brodhead Independent, August 8, 1907. 18 Appears on 1887 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead. 19 Appears on earliest maps of city, perhaps including the 1861 Map of Green County. 20 First appears on Sanborn-Perris map of 1908. 21 Brodhead Independent, August 6, 1867. 22 Brodhead Independent, February 18, 1868. 23 First appears on 1908 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead. 24 First appears on 1893 Sanborn-Perris map of Brodhead. 25 History of Green County, Wisconsin (1884), p. 804; Brodhead Independent, February 4, 1870; September 9, 1870. 26 Brodhead Independent, February 4, 1870; September 9, 1870.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green Co. Continuation sheet Item number



grain processing as well. Other agricultural services soon followed. In the 1860s, wagon manufactories were established; by the 1870s a plow works was in operation; and, after the decline of the wheat crop and the emergence of diary farming, a creamery was built in the village (1882). By the late nineteenth century, the diversification of the region's agriculture was reflected in the tobacco, cheese, and fur warehouses that clustered by the railroad tracks.

8

As Brodhead grew in the nineteenth century, so did the thriving commercial district in the heart of town, a place for farmers to haul crops, buy supplies, and simply meet to discuss the events of the day. The railroad depot, originally constructed in 1856 (and replaced by the present brick structure in 1885) formed an obvious nucleus for the district, and the earliest commercial buildings (mostly frame structures like the Farmers Hotel, no. 3) coalesced near the tracks.⁴ As the commercial district expanded after the economic downturn of 1857, Center Street emerged as the principal commercial artery. By the end of the Civil War, news accounts claimed that Center Street played_host to "thousands" of grain and livestock farmers who came to buy and sell. Not all the visitors left, either. Merchants from Albany, Juda, and elsewhere continued to set up shop on the street. "No village in the west is building up more rapidly," boasted editor I. F. Mack in 1865. "Strangers are coming here by the dozen to locate and nothing prevents our village from becoming the most populous in the county." Boosterism was matched by an economic boom. In the 1870s, Brodhead passenger and freight traffic rivalled that of Monroe. In Brodhead, wrote one historian of the period, one never had to wait for anything.

Prosperity, of course, was not a panacea for civic ills. As late as 1865, for example, "great piles of rubbish, great pools of surface water, rough, uneven sidewalks, and indiscriminate and unlicensed use of public thoroughfares" by livestock continued to plague the community. But commercial expansion did result in a building campaign that soon transformed the face of the district. A major new brick building in town -- George Monell's three story block, complete with retail space, offices, and public hall (no.27)--was Brodhead's largest commercial structure when it was completed in 1868. But interest soon shifted to Exchange Square, the largely undeveloped area mid-way between the depot and the more northerly Center Street buildings. As early as May, 1867, the sale of vacant business lots on what was then known as Mechanics Square signaled a new interest in developing the area -- and spread apprehension among some Center Street merchants, fearful they would be ruined and "with them, of course, the town would go to the bugs"--while customers went to the Square.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District, Brodhead, Green Co. Continuation sheet Item number 8

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Such fears were overstated, but construction on the Square was very real -- and unprecedented in Brodhead history. From 1868 until 1870, all three sides of the Square boasted new commercial structures, including several public halls and a major new hotel. Initiated by Leonard Lakin's three story block (with third floor hall) (no. 12), other structures on the Square included the Young House Hotel (1868) (no. 2); Gombar Hall (1868) (no. 3) which featured the village's first opera house; McNair Block (1869) (no. 11), which featured the third floor National Hall; and the Frazee-Verback-Gosling Block (1869) (no. 13), a series of store front shops united by fanciful interlacing brick arches at the cornice. The building activity was the greatest construction effort since the town was platted, according to news reports of the day. In the spring of 1869 alone "a million pounds of bricks" were piled in the middle of the Square, the raw materials that soon gave shape to the vibrant new center of the city.

New construction was less dramatic in the following decades but the district continued to prosper. Shortly after the village was incorporated in 1870, the village fathers set out to improve the commercial area with new sidewalks and improved street grading.¹¹ Services expanded, too. Retailers offered a variety of products and services ranging from farm implements to clothing. Wagon manufactories including the Bartlett shop (no. 8), in the same 12^{decade}, provided critical services to farmers and city dwellers alike. established in 1868, and the Laube and Durner shop (no. 37), established

In 1891, Brodhead was incorporated as a city (upon the legislative initiative of H.C. Putnam who later donated his business block -- the old Lakin Block, no. 12 -- as the new city hall). Visible signs of continued growth included the construction of the new Laube building (no. 14), which served as home of the Bank of Brodhead, in 1895. Twelve years later, when fire destroyed the last row of old frame businesses on Center Street, merchants rebuilt in brick and the new structures included the city's first "department store," the Terry and Amerpohl building (no. 31). Despite the building activity, population remained steady through the early twentieth century (about 1500 people), and the commercial district did not physically expand after 1930. Yet if never to challenge the regional status of Janesville or Monroe, Brodhead did retain its commercial function through the late twentieth century, and today the Exchange Square Historic District is a well-preserved commercial center, a built encapsulation of the city's growth from before the Civil War until the Depression.



Page 2

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District Continuation sheet Brodhead, Green County Item number 8



Area of Significance: Architecture

An architecturally significant group of commercial buildings whose constituent elements range from Victorian Italiance to early twentieth century design (and include examples of nineteenth century industrial and depot construction), the Exchange Square Historic District is distinguished by a uniformity of material (brick), a conformity of scale (two and three stories), a compatability of style, and an integrity of historic character unrivalled elsewhere in Green County outside Monroe. The centerpiece of the district is Exchange Square, framed on three sides by a nearly indivisible wall of commercial Italianate blocks constructed of cream brick and embellished with the arched fenestration, brick pilasters, and decorative cornices associated with the style. The visual harmony of the square is suggested, in part, by the rich textural quality of the brick and the strong rhythem of the fenestration. But the uniformity is more than mere happenstance. Constructed mostly in a three year period (1868-1870), the buildings on the square reflect the craftsmanship of local masons and builders engaged simultaneously in a vigorous building campaign at the behest of owners who often insisted on similarity of design. ¹⁴

Gombar Hall (no.3) represents Italianate design on the square: arched windows with strongly profiled hoods are divided into "bays" by projecting brick pilasters which rise from the cast-iron storefront lintel to the cast-iron cornice. The motif recurs not only in the Gombar building next door (no.4) but on the west side of the square as well--especially (with some variation) in the Broughton Opera House (no. 10); the McNair Block (no. 11); and the Lakin Block (no. 12). The Frazee-Gosling Block (no. 13) unites six storefronts with an arched fenestration pattern that is identical to that of Young House (no.2) on the opposite side of the square--a reflection, no doubt, of pioneer architect Christopher Seeber to whom both designs are attributed. The ingenious pattern of interlacing brick arches at the cornice of the Frazee Block offers a more personalized rendition of the arch theme that carries across the square.

Despite the Italianate complexion of the square, the building that links the square with Center Avenue is built of red brick, has flat-headed windows, rusticated stone trim, and a decidedly Queen Anne oriel tower. Nevertheless, the Laube Building (no. 14) is an effective intermediary, harmonious in scale with the buildings on the square but dramatic enough in style to provide a visual landmark for Center Avenue as well.

The buildings on Center Avenue, less uniform in style and simpler in detail, intersperse **Italianateadesign** with work from the twentieth century. Italianate structures--like the Monell Block, designed by Christopher Seeber with his signature fenestration pattern of a central round arch window flanked on both sides by two segmental arch windows-are contemporary with the earliest buildings on the square. Some, like the Roderick Building (no. 19), boast cast-iron cornices. Other nineteenth century buildings are characterized by cast-iron window hoods, corbelled brick cornices, and stone sills. Twentieth century designs on Center Avenue are Straightforwardly "modern", with unadorned lines, broad windows, and pressed brick. The Terry and Amerpohl Building

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

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United States Department of the Interior National Park Service	For NPS use only
National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form Exchange Square Historic District	received date entered
Continuation sheet Brodhead, Green County, WI Item number 8	Page ⁴

11

(no. 34) is perhaps the best example, with widely spaced structural piers creating ample windows for the well-lighted department store. Yet the planarity and simplicity of buildings from the period maintains a harmony with older district buildings.

Much the same can be said of the utilitarian buildings in the district--the Bartlett carriage manufactory (no. 8) and the Laube and Durner blacksmith shop (no. 37). Simple in plan and profile, they nonetheless draw heavily upon the same design vernacular of the district's commercial buildings. Constructed of cream brick and "ornamented" with arched fenestration, the two industrial buildings, as well as the Depot (no. 1), clearly reflect architectural traditions that date to the earliest commercial buildings in the district.

The buildings of the Exchange Square Historic District are largely the handiwork of local masons, carpenters, and contractors whose work has, in most cases, outlasted the memory of their names. The first acknowledged "architect" whose work survives is Christopher Seeber, of whom little is known but whose Italianate designs can be seen in the Monell Block (no. 27), the Young House (no. 2), and the Frazee-Gosling Block (no. 13). His work seems to be characterized by a repetitive fenestration pattern in which a central round arch window is flanked by segmental arch windows. But the unique cornice treatment of the Frazee Block reflects a more "artistic" flair that pleased the local newspaper. ¹⁵ The only other architect of consequence to work in the district (as far as is known) was Frank Kemp of Janesville and Beloit. In Brodhead, Kemp's work included two of the most substantial (and "modern") of the district buildings-the Laube Building (no. 14) and the Terry and Amerpohl Building (no. 34). Kemp (18 ?? - 19??) is best known for his work in Janesville in the early twentieth century.

Area of Significance: Commerce

An itinerant writer, visiting Brodhead in 1872 to compile what may be the first history of the community, began his commentary noting that the "principal business of the village is mercantile, centered on Exchange Square and Center Street." While certainly not novel, the remark was an accurate assessment of the village's sixteen year history and a good prediction of things to come. ¹⁶ From its inception in 1856, commerce was king in Brodhead, a reason for being and a source of livelihood. Even before the railroad arrived in the village, "all the businesses and the best houses" of the region set up shop on Center Street in anticipation. ¹⁷ When the train arrived in September of 1857, the Monroe Sentinel aknowledged that "Brodhead is a lively village and the railroad is already quite important." ¹⁸

The depot, and the commercial district which grew up around it from the start, remained a "lively" place of commerce for well over a century, particularly in the years after the Civil War when Brodhead challenged Monroe to shipping supremacy, when merchants boasted of expanded goods and services, and when new buildings were constructed to house all the activity. When new rail lines were extended from the village to Albany and New Glarus in the 1880s, Brodhead's role in the regional economy expanded even more.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

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Excahnge Square Historic District Continuation sheet Brodhead, Green County, WI Item number 8 Page 5

The depot was a conduit for traffic, but the rest of the district boomed with the business it brought. The Farmer's Hotel (no. 3), constructed immediately north of the tracks in 1856, provided a convenient resting place for farmers and others who came to trade in town. By 1869, a new and more elaborate hostelry, the Young House (no. 2) threw open its doors and on the first day boasted guests from several states. ¹⁹ Both hotels continued to operate into the twentieth century.

The merchants who opened up shop in Brodhead in the 1860s and 1870s were generally young (mostly under 35 according to a news account of the period) and certainly ambitious. ²⁰ When the newspaper reported a rumor that Exchange Square was to be developed in the summer of 1868--complete with "dry goods, hardwares, and sundry institutions"--merchants lost no time buying lots and constructing the multi-story brick blocks that became Brodhead's full-fledged commercial center. ²¹ Fred Gombar, John Young, Leonard Lakin, and William Frazee were just some of the men who capitalized on the opportunities afforded by a growing town.

Most of the district's businesses catered to the region's farmers--harware stores, implement dealers, general stores, and saloons. Not surprisingly, light industrial activity geared toward the needs of farmers also located in the district. Two wagon and carriage shops--the Laube and Durner shop (no.37) and the Bartlett factory (no. 8)-were in business by 1870 and remained in business until the twentieth century, making and repairing a variety of carriages, wagons, and sleighs. ²²

Many of the services offered by district businesses in the 1870s and 1880s continued into the new century, often from the same shop. The commercial strength of the district was still evident in the early twentieth century when major buildings, like the Laube Building (no. 14) and the Terry and Amerpohl Building (no.34), offered modern facilities for the merchants. But after 1930, the district's physical growth stopped. Nevertheless, the buildings of the district continued to function as they had since construction-as a regional commercial center for southern Green and Rock counties.

Area of Significance: Civic and cultural center

The development of the Exchange Square Historic District signalled more than the emergence of a regional commercial center. It also transformed the area from a primitive strip of shops into a mature community center, home to the opera houses, the fraternal lodges, and the public halls that provided education and entertainment for Brodhead residents in an era before radio, television, or rapid transportation. The transformation, however, was not sudden. As late as 1866 the newspaper lamented that Brodhead needed "a public park or square and a town hall." And in 1867, C. N. Carpenter attempted to form a joint stock company to construct a public hall.²³

Although Carpenter's plan never materialized, within a year of his plea Brodhead had one new hall--the Monell Block (no. 27)--shortly followed by the halls in the Lakin Block (no. 12), the Gombar Hall (no. 3), the McNair Block (no. 11), and the Broughton

OMB No. 1024-0018 Exp. 10-31-84

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District Continuation sheet Brodhead, Green County, WI Item number

Opera House (no. 10). Suddenly, the community had ample space to convene meetings, balls, political rallies, and church events. Nor was there a shortage of groups to use the facilities. In the late nineteenth century, Brodhead had a proliferation of social and fraternal organizations, including the Masons, the Patrons of Husbandry, the Odd Fellows, the Sons of Temperance, the GAR, The Womans Relief Corp, the Knights of Phythias, and others, meeting in any one of the available downtown halls.

In addition to meetings and rallies, the halls provided space for entertainments of the day, both home-grown and professional. Local bands, musical groups, and church choirs often performed from the buildings. More elaborate facilities were available at Gombars Hall (later Laube Hall, and then Manager Opera House, no. 3), which provided seats for 500 and movable scenery. The Broughton Opera House could seat 700 (and make room for 1000 if needed) and featured a variety of touring vaudeville shows.²⁴

Clearly the center of the city, the district's pivotal role in community life was finally formalized in 1905 when H.C. Putnam, a prominent Brodhead merchant and politician, donated the old Lakin Block (no. 12) to the community for use as a city hall, fire department, jail, library, and GAR hall. The building continues to serve as City Hall today.

Boundary Justification:

The boundaries of the Exchange Square Historic District are clearly suggested by the compact development of the central business district and have been drawn to include all the continguous properties associated with the commercial development of Brodhead between 1860 and 1930. General boundary rationales are as follows: south of the District on Center Avenue, the building stock becomes residential in character and sparsely developed; southeast and east of the district, a light industrial/warehouse area (mostly non-historic) and residential neighborhoods are sparsely developed; north of the district is a more densely developed and older residential neighborhood; west of the district is a sparsely developed residential neighborhood; southwest of the district is a ware-house/mill district that is largely non-historic or greatly altered.

Specific boundary rationales are as follows: The building immediately north of the Loftus Building (no. 26) has been excluded because it is a gas station of non-historic character; the two buildings immediately north of the Depot (no. 1) have been excluded because one is a mill of non-historic character and the other is a bank of recent construction; the frame storage shed immediately to the rear (east) of the depot (no. 1) has been excluded because it is of non-historic character; the buildings to the rear (west) of the Bartlett factory (no. 8) have been excluded because they have been substantial altered in recent years or of non-historic character.



21

7

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory___Nomination Form Exchange Square Historic District

Brodhead, Green County, WI

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

For NRS use only received date entered

Page

Boundary Description:

The Exchange Square Historic District is described thusly: Beginning at the northeast corner of Lot 1, Block 88 (1003 Center Avenue), proceed west along the north lot line until the west (rear) lot line; then proceed south along the west (rear) lot lines of Lots 1-7, Block 88 (1003-1035 Center Avenue) until a point parallel to the north (rear) facades of the buildings at 913-929 West Exchange Street (Lots 8, 10, Block 88); then proceed west along the north (rear) facades of 913-929 West Exchange Street until the east side of West Second Avenue; then proceed south along West Second Avenue (the west lot line of Lot 10, Block 88) until a point in West Exchange Street parallel to the northeast corner of Lot 1, Block 101 (1103 West Second Avenue); then proceed west along the north lot line of said property until the west (rear) facade of the building at 1103 West Second Avenue; then proceed southerly along a line described by the west (rear) facades of the buildings at 1103-1117 West Second Avenue until the southwest corner of the building at 1117 West Second Avenue; then proceed west until a point parallel to the western facade of the building at 1012 West Third Avenue (Lot 6, Block 101); then proceed south along the west facade of said building until the south facade; then proceed east along the south facade of said property and continue in an easterly line described by the south (rear) lot lines of Lots 1-5, Block 100 (906-926 West Exchange Street and 1101 Center Avenue) to the southeast corner of Lot 1, Block 100 (1101 Center Avenue); then proceed east to the mid-point of Center Avenue parallel with the south lot line of Lot 5, Block 99; then proceed south along the mid-line of Center Avenue approximately 170 feet until a point parallel to the south facade of the depot building; then proceed easterly along the south facade of the depot (approximately 165 feet) until the rear facade (east facade) of the depot; then proceed northerly along the east facade of the depot (approximately 35 feet) until the north facade of the depot; then proceed westerly along the north facade until a point on the east side of Center Avenue; then proceed north along the east side of Center Avenue until the south lot line of Lot 10, Block 87 (1042 Center Avenue); then proceed east along the south lot lines of Lots 10 and 9, Block 87 and continue easterly along the south lot line of Lot 8, Block 86 (1006 East Second Avenue)until the east facade of said building; then proceed north along the east facade of said building until the north facade of said building; then proceed west along the north facade of said building and continue westerly along the north lot lines of Lots 9 and 10, Block 87 until the east lot line of Lot 10, Block 87 (1042 Center Avenue); then proceed north along the east (rear) lot lines of Lots 10, 8, 6, and 4, Block 87 (1042-1008 Center Avenue) until the north facade line of the building at 1008 Center Avenue (North 1/3 Lot 4, Block 87); then proceed east along the north facade of said property until the east lot line of Lot 3, Block 88 (1007 Center Avenue); then proceed north to the point of beginning.

8

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Page

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

Exchange Square Historic District Continuation sheet Brodhead, Green County, Wiscotterinumber 8

Footnotes:

1	See <u>History of Green County, Wisconsin</u> Springfield: Union Publishing, 1884) pp.802-815 and Bingham, Helen, <u>History of Green County, Wisconsin</u> (Milwaukee: 1877), pp.222-225.
2	Ebling, Walter, <u>A Century of Agriculture, 1846-1946</u> . Wisconsin Department of Agri- culture Bulletin no. 290. (Madison: 1948), p.87.
3	History of Green County (1884), pp. 802-15; Bingham, pp.222-25.
4	History of Green County (1884), pp. 802-15; Bingham, pp.222-25.
5	Brodhead Independent, June 2, 1865.
6	Brodhead Independent, June 9, 1865; September 8, 1865.
7	Bingham, pp. 223-224.
8	Brodhead Independent, November 9, 1866.
9	Brodhead Independent, May 14, 1867.
10 11	Brodhead Independent, April 7, 1868; April 9, 1869.
11	Brodhead Independent, May 27, 1870.
13	Sherwood, T.S, The City of Brodhead (Brodhead, 1893), pp. 31-32.
	Brodhead Independent Register
	See, for example, Brodhead Independent, September 22, 1868.
	Brodhead Independent, December 19, 1868.
16	Brodhead Independent, November 15, 1872.
17	Bingham, p. 200.
18	
19	Monroe <u>Sentinel</u> , September 23, 1857.
E	rodhead Independent, August 27, 1869.
20	Brodhead Independent May 26 1868
21	Brodhead <u>Independent</u> , May 26, 1868.
	Brodhead <u>Independent</u> , May 14, 1867.

National Register of Historic Places Inventory—Nomination Form

c Places received date entered ict em number ⁸/9 Page

Exchange Square Historic District Continuation sheet Brodhead, Green County, WI Item number 8

22 Sherwood, pp. 31-32.
23
Brodhead <u>Independent</u>, November 9, 1866; February 8, 1867.
24
Sherwood, p. 51.

Item 9: Major Bibliographic References

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Maps:

Atlas of Green County, Wisconsin. Madison: Harrison and Warner, 1873. Bailey, H. H. Brodhead, Wisconsin. Milwaukee, 1871. Dodge, Joseph Thompson. <u>Map of Green County</u>. Monroe, 1861. Sanborn-Perris Co. <u>Brodhead</u>, 1887, 1893, 1900, 1908, 1915, 1928.

Newspaper:

Brodhead Independent, 1865-1915 (Various issues. See footnotes)



9

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EXCHANGE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Brodhead, Green County, Wisconsin

Key: *IIII* = non-contributing --- = district boundary



EXCHANGE SQUARE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Brodhead, Green County, Wisconsin



