

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED NOV 14 1979  
DATE ENTERED MAR 20 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Hanchett Block (preferred)

AND/OR COMMON

Hanchett Hall

**LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

307 State Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Beloit

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

First

STATE

Wisconsin

VICINITY OF

CODE

55

COUNTY

Rock

CODE

105

**CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

**OWNERSHIP**

**STATUS**

**PRESENT USE**

DISTRICT

PUBLIC

OCCUPIED

AGRICULTURE

MUSEUM

BUILDING(S)

PRIVATE

UNOCCUPIED

COMMERCIAL

PARK

STRUCTURE

BOTH

WORK IN PROGRESS

EDUCATIONAL

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

SITE

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

**ACCESSIBLE**

ENTERTAINMENT

RELIGIOUS

OBJECT

IN PROCESS

YES: RESTRICTED

GOVERNMENT

SCIENTIFIC

BEING CONSIDERED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

INDUSTRIAL

TRANSPORTATION

NO

MILITARY

OTHER:

**OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Grand Marais Hotel Co.

STREET & NUMBER

c/o Mr. George B. Peet

CITY, TOWN

Grand Marais

VICINITY OF

Minnesota

STATE

55604

**LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Rock County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

51 South Main St.

CITY, TOWN

Janesville,

STATE

WI

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Rock County historic survey

DATE

1975

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Rock County Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

Janesville

STATE

WI

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

EXCELLENT

GOOD

FAIR

DETERIORATED

RUINS

UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

UNALTERED

ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

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### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Hanchett Block is a four-story corner block, facing west, (slightly northwest, to be exact, as the building is slightly trapezoidal). The top two stories are occupied by Hanchett's Hall, an auditorium which retains a stamped metal ceiling with panels of intertwined garlands and a cove frieze of palmettos, now in poor condition. The west or State Street facade presents a four-story, six-bay front of cream brick painted grey. Wide round-arched one-over-one windows are spaced between brick pilasters, which intersect with string courses between the stories and which are surmounted by a simple but effective brick frieze, where corbeled brick supercapitals intersect with corbeled modillions. On the upper three stories the windows are boarded up inside the panes, and several panes are smashed.

This facade dates from between 1893 and 1904, according to photographs; before this the third and fourth stories contained six round-arched, two-story windows, and the cornice (probably wood) projected boldly.<sup>1</sup> Pilasters did not appear between the windows, but a frieze above the first and string courses above the second story gave horizontal emphasis to the building.<sup>2</sup> It is not known why the facade was rebuilt, particularly on the upper floors where the hall remained.

On the first story, the south two-thirds, a clothing store, was fronted about 1978 with a "rustic" sawn shake shingled awning.

The south facade, though heavily stuccoed and scored and also painted grey, retains three pairs of original two-story, round-arched Italianate windows, opening from the auditorium. The middle window has a bullseye above the paired arched window frames, a vestige of the former elegance of the building. These windows and the rectangular ones on the second story are now boarded up, and all but one of the ground story openings are blocked up. A strange broken frieze above the windows appears to be a vestige of earlier ornamentation.

As the hall ceiling slopes downward, from front to rear, the east (rear) wall, also stuccoed and painted grey, has no windows as high as the fourth story, but there are six round-arched windows each on the second and third stories, many of whose panes are missing and open to the elements. The north side is of random limestone.

Although the first story is occupied by two businesses, the building above the ground story has been vacant and sorely neglected for many years. Roof leaks have created holes in the elaborate stamped ceiling of the auditorium, and the broken windows on all upper floors have afforded entrance to numerous pigeons, many of whom have died and decayed on the premises. A 20th century balcony against the north wall with a plain stairway to it are appropriate for the scale of the room.

A one story building of dark red early 20th century brick, adjacent to the east, and used by the two businesses which front on State Street, is part of the property but is not considered part of the nomination.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	NOV 14 1979
DATE ENTERED	MAR 20 1980

Hanchett Block, Beloit, Rock County, Wisconsin

See

CONTINUATION SHEET

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6. Wisconsin Inventory of Historic Places

1975

State

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Madison

Wisconsin 53706

7. \_\_\_\_\_

1. Book of Beloit, 1936, upper (1893) and lower (1904) illustrations.

2. Ibid. No detailed photographs of the original west or south facades have been found; the 1893 illustration cited was taken a full block north.

# 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 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 type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input 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 type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) association with famous person
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1856, ca. 1900

BUILDER/ARCHITECT James Hanchett

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Hanchett Block is of major local historical significance for its long association with Beloit business and social life. It served as a community center with social and political meetings. Called "the Republican rallying point in the years just preceding the war"<sup>1</sup>, it was the site of Rock County's first enlistment in the Civil War, in 1861, by the Beloit Guards.<sup>2</sup> Falling into neglect in the late 1870's, its "paint and gilding" no longer "resplendent",<sup>3</sup> it was extensively refurbished and remodeled about the turn of the century. It housed Beloit Business College ca. 1904-1909, and was concurrently the home of Beloit's YMCA, until 1915. Their rented quarters on the second and third floors included a gymnasium, showers, and a reading room, and offered "socials, minstrel shows, circuses and entertainments".<sup>4</sup> It housed the Beloit Company L (organized 1900) of the First Wisconsin National Guard Infantry regiment ca. 1922 through 1930. All of these latter activities occurred in the structure after it took its present external form.

The builder, James H. Hanchett (1813-1865), was known as a contractor and speculator.<sup>5</sup> He was also the builder of the Hanchett farmstead (Bartlett Memorial Museum) in 1857-58 (NRHP) and the first Beloit dam over the Rock River (1844), as well as the Broder Block (razed ca. 1970), formerly located kitty-corner from the Hanchett Block on the southwest corner of State and Broad. From 1858 until just before his death at home he prospected for gold and claimed land for mining in Colorado.<sup>6</sup> The Hanchett Block is believed to be the most significant and imposing extant commercial building to be constructed by this builder, who is also credited with the construction of a number of dams in Indiana and along the Rock River in Illinois and Wisconsin.<sup>7</sup>

Hanchett's Hall in the Hanchett Block is also of broader historical significance as the most intact, though subsequently altered, place where Abraham Lincoln spoke to the public in Wisconsin. It is Beloit's last known extant link with Lincoln's visit to Rock County on Saturday and Sunday, October 1 and 2, 1859. After speaking at the Wisconsin State Fair the previous evening, Lincoln traveled by train to Beloit. Arriving Saturday morning, he dined at the Bushnell House (razed after a fire in 1968 and its site now a park), and spoke against slavery to an enthusiastic audience in Hanchett's Hall at 2 p. m. The talk had been planned outside, but gusty weather forced it inside.

Lincoln passed through the then unsettled area in 1832 as a private in the Illinois Militia during the Black Hawk War,<sup>8</sup> but in 1859 he was greeted by a sizable audience warmly sympathetic to the cause of antislavery. Beloit was a Republican stronghold

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Beloit Journal, October 5, 1859.

History of Rock County, 1879, pp. 641, 751.

Jackson, A. A., "Abraham Lincoln in the Blackhawk War", Ms., RCHS.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

**ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED**

**UTM NOT VERIFIED**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 0.19

QUADRANGLE NAME Beloit, Wis.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 16 332740 4706960  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

70 feet on State (w. facade); 100 feet on Broad (s. side); 50 feet on east side and 88 feet on north side.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Nancy Belle Douglas, National Register Officer

ORGANIZATION

Rock County Historical Society

DATE

May 1, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 896

TELEPHONE

(608)756-4509

CITY OR TOWN

Janesville

STATE

WI 53545

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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 K. Kuey*

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE 10/29/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE 3/20/80

*Sally J. Olden*  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 ATTEST: *Kristin O'Connell*  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 3/18/80

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and a hotbed of political feeling; it recently had sent men and money to Kansas to join the fight to make Kansas a free state, following the repeal of the Missouri Compromise in 1856. Beloit and Janesville, even then rivals, each tried to send more support than the other to Kansas through "Kansas Leagues" and "Friends of Freedom for Kansas."<sup>9</sup> In opposition to the "public sovereignty" view of Stephen A. Douglas, which Lincoln rebutted, Lincoln declared that the underlying principle of Republicanism was its hatred of slavery on moral, social, and political grounds, that an "irrepressible conflict" existed between Negro bondage and human freedom, and that when slavery attempted to overlap its present limits, the party would resist it in every legitimate and constitutional way, and force it back. The meeting closed with "three hearty cheers" for the speaker.<sup>10</sup>

From Beloit, Lincoln was taken to Janesville by carriage, and spoke in the evening at the Young America Hall. He was a house guest of the William M. Tallman family at the Tallman House (NRHP), by far the best-preserved Wisconsin site connected with his 1859 visit. The next morning he worshipped with the Tallmans at the Congregational Church in Janesville.

Beloit could make local political capital out of the Lincoln connection with Hanchett's Hall, but at present its potential is underplayed. A plaque commemorating the visit, erected by the D. A. R. and visible by the time of the 1936 Beloit centennial, is now located very inconspicuously on the back of the building where it is attached to the grill of a first-story window. Under absentee ownership for many years, the building has suffered from lack of maintenance and the recent decline of downtown Beloit as a retail shopping center. It is located across the street from the vacant site of a largely unrealized urban renewal project. The Beloit Downtown Council and the Beloit City Planning Department both hope that National Register designation will encourage rehabilitation of the structure as part of a general program to revitalize downtown Beloit.

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Hanchett Block, Beloit, Rock County, Wisconsin

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Footnotes

1. History of Rock County, 1879, p. 630.
2. Way, R. B., Rock River Valley, 1926, Vol. I, p. 422.
3. 1879, Ibid.
4. Rock County Directories, passim; Beloit in 1911, Beloit Daily News, 1911, p. 4.
5. Directories, 1859, 1860.
6. Bauchle, Ms., Beloit Historical Society.
7. 1879, p. 751.
8. Wis. State Marker No. 93 is placed on Highway 51 because of greater traffic. Lincoln's route in 1832 passed very close to Prairie Avenue. He recognized the route when he traveled along that road in 1859, accompanied by A. A. Jackson, William Tallman, Daniel Wilcox and James Burgess. Lincoln had been chosen a Captain when he enlisted in the Illinois Militia on April 21, 1832, and served in Illinois. He reenlisted as a private (May 9 and June 16). As one of Captain Early's Independent Rangers, under General Atkinson, he pursued Black Hawk's band through southern Wisconsin in early July, 1832. Ms., A. A. Jackson, "Abraham Lincoln in the Blackhawk War", RCHS Collections, pp. 17-20, 40; H. Hambrecht, Abraham Lincoln in Wisconsin, Madison: Lincoln Fellowship, 1946, pp. 5-7.
9. Book of Beloit, 1936, p. 72.
10. Beloit Journal, Oct. 5, 1859; A. A. Jackson, Op. cit., p. 38; Hambrecht, Op. cit., p. 15.
11. The Hanchett Block is one of five Wisconsin sites associated with Lincoln to be illustrated in Bernhardt Wall's Following Abraham Lincoln, New York: Wise-Parslow, ca. 1942. The RCHS collections contain a copy of the book and the complete set of the Wisconsin etchings (1936).
12. Book of Beloit, Ibid. Though in their history they have moved around in the downtown, Reitler and Co. was located in the block in 1886-7.

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Hanchett Block, Beloit, Rock County, Wisconsin

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Brown, Wm. F., Rock County, Chicago, 1908, Vol. I., p. 164

Way, R. B., Rock River Valley, 1926, Vol. I., p. 422

Book of Beloit, Beloit, 1936, p. 72; illus. p. 46

Wall, B., Following Abraham Lincoln, N. Y.: Wise-Parslow, ca. 1942, illus. p. 235.

"Lincoln's Last Visit to Wisconsin," Rock County Chronicle, Vol. III, 1957, pp. 5-8

Douglas and Hartung, Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings, Janesville, 1976,  
pp. 190, 192-193

Beloit Daily News, Sept. 15, 1977

Collections of the RCHS and Beloit Historical Society