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NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 8/86)  
Wisconsin Word Processor Format (1331D)  
Approved 3/87

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United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL  
REGISTER

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets. (Form 10-900a). Type all entries. Use letter quality printer in 12 pitch, using an 85 space line and a 10 space left margin. Use only archival paper (20 pound, acid free paper with a 2% alkaline reserve).

1. Name of Property

historic name Bellmont Hotel

other names/site number Lake Park Hotel; Myrtle Lintner Spear Museum

2 Location

Street & number: 120 North Main Street N/A Not for Publication  
city, town: Pardeeville N/A vicinity  
state: Wisconsin code WI county Columbia code 021 zip code 53954

3 Classification

Ownership of property	Category of Property	No. of Resources within Property	
		contributing	noncontributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)		
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	<u>1</u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public - Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
		<u>1</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:  
N/A

No. of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this x 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 x meets      does not meet the National Register criteria.      See continuation sheet.

[Signature] 9/28/93  
Signature of certifying official Date  
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.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this 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.

     removed from the National Register.

     other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

**Entered in the National Register**

[Signature] 11/14/93

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper Date

6. Functions or Use

Historic Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions  
(enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

RECREATION AND CULTURE/Museum

COMMERCE/restaurant

COMMERCE/specialty store

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7. Description

Architectural Classification  
(enter categories from instructions)

Materials  
(enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

foundation concrete

walls concrete

roof Other: Not Visible

other wood

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

x See continuation sheet

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:  nationally  statewide  locally

Applicable National Register Criteria  A  B  C  D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)  A  B  C  D  E  F  G

Areas of Significance

(enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1909

Significant Dates

1909

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Williams, Charles H., architect

Neck Brothers, builders

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):     x     See continuation sheet  
     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:  
    x     State Historic Preservation Office  
     Other State agency  
     Federal agency  
     Local government  
     University  
     Other  
Specify repository: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than an acre

UTM References

A 1/6 3/1/4/1/6/0 4/8/2/2/7/9/0 B / / / / / / / / / /  
Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing  
C / / / / / / / / / /  
D / / / / / / / / / /

Verbal Boundary Description

Lot 5, excepting therefrom so much as has been previously conveyed to the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company and a part of Lot 6, of the Original Plat (otherwise known as Block A); more particularly described as follows: Commencing at the Southwest corner of Lot 6; thence Northerly along the West line thereof, 24 feet; thence Easterly on a line parallel with the South line of said Lot 6, 124 feet; thence Southerly on a line parallel with the West line of said lot, 20 feet; thence Easterly on a line parallel with the South line of said lot to the Easterly line of said lot; thence Southerly along the Easterly line of lot to the Southeast corner thereof; thence Westerly along the Southerly line of said lot to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification

These boundaries encompass the land historically associated with the Bellmont Hotel, except those lands no longer owned by the Columbia County Historical Society.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rebecca Bernstein - Preservation Consultant  
organization for the Columbia County Historical Society date June 15, 1992

street & number 309 Norris Court telephone (608) 251-4615  
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53703

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## Section 7

### Introduction

Built in 1909, the Belmont Hotel is a simple Late Victorian three-story concrete block railroad hotel. It is the tallest and largest building within the Columbia County farming community of Pardeeville, Wisconsin, and retains a high degree of integrity.

### Exterior Description

The Belmont Hotel in Pardeeville, Wisconsin, is situated on the northeast corner of the intersection of Main Street and what used to be the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad tracks<sup>1</sup>. The hotel's location was almost certainly chosen because of its immediate proximity to the C.M. & St.P.R.R. freight and passenger depot directly to its south, since demolished. Its prominent location is at the south end of the commercial core running along three blocks of Main Street.

The unadorned, three-story, 32-room hotel<sup>2</sup> is rectilinear in plan and measures 40 feet wide by 60 feet deep. The hotel's shed roof is shielded from view on the three principal sides by a parapet wall visually supported by a metal cornice and paired bracketing. The panel-faced concrete blocks that cover the main body of the building are formed to simulate ashlar masonry; the concrete blocks of the exposed foundation and the belt courses between the first and second, and between the second and third stories are rock-faced.

The four-bay-wide front elevation is spanned by a full-length porch with decorative concrete columns and a solid cinder block balustrade.<sup>3</sup> The porch

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<sup>1</sup> The tracks were pulled up ca. 1970.

<sup>2</sup> There are five rooms on the first floor, thirteen on the second and seven on the third.

<sup>3</sup> According to a c.1910 postcard of the Belmont Hotel now in the possession of the Columbia Historical Society, the porch originally had a plain wooden millwork railing. That was recently replaced with cinderblocks sometime before the Historical Society took ownership. The roof of the porch also had a similar millwork railing along the roof that was also probably lost to the elements. The Historical Society has plans to restore this railing sometime in the near future. The porch roof was rebuilt in 1990 and in 1991.

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shelters the hotel's two separate main entries. The center entry of the main (west) elevation provides direct access to the hotel lobby, while the entry north of the center opens to the hotel's corner office. The first story of the main elevation has a combination of two one-over-one double-hung wood sash windows and two large plate glass picture windows. In general, other windows are one-over-one double-hung wood sash with segmental arches, keystones, and concrete sills.

The two side elevations are each six-bays-deep. A third first-floor entry, located in the center of the north elevation, provides access to the hotel's parlor or lounge. It is flanked by two large picture windows under segmental arches and keystones. The first floor windows on the exposed south elevation are one-over-one double-hung wood sash with transom and keystones. The basement level entry on the south side provides direct access to a finished basement room that was originally a barber shop. The remainder of the basement is lit by double-light casement windows.

The rear (east) elevation is five-bays-wide, in contrast to the four bays of the front. The gable-roofed single-story iron-clad addition attached to the rear elevation was built in stages. The older section to the south was probably meant to house the hotel's horse team. A second smaller portion to the north with its own double-door entry bay was added sometime later for auto storage. A comparison of Sanborn-Perris Fire Insurance Maps also indicates a large wood frame livery barn northeast of the hotel was removed by 1937 to be replaced by a concrete block auto garage. Since the three-bay garage still survives and includes a 1921 date stone, the livery might have been lost by that date.<sup>4</sup>

### Interior Description

The ten-foot high first floor includes all of the hotel's more important public spaces and as such it was finely appointed. These character-defining spaces survive remarkably intact. Each of the five main floor rooms retain their own individual decoratively pressed metal ceilings. The center entry provides access to the hotel's lobby. The lobby is separated from the hotel's dining room by a columned screen wall. The dining room, the largest room in the hotel, has direct access to the kitchen through a pair of swinging doors in the building's northeast corner. The kitchen retains its floor-to-ceiling corner cabinet. The

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<sup>4</sup> The delapidated garage is not included in this nomination since its ownership is separate from that of the hotel's.

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kitchen has separate exit doors that lead to either the garage or the stable. The dining room also accesses the lounge through a double doorway. The lounge still retains a pair of hanging lights that have some Art Nouveau features. A small pantry separates this smaller lounge area from the hotel's northwest corner office. Hardwood floors are found throughout.

The thirteen second floor rooms are all located along the perimeter of the building, off of a U-shaped corridor. The central core of this floor was reserved for a laundry room. Each of the hotel rooms retains its original five-panel wood door, double-light operable transom and molded wooden surround. Some still retain their original hotel room number. The walls currently separating the second floor corridor from the original open double-flight staircase were added in response to the community's retroactive fire code. The fact that the newel posts on the first floor do not match those above indicates that the introduction of these fire walls may have also required the addition and/or substitution of some of the stairway's railing and newel posts, particularly those above the midpoint landing. A double skylight, since removed but still found on the premises, helped light the hallway near the single bathroom located just to the left of the stairway.

The third floor retains seven hotel rooms. Most of the floor is presently unfinished and is currently used primarily for museum storage. This floor has either never been fully completed, was lost in a subsequent fire,<sup>5</sup> or has undergone a great deal of change since its original construction. In any case, it is the simplest in finishing detail, with none of the finer wood detailing found on the lower two floors. Room entryways have only plain wood surrounds and no transoms. The floorboards are wider and less finished.

The basement has three finished rooms, each with its own stairway and access. The kitchen has a northeast corner stairway that provides access to what was probably a root cellar. A second interior stairway located directly below the main stairway provides access to a finished room with a stamped metal ceiling. That room might have also have been used by the barber shop that originally

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<sup>5</sup> Inspection of some exposed framing members in a presently unfinished portion of the third floor indicates that the building survived a fire. Many of these exposed members exhibit some serious burn marks and have been strengthened with the splicing of new wooden framing members.



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occupied the southwest corner basement room.<sup>6</sup> This southwest corner room still retains its own outside stairway, full-length plate glass window and stamped metal ceiling. The hotel's original furnace and water pump, although no longer in service, can still be found in place in the unfinished portions of the basement.

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<sup>6</sup> "J. O. Smith has moved his barber shop into the new quarters at the Belmont Hotel, and will be pleased to meet his customers there after to-day. The new shop is much more modern and up-to date than it was possible to make it in the old place, and we hope Jay will meet with well merited success in this efforts to keep abreast of the times and to give his customers the best in his line." Pardeeville Times, October 22, 1909; 1:3.

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Section 8.

**Summary of Significance**

The 1909 Belmont Hotel in Pardeeville, Wisconsin, is locally significant under Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places in the area of Architecture as an prominent, intact example of a concrete block hotel. One fifth of the buildings in Pardeeville's commercial core are built of concrete, and the Belmont Hotel, designed by local architect Charles Harvey Williams, reflects the early Twentieth Century importance of concrete block building technology to that small community.

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## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### History of Pardeeville

In 1848, John S. Pardee, a Milwaukee capitalist, employed an agent to manage his holdings on the Fox River. Yates Ashley, a surveyor and merchant, succeeded the first agent in the spring of 1849. It was Pardee's investments and Ashley's on-site management that laid the historic foundations for the community of Pardeeville. It was Ashley who was responsible for Pardeeville's original town plat in 1850.

Pardeeville was originally known as Midland, since it was the midway station on the railroad from Milwaukee to La Crosse. The La Crosse and Milwaukee Railroad Company was incorporated in 1852, reached Pardeeville in 1857 and completed the 200 mile distance between the two ends of the State by 1858. The Panic of 1857 caused the railroad company to experience serious economic downturns and by 1860 it fell into receivership. Control of the bankrupt company's holdings came under control of the newly-formed Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway.<sup>7</sup> By 1885, there were two hotels in operation in Pardeeville: the Briffett House, run by George Briffett, and the American house, run by S. H. Alisbury.<sup>8</sup>

The village was officially incorporated in 1899, at which point it could boast of an operating flour mill, a grain elevator, a creamery, several potato warehouses, a large lumberyard and a bank.<sup>9</sup> In 1906, the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics described Pardeeville in its Twelfth Biennial Report:

[Pardeeville] has an electric light plant, 1 bank, 2 drug stores, 6 grocery stores, 1 hardware store, 1 department store, 3 dry goods store, 1 laundry, a graded public school employing 8 teachers, 3 hotels with a capacity for 150 guests, 2 physicians, 5 churches, a weekly newspaper, 3 potato warehouses, 1 commission merchant hauling

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<sup>7</sup> Report on Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company (Chicago, Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company, 1925), p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> Columbia County Directory, 1885.

<sup>9</sup> J.E. Jones, A History of Columbia County, Wisconsin (Lewis Publishing Company, Chicago, 1914), pp. 276-7.

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poultry and eggs, furniture store and farm implement store.<sup>10</sup>

One of the three hotels was the Commercial Hotel, later demolished to make way for the Bellmont Hotel (see below). While little is known about the other two Pardeeville hotels, apparently they were inadequate for the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics report went on to say that "a first-class hotel is needed."<sup>11</sup> It also stated that "great beds of marl"<sup>12</sup> are located near the village."<sup>13</sup> The same report had a whole section devoted to the manufacture of "Portland Cement" and stated that Wisconsin should stand ready to take advantage of this new industrial potential. It went on to say that:

"It should be remembered that in Wisconsin in some cases the two raw materials, marl and clay, are found side by side. This is true of those materials at the site of a plant to be built the coming year near Portage, in Columbia County."<sup>14</sup>

This report proved to be prophetic in that soon local concrete in the form of block would be used to construct Pardeeville's "first class" Bellmont Hotel.

#### History of the Bellmont Hotel

On January 8, 1909, the Pardeeville Times announced the following:

Messrs. Maher & Cushing of Buffalo who recently purchased the Commercial Hotel are to meet the village board this evening in regard to the new hotel they expect to put up on the old grounds. It has been stated by the gentlemen that a fine, modern equipped building will be erected, thoroughly to suit all the hotel

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<sup>10</sup>Twelfth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Labor and Industrial Statistics: 1905-06, (Madison, 1906), pp. 386-7.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid..

<sup>12</sup> Marl is a crumbly soil mainly of clay, sand and calcium carbonate, used as fertilizer, and in making cement and bricks.

<sup>13</sup>Twelfth Biennial Report.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid..

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requirements of our little city, and there is no doubt but what the young men will meet with success in the step they are taking, and are sure to meet with favor from the traveling public as well as with local trade.<sup>15</sup>

The Commercial Hotel was a simple wood frame, clapboard clad, gable front building. Historic photographs (see attached) show that it was two stories tall with a two story porch on the main elevation. By the end of the March of 1909, the Times announced:

AN OLD LANDMARK GOING - Work was begun this week on tearing an old landmark, the Commercial hotel, which has flourished as a hostelry for nearly half a century. The north wing, which was built some eighteen years ago has been cut away from the main part and has been moved to the north side of the lot, and will be fitted up as a saloon until the new building is ready for occupancy. The other part will be torn down at once and work commenced on the new structure, which will be of brick two stories high, 40 feet wide and 60 feet in length, costing \$7000.00. The plans are all prepared by Architect [Charles H.] Williams of Portage, and Pardeeville will boast of a fine modern new hotel, thoroughly equipped to handle the best transient as well as the local patronage."<sup>16</sup>

In April, 1909, excavation had commenced and by the middle of May, the Neck Brothers of Montello, a firm known for its manufacture and construction of concrete block buildings throughout the region, had received the contract for

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<sup>15</sup> January 8, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:3.

<sup>16</sup> March 26, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:4. Although this article mentions that only two stories were planned, a ca. 1910 postcard of the Bellmont shows that the building has three full stories. Either the third floor was added sometime before the photo for the postcard was taken, or the article makes an erroneous assertion. The term "brick" was often used at this time, as in this article, to include concrete block.

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construction.<sup>17</sup>

[The] Neck Bros [of Montello] have secured the contract for building a large cement block hotel in Pardeeville for Cushing and Mahar, who recently purchased the Commercial house . . . [The] Neck Bros. make a good cement block and this fact is not only known in Montello, but in all the surrounding towns. These gentlemen have erected buildings in Coloma, Hancock, Endeavor and Neshkoro and all have proved to be very satisfactory to the parties who had the work done.<sup>18</sup>

By July, the plasterers were at work on the interior. In early October the carpentry was completed and the painters and plumbers busily engaged.<sup>19</sup> By the end of the month J.O. Smith, the local barber had relocated his business in the hotel's basement in what the paper announced as "much more modern and up-to date than it was possible to make in the old place."<sup>20</sup> On October 27, the owners Thomas Cushing and Thomas Mahar celebrated the hotel's opening. Nearly three hundred and fifty people attended. "The people turned out en masse Wednesday to show their appreciation. Such a building in a town of our size is a lasting monument to energy and enterprise. During the evening music was furnished by the Ideal orchestra. . ."<sup>21</sup> The hotel charged 35 cents for "dinner and team in the barn," a price the proprietors claimed was competitive with the other nearby hostelryes.<sup>22</sup>

The hotel became the logical stopping place for at least one doctor who made

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<sup>17</sup> April 18, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:1; May 14, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:3.

<sup>18</sup> May 14, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:3.

<sup>19</sup> October 1, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:2.

<sup>20</sup> October 22, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:3.

<sup>21</sup> October 29, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:3-4.

<sup>22</sup> November 5, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:3.

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Pardeeville a regular destination on his itinerary.<sup>23</sup> Its immediate proximity to the six daily trains that stopped at passenger depot probably made it a logical way station for other traveling salesmen.

In September, 1910, Thomas Maher sold out his interest in the hotel to his partner Thomas Cushing.<sup>24</sup> Polk's 1911-1912 Wisconsin State Gazetteer indicates that Cushing then made his son, William, a partner. Ownership turned over rapidly in the next few years, with Charles Kluth listed as proprietor in 1915 and M. Peters in 1917.<sup>25</sup> The Belmont Hotel was not listed in the 1919 Gazette. By 1921, the hotel was purchased by Louis Lintner and O.D. Harrison and renamed the Park Lake Hotel. The two men were already co-owners of a furniture store and undertaking business across the street. They would utilize the hotel's larger first floor rooms for funerals and the upper floors for furniture storage.

In 1933, the Lintners closed the hotel, and used the building as a funeral home. In 1962, the funeral business was sold to Merwyn Smith. About 1970, Smith relocated the funeral home to Roosevelt Street. The building was closed up and stood vacant until 1973. Then Myrtle Lintner Spear (the remarried widow of Louis Lintner) donated the building to the Columbia County Historical Society for use as a museum building.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Columbia County Historical Society has worked on maintaining the building. Work has included restoration of the first floor for exhibits, plastering, painting, tuck pointing, and addition of a new roof.

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<sup>23</sup> "Dr. A.B. Norris, who recently located at Portage will visit Pardeeville one day each month and will have his office at the Hotel Belmont. Dr. Norris . . . will be pleased to meet all having eye troubles . . ." April 8, 1909, Pardeeville Times, 1:2.

<sup>24</sup> September 15, 1910, Pardeeville Times, 1:2.

<sup>25</sup> Polk's Wisconsin State Gazetteer 1915-16 and 1916-17.

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## ARCHITECTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

### History of Concrete Block Making in Wisconsin and Pardeeville

While concrete was used in ancient Roman times, it was first successfully used in the United States around 1810 in construction of the Erie Canal. It was used only infrequently as a load bearing material until Portland cement (an artificial cement) was patented in 1872. In Wisconsin, however, a lime-sand-gravel-water mixture called "grout" was used with success in Rock County in the 1840s and 1850s.<sup>26</sup>

The following history of concrete block making in Wisconsin is by Beth Godfrey in Cultural Resources Management in Wisconsin, under "Construction Materials and Methods; Grout and Concrete" of the Architecture theme:

Besides the fairly localized use of grout in Rock County, precast concrete blocks were the most common use of concrete prior to the advent of Portland Cement. The blocks were made with hydraulic lime and cast in wooden frames. They were sold like bricks and laid up in mortar. United States Patents specifically mentioning "cement block" were first issued in the 1830s. Interest in Wisconsin in this type of building material is evidenced by United States Patent #12,264 issued January 16, 1855 to John A. Messinger of Milwaukee and A. Foster of Portland (Dodge County). This patent was for an "improved building block composed of twelve parts sand to one part lime and pressed in molds" (Report of the Commissioner of Patents, 1855, Vol. 2, 88). It is not known how actively they pursued the development of their patent. The first commercial manufacture of concrete blocks began in 1868 by the Frear Stone Manufacturing Company of Chicago. These and other commercially manufactured block were turned out by metal presses with hollow cores. This later innovation produced a light, insulated, moisture resistant block that was cheaper than stone and stronger than brick. By the turn of the century concrete block presses were being commercially manufactured engendering a wide application of concrete blocks until

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<sup>26</sup>Beth Godfrey, "Grout and Concrete" in Cultural Resource Management Plan, Volume 2, Barbara Wyatt, editor (Madison, Wisconsin, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986), Architecture 4-8 - 4-9.



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the end of their popularity in the 1930s.<sup>27</sup>

The use of metal presses in concrete block making and construction in Wisconsin can be traced from approximately 1905 until the early 1920s. The 1905-06 edition of Polk's Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory lists the Milwaukee Concrete and Supply Co. as the first under the heading of "Concrete Building Blocks." Also listed for the first time was R.J. Schwab & Sons Co.; they were listed under the heading of "Concrete Block Machinery." They too were located in Milwaukee. Schwab & Sons were listed in Polk's State Gazetteer from 1905 until 1917. The number of concrete block manufacturers increased in number and spread throughout the State until they reached their peak of 101 in 1911; eighteen of these were in Milwaukee alone. Perhaps in an effort to increase interest many businessmen invented new names for the new product such as artificial, cast, pressed stone and in one case "hydro-stone."

Block making was locally done, but nationally advertised. Machines for making block were sold through mail order catalogues, as well as by local distributors. Concrete block construction became popular because concrete blocks were less expensive than either brick or lumber, and it was easy to do.<sup>28</sup>

Concrete block was also versatile, and had the ability to mimic a variety of other, more expensive, building materials. For instance, concrete blocks were made to look like dressed stone, rough-cut rock, ashlar, cobblestone, and brick. Blocks could also be molded with architectural details such as egg and dart trim, and swags. Typically, panel-faced concrete blocks were used as quoins in contrast to rougher rock-faced concrete block walls.<sup>29</sup>

Pardeeville could boast of hosting one of the new businesses then springing up all over the state.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid..

<sup>28</sup>Pamela H. Simpson "Cheap, Quick, and Easy: The Early History of Rockfaced Concrete Block Building" Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture III.

<sup>29</sup>J. Randall Cotton, "Ornamental Concrete Block Houses" The Old House Journal October, 1984/Vol. XII No. 8. pp.180-182.

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Wm. and Frank Wing and D.H. Brewer have secured a portable cement block machine, and if it proves to be the thing, they are going to manufacture cement blocks for the market. There is no doubt that this is a building material of the future, as the American forest will soon be a thing of the past, and a building constructed of properly prepared cement blocks will last for ages. Watch for their ad, and if your are going to build, build right. Cement costs no more than lumber, and will outlast it many times.<sup>30</sup>

#### Comparison with other Concrete Block Buildings in Pardeeville

Concrete block was the material of choice for significant commercial buildings in Pardeeville. Of thirty-six buildings in Pardeeville's commercial core, six of them are constructed of concrete block; and another two are concrete block and another building material. The other twenty-eight Pardeeville commercial buildings are brick, clapboard, asphalt-shingle or metal. There are no stone commercial facades in Pardeeville.

The six concrete block buildings are the 1912 gas station at the southwest corner of highways 44 (Lake Street) and 22 (Main Street); the retail store at 146 N. Main with a cast iron storefront; the two-story rockfaced concrete block retail building at 135 N. Main; the one-story retail building at 125 N. Main; the 1914 nursery at 115 N. Main Street and the Belmont Hotel.

Of the six concrete block buildings in Pardeeville, the Belmont Hotel is the earliest and most intact example. The building at the southwest corner of Highways 44 and 22 has been altered on the first floor. The building at 135 N. Main with a rock-faced concrete block facade has had major incompatible changes to the first floor, while the buildings at 115 N. Main and 146 N. Main have incompatible infill on the first floor. The retail building at 125 N. Main remains intact, although it has been poorly remortared and has replacement blocks.

The Belmont Hotel also gains significance from its sheer size. The altered buildings listed above are two stories tall. The only other unaltered concrete block building in the commercial core, at 125 N. Main, is diminutive at only one story and three bays wide.

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<sup>30</sup> July 7, 1905; Pardeeville Times 1:3

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**Charles H. Williams, Architect**

Charles H. Williams, born in Pardeeville in 1868, was a self-taught architect with offices in Portage at the time of the hotel commission. Williams had also practiced in Ironwood, Michigan (1889-1895), in Pardeeville, 1895-1900, in Wausau, 1900-1901, and in Green Bay from 1912 until his death in 1948. While in Pardeeville, about 1899, he produced a pamphlet of his designs showing floorplans and exterior sketches. Full architectural specifications could be purchased directly from him. Of forty-two projects listed (not necessarily shown), twenty-two were in Pardeeville, including five stores and a church. The residential design examples all have late Queen Anne detailing. The one commercial building shown has Italianate detailing.<sup>31</sup>

The Belmont Hotel design, as built, is simpler than his earlier work, as typical of architectural trends of the first years of the 1900s. It gains most of its character from the use of panel-faced concrete-block in juxtaposition to the rock-faced concrete block of the belt courses and foundation. Concrete block is featured as an important design element.

The panel-faced concrete blocks are imitative of stone, reflecting a respected building tradition; but also show a conscious choice to use a new building technology. The Neck Bros., who had the contract for constructing the building also made the blocks. This is representative of the then widespread practice of making blocks at the construction site rather than importing them from off site.

Simple in its design, the Belmont Hotel is significant under Criterion C of the National Register of Historic Places because it is constructed of concrete block in a community and a time enamored with concrete block construction. It reflects and illustrates the once current technology prevalent in Wisconsin during the early decades of the Twentieth Century. It is the largest and most intact concrete block building in the community of Pardeeville.

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<sup>31</sup>Charles Harvey Williams, Pattern Book, no date, copy on file at the Division of Historic Preservation, State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

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Current Owner:

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Pardeeville, WI 53594

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Photographs

Rebecca Sample Bernstein, photographer  
March, 1992

negatives stored at:

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816 State Street  
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1. Bellmont Hotel  
Pardeeville, Columbia County, Wisconsin  
View from the southwest
2. Bellmont Hotel  
Pardeeville, Columbia County, Wisconsin  
View from the southeast
3. Bellmont Hotel  
Pardeeville, Columbia County, Wisconsin  
View from the north west
4. Bellmont Hotel  
Pardeeville, Columbia County, Wisconsin  
Interior View, Lobby
5. Bellmont Hotel  
Pardeeville, Columbia County, Wisconsin  
Interior View, Dining Room
6. Bellmont Hotel  
Pardeeville, Columbia County, Wisconsin  
Interior View, Lounge
7. Bellmont Hotel  
Pardeeville, Columbia County, Wisconsin  
Interior View, detail of Lounge light fixture
8. Bellmont Hotel  
Pardeeville, Columbia County, Wisconsin  
Interior View, Second Floor Hall