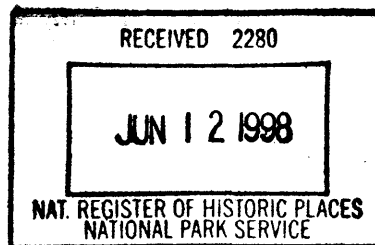


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United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form



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

1. Name of Property

historic name Henry and Charles Imig Block

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

street & number	625-629 North Eighth Street	N/A	not for publication
city or town	Sheboygan	N/A	vicinity
state	Wisconsin	code WI	county Sheboygan
		code 117	zip code 53081

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

5/28/98

State or Federal agency and bureau

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

Signature of commenting official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Henry and Charles Imig Block
Name of Property

Sheboygan
County and State

Wisconsin

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register.
 ___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined eligible for the
National Register.
 ___ See continuation sheet.
___ determined not eligible for the
National Register.
 ___ See continuation sheet.
___ removed from the National
Register.
___ other, (explain:)

Edson A. Beall

7.9.98

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
as apply)

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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

contributing noncontributing
1 ___ buildings
 ___ sites
 ___ structures
 ___ objects
1 0 total

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

N/A

**Number of contributing resources
is previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)
COMMERCE/TRADE/specialty store

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)
Italianate

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Stone
walls Brick

roof Asphalt
other Metal

Narrative Description

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

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Description

The Henry and Charles Imig Block is a very fine two-story, cream brick, High Victorian Italianate style triple store building that was built in two stages between 1881 and 1882. The Imig Block occupies most of the north portions of two lots situated in downtown Sheboygan at the west end of a city block whose west side forms the 600 block of North Eighth Street, this street being Sheboygan's principal historic commercial thoroughfare. The L-plan Imig Block measures 88-foot-wide x 88-foot-deep and has a 55-foot-wide main facade that faces west onto Eighth Street, and a twenty-five-foot-wide secondary elevation that faces north onto New York Avenue. The building wraps around the smaller two-story brick-clad Italianate style Caspar Pfister Store Building (631 North Eighth Street), which occupies the northwest corner of the block and was built ca. 1862. The designer of the Imig Block has not yet been identified but it was constructed by two Sheboygan firms: Luecke and Roeder, the masonry contractors; and Fred Hildebrand, the carpentry contractor. Their clients were Henry and Charles Imig, two of Sheboygan's most successful clothing merchants who built this new building to house their own store and the boot and shoe store and residence of their brother, Jacob Imig, along with a third income-producing store.

The city of Sheboygan is a port located on the west shore of Lake Michigan at the mouth of the Sheboygan River and the Imig Block is located in the center of the historic downtown business district of the city, a district whose southern boundary is formed by a large bend in the course of the east-west flowing Sheboygan River.⁽¹⁾ Land in the center of this four-block-wide by ten-block-long district is mostly flat except along its west and south edges, both of which slope down to the river. The block on which the Imig Block is located is bounded by N. Eighth Street on the west, N. Seventh Street on the east, New York Avenue on the north, and Center Street on the south. The main facade of the Imig Block faces west onto the north-south running Eighth Street, which originally ran uninterrupted south across the Sheboygan River. In the 1980s, however, the original traffic pattern in this area was altered for the creation of the Plaza 8 redevelopment project, one of whose goals was to turn much of the downtown portion of Eighth Street into a pedestrian shopping mall. As a consequence, the Eighth Street-Jefferson Avenue intersection was redesigned to become the southern terminus of this mall. Eighth Street was then closed off just below Jefferson Avenue, forming a cul-de-sac, and this arrangement lasted for nearly a decade. Since then, however, this cul-de-sac has been removed, Eighth Street has been reopened, and the former intersection of Jefferson Avenue and Eighth Street has been reconfigured and now serves as the landscaped southern entrance to the city's historic original downtown, which is now in the process of being renovated.

Historically, Eighth Street was the busiest, most important thoroughfare in Sheboygan and until recently it always been lined with the city's major commercial establishments, including its largest banks and department stores. The buildings that now line this street date from the 1870s to the 1980s and many of the more important architectural styles that were developed during this broad span of years can be seen in their designs. Eighth Street buildings range from one to eight stories in height, they are mostly clad in masonry, and they are positioned with their principal elevations flush with the sidewalks and with their side elevations abutting one another. Many of the older buildings that once fronted on this street have now been demolished, but many others are still extant, including the recently renovated Wolff-Jung Company Shoe Factory building (NRHP 1-30-92), the recently restored Henry Foeste Store building at 531 S. Eighth Street (NRHP 9-1-

¹ The 1990 population of Sheboygan was 48,085.

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National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

95), and the outstanding, recently restored Max Zaegel Building, which is located directly across from the Imig Block on the opposite corner of N. Eighth Street and New York Avenue.

The construction of the Imig Block began in April of 1881. The building was built in two stages. The 21-foot x 88-foot south portion (625), which was to hold the clothing store of Henry and Charles Imig, was completed and occupied by the Imig brothers in September of 1881. The remaining two-thirds of the building (627 and 629) was built the following year. The north portion (629) of the building was built to house the shoe store and residence (above) of Jacob Imig, a brother of Henry and Charles, while the center store (627) was occupied by the drugstore of A. Mahlendorf, Jr. & Co. The nearly completed store was praised in the local press:

Take the whole block of three stores together as one building, and we do not think a handsomer front than it will be, when completed, can be found in the city.⁽²⁾

Like its neighbors to the north and south, the Imig Block has a main facade that is set flush with the concrete sidewalk that edges Eighth Street and has a rear elevation that is set flush with a hard-surfaced alleyway that partially bisects the block from north to south. The Imig Block has cut stone foundation walls that are not visible above grade and these walls enclose a full basement story. The exterior walls that rest on this foundation are constructed of cream brick. The main facade and the side elevations are each terminated by shallow parapet walls and these walls hide the slightly westward sloping poured asphalt-covered roof that shelters the building. Since the Imig Block was designed to be inserted in between two older two-story buildings that adjoined it to the north and south, both its south-facing side elevation and that portion of the north-facing elevation that is covered by the Pfister building were and are without decoration or openings of any kind.

West-Facing Main Facade

The fifty-five-foot-wide North Eighth Street facade of the Imig Block contains three storefronts in its first story. This facade is divided into three bays by four full-height, two-story, paneled pilaster strips, the middle bay being less wide than the two bays that flank it, as is the storefront in this bay. A lintel spans the width of the facade above these three storefronts and it is covered with a mostly intact molded sheet metal cornice that is decorated with four ornamental sheet metal capitals that are placed at the point of intersection of the cornice and the four pilaster strips. Three tall, rather narrow, segmental-arched window openings that have corbelled red brick and white stone surrounds and cut-stone sills supported by stone brackets are placed in the second story above both the right-hand and the left-hand (north and south) storefronts (625 and 629). Two paired semi-circular-arched windows that also have red brick and white stone surrounds and cut-stone sills supported by stone brackets are placed above the middle storefront (627) and these are further decorated by an elaborate semi-circular-arched cast iron lintel. The entire facade is then crowned by a corbelled brick parapet wall that is protected by a highly decorative, overhanging, bracketed, sheet metal cornice. The cornice is also decorated with four ornamental sheet metal capitals that are placed at the point of intersection of the cornice and the tops of the four pilaster strips, and with segmental-arched sheet metal pediments that are placed above each of the end bays.

² *The Sheboygan Times*: June 17, 1882, p. 3.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 3 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Not surprisingly, a number of changes have occurred to this facade since it was first built. An excellent photograph of the building taken shortly after construction was completed shows that all of the original storefronts originally had cast iron framing elements.⁽³⁾ Both the north and the south storefronts had large, one-light, plate glass display windows flanking deeply recessed canted and centered entrances whose tall double doors were each accessed by ascending two broad stone steps, while the less wide center storefront consisted of a large display window to the left and the recessed entrance (also with double doors) to the right. All the second story window openings, whether segmental or round-arched, originally contained one-over-one-light, double hung, wood sash and the sheet metal cornice above them was decorated by the two previously mentioned segmentally arched pediments, which originally had flame finials, while a taller and more elaborate broken-arched shaped pediment was originally placed over the middle bay and was crowned by a gold leaf-covered metal eagle having outstretched wings.

The first change to this facade occurred early in the building's history when the middle of the three second story window openings in the south bay (625) was widened to include a segmental-arched paired window group. Prior to the alteration it matched the north bay. A major change to the facade happened during the first two decades of this century, when all the storefronts, including the one that faces onto New York Avenue, were replaced with new ones of different configuration, each of which included a prism glass transom. Also changed at this time was the means of accessing the second story. Originally, each of the three stores had its own internal second story stairway, which was located in the rear of each store.⁽⁴⁾ When the storefront makeover occurred, however, the second story was completely reorganized into new spaces for offices and the like and a new main entrance for this story was incorporated into the new storefront of the north store (629). The design of this remodeling was the work of noted Sheboygan architect Charles Hilpertshausser.⁽⁵⁾

Since 1946, however, each of the Eighth Street storefronts has been individually modernized once again and most of their historic elements have now been replaced with modern elements of different design (the New York Avenue storefront, however, still retains most of its early Twentieth century appearance and prism glass transom). Also replaced since 1946 are the second story windows in the openings above the north and south storefronts on the main facade, although the original 1882 second story wood sash windows in the center portion are still intact. Lastly, the center pediment, with its golden eagle, and the flame finials on the other two pediments, have now been removed.

North-Facing Side Elevation

Most of the north-facing side elevation of the Imig Block is covered by the adjacent, older Pfister Building and it is without decoration or openings of any kind. The easternmost portion of this elevation, however, consists of a twenty-five-foot-wide two-story-tall ell (725-727 New York Avenue) that is similar in design to the north and south bays of the main facade. Here too, the first story consists of a full-width storefront and there are also three segmental arched window openings in the story above. Differences, however, include a much simpler cornice treatment, slightly less complex second story window surrounds, and the absence of the paneled pilaster strips that define the bays on the main facade.

³ This photo is in the possession of the Sheboygan County Historical Society and bears the identification number 200/197.

⁴ *Fire Insurance Maps of the City of Sheboygan*. Sanborn-Perris Map Co., New York, NY: 1884, 1887. 1891.

⁵ Wisconsin Architectural Archives. Hilpertshausser Collection: Drawing No.: WAA# 99/166.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

South-Facing Side Elevation

The eighty-eight-foot long two-story-tall south-facing side elevation of the Imig Block is largely covered by the less tall two-story building adjacent to it, but the portion that is visible is clad in cream brick and has no openings or decoration of any kind. Like the matching portion of the north-facing side elevation, this elevation is terminated vertically by a short brick parapet wall that descends very gradually from west to east and hides the shallow-pitched main roof from view.

East-Facing Rear Elevation

The cream brick-clad east-facing two-story-tall eleven-bay-wide rear elevation of the Imig Block opens onto an alley that runs behind the building. Most of this elevation's original first story window and door openings have now been altered, but all eleven of its segmental-arched second story window openings are still intact and retain their double coursed brick heads and dressed stone sills. The first, second and third, and the ninth, tenth, and eleventh of these openings, however, have now been filled with painted plywood sheets.

Interior

While the original floor plans of the Imig Block have not been found, it is all but certain that its first story space was originally divided into three or perhaps four separate stores.⁽⁶⁾ Each of the three stores that face N. Eighth Street occupied a single room that extended from the front to the rear of the building and these rooms were separated from one another by brick party walls, with each store also having storage space in its basement level and perhaps more space in the second story. (The second story of Henry & Charles Imig's store at 625 N. Eighth Street, for instance, was occupied by their tailor shop.) In all likelihood, each of these stores also had its own rear entrance and its own internal stairways that went down to the basement story and up to the second story. Floors were probably of wood, walls were plastered, ceilings were either plastered or covered in stamped sheet metal, and trim sets of unknown design outlined the rooms, doors, and windows.

Unfortunately, most of the Imig Block's original interior features are either now hidden by later carpeting, wall coverings, and dropped ceilings or they were destroyed by later remodeling activities. The first story spaces associated with 625 and 627 N. Eighth Street are still largely intact as raw space, but very little of the original design of these spaces is now visible. In addition, the original first story space associated with 629 N. Eighth Street has been subdivided since World War II to create a relatively small space at the front of the original room, while the much larger space to the rear has been incorporated into the first story space associated with 725-727 New York Avenue.

The original second story floor plan of the block is entirely conjectural now, since this entire story was remodeled and consolidated early in this century, but it is believed that the second stories of each store were separated

⁶ Both Sanborn-Perris maps and contemporary newspaper accounts suggest that the first stories of 629 N. Eighth Street and 725-727 New York Avenue may have originally been a single L-shaped space that was occupied by Jacob Imig's boot and shoe store.

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Section 7 Page 5 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

from each other by continuations of the first story partition walls. Whether or not any of these spaces were interconnected and the location of any other partition walls is not known. The current second story floorplan is probably the result of Charles Hilpertshauser's early twentieth century remodeling of the building. The new main second story stairway that Hilpertshauser created consists of a straight run enclosed staircase that ascends directly from the first story entrance door (which was originally a part of Hilpertshauser's new storefront for 627 N. Eighth Street and is now a part of its successor) to the second story hall. From there, a hallway goes straight back to the rear of the building, two secondary hallways branch off to the left (north) along the way, and the walls of these hallways are penetrated by numerous entrance doors, many of which have transoms above them. The floors of this story are made out of tongue and groove wood boards, the walls and ceilings are plastered, simple trim sets outline the doors, and the entire story appears to be largely intact, although in places (most notably above 725-727 New York Avenue) water is now leaking in from the roof and parts of the ceiling have failed.

The present condition of the Imig Block is typical of unrestored buildings in downtown Sheboygan. Fortunately, the changes that have affected the exterior of the building are reversible, and the existing building still constitutes one of the finest and most elaborate of Sheboygan's early Late Victorian style commercial buildings. It is the intent of the current owners of the building to reconstruct the historic appearance of the exterior of the building using still extant materials and early photographs as a guide. The interior spaces, however, will be remodeled respectfully but with the aim of making them suitable to the needs of today's tenants.

Henry and Charles Imig Block
Name of Property

Sheboygan
County and State

Wisconsin

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

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

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

Criteria Considerations

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

Property is:

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

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1881-1882

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Luecke and Roeder / Builder
Hildebrand, Fred / Builder

Narrative Statement of Significance

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

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Section 8 Page 1 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

The Henry and Charles Imig Block is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its local significance under National Register (NR) criterion C. More specifically, the Imig Block is being nominated because of its associations with the NR significance area of Architecture, a theme that is also identified in the State of Wisconsin's *Cultural Resource Management Plan* (CRMP). Research centered on evaluating this building using the High Victorian Italianate style subsection of the Architectural Styles study unit of the CRMP's Architecture Theme section.⁽⁷⁾ The results of this research are detailed below and confirm that the Imig Block is locally significant under criterion C as a fine, largely intact example of later nineteenth century design as applied to an early 1880s retail store building.

The very fine High Victorian Italianate style Imig Block was built in two stages during 1881 and 1882 for Sheboygan businessmen Henry and Charles Imig, who in 1853 had inherited the men's clothing store begun by their father in 1851 and had prospered. The first stage of the building (625) was built by the brothers in 1881 to house their own store and it was located on the lot adjacent to their original building (non-extant). The larger second stage was built the following year on the site of the original store, which was moved off site, and it housed the boot and shoe store and second story residence (629) belonging to their brother, Jacob Imig, as well as a third store (627) that provided rental income. The completed building fronted onto N. Eighth Street, which in 1882 was the principal thoroughfare of Sheboygan's downtown commercial district, and it was considered to be one of Sheboygan's more impressive commercial buildings for years thereafter. The identity of the Imig brother's architect is still unknown, but Luecke and Roeder, the masonry contractors, and Fred Hildebrand, the carpentry contractor, were both well known Sheboygan builders;. The three (sometimes four) stores in the first story of this building have been continuously occupied by commercial operations since the building was built, while its second story spaces, besides once being used as adjuncts of the first story stores, have also housed a wide variety of other uses including professional offices and living units. Currently, the first story of the building is occupied by three separate businesses, while the second story houses both a living unit, several businesses, and considerable vacant or unused space. The several separate owners of the Imig Block are currently uniting to restore the building, which will soon once again regain its place as one of N. Eighth Street's finest buildings.

Historic Context

Industry and commerce began in the Sheboygan area in 1834 when William Paine erected a crude sawmill on the shore of the Sheboygan River midway between the falls of the river (which are located in the nearby city of Sheboygan Falls) and what was to become the site of Sheboygan at the place where the river empties into Lake Michigan. At first, despite the geographic advantages of Sheboygan's location, growth was slow in this area, and Sheboygan did not achieve village status until 1846. By 1853, however, the year that Sheboygan became a city, the natural advantages of its site were beginning to be utilized. Particularly rapid growth occurred in Sheboygan after the end of the Civil War thanks in large part to the creation of a number of what would become very large industries in the city, the most notable being ones that were devoted to the processing of northern Wisconsin's timber resources into salable products such as furniture. By 1912, when the following overview of the history of the industrial enterprises of Sheboygan was written, the city had become a major manufacturing center in Wisconsin, a center that by 1929, would be the state's eighth largest city.

⁷ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: State Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986, vol. 2, p. 2-10

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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

Lumber was the first commercial article made and then the manufacture of shingles was but a single step further.

Since the small and very primitive beginning mentioned above, the city of Sheboygan has attained a high place among manufacturing cities, not only of the state but also the nation, for in the production of certain styles of chairs Sheboygan is the leader of all competitors. In 1868 the manufacture of chairs was begun and Sheboygan eventually acquired the sobriquet of the Chair City. She became famous as such the country over, and the civilized world for that matter, as her chairs are in universal demand. By 1891, Sheboygan was listed as a manufacturing center to be reckoned with when other industrial centers were considered. About this time some of the largest establishments in the country for the manufacture of enameled goods [the Vollrath Company and the Kohler Co.] were founded and iron products, knit goods and various and numerous other articles began finding their way into the marts of the country from Sheboygan factories and mills.(8)

Not surprisingly, as Sheboygan's industries grew in size, the city's population boomed, reaching 8500 by 1884 and 21,200 by 1891. In the process, an ever increasing market for goods and services was created, which offered many opportunities for success to those who made up the city's emerging merchant class. Prominent members of this class were Henry Imig (1839-1897), Charles Imig (1840-1905), Herman Jacob Imig (1844-1924), and Adam Imig (1849-1914) four of the five children of Michael Imig (1814-1855), who had immigrated to Sheboygan from Simmern, Germany with his wife, Julia Koelch Imig (1816-1894) and children in 1851. Michael Imig had been a merchant tailor in Simmern and it was this trade that he pursued when he arrived in Sheboygan. His first shop in Sheboygan was on Pennsylvania Avenue, which was the first major commercial thoroughfare in Sheboygan's downtown. Shortly thereafter he moved his shop into a small new Front Gable form frame building (non-extant) that he erected in 1855 at 627 North Eighth Street, which even at this early date was beginning to supplant Pennsylvania Avenue in importance, and it was in this location that he was working when he died in an accident in 1855, while serving as a volunteer fireman.(9) His shop was then taken over by his two oldest sons, Henry and Charles.

By 1880 the two Imig brothers were among the most successful men's clothing dealers in Sheboygan and were in desperate need of increased space for their business. To satisfy this need the brothers decided to build a new building to house their store and also another store for their brother, Herman Jacob Imig (usually called 'Jacob'), who owned and operated an almost equally successful shoe store in Sheboygan. In order to do this the brothers decided to construct their new building in two stages, with the first portion being built next door to their existing store building in order to allow them to continue their business operations while their new store was being constructed. Then, after moving into their new store, their old building would be moved to a new location and the rest of the building would be constructed, a portion of which would be occupied by Jacob Imig's store.

8 Zillier, Carl (Ed.). *History of Sheboygan County Wisconsin: Past and Present*. Chicago: The S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1912, Vol. 1, pp. 305-306.

9 *Evergreen City Times*. October 20, 1855. A photo of this building after its move to 802 N. Ninth St. is located in the collection of the Sheboygan County Historical Society and bears the identification number 510/77.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

The construction process was closely followed in the Sheboygan newspapers. The first mention of the future building occurred late in 1880.

H. & C. Imig have let the contract for a brick building 21x88 feet to Hildebrand & Co., to be put up in place of their old wooden one that they have used as a clothing store for 28 years.(10)

Ground was broken on April 22, 1881 and by late July the building was nearing completion.

The new store of H. & C. Imig will soon be ready for occupancy, and when once they are in it with their immense stock of goods in place, they will be likely to wonder how they did business so long in their old quarters. The front of the new store with its novel ornamentation, is decidedly attractive.(11)

Two weeks later, in August, Henry Imig went east to acquire new stock for the new store, a trip that was duly noted.

Henry Imig, of H. & C. Imig, left the city Tuesday morning for Rochester, New York and Boston, to purchase the largest and best stock of goods in the clothing line that have ever [been] brought to this city — and their stocks are always large. As they now have the best building of any clothing store in the city, they propose to also have the best stock of goods to put in it. To this end Mr. Imig will take plenty of time to make his selections of the best goods, and to get them at the lowest figures.(12)

By September, all was completed and the new building and its new store was opened to the public.

H. & C. Imig opened their new store on Saturday last, with what most persons would call a large stock of goods, but the largest portion of their stock is still back, having been delayed by railroad strikes in New York. Nevertheless, they make a handsome show and are *suit*-ing people daily.(13)

Early in the following year the Imig brothers began the second phase of their project. As part of this phase, both the old Imig store building located next door to the new building at 627 N, Eighth Street and the original Imig family homestead at 725-727 New York Avenue around the corner were moved to another site, creating an L-shaped parcel of vacant land.

A large pile of building stone is accumulating on New York street opposite the Beekman House. It is, we learn, for the basement walls of another brick building to be erected by the Messrs. Imig, as a continuation of the block of which they built the first one-third last year, and which, when completed, will be one of the most handsome and conspicuous business blocks in the city.(14)

10 *The Sheboygan Times*, November 6, 1880, p. 3.

11 *Ibid*, April 23, 1881, p. 3 and July 23, 1881, p. 3.

12 *Ibid*, August 6, 1881, p. 3.

13 *Ibid*, September 10, 1881, p. 3.

14 *Ibid*, February 4, 1882, p. 3.

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Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 4 Henry and Charles Imig Block
Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, Wisconsin

By April, the work of removing the older buildings on the site to a new location two-and-one half blocks away at the corner of N. Ninth Street and Wisconsin Avenue had begun. A week later, work on the foundation walls of the new addition to their building began, even as work on the three dwellings (non-extant) was continuing.

The three dwellings on Ninth street opposite the Trinity Lutheran Church—one newly erected entire and the others removed there, re-modeled and re-built—as they approach completion are presenting very tasteful exteriors, and as the declivity in the lot on which they are placed has been nearly remedied by filling up, the improvement is a most important one in that locality, and changes the general appearance of the street and block very greatly for the better. Messrs. H. & C. Imig are entitled to the credit of that, and they will undoubtedly reap a fair reward for their enterprise in the rental they will receive for their dwellings, for such buildings are in active demand here now, and hard to be obtained. Other monied men can find profit in the same line of enterprise in the residence portion of the city.(15)

By August the new portion of the Imig building was far enough along so that its first tenants could begin to occupy their new stores.

No. 629 Eighth street, the north one third of H. & C. Imig's handsome new block is now completed and has been taken possession of by its future occupant, Jacob Imig, whose large stock of new boots and shoes just received from the east is being unpacked and placed upon its shelves and in its 200 drawers, and will be opened for public inspection and purchase on Monday next. It will be one of the most convenient and handsomest shoe stores in the city, and a place compared with the one Mr. Imig has for so many years occupied, but in which he has sold an immense quantity of goods. He will occupy the whole of this portion of the block, together with the L portion fronting on New York Street, east of Pfister's jewelry store building, using the latter portion as a family residence, for which it was built. The Times congratulates Mr. Imig on his accession to such handsome and elegant quarters.(16)

In addition, the other new store in the building (627 N. Eighth Street) was initially occupied by the drugstore of Mahlendorf & Co., which yet another contemporary newspaper account described as being "also an elegant one."(17)

The completed Imig Block thus contained three first story stores fronting on N. Eighth Street, with the second story of 625 housing the tailoring operations of H. & C. Imig's business and the second story above 629 and the ell portion of the building being used as a residence by Jacob Imig and his family. This was not the only Imig family building on the block, either, since the jewelry store of Adam Imig was also located just up the street at 621 N. Eighth Street as well.(18)

15 *The Sheboygan Times*, May 27, 1882, p. 3. See also: April 15, 1882, p. 3.

16 *Ibid.* August 12, 1882, p. 3.

17 *The Sheboygan Herald*, August 18, 1882, p. 4.

18 This two-story Italianate style building is still extant but its historic facade has now been completely covered over with more modern materials and it no longer retains its historic appearance.

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Once ensconced in its new quarters the men's clothing store and tailoring shop of Henry and Charles Imig quickly became one of the leading establishments of its kind in the city and remained so until 1891, when Henry Imig's eldest son, Henry C. Imig, joined the firm and Charles Imig retired. The new firm was then renamed H. Imig & Co. and it continued to occupy the store at 625 N. Eighth Street until Henry Imig's death in 1897, after which Henry C. Imig ran it alone until ca.1904-05, when the firm ceased operations.⁽¹⁹⁾ In the meantime, Charles Imig, having quickly found that retirement was not to his liking, formed a new men's clothing company of his own in 1892 with his son, Victor H. Imig (1871-1944), the firm being called C. Imig & Son.⁽²⁰⁾ This new company initially operated from a store at 725 N. Eighth Street (non-extant) but in 1895 it moved into a large building of its own at 801-805 N. Eighth Street on the northeast corner of N. Eighth Street and Wisconsin Avenue (non-extant), which it occupied for many years.

Another of Charles Imig's sons, Arthur Imig Sr., (1877-1977) also joined the firm of C. Imig & Son shortly before Charles Imig's death in 1905. In 1909, Arthur Imig opened a high end men's clothing store of his own called "The Tog Shop" in the store at 629 N. Eighth Street that had been occupied by the boot and shoe shop of Jacob Imig until ca.1898. As an adjunct to this business, Arthur Imig also opened one of Sheboygan's first dry-cleaning businesses, which soon became his principal business and resulted in his building a two-story, brick, Prairie School style-influenced building (extant) in 1916 on the site of the old Imig homestead on New York Avenue and next door to the Henry and Charles Imig Block.⁽²¹⁾ This firm is still in business and is still being operated by Arthur Imig's descendants today. Thus, no fewer than five generations of the Imig family have been in business at one time or another on this block of N. Eighth Street. Of the three surviving buildings associated with these different firms, however, it is the Henry and Charles Imig Block that is the oldest and that has been associated with the most members of the family.

Architecture

The Henry and Charles Imig Block was constructed between 1881 and 1882 and is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places for its local significance as an excellent example of the application of High Victorian Italianate style design to a two-story commercial building. As an early example of this style in Sheboygan, the building is also a good example of the stylistic transition that was taking place at the beginning of the 1880s, when the simpler Italianate designs that preceded it were giving way to the more elaborate High Victorian style designs that were to come afterwards.

The study of commercial buildings such as the Henry and Charles Imig Block currently represents the leading edge of work involved in the development of more sophisticated and accurate architectural typology. Fifteen years ago, all but the most sophisticated buildings on America's Main Streets were evaluated largely on the basis of their integrity, not their design. Today, though, enough work has been done in identifying and categorizing such resources on both the state and national levels to make it possible to evaluate commercial buildings using criteria other than integrity alone. This is apparent in the creation of the Twentieth Century Commercial style category developed by the staff of the Historic Preservation Division of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin and it can also be seen in such new works as the

¹⁹ *Portrait and Biographical Record of Sheboygan County, Wis.* Chicago: Excelsior Publishing Co., 1894, p. 679.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 712-713. See also *The Sheboygan Press*, May 4, 1944, for Victor H. Imig's obituary.

²¹ Leberman, J. E. *History of Sheboygan*. Sheboygan, 1946.

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recently published book *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, written by Richard Longstreth.

Longstreth has been particularly helpful in devising building categories that describe how the principal facades of historic commercial buildings are organized. The most pervasive type is one that he calls the two-part commercial block, which is the type to which the Henry and Charles Imig Block belongs.

The two-part commercial block is the most common type of composition used for small and mid-sized commercial buildings throughout the country. Generally limited to structures of two to four stories, this type is characterized by a horizontal division between two distinct zones. These zones may be similar, while clearly separated from one another; they may be harmonious, but quite different in character; or they may have little visual relationship. The two-part division reflects differences in use inside. The single-story lower zone, at street level, indicates public spaces such as retail stores, a banking room, insurance office or hotel lobby. The upper zone suggests more private spaces, including offices, hotel rooms, or a meeting hall. Prevalent from the 1850s to the 1950s, the two-part commercial block emerged as a distinct type during the first half of the 19th century.(22)

In the Henry and Charles Imig Block the two zones of the main facade are harmonious in design but are clearly distinct from one another. The three first story storefronts extend across the whole facade and they are primarily a glass wall that is framed by slender, simple cast iron columns. A well-defined, tin-covered, decorative cornice acts as the division between the first story and the second story, which consists of nine windows enframed with red brick and stone-accented corbelled brick surrounds set in a cream brick-clad main wall surface. The center three windows of the facade are crowned by an elaborate cast iron hood mold and the whole facade of which is surmounted by a very elaborate tin cornice. This cornice crowns the building and it was a noticeable departure from the rather less elaborate Italianate style cornices and facades of the previous decades that typified N. Eighth Street at the time.

The choice of a High Victorian Italianate style design for the Imig Block's facade, complete with such style-defining elements as polychromatic brickwork and an elaborately overscaled and classically influenced metal cornice, was itself symptomatic of changes occurring in the architectural community of the day.(23) The late 1870s and early 1880s was an important transitional period for the architectural design of commercial buildings in the larger cities of Wisconsin and in other states. By the beginning of the Civil War, the evolving Main streets of Wisconsin were notable mostly for their harmonious mix of small-scale high style and vernacular form commercial buildings. Streetscapes of simple one to three-story buildings constructed out of wood and out of brick predominated and featured designs that consisted mostly of simple vernacular buildings and not much more elaborate ones representing either the Greek Revival or the Italianate styles of design. Gradually, though, as these cities grew and as their populations increased, the buildings in the downtown commercial districts of these communities grew in size as well and the design of these buildings became more

22 Longstreth, Richard. *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*. Washington D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1987, p. 24.

23 Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). Op. Cit., vol. 2, p. 2-10.

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elaborate. By the end of the 1870s, this trend was beginning to transform the still numerous pioneer commercial buildings made of wood and brick that were located in the downtown portion of Sheboygan and which were centered on and around N. Eighth Street.

By the early 1880s, communities the size of Sheboygan were beginning to acquire streetscapes of sometimes startling variety in which small two-story frame and brick Greek Revival buildings vied for attention with new, much larger brick or stone-clad High Victorian Italianate style and other Late Victorian period style buildings. Longstreth discusses this trend in his discussion of the evolution of the two-part block type.

During the High Victorian era, the two-part block experienced further modifications that are conspicuous, if not radical. Work of this order generally dates from the 1870s and 1880s, but it continued as late as the 1900s. The principal change is an increase in the amount of ornament and the variety of elements and materials employed. Often a much larger portion of the wall surface is covered with decorative patterns in wood, stone, brick, cast iron or, by the 1880s, stamped iron.(24)

By 1890, N. Eighth Street and other downtown streets in Sheboygan were lined with examples of these exuberant commercial buildings, some of which, like the Zaegel Building (1886, 632 N. Eighth St.), the Bodenstern Bros. Block (1893, 520 N. Eighth St.), and the Jung Carriage Works Building (1877, 829 Pennsylvania Ave., NRHP) are still extant. The Imig Block, however, was one of the earliest if not *the* earliest example of this trend in Sheboygan. Contemporary newspaper accounts detailing the construction of the building made it clear that the design of the block was a departure from established precedent.

- The stone foundation walls of H. & C. Imig's new store building are up and completed, and the brick superstructure will go rapidly forward. This portion of the contemplated future block (for it is but one-third of that of which it is designed to form a part) is 21 feet front by 88 feet deep, and is all that will be erected in the present year. The whole block, the front elevation draft of which we have been permitted to see, is of elegant design, different from any other block in the city, and when completed the triple store block will make a most attractive appearance. The portion now being built, will make Messrs. Imig, if we mistake not, the largest clothing store room in the city. That is what they need, for they carry an immense stock of goods, which their present occupied building is wholly inadequate to show to any advantage. Luecke & Roeder do the mason work and Mr. Hildebrand the wood work.(25)

A year later, the construction of the remaining portion of the building commenced, and so did the newspaper commentaries.

A large pile of building stone is accumulating on New York street opposite the Beekman House. It is, we learn, for the basement walls of another brick building to be erected by the Messrs. Imig, as a continuation of the block

24 Longstreth, Richard. Op. Cit., p. 35.

25 *The Sheboygan Times*, May 14, 1881, p. 3.

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of which they built the first one-third last year, and which, when completed, will be one of the most handsome and conspicuous business blocks of the city.(26)

As construction proceeded, not only the building's general form but also the details of its design and appearance attracted attention as well.

Imig's new block front shows finely since the elaborate zinc cornice, with its ornamental projections, has been put in place.(27)

And finally, when the building was completed, the following commentary and praise was offered.

The middle store No 627 in H. & C. Imig's new block, upon the apex of the arched cornice of which is perched the large golden eagle with expanded wing, will in a few days be occupied by A. Mahlendorf, Jr. & Co., with their fine stock of drugs and medicines, flavoring extracts, perfumery, fancy oils and soaps, toilet articles of all descriptions, pictures & c. Their present quarters have become too small for their business, and when once in their new quarters with everything in place they will present greatly increased attractions to their customers and the public generally.

The change made by the Messrs. H. & C. Imig, in the completion of their business block on Eighth street, this season has been a very great one. The south third of the block, erected last summer and since occupied by them with their immense stock of clothing, gave an earnest of what the whole would be when completed. And public anticipation has not been disappointed in the result. Where before stood three small wooden buildings erected some twenty-five or more years ago now stands a high two story and basement brick block of three stores, with one of the handsomest fronts of any building in the city, and by all odds the best and most substantial pavement in front of it, yet laid in our city, and one which we do not think excelled in any city in the state. Each store in the building is now occupied or being filled with goods, and will soon present a business attractiveness that will not permit people to pass by without entering.(28)

The importance of the transformation that the Imig brothers wrought on the 600 block of N. Eighth Street by constructing their new building is difficult to appreciate today for a number of reasons. For one thing, we live in an age when the prompt response of a modern professional fire-fighting force to any fire emergency is taken for granted. In the 1880s, though, fire fighting was still largely the work of poorly trained and poorly equipped volunteers and the threat of "the fire fiend" was one of the greatest dangers that a building owner faced. Consequently, a building owner who replaced a wooden building with a brick one was likely to be viewed by adjacent property owners as having contributed to the safety of all of their properties by erecting a passive but still greatly appreciated masonry bulwark against fire. One can easily imagine that Caspar Pfister in particular breathed a sigh of relief when the wooden buildings belonging to the Imigs that

26 *The Sheboygan Times*, February 4, 1882, p. 3.

27 *The Sheboygan Times*, June 24, 1882, p. 3.

28 *Ibid*, August 12, 1882, p. 3.

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surrounded his own brick building on two sides were replaced by the Imig's much less flammable new brick block. In addition, building in brick in those days was also seen as a sign of civic maturity that demonstrated the wealth and economic vitality of both the building owner and of the community as a whole.

Unfortunately, the architect who designed the Imig Block has not been identified. The architect who remodeled the building in the first decade of this century, however, is known. This was Charles Hilpertshouser, one of the most prominent architects to practice in Sheboygan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who altered all the first story storefronts as well as the interior of the second story of the block ca. 1909. Hilpertshouser was the son of Jacob and Annie Hilpertshouser, who had emigrated from Switzerland to the United States in 1854 and to the town of Herman, in Sheboygan County, in 1856. Jacob Hilpertshouser (1830-1890) was a carpenter by trade and he followed this trade in his adopted country as well, working as a carpenter and contractor both in the town of Herman and, following a move to Sheboygan in 1863, in that city as well. For most of the 1870s he worked in company with Fred Hildebrand, who was the carpentry contractor for the Imig Block, after which he practiced alone until he was joined by his son in the mid-1880s.

Charles Hilpertshouser (1861-?), was born in the town of Herman and received his schooling in the Sheboygan public schools. After graduation in 1880, he went to Chicago to take a course in algebra and geometry at the West Side Business College and subsequently worked in the offices of several local architects for the next five years, beginning in the office of John C. Cochran. Returning to Sheboygan, he at first assisted his father in his well-established contracting business, being the principal designer for the firm. In 1887, he opened his own office and devoted himself exclusively to the profession of architecture, which in the following decades resulted in many of Sheboygan's finest buildings.(29)

In the Hilpertshouser Collection at the Wisconsin Architectural Archives is an undated drawing of the alterations that Hilpertshouser designed for what was then the Art Imig store at 629 N. Eighth Street.(30) No other drawing of this project has survived but a photo of the building dated 1946 makes it clear that the project involved replacing all of the building's four original first story storefronts with the ones that are described more fully in the Description Section of this nomination. Today, the only storefront that survives from this remodeling is the one associated with 725-727 New York Avenue, but this one, fortunately, is still highly intact and still retains its large full-width prism glass transom.

The Henry and Charles Imig Block is thus being nominated to the NRHP because it is a fine example of early High Victorian Italianate style design as applied to a locally important two-story commercial building. The Imig Block represented something new in the design of buildings of this type in Sheboygan when it was built and it is believed to be of architectural significance as such because it was the forerunner of the Late Victorian style buildings that were soon to replace many of Sheboygan's pioneer commercial buildings. What was especially novel and new about the Imig Block was its ornamentation, which, as a comparison with the adjacent Italianate style-influenced Caspar Pfister building built in 1862 so aptly illustrates, was more elaborate than what had been built in the city before. Remarkably, much of this ornamentation is still intact, a fact that is all the more important since so many of the buildings of similar vintage that once surrounded it have now been either greatly altered, like the nearby Adam Imig building, or have been demolished.

29 *Portrait and Biographical Record of Sheboygan County, Wis.* Op. Cit., pp. 517-518.

30 Wisconsin Architectural Archives. Hilpertshouser Collection: Drawing No.: WAA# 99/166.

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

S21' of N75' of W40' of Lot 5 & S21' of N75' of Lot 6, Block 152 (625 N. Eighth Street).
S13' of N54' of W40' of Lot 5 & S13' of N54' of Lot 6, Block 152 (627 N. Eighth Street).
N 41' of W40' of Lot 5 and S21' of N41' of Lot 6, Block 152 (627 N. Eighth Street and 725-727 New York Avenue).
All within the Original Plat of the Village of Sheboygan. The boundaries enclose an area of less than one acre.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries of the Imig Block enclose all the land historically associated with the building. The legal description given above reflects the fact that the three stores and the space above them are now each owned separately, so that in fact there are three owners of the building, which is now divided into three separate parcels.

Owners

As of the current date the three owners of the building are:

Jung Buildings, Inc.
631 N. Eighth Street
Sheboygan, WI 53081-4549

Dan McFadden
PO Box 106
Sheboygan, WI 53082

Dale R. Rauwerdink
N7411 North Star Rd.
Sheboygan, WI 53803

Henry and Charles Imig Block

Sheboygan

Wisconsin

Name of Property

County and State

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

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

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

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

Property Owner

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

name/title See Continuation Sheet 10-1

organization date

street&number telephone

city or town state Wisconsin zip code

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

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Photo

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Items a-d are the same for each photo.

Photo 1

- a) Henry and Charles Imig Block
- b) Sheboygan, Sheboygan County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, October 28, 1997
- d) State Historical Society of Wisconsin
- e) View of main facade., View looking E
- f) Photo 1 of 7

Photo 2

- e) Detail of 627 N. Eighth Street, View looking E
- f) Photo 2 of 7

Photo 3

- e) Detail of 629 N. Eighth Street, View looking E
- f) Photo 3 of 7

Photo 4

- e) Interior of 627 N. Eighth Street, View looking E
- f) Photo 4 of 7

Photo 5

- e) 725-727 New York Avenue elevation, View looking S
- f) Photo 5 of 7

Photo 6

- e) Alleyway behind building with rear elevation, View looking SSW
- f) Photo 6 of 7

Photo 7

- e) General view of N. Eighth Street-New York Avenue corner, View looking SE
- f) Photo 7 of 7