

**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

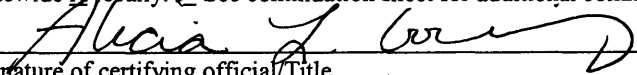
historic name Union House Hotel
other names/site number Union Hotel

2. Location

street & number	200 North Broadway	N/A	not for publication
city or town	De Pere	N/A	vicinity
state Wisconsin	code WI	county Brown	code 009 zip code 54115

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 October 9, 2003

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 for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting official/Title Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Union House Hotel
Name of Property

Brown County
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:)

Edward H. Beall

11-26-03

Don

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(check as many boxes as
apply)

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

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

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

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

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
previously listed in the National Register**

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMESTIC/hotel

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

DOMERSTIC/hotel

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

LATE VICTORIAN

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation Stone

walls Brick

roof Asphalt

other Stone

Narrative Description

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

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 1

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

DESCRIPTION

The Union House hotel has always been one of the most important visual and historic landmarks in downtown De Pere. This excellent, highly intact Late Victorian building was constructed in stages between 1883 and 1922. The original owner was Nicholas Altmayer, who owned the building and ran the hotel that occupied it until 1893, after which it was sold first to his brother, Fred Altmayer, and in 1918 to the Maternoski family, who still own and run it today. Located in the heart of the city of De Pere's historic downtown, this thirty-four-room hotel building is one of De Pere's largest and one of its most intact nineteenth century commercial buildings. The Union House Hotel building has a "U" plan that is formed by a large L-plan three-story main block, and a one-story garage wing that is attached at a right angle to a rectilinear plan two-story rear wing that is attached at a right angle to the main block. The principal facades faces west onto Broadway, De Pere's most important historic commercial thoroughfare, and onto James Street. The main block of the hotel measures approximately 66-feet-wide x 72-feet-deep and it rests on foundation walls constructed out of both regular and irregular coursed rubble limestone that enclose a full basement story. The exterior walls that rest on this foundation are constructed of cream brick laid up in American bond. The Broadway and James Street-facing main elevations are crowned by a continuous, highly intact bracketed metal cornice that hides the very gently sloping rolled asphalt-covered main roof. Fortunately, the Union House Hotel is still in largely original condition today, its exterior in particular having retained most of its historic appearance.

The city of De Pere is located in Brown County on both sides of the Fox River. The river divides the city into east and west sides, both of which saw the evolution of historic nineteenth century downtown commercial districts. The Union House Hotel is one of the most important resources in the downtown on the east side of the river, which consists of a fine collection of nineteenth century and early twentieth century commercial buildings that form both the historic and the present commercial core of this small city.¹ The downtown is situated on level land in the heart of the city and comprises the buildings that line both sides of a four-block-long stretch (the 100 and 200 blocks of N. Broadway and the 100 and 200 blocks of S. Broadway) of Broadway, which is 80-feet-wide at this point.

Historically, the north-south-running Broadway has been the busiest, most important commercial thoroughfare on the east side of De Pere and it has always been lined with the city's major commercial establishments. These buildings all have main facades that abut the concrete sidewalks and curbs that line Broadway and the only greenery is provided by small trees that have recently been planted along

¹ The population of De Pere in 2001 was 16,569.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 2

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

the right-of-way. Most of the historic commercial buildings in the downtown are representative examples of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century Commercial Vernacular form and Twentieth Century Commercial style designs faced in brick. The downtown also contains a largely intact stone-clad Neo-Classical Revival style bank, a smaller stone-clad Beaux Arts style bank, and several Italianate style examples. These buildings form a fine ensemble that is immediately recognizable as an historic downtown and the Union House Hotel, which is one of only two three-story historic commercial buildings that front onto Broadway today, is one of the largest of these buildings and one of the most intact as well.

The Union House occupies a lot that comprises the southwest corner of a rectangular city block that is bounded by the north-south running N. Broadway to the west, James Street to the south, N. Wisconsin Street to the east, and William Street to the north.² The main facades of the Union House face west onto N. Broadway and south onto James Street, the latter of which has been reduced in width and the original parking lane on the north (hotel) side has now been replaced with an elegant, in-ground stone reflecting pond and fountain. The principal facades abut sidewalks that are edged with concrete gutters. The hotel's north-facing side elevation contains no openings because it was originally completely hidden by the side elevation of the older and since demolished City of De Pere Fire Engine House and City Hall. The hotel's east-facing rear elevation consist of the east-facing elevation of the hotel's garage wing, which now faces onto a large black-topped parking lot but which originally faced a north-south-running service alley that bisected the block and ran parallel to N. Wisconsin Street. A small courtyard that is surrounded by three sides of the hotel opens onto James Street and this has recently been partially paved and partially landscaped. It serves both as a memorial garden to the late Patricia Boyd and as a means of access to the rear of the hotel and the kitchen.

The design of the Union House can be better understood by knowing how the building we see today evolved. The earliest part of the hotel is the west half of the main block, which was built in 1883, and was originally a two-story, cream brick-clad, rectilinear plan block measuring 66-feet-wide x 30-feet-deep. The west-facing main facade of this block faces onto N. Broadway and most of its original design is still extant today.³ Two years later, in 1885, the building was almost doubled in size when a two-story, 66-foot x 20-foot-deep addition was built along the entire east side of the original block,

² Originally this block contained a mixture of historic commercial and residential buildings, but recent urban renewal efforts resulted in the demolition of all of the surviving buildings excepting only the Union House, and the surface of the block is now given over almost entirely to a black-topped municipal parking lot.

³ See historic photo dated ca. 1884 (Attachment A) and 1884 Sanborn-Perris Map (Attachment B). Also built in 1883 was a 66-foot x 25-foot-wide wooden horse barn that occupied the part of the lot now occupied by the still extant 1918 barn.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 3

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

resulting in a deeper but still rectilinear plan building.⁴ In 1903, a third story was added to just the N. Broadway and James Street facades, creating an L-plan third story on top of the rectilinear plan two-story block below.⁵ Next, in 1920, a new two-story rectilinear plan laundry wing was built across the north edge of the lot and it was attached to the northeast corner of the main block. At the same time, a new, one-story, rectilinear plan barn/garage wing was built that replaced the original free-standing frame barn, and it was attached to the southeast corner of the laundry wing. The two 1920 additions resulted in a three-sided, nearly square-plan courtyard that had an open south side that opened onto James Street. Finally, in 1922, a three-story-tall 20 x 20-foot square addition was added to the southeast corner of the main block, resulting in an L-shaped courtyard and the building that is still visible today.⁶

Exterior

The corner location of the Union House gives the building two principal facades, one facing west onto N. Broadway and the other facing south onto James Street. The facade that faces onto N. Broadway that we see today represents the joining together of both the original 1883 two-story block and the third story added in 1903. This facade is asymmetrical in design and seven-bays-wide and its cream-brick wall cladding rests on a slightly projecting and slightly raised stucco-covered stone foundation wall. A totally intact metal-covered bracketed cornice, the ends of which are also capped with ball finials, crowns the wall.⁷ The first story of the first and third bays from the right (south) each contain a one-light over one-panel wood entrance door and both doors are surmounted by segmental-arched one-light transoms.⁸ Placed in all seven bays of both of the stories above and in the bays between and to the left of these doors are identical segmental-arched window openings having wood sills. All of these window and door openings are crowned with identical corbelled hoods comprised of two header courses of brick. Historic photos show that the window openings all originally contained four-over-four-light double hung wood sash windows, the top of the upper sash having a segmentally arched shape. These window openings now contain one-over-one-light double hung wood sash windows that historic photos show have been in place since around 1900. The only other element on this facade is a

⁴ See 1890 De Pere Sanborn-Perris Map (Attachment C.)

⁵ See 1914 De Pere Sanborn-Perris Map (Attachment D).

⁶ See 1925 De Pere Sanborn-Perris Map (Attachment E).

⁷ The tall corbelled brick cornice that crowned the original two-story-tall elevation was removed when the third story was added. The differences in the cream brick used in 1883 and in 1903 is still quite visible.

⁸ Historic photos in the collection of the De Pere Historical Society show that the right-hand door originally served the hotel's saloon while the left-hand one was the "ladies entrance," possibly to the hotel's dining room.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 4

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

large neon sign on the second story of the N. Broadway-James Street corner that says "Union Hotel" and which is reputed to have been the first neon sign in the city when it was installed.

The eight-bay-wide, south-facing James Street facade of the main block that we see today represents the joining together of the original 1883 two-story block with the 1885 two-story addition, the 1903 third story addition, and also the 1922 addition.⁹ This facade is also asymmetrical in design and it is very similar in design to the N. Broadway facade. It too has cream-brick wall cladding that rests on a slightly projecting and slightly raised stucco-covered stone foundation wall and it is also crowned by a continuation of the same metal-covered bracketed cornice, the ends of which are also capped with ball finials.¹⁰ The first story of the first and fifth bays from the left (west) both also contain one-light over one-panel wood entrance doors that are surmounted by segmental-arched one-light transoms and an identical door is placed between the fourth and fifth bays as well. Originally, the left-hand of these three doors served the hotel's saloon (it is now the hotel's principal entrance) while the one between the fourth and fifth bay served (and still serves) a stairway that ascends to what was originally the second story lobby. The third door was added when the 1885 addition was built and it too served the hotel's saloon. Placed between the seventh and eighth bays is still another entrance door that was added as part of the 1922 addition. This door is taller than the other three and it has a tall, two-light transom above it. It was originally flanked on either side by tall store window openings in the first stories of the seventh and eighth bays from the left that have since been reduced in size and partially filled in with cream brick and with glass block. These windows and the door originally served a commercial space that was long occupied by a barber shop but which is now occupied by a card room. Placed in all eight bays of both of the stories above and also in the first stories of the second, third, fifth and sixth bays from the left are segmental-arched window openings that are identical to those found on the N. Broadway facade.

The east-facing rear elevation of the hotel's main block looks out onto the courtyard that was described earlier and it is comprised of two separate elements, the three-story elevation of the 1922 wing and the recessed three-story elevation of the 1885 addition. The elevation of the 1922 wing is three-bays-wide, clad in cream brick, and crowned by a simple, slightly overhanging wooden eave that is supported by simple wood brackets. Originally this elevation's first story featured four small, segmental-arched window openings that were placed in the first story of the first and third bays and on either side of the

⁹ The first three bays from the left (west) represent the original 1883 block, the next three represent the 1885 addition, and the last two, the 1922 addition. The third story was added to both the 1883 and 1885 blocks and was original to the 1922 addition.

¹⁰ The tall corbelled brick cornice that crowned the original two-story-tall elevation was also removed when the third story was added and the differences in the cream brick used in 1883, 1903, and 1922 are also still quite visible.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 5

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

middle bay.¹¹ Each of these openings originally contained a one-over-one-light wood sash, double hung window, but the only intact survivor is the one in the right-hand (north) bay. The two left-hand (south) openings have now been bricked shut and the third is now partially filled by a sheet metal ventilator. The second and third stories of the first and third bays still retain their original segmental-arched window openings, and these openings have either stone or concrete sills and retain their original one-over-one-light double hung wood sash. The second and third stories of the middle bay, however, both contain emergency exit door openings that open onto a wrought iron fire escape that extends down to the ground from the third story. The segmental-arched second story door opening contains its original one-light-over three-panel wood door, which is surmounted by a segmental-arched one-light transom, while the third story's door opening is filled with a modern door and is surmounted by a rectangular one-light transom.

The north-facing rear elevation of the 1922 addition is three-stories tall, two-bays-wide, and clad in cream brick. The first story of the left-hand (east) bay contains a segmental-arched double door opening that is filled with a pair of side-hinged doors made of vertical wood boards. The two stories above this door each contain a single segmental-arched window opening, as do all three stories of the right-hand bay. Each opening contains its original one-over-one-light double hung wood sash window.

The original east-facing elevation of the 1885 block of the hotel is now mostly covered by the 1920 laundry wing addition to the north and the 1922 addition to the south. Consequently, what is visible today is only a small portion of what would have been visible in 1920. What is visible is the section between the two later additions, this section being two-stories-tall, two-bays-wide, and clad in cream brick. Originally, both bays had paired windows in their first stories that were each contained within segmental-arched openings and these windows serve the hotel kitchen. Both openings have now been partially filled, the left-hand (south) one with brick and with glass block, and the right-hand one partially with brick and with a much later and smaller triple window group consisting of three single-light casement sash windows. The second story's original appearance is conjectural but it appears that each bay once contained a paired window group as they still do today, although the windows themselves are modern, not original, and the openings have stone or concrete sills.¹²

¹¹ All the segmental-arched window openings on the east and north sides of the 1922 addition and on the 1920 laundry wing and barn additions have heads made of two courses of header brick, but unlike the windows on the main facades, these heads are not corbelled out from the wall surface.

¹² Not visible from the ground is the recessed third story above that is the result of the 1903 third story addition, the width of which covered the original 1883 block only.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 6

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

The south-facing elevation of the two-story 1920 laundry and storage wing that intersects at a right angle with the 1885 block is clad in cream brick and it looks out over the courtyard. This asymmetrically designed elevation has a seven-bay wide first story. The first, second, third, fourth, and sixth bays from the left (west) each feature a small, segmental-arched window opening that has a concrete or stone sill and these openings now each contain a pair of modern one-light casement sash windows. The fifth and seventh bays from the left both feature segmental-arched door openings that now contain modern steel doors. This elevation's second story has only three openings. The first opening is placed above the first story's second bay from the left and consists of a segmental-arched door opening that has a three-light over three-panel wood door that opens onto a steel fire escape that is attached to this elevation and which descends from the second story roof of the 1885 addition. The second story's other two openings are both segmental-arched window openings placed above the fourth and seventh bays from the left and contain their original one-over-one-light double hung wood sash windows.

The third side of the courtyard is formed by the west-facing side of the one-and-one-half story-tall garage/barn wing, built in 1920. This elevation is also clad in cream brick and it is five bays wide. The first bay from the left (north) consists of a segmental-arched window opening that contains its original one-over-one-light double hung wood sash window. The other four bays are more or less evenly distributed across the width of the elevation and they are placed somewhat high up on the wall surface and contain small segmental-arched window openings that now contain a rectangular three-light window.

The south-facing end elevation of the 1920 garage wing faces onto James Street and it is three bays wide, one-and-one-half stories tall, clad in cream brick, and is crowned by a stepped parapet wall. The first story's middle bay contains a large garage door opening that contains a six-light, eighteen-panel overhead garage door. Flanking the door on either side are segmental-arched window openings of different sizes, the one on the left contains a one-over-one-light double hung, wood sash window while the one on the right is smaller and contains an oblong shaped three-light window. Placed in the second story between the first and second bays from the left (west) and in the second story of the right-hand bay are two more small, segmental-arched window openings that both contain an oblong one-light window.¹³ The stepped parapet wall that crowns the elevation hides the roof of the barn, which is clad in tarpaper and is actually almost Mansard-shaped, having a flat central portion that runs north-south and steeply sloped sides.

¹³ All the window openings on this elevation have rock-faced stone sills.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 7

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

The east-facing side elevation of the barn wing lies in the same plane as the east-facing end elevation of the laundry wing, to which it is connected, and both elevations are clad in painted brick and originally faced the alleyway that once bisected the block. The east elevation of the barn wing is seven bays wide and these bays are more or less evenly distributed across the width of the elevation and are placed somewhat high up on the wall surface.¹⁴ Each of these bays contains a small segmental-arched window opening having a rock-faced stone sill and each now contains a rectangular three-light window. Centered on the slope of the roof above is a large shed-roof dormer that served to bring hay into the wing's attic storage area. This dormer contains a pair of side-hinged wood doors and its sides are clad in asphalt shingles.

The attached end elevation of the laundry wing occupies the right-hand portion of the hotel's east elevation. Its first story contains a large garage door opening with an overhead garage door. Two segmental-arched window openings are placed in the second story above and these contain their original one-over-one-light double hung wood sash, the upper sash of which have segmental-arched heads. The elevation is crowned by the laundry wing's very shallow-pitched gable roof.

The north-facing elevation of the hotel consists of the north-facing elevations of the laundry wing and the 1883 and 1885 main block of the hotel, all three of which lie in the same plane. The parapet walls that crown each of these elements step down gradually from right (west) to left and the wall surfaces of the original block and its 1885 addition, both of which were originally covered by the non-extant City Fire Engine House, have no openings and are clad in stucco over the original brick.¹⁵ The first story of the adjacent laundry wing is constructed of building tile and it has no openings or other features. The second story is clad in painted brick and is four bays wide. Each of these bays contains a single segmental-arched window opening that contains its original one-over-one-light double hung wood sash window excepting the second bay from the right (west), which now contains a ventilator.

Interior

Not surprisingly, the interior of the Union House Hotel has changed somewhat since the first portion was constructed. Good documentation regarding the layout of the hotel for much of its life is lacking, but some general information about the changes that have occurred is known and once again the nature of these changes is tied up in the evolution of the building.¹⁶ When the original 1883 block was built,

¹⁴ Originally, there was also an entrance door placed just to the right of the right-hand-most window on the barn's portion of this elevation but this has since been filled in with brick.

¹⁵ Two circular sheet metal ventilators now pierce this wall and serve the hotel kitchen.

¹⁶ See attached Sanborn-Perris maps.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 8

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

the south 30% of the first story was given over to the hotel's saloon and, while the use of the rest of this story is uncertain, it is believed to have been at least partially occupied by guest rooms. In addition, the hotel lobby/office was on the second story, as were the rest of the guest rooms, thought to have totaled eighteen altogether. When the hotel was doubled in depth in 1885, more guest rooms were added to the second story and the saloon was expanded to include the south 30% of the new addition, so by 1885 the saloon occupied the south 30% of the combined blocks and stretched along the entire James Street elevation of that period. The next known change occurred in 1903, when an L-plan third story was added along the N. Broadway and James Street elevations, which gave the hotel an additional dozen guest rooms and created a flat deck over the remaining roof surface of the 1883-1885 portion. What is still unknown concerns the use of the rest of the first story in the years between 1885 and 1903. It is not known, for instance, when dining facilities were first offered and where this room and the hotel kitchen were first located. What is known is that by 1914 the former saloon space had been divided into two unequal size spaces with the lobby/office occupying the west portion and the saloon the slightly larger east portion, an arrangement that still exists today. The rest of the first story, meanwhile, was by then divided into a dining room (to the west) and the kitchen (to the east), again, much like it is today. Finally, the 1922 addition created more second and third story guest rooms and also a small first story commercial space just to the east of the saloon that was first occupied by a barbershop, then by a card room, and now by a small dining room.

Today, the south portion of the first story of the main block of the hotel consists of a small lobby in the hotel's southwest corner, a bar to the east of this that is separated from the lobby by an enclosed staircase that ascends to the second story, and a small dining room in the hotel's southeast corner. Located north of the lobby and facing onto N. Broadway is a living room and north of this and also facing onto N. Broadway is the hotel dining room, which occupies the northwest corner of this story. The northeast corner adjacent to the dining room consists of the hotel kitchen and located directly to the east of the living room is the Booth Room (another small dining room).

The entrance lobby, bar, and Booth Room were all remodeled in 1936-1937 and achieved their present mildly Art Moderne-influenced appearance at that time. The entrance lobby has plaster walls and ceiling, two plaster-encased beams that span the width of the ceiling from north to south, and a floor that is now carpeted but was covered with patterned linoleum in 1936.¹⁷ There are two windows and an outside door on the room's south (James Street) wall, one window and one outside door on its west (N. Broadway) wall, one multi-light door on its north wall that leads into the living room, and two multi-light doors on its east wall, the left-hand one of which opens into the bar and the right-hand one

¹⁷ The ceiling is now covered with sound absorbent tiles.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 7 Page 9

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

of which opens into a stairway that leads to the second story. The room's most notable feature is the lobby desk, which is attached to the east wall and has an L-plan and a rounded corner and which is the single Art Moderne touch in the room dating from the 1936 remodeling.

The next room to the north of the entrance lobby is the hotel's principal living room, a rectangular space having plaster walls and ceiling and a floor that is now carpeted. The walls are trimmed with a tall, simple painted baseboards and with crown molding and the room's major decorative element is a non-working classically derived fireplace that is centered on the room's south wall. Also located on the room's south wall to the left of the fireplace is the single multi-light door that leads into the entrance lobby. The living room's west wall has two window openings and a single outside entrance door that all overlook N. Broadway and its north wall has a pair of multi-light doors to the left and a single separate multi-light door to the right that all open into the dining room (only the door to the right is in daily use). An enclosed staircase that ascends to the hotel's second story is accessed through an opening centered in the living room's east wall and placed to the left and to the right of this staircase are a pair of multi-light doors, the left-hand pair of which open into the Booth Room.

The Booth Room was created in 1936-37 when a room that had been used as a sample room was remodeled into this second, smaller dining room. The walls and ceiling of this room are both plaster-covered and, as the name implies, both the north and south sides of the room are lined by 3/4 inch-thick walnut veneer-clad dining booths that flank a center aisle. The booths have leather-covered seats and backs that were installed at a cost of \$1122.00 when delivered in 1936.¹⁸ Two more booths are located at the rear (east) end of the room and doors at the east ends of the north and south walls allow passage between the kitchen to the north and the bar to the south.¹⁹

The hotel dining room occupies the northwest corner of the first story and has a floor that is now carpeted, plaster walls, and a plaster ceiling that also has two plaster-encased beams that span its width from north to south. The most historic feature of the room is believed to be the paneled wainscot that encircles the lower third of the walls. The corners where the rails and stiles meet are rounded in a fashion more typical of the Late Victorian period than of the Classical Revival style that influenced the design of the living room next door. The remaining surface is plastered and is now covered with scenic wallpaper that was put up in 1961. The west wall of the room contains three window openings that look out onto N. Broadway, there are no openings on the north wall, a single door on the east wall opens into the kitchen, and the south wall features a pair of multi-light doors to the right and a single multi-light door to the left (east), both of which open into the living room.

¹⁸ Hotel records.

¹⁹ All of these booths have buzzers inserted into their walls for summoning wait staff.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 7 Page 10

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

The hotel kitchen occupies the space to the east of the dining room and the hotel bar the space to the east of the entrance lobby. All of these first story rooms are in daily use and the hotel's restaurant serves not only those staying at the hotel but also customers from the entire Green Bay/De Pere area and points beyond. Also in daily use are the hotel's guestrooms, most of which are simply furnished and have carpeted floors and plaster walls and ceilings.

The Union House Hotel that we see today is essentially unchanged since 1922, after the last addition was completed, and the building is still in excellent condition and has been well maintained throughout the 120 years of its existence. Such changes that have been made to its exterior were all made within the first fifty years of the hotel's existence, well within the period of significance, and were the result of expansion efforts that have allowed the hotel to survive as an economic entity into the present day. Thus it is believed that the Union House is one of the oldest and most intact of the increasingly small number of nineteenth century hotels that still survive in Wisconsin.

Union House Hotel
Name of Property

Brown County
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)

COMMERCE

ARCHITECTURE

Period of Significance

1883-1953

1883-1922

Significant Dates

1883

1885

1903

1920

1922

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

Narrative Statement of Significance

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 1

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

SIGNIFICANCE

The Union House Hotel is being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its local significance under National Register (NR) Criteria A & C. More specifically, it is being nominated because of its associations with the significance areas of Commerce and Architecture. The original portion of this mostly three-story-tall, cream brick-clad building was built for Nicholas Altmayer as a two-story-tall, 66x30-foot rectilinear plan block in 1883. In 1885, the hotel was doubled in size to 60x60 and in 1893 a third story was added. Also still intact is the kitchen and stable wing, added in 1920, and in 1922 still another small addition was made to hotel itself, which resulted in the building as it stands today. The building is locally significant in the area of architecture as an intact example of the hotel building type having a high degree of architectural integrity.²⁰

The Union House Hotel is also of local significance under NR criterion A because it is historically one of the oldest and one of the largest hotels in De Pere. The Union House Hotel has been in continuous operation as a hotel since it was first built and it is still in operation as a hotel today, making it one of the oldest continually operated hotel in the state of Wisconsin, and certainly in De Pere and in Brown County. The hotel's current owners have gone to great lengths to respect the historic integrity of the building and the hotel is now one of the oldest and easily the most intact surviving example of a commercial theme that was of great importance in De Pere's historic past. The period of significance begins in 1883 with the initial construction of the building and extends to the 50-year period in 1933.

COMMERCE

A general history of the city of De Pere and its buildings is included in the recently published *City of De Pere Intensive Survey Report*.²¹ Consequently, the history that follows will not repeat what has already been written except as is necessary to place the Union House building into its historic local context.

The earliest commercial activity that took place within and around what is today's city of De Pere in the nineteenth century was probably conducted by merchants catering to traffic moving up and down the old Military roads on the east and west banks of the Fox River. It was not until the first dam was built across the rapids at De Pere in 1836-37 and especially after the first bridge connecting the east and

²⁰ Wyatt, Barbara (Ed.). *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*. Madison: State Historic Preservation Division, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1986. Vol. 2, p. 3-10 (Architecture).

²¹ Heggland, Timothy F. *City of De Pere Intensive Survey Report*. De Pere: City of De Pere Historic Preservation Commission, 2001.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 2

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

west sides of the river was built across the dam in 1851, that commercial activity in De Pere really began in earnest. Because this bridge and its successors were the only ones in the entire area that crossed the river for a number of years thereafter, land near the bridge site on both sides of the river quickly evolved into hubs of both industrial and retail commercial activity. Thus, it is all the more remarkable that one of the two earliest surviving buildings in De Pere and also one of the oldest in northern Wisconsin is a commercial building that predates the building of the first bridge. This is the one-story Greek Revival style former payroll office of the De Pere Hydraulic Co. This building was built in 1836 and is now located at 403 N. Broadway in the North Broadway Historic District (NRHP, 9-8-1983), but it was originally located in the 100 block of N. Broadway and was moved to its present site in 1861.

Nearly all of the other buildings associated with the history of commerce in De Pere are much newer and date from the late 1870s onward. Most of these buildings are located in three distinct areas of present day De Pere that together form the historic downtown core of the city. Two of these areas are located at the east and west ends of today's Claude Allouez Bridge and the third is located along the first five westernmost blocks of George Street, which extends eastward from the east end of the bridge. This downtown core grew up where it did because of its location at the ends of the bridges that have spanned the Fox River at this point and which unite the communities of West De Pere on the west bank of the river and De Pere on the east bank. Proximity to the Fox River was the critical factor in the establishment of both of these communities. The mouth of the Fox River empties into Green Bay and Lake Michigan. De Pere is located five miles south of this mouth at a place on the river where sizable rapids made further navigation upstream impossible in the early 1800s. This was also a time when shipping on nearby Lake Michigan was the only reliable means of transporting large quantities of goods and large numbers of people to and from this area in the period before adequate overland roads and later, railroads, were developed. Consequently, that portion of the river between these rapids and Lake Michigan gradually developed into an important Great Lakes port. More importantly, the rapids of the Fox River at De Pere were the most important potential source of water power in the area in the 1840s-1860s. It was therefore the logical place for the construction of a dam and of saw mills and flour and grist mills and other industries that could make use of the power that could be generated by mechanically harnessing the flow of the river.

The combination of transportation access and readily available water power made the rapidly growing communities on both sides of the former rapids economically viable. This combination also resulted in commercial districts being developed at both ends of the bridge and along the main roads that extended out of these two areas and into outlying areas that were in need of the resources that De Pere was increasingly able to supply. The most important of these roads on the east bank of the river was

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section 8 Page 3

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

Broadway. What made this particular north-south-running road important was the fact that it was already the principal road running north to Green Bay from points to the south on that side of the river. Thus, Broadway was already an important local and regional thoroughfare when the first bridge was built and the place where Broadway connected with the east end of the east-west-running bridge thus became a natural place for commerce to develop. This new commercial development was not limited just to Broadway. Commercial development also began to extend eastward from Broadway along both sides of the east-west-running George Street because the western terminus of George Street was the east end of the bridge. Consequently, the point of intersection of George Street with north-south-running Broadway became the focal point for commercial activity on the east bank of the river.

Similar development occurred at the west end of the bridge and for identical reasons. Here too, several already existing and newly created roads quickly came to focus on the area near the end of the new bridge. The most immediately important of these roads was the east-west-running Main Ave., and what made this particular thoroughfare important was that its eastern terminus was the west end of the bridge. Consequently, commercial development developed around this point, and along the three-block length of Main Ave. The importance of the West De Pere end of the bridge and of Main Ave. was further enhanced in 1862 when the first railroad to extend north into this region from Chicago, the Chicago & NorthWestern Railroad, was constructed up the west bank of the river and past West De Pere on its way to Fort Howard at the river's mouth. Not surprisingly, the place where these tracks crossed Main Ave. further anchored the commercial district that was growing up along Main Ave.

The West Side of the Fox

The first commercial buildings on Main Ave. were probably built as soon as the first bridge was constructed and these were almost all small, one and occasionally two-story, wood frame buildings. By comparison with the commercial district on the east side, the subsequent growth of the one that centered on Main Ave. was orderly because the west side's commercial district was spared the catastrophic fires that destroyed most of the early commercial buildings on the east bank. Instead, the evolution of the west side's commercial district was characterized by steady growth that responded to changes in business and construction practices as well as economics. Beginning in the 1870s, some of the small wooden buildings along Main Avenue were replaced with larger, brick construction, Commercial Vernacular form ones and examples of both were later replaced with one and two-story brick-clad examples of the Twentieth Century Commercial style. Interestingly, the first Sanborn-Perris maps to cover De Pere show that even in 1884, when the combined population of De Pere had reached 4500, nearly all the commercial buildings on Main Ave. were still one and occasionally two-story wood frame buildings. Furthermore, a number of Main Avenue's original frame construction

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 4

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

commercial buildings were still in existence and in use in the 1930s and a few are in use even today.²²

The East Side of the Fox

The story of the evolution of the commercial district that developed at the east end of the bridge around the Broadway/George Street intersection is much different. Perhaps because Broadway was a better established and more direct route and perhaps because Green Bay was a more important destination than Fort Howard on the west bank, the commercial district of the east bank of the river grew faster than its west side counterpart. This growth was characterized by more and larger buildings as well, some of which were built of brick and of stone. This can be clearly seen on the 1871 Bird's Eye View of the combined cities, which shows that the commercial district of the west side of the river was then limited to just the 300 block on Main Avenue, while that on the east side included both sides of the 100 blocks of both north and South Broadway and had made some inroads into the 200 blocks as well.²³

The importance of the east end of the bridge and of the area was further enhanced in 1872 when the first railroad to extend north into this region along the east bank of the Fox River, the Milwaukee & Northern Railroad, was constructed through De Pere on its way to Green Bay at the river's mouth. Not surprisingly, the proximity of these tracks to Broadway served to make the area around the Broadway/George Street intersection a more attractive focus for commercial development and further anchored the commercial district that had already developed around this intersection.

The first commercial buildings on the east side of the river were also put in place as soon as the first bridge was built over the river and these too were almost all small, one and occasionally two-story, wood frame buildings. Gradually, a few brick buildings joined these wood frame pioneers and by 1880 both the east and west sides of the 100 block of South Broadway were almost completely lined with one, two and three-story commercial buildings, most of which were of frame construction. All of this changed in a single night on April 23, 1882 when an enormous fire destroyed all of the buildings fronting on both sides of the 100 and 200 blocks of South Broadway and almost all of the rest of the buildings in this four-block area.²⁴

One of the consequences of this fire was that the De Pere city council immediately created a fire district along Broadway that specified that all new construction within the district boundaries had to be of masonry or brick construction. Thus, when the rebuilding of "the burned district," as the area was called, began, the previous mixture of wood-clad and brick-clad commercial buildings that had

²² Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Fire Insurance Maps of De Pere, Wisconsin. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1884.

²³ Bird's Eye View of De Pere, Wisconsin. Madison: J. J. Stoner, publisher, 1871.

²⁴ *De Pere News*. April 29, 1882, p. 1.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 5

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

characterized the district streetscape before was replaced by streetscapes of a much more uniform appearance as can best be seen today on the 100 block of South Broadway. These buildings are good, representative examples of Commercial Vernacular forms and several are almost identical in appearance, which is not surprising given the circumstances surrounding their construction.

On April 14, 1888, another fire destroyed all the buildings on the east side of the 100 block of N. Broadway, and on May 4, 1889, still another fire destroyed all the buildings on the west side of the 200 block of S. Broadway, most of which dated from the rebuilding of that block following the 1882 fire.²⁵ Thus, by 1900, the 100 blocks of N. and S. Broadway had achieved a certain visual homogeneity by virtue of their having been largely rebuilt within a relatively short period of time. Fortunately, the large fires ceased after 1889 and, while the commercial area centered on Broadway has since been greatly reduced by post-World War II redevelopment activities that have essentially eliminated most of the historic commercial structures in the 200 blocks of both North and South Broadway, what has survived is still a largely coherent and quite well preserved whole.

Hotels:

There are now just four extant buildings in De Pere that were constructed as hotels prior to World War II. The newest of these is a fine two-story brick construction Twentieth Century Commercial style building that was built as railroad hotel: the Hotel Roffers at 500 Grant St. (built in 1912). As the name implies, railroad hotels were built adjacent to or near railroad yards and depots and they catered primarily to transient travelers and to railroad crews. The Hotel Roffers is a fine, late example of this type and it is believed to also be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. De Pere's oldest extant hotel, the Commercial House Hotel at 302 George St., has been in existence since at least 1870 and historic photos show that it was originally a side-gabled, two-story, rectilinear plan, Greek Revival style building clad in clapboards. In 1885, Green Bay architect/contractor turned hotelier, Joseph Lemieux, purchased the building, expanded it, and gave it a more fashionable Mansard roof. The remodeled building became almost unrecognizable when it was remodeled into an apartment building in 1936.²⁶ The third surviving hotel is the somewhat altered three-story, cream brick-clad, Commercial Vernacular form Knoeller Block building at 124 N. Broadway, which housed the New California House hotel for a number of years.²⁷ This building was built in 1899 and it replaced the original

²⁵ Ibid. April 14, 1888, p. 1 and May 4, 1889, p. 1.

²⁶ *De Pere News*. June 13, 1885, p. 1; June 27, 1885, p. 1; July 4, 1885, p. 1. See also: *De Pere Journal-Democrat*. January 28, 1937, p. 1.

²⁷ *Brown County Democrat*. September 8, 1899, p. 1. The Knoeller Block has since been remodeled into stores and offices and its exterior has lost its original brick cornice and its first story has also now been modernized.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 6

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

California House, which was destroyed by fire in 1888.²⁸

The fourth surviving historic hotel is the Union House Hotel located at 200 N. Broadway, the original portion of which was built for Nicholas Altmayer in 1883. The cream brick-clad Union House is the most intact of the city's nineteenth century hotels and it was the first new hotel built in De Pere after the devastating fire of April 23, 1882. Its owner, Nicholas Altmayer, had emigrated from Germany to the United States with his father in 1843. They came first to Milwaukee, settling in the nearby community of Germantown and it was there that Altmayer met and married his wife. In 1860 the couple moved to Morrisontown, a small community located some fifteen miles southeast of De Pere, where Altmayer opened a sawmill.²⁹ By 1882, Altmayer had prospered to such an extent that he was able to undertake the construction of a new hotel in De Pere as an investment.

Mr. Altmayer, with a force of men, has been actively engaged during the week getting things in readiness for the erection of his new hotel next to the engine house, on the corner of Broadway and James street. The old building fronting on James street has been torn down and the parts taken away so as to make room to put up a substantial new barn 30x66 feet, which is built along the alley and fronts on James street. On Monday will be commenced the work of moving the old corner building from its present position to a place on the lot where it will not interfere with building operations either on the hotel or barn—that is, about midway between the alley and Broadway and fronting on James street. About the 10th of September Mr. Altmayer's family will move from Morrisontown and occupy this as a temporary residence until the hotel is completed, which is thought will be accomplished about Nov. 1, and certainly not later than the 15th of that month. The hotel will be a two-story brick-veneered building and have a frontage of 66-feet on Broadway and 30-feet on James street, and built up so as to correspond as nearly as may be with the engine house, so that a great improvement in looks and otherwise, will be effected in this part of De Pere's principal street.³⁰

Still another aspect of Altmayer's plan was reported in the paper two weeks later.

It is the intention of Mr. Altmayer to add an L on James street to his hotel building but it will not be done this season because he will have all he can do to complete the main structure before

²⁸ The first California House was a three-and-one-half-story, Front Gable form, stone-clad building that had been built for Dr. A. B. Williams in 1857, at which time it was the largest building in Brown County.

²⁹ Morristown is now called Morrison.

³⁰ *De Pere News*. September 1, 1883, p. 3. The now non-extant two-story cream brick De Pere fire engine house was located next door (north) to the hotel on Broadway. (See site map)

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 7

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

the cold weather will interfere with building operations. This L will add greatly to the appearance of the hotel and of the corner on which it stands.³¹

By late October, Altmayer's hotel was almost completed.

Mr. Altmayer has his new hotel, the Union House, nearly completed, and says he expects to occupy it next week. The work of building, though rapid, has been well and substantially done. On the lower floor are seven rooms, besides the office, bar-room and hall-ways; and upstairs are eleven sleeping apartments and a parlor; and all the arrangements of the interior are very convenient.³²

Two weeks later, Altmayer was in residence and his new hotel was open for business.

Mr. Altmayer is now settled in his new hotel. The old wooden building which he occupied temporarily has been purchased by Sam'l Blake, and is to-day being moved by Robt. Doak to Mr. Blake's place in the southern part of the city.³³

The construction of the Union House would have been a noteworthy event in De Pere at any time but it was especially important to the city then because De Pere's three newest hotels had all been destroyed in the 1882 fire. This left only the elderly California House, built in 1857, and the almost equally old Commercial house, built prior to 1870, to represent the city.³⁴

Fortunately for Altmayer, the eighteen room Union House was a success from the start, its success helped along by good management, timing, favorable business conditions, and the growth of De Pere and the surrounding area. Altmayer was not the only person to seize the opportunity the 1882 fire presented, however. As noted above, Joseph Lemieux of nearby Green Bay moved to De Pere in 1885 and remodeled and modernized the old Commercial House hotel, which is located two blocks away

³¹ Ibid. Sept. 15, 1883, p. 3.

³² Ibid. October 27, 1883, p. 3.

³³ Ibid. November 17, 1883, p. 3.

³⁴ Lost in the 1882 fire were: the three-story brick American House (a.k.a. the National House), which was located on the northwest corner of S. Broadway and Charles Street; the two-story frame construction Village House hotel, which was located diagonally across the same intersection on the southeast corner; and the De Pere House, which was located just up Broadway from the American House in the same block. Also now lost is the Transit House hotel, a frame building that was built just south of the site of the American House in the next (200) block after the 1882 fire and which was itself consumed in another fire in 1889. On the west side of the river, De Pere has also lost the Hotel Duval, which was in existence in 1893 on the northeast corner of the intersection of Fourth and Reid streets.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 8

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

from the Union House at 302 George Street. Perhaps in response, Altmayer decided to expand his own hotel just a few months later.

Business is so good at the Union House that Landlord Altmayer is compelled to erect a 20x66 addition to the hotel to accommodate his guests. He has already begun work upon it, and will soon commence an addition to the barn also. The addition will add materially to the appearance of the house.³⁵

By October, the new addition was almost completed.

The addition to the Union House is approaching completion and already appearances thereabouts are greatly improved.³⁶

Nicholas Altmayer continued to own the Union House until 1893, when his brother, Fred Altmayer took over the business. By 1903, favorable conditions warranted yet another expansion to the building.

Fred Altmayer, proprietor of the Union house, will put part of an additional story to the building. The addition will give about a dozen rooms, facing on Broadway and James street. The building has a frontage of 66 feet on Broadway and 50 feet on James street. Work will begin as soon as possible.³⁷

This addition had an L-plan and it raised both the Broadway and James street elevations to three-stories. Once begun, work once again moved quickly towards completion.

The mason work of the addition to the Union House has been finished. The brick is being painted a cream color.³⁸

In 1914, Altmayer sold the Union House to A. W. Kabat, ending thirty years of Altmayer family associations with the building. Kabat then sold the hotel to August Maternoski in 1918 and the present generation of the Maternoski family still owns and runs the hotel today. Shortly after purchasing the hotel, Maternoski decided to replace the original wooden horse barn behind the hotel with a more modern one of tile construction that would also stable horses that belonged to the city's fire engine

³⁵ *De Pere News*. June 6, 1885, p. 1.

³⁶ *Ibid.* October 17, 1885, p. 1.

³⁷ *Ibid.* July 22, 1903, p. 1.

³⁸ *De Pere News*. September 2, 1903, p. 1.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 9

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

house, which was located next door on N. Broadway.

August Maternoski has begun work on the erection of a large new tile barn on the Union House lot on James street. An addition will also be built to the back of the hotel to accommodate the laundry and to be used as a storehouse.³⁹

Two years later, in 1922, Maternoski had the last addition to the hotel built.

Aug. Maternoski is having a two-story addition built to the east end of the Union House, to face on James street. He may decide to make the addition three stories. The first floor will be for small store purposes, and the upper floor for rooms for the hotel.⁴⁰

This last addition did indeed become a three-story affair and it resulted in the thirty-four room hotel building that is the subject of this nomination.

By 1922, the commercial dominance of the much larger nearby city of Green Bay was having a significant effect on the hotel business in De Pere. Even by 1916, the combined number of hotel rooms in Green Bay numbered 1200, dwarfing the number available in De Pere. Two years later saw the construction of the 240-room Northland Hotel in Green Bay, which was a part of the Milwaukee-based Schroeder Hotels chain and was for many years thereafter the largest hotel in the entire Fox River valley. Despite such competition, the Union House (which Maternoski renamed the Union Hotel later in the 1920s) continued to occupy a niche in the De Pere market that the Maternoski family filled successfully. Partly this was due to fortuitous circumstances, such as the construction of the new Claude Allouez bridge across the Fox River in 1932-33. The location of the east end of the bridge just two blocks away from the Union House made it an obvious place for construction crews to stay, which in turn helped the hotel ride out two of the worst years of the Depression. Also helping was the willingness of the Maternoski family to move with the times. The dining room of the hotel had long been a noted gathering place for De Pere citizens and in 1937 the bar room, booth room, and lobby were remodeled and achieved their present Art Moderne style-influenced appearance. Still later, in 1951, air conditioning was also added.

Today, the Union House is operated by the great-grandchildren of August Maternoski. The Union House is also one of the most intact 1880s commercial buildings in De Pere. Consequently, it is

³⁹ *De Pere Journal-Democrat*. May 20, 1920, p. 1.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* June 22, 1922, p. 4. This year also saw the city of De Pere's first purchase of a motorized fire engine, ending their need for stabling at the hotel.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 10

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

believed that the Union House hotel is eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level because it is a rare example of a continuously operated nineteenth century hotel, one whose period of significance encompasses most of De Pere's history as well.⁴¹ Hotels were important commercial enterprises in De Pere and elsewhere in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and they were also of enormous symbolic importance, being one of the ways in which outsiders judged a community's vitality and prosperity. The Union House, by virtue of both its size and its reputation, has always been one of De Pere's leading hotels and it is also now the oldest intact hotel building in De Pere. This significance is greatly enhanced by the fact that the hotel has been in continuous use since it was built. Its significance is still further enhanced by the commitment the present generation of the Maternoski family has made to maintain and respect the historic integrity of the building. In addition, the highly intact state of preservation of the hotel permits it to continue to accurately portray its historic role in the community.

ARCHITECTURE

The Union House is also eligible for listing in the NRHP at the local level on the basis of its architectural significance as a fine, representative example of the small to mid-size late nineteenth century hotel property type. Buildings such as this could once be found in nearly every Wisconsin city but many have now been lost because their downtown locations made them vulnerable to later development activities and few of those that do survive retain all of their historic appearance. Even more rare are examples of this property type that still retain anything of their historic hotel-related interiors. This is, of course, directly related to the scarcity of examples that are still used for their original hotel purposes. Changes in fashion, changes in building codes and zoning regulations, and changes in the economics of the hotel business have together conspired to all but eliminate the commercial viability of using such buildings for their original purpose. It is therefore extremely fortunate that the Union House, which has always been in continuous operation as an hotel, still survives today.

The Goods and Services Study Unit of the Commerce Theme of the CRMP which will discuss Wisconsin hotels has not yet been published. In its absence, no statewide overview of hotels as a resource type currently exists. Never the less, hotels and other places where short-term lodging could be rented constitute one of the more wide-spread resource types and examples can be found historically in settlements of every size and in every part of the state. Their presence has been noted in every Intensive Survey of community resources so far undertaken in Wisconsin and even a casual

⁴¹ The Period of Significance for Commerce spans the years that the Union House was operated as a hotel in De Pere. The hotel operation began in 1883 and the year 1953 reflects the date mandated by the NPS's 50 year rule, even though the actual years of operation have continued up to the present day.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 11

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

perusal of published Wisconsin county histories shows that virtually every community has at one time or another had a building which offered rental lodgings.

The earliest examples of hotels in Wisconsin were frequently among the first buildings in their respective settlements and owed their existence to the scarcity of available dwelling places in those days and to the necessity of providing shelter for transients and for new arrivals. This need usually resulted in the erection of a makeshift building whose rough-and-ready mode of construction often revealed the limitations of available labor and materials. The earliest examples were often of log construction and few of these have survived.

The next generation of hotels followed quickly on the heels of the pioneer examples and these were usually of frame construction. Typically, a community that had reached this stage of its development had its future growth become its first priority and further progress in constructing newer and larger hotels often depended on the ability of the community to generate enough traffic to warrant the expense of such construction. The coming of the railroad was often the catalyst that generated this traffic. Railroads were looked upon by towns of that period as an almost magical agency that could insure future prosperity. Thus, railroads acquired a tremendous symbolic importance since a community that was on a rail line was felt to be a permanent one and one whose future growth was all but assured, both of which were critical distinctions in attracting the outside capital that was needed for growth. Indeed, the desire for permanency was so important that citizens willingly bought the stock of the railroad, mortgaged farms, donated land for right of ways, and did all in their power to ensure the coming of this transforming agent. Interestingly enough, a number of the state's early hotels were also built in the same way, with locals taking up shares in the enterprise in order to assure its success.

Once a community was well established, its next priority was to shed its small town appearance and give evidence of being a settled, growing, prosperous place. This usually translated into the simple mantra of "bigger is better," bigger stores could hold more goods, and bigger hotels, more customers. Along with an increase in size came changes in construction materials. Very early Wisconsin commercial buildings and hotels were typically built of wood and were clad in clapboard, these being materials that were readily obtained throughout the state even before the coming of the railroads. Not surprisingly, those also were the days before meaningful and effective fire protection was available; such buildings tended not to last long. So along with increased size came buildings built of more permanent and fire proof materials such as brick and stone.

The Union House is a good, representative example of this trend. The fire of April, 1882 destroyed the three newest of the five hotels then operating in De Pere, two of the three of which were wooden

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 12

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

buildings, leaving a void that Nicholas Altmayer moved quickly to fill. His new building was only two-stories and height and it held only eighteen rooms at first but it was built out of brick and was the most modern, up-to-date hotel in De Pere at the time. It would remain so for the next sixteen years until the New California House was built in the next block in 1899. The only other hotel built in De Pere after the New California House was the Hotel Roffer, built in 1912, and these two examples, together with the Union House, which by 1922 had grown to three stories and thirty-four rooms, would be the sole representatives of the hotel industry in De Pere until shortly after World War II.

Today, both the New California House and the Hotel Roffers, while still extant, have long since ceased to be used as hotels and both now have greatly altered interiors. Taking their place are several new motor inns have also been built on the outskirts of the city and two new hotels that have recently been built in De Pere's downtown. Of the city's surviving historic hotels, only the Union House hotel still functions as a hotel and it is now the oldest and by far the most intact example of this important historic property type.

The Union House is a fine, extremely intact example of simple Late Victorian commercial design as applied to a small to mid-size 1880s hotel building. Simply designed commercial buildings constructed between 1850-1910 are usually two or three stories-tall, although one and four story-tall examples are also found. In multi-story examples the first floor is typically given over to retail space and the upper floors are often used for apartments although other commercial uses such as offices are also common in upper floors. A typical original feature of such designs is a large ground floor show window(s) and frequently transom windows placed above the show window help to light the ground floor. Upper stories usually have simple multiple window openings which are treated identically on buildings of the simplest design. A visually emphatic cornice featuring one or more decorative treatments such as brick corbelling, wooden moldings, and a stamped metal frieze typically terminates the main facade and the only other decoration is usually a decorative cornice or iron I-beam above the first floor display window(s). Doors leading to both the ground floor and the upper floors are simple and are generally of paneled wood with a single window. While the mixing of two or more materials in the wall cladding of an individual building is sometimes seen, most examples usually feature just one material.

The recently completed De Pere Intensive Survey found thirty-five examples of the Late Victorian commercial form in that city that retain sufficient integrity to justify being surveyed. The oldest and

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 8 Page 13

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

largest of the two most intact examples is the cream brick-clad Union House Hotel.⁴² It was begun in 1883 and was expanded several times thereafter, achieving its final form in 1922.⁴³ The hotel possesses nearly all the features listed above that are typically associated with Late Victorian commercial designs and its importance is greatly enhanced by its exceptional degree of integrity and by the high standard of maintenance that has helped to preserve it.

In conclusion, it is believed that the Union House Hotel is also eligible for listing in the NRHP for its architectural significance as a fine, exceptionally intact example of a small-mid-size style 1880s hotel.

⁴² The other example is the two-story J. Baeten Block, 620-22 George St., built in 1903.

⁴³ The Period of Significance for Architecture spans the years from 1883, the initial year of construction, until 1922, when the last addition was made to the building.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 9 Page 1

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bird's Eye View of De Pere, Wisconsin. Madison: J. J. Stoner, publisher, 1871.

Brown County Democrat. September 8, 1899, p. 1.

De Pere Journal-Democrat. Various issues, see footnotes.

De Pere News. Various issues, see footnotes.

Heggland, Timothy F. *City of De Pere Intensive Survey Report*. De Pere: City of De Pere Historic Preservation Commission, 2001.

Interviews with McKim Boyd, owner and manager of the Union Hotel.

Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Fire Insurance Maps of De Pere, Wisconsin. New York: Sanborn-Perris Map Co., 1884; 1890; 1900; 1914; 1925; 1925 (updated to 1934); 1925 (updated to 1953)..

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

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section 10 Page 1

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

Boundary Description

All Lot 7, Block 20, Original Plat of the City of De Pere.

Boundary Justification

The boundaries enclose all the land historically associated with the Union House Hotel.

Union House Hotel
Name of Property

Brown County
County and State

Wisconsin

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	McKim Boyd/Owner	date	
organization	The Union Hotel	telephone	920-336-8616
street & number	102 S. Clay St.	zip code	54115
city or town	De Pere	state	WI

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.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Section photos Page 1

Union House Hotel
De Pere, Brown County, WI

Items a-d are the same for photos 1-6.

Photo 1

- a) Union House Hotel
- b) De Pere, Brown County, WI
- c) Timothy F. Heggland, April 6, 2002
- d) Wisconsin Historical Society
- e) View of main facades, View looking N
- f) Photo 1 of 6

Photo 2

- e) View looking NW
- f) Photo 2 of 6

Photo 3

- e) Courtyard, View looking NW
- f) Photo 3 of 6

Photo 4

- e) View looking SW
- f) Photo 4 of 6

Photo 5

- e) View looking SE
- f) Photo 5 of 6

Photo 6

- e) View looking NE
- f) Photo 6 of 6



UNION HOUSE,

NEXT TO ENGINE HOUSE,

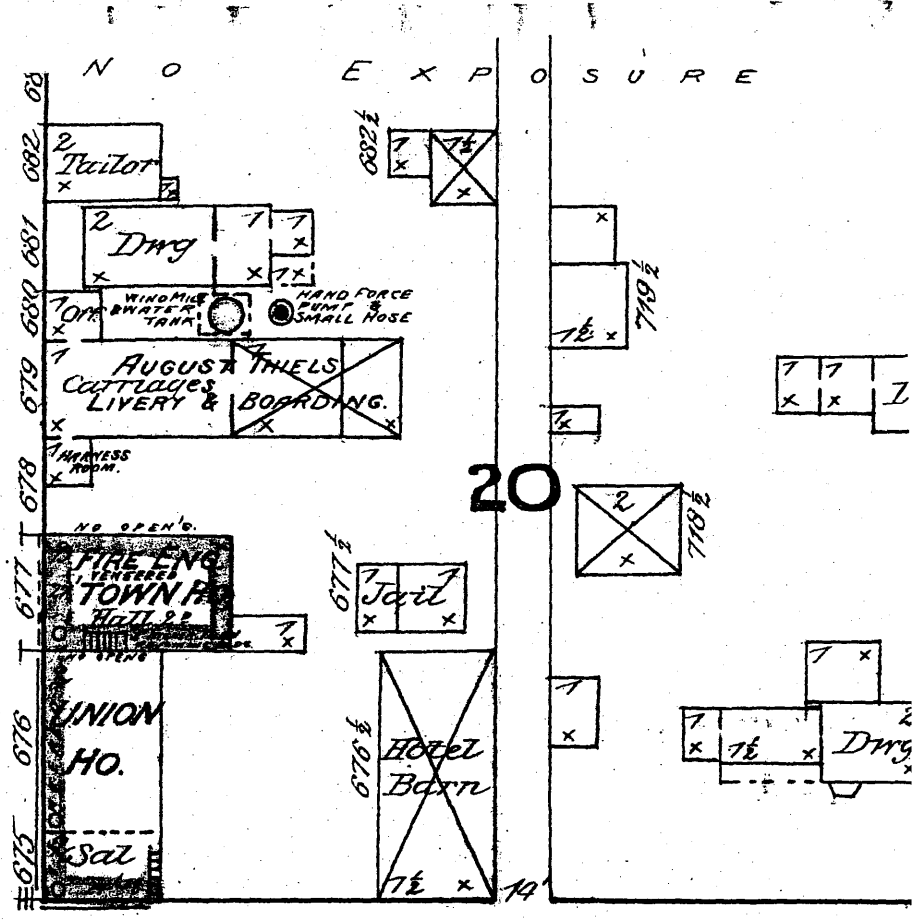
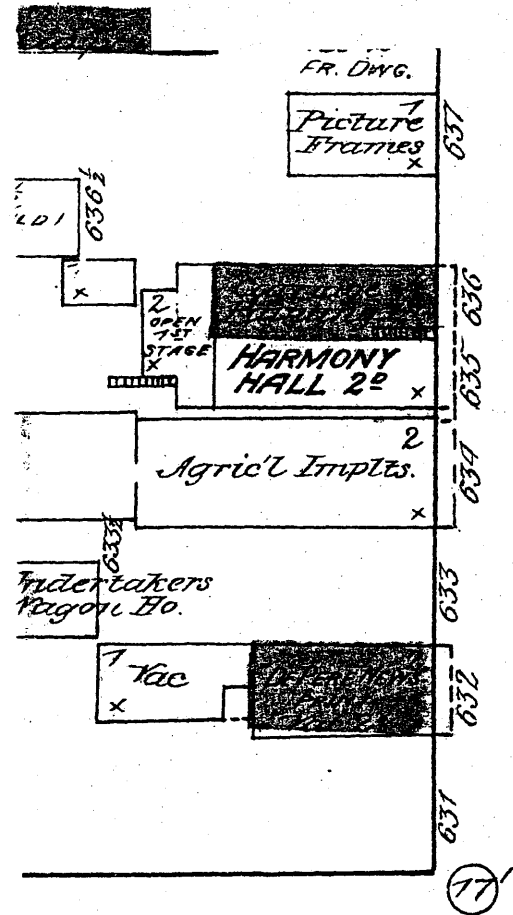
BROADWAY, DE PERE, WISCONSIN.

GOOD ACCOMMODATIONS AVAILABLE.

NICHOLS & ALTMAYER,

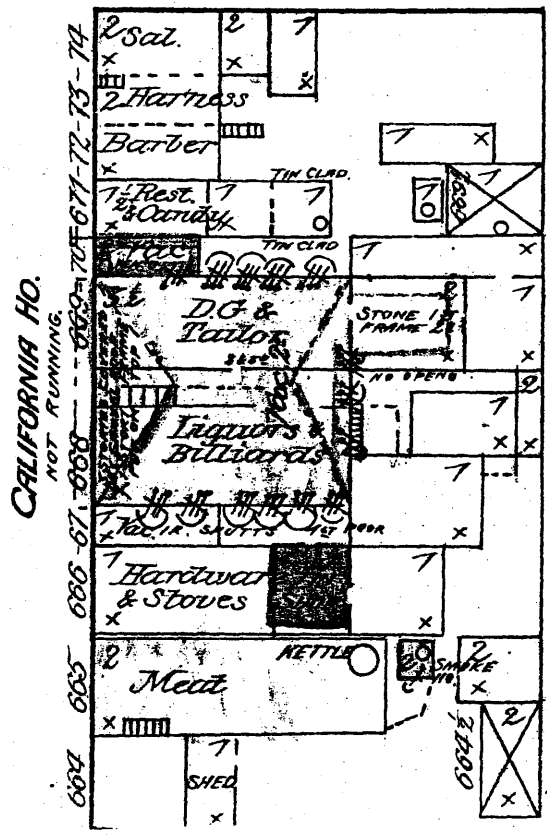
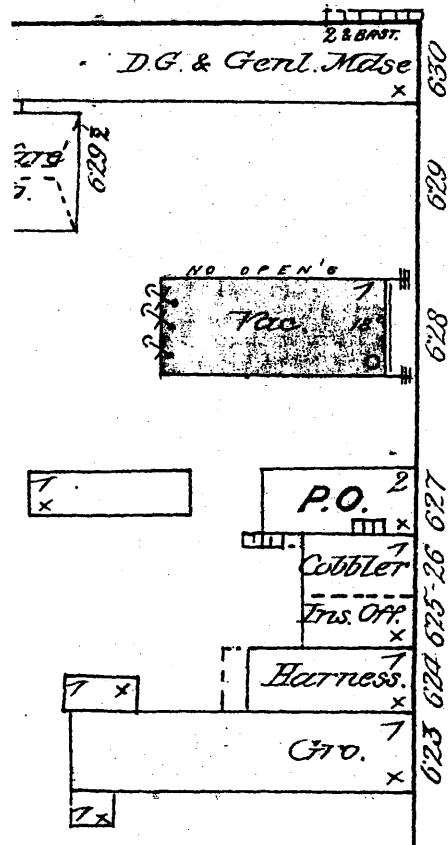
Attachment B

UNION HOUSE HOTEL
DE PERE, BROWN CO., WI

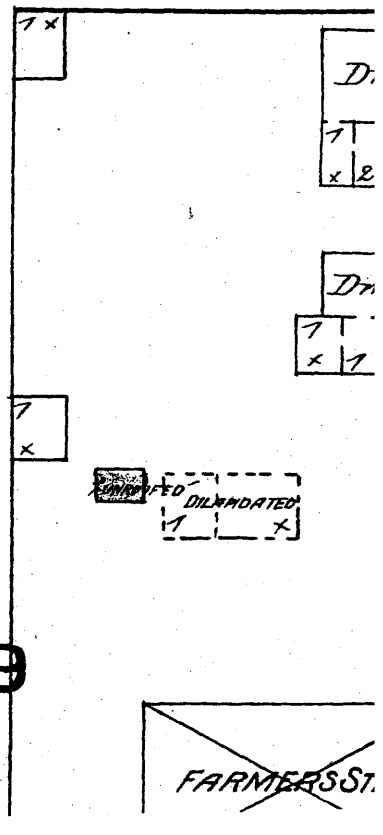


1883

JAMES



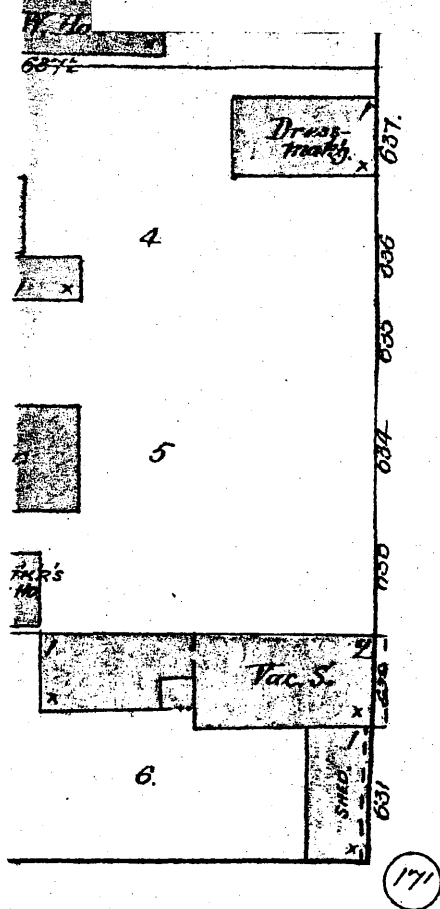
19



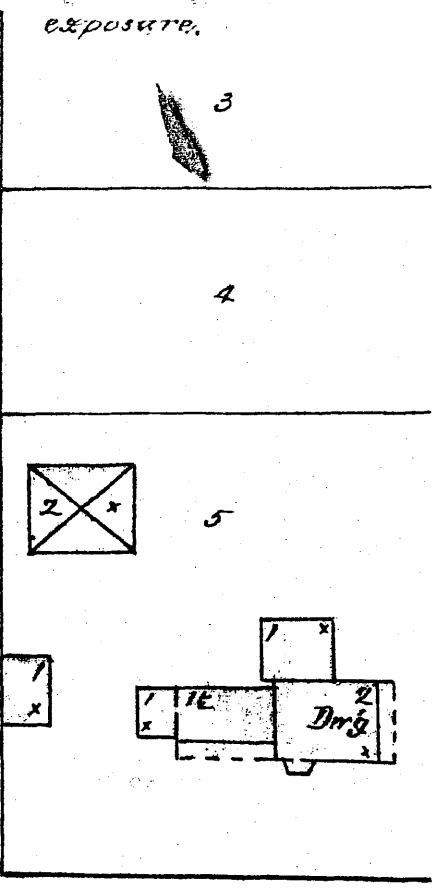
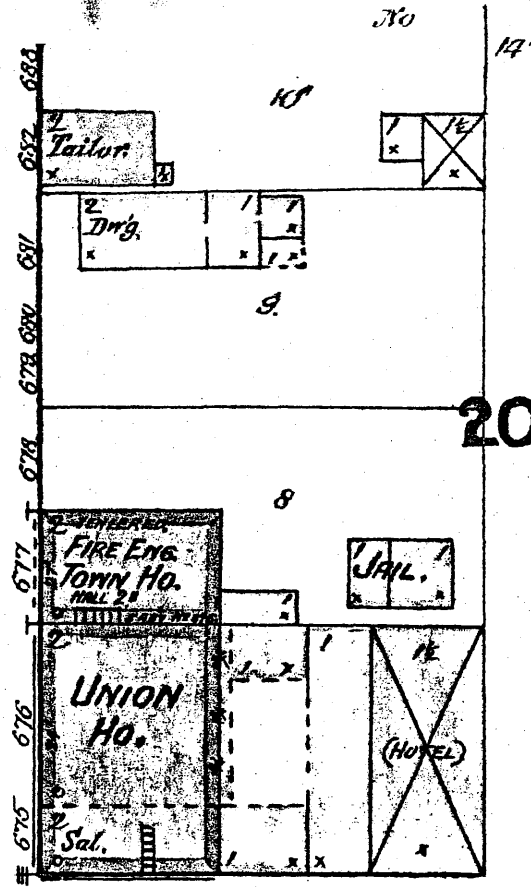
CALIFORNIA HO.
NOT RUNNING.

Attachment C

UNION HOUSE HOTEL
DE PERE, BROWN CO., WI



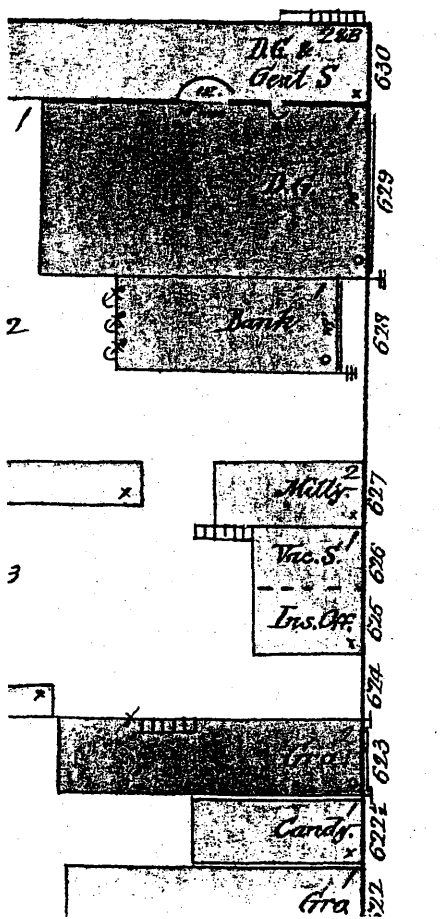
80'
17'



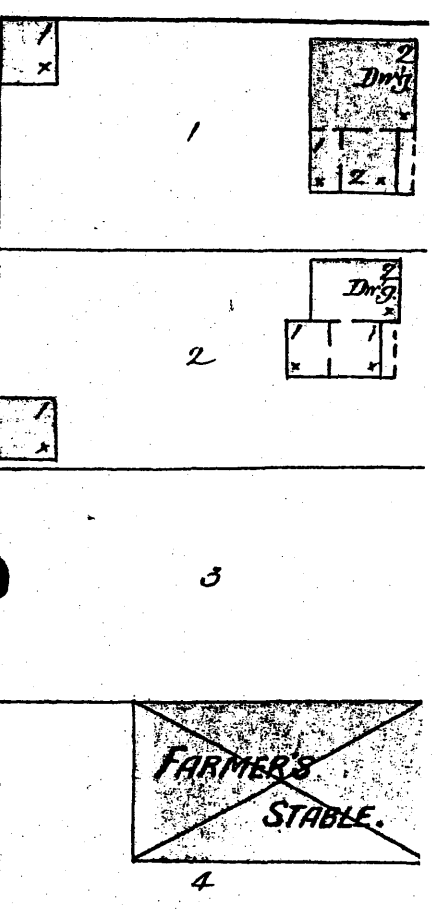
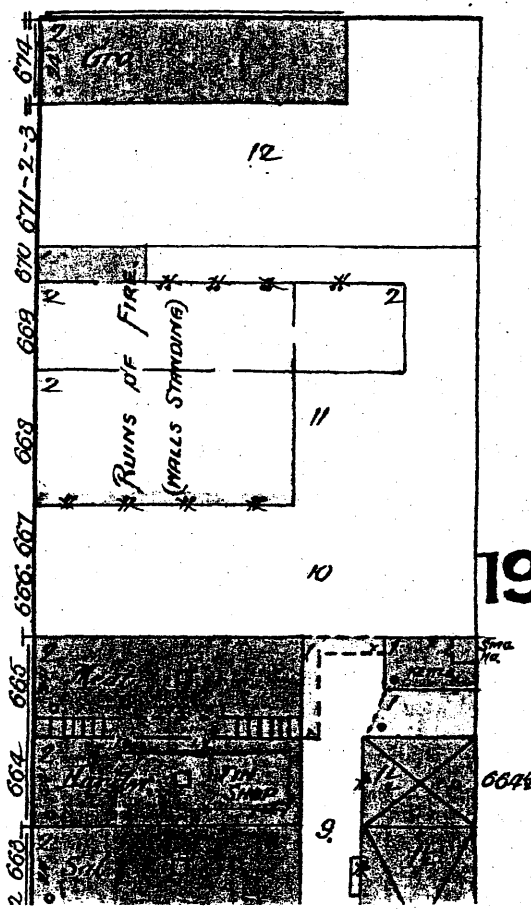
TRM
NYA

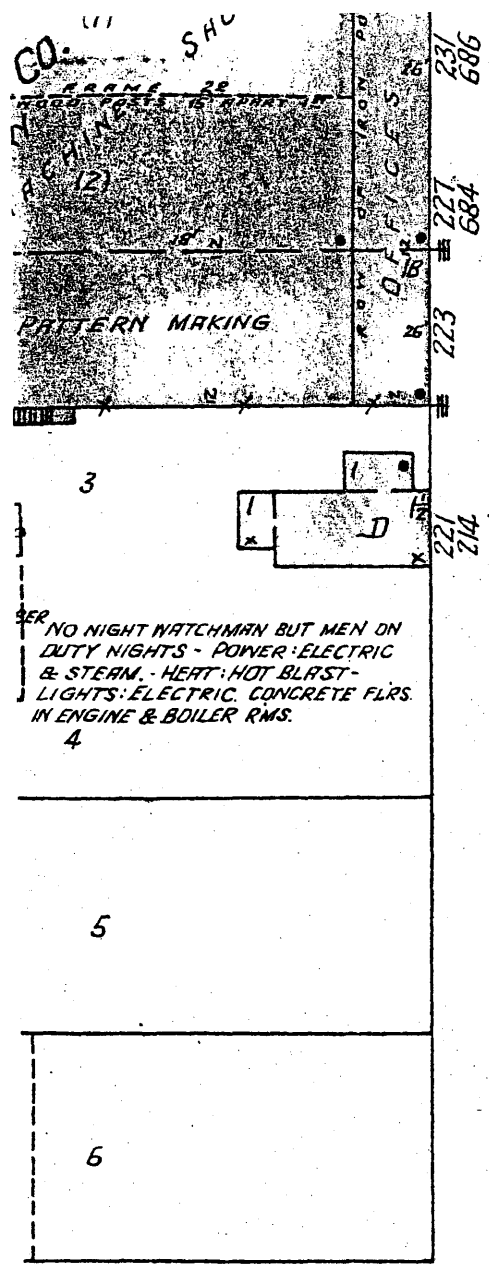
1985
1903

JAMES

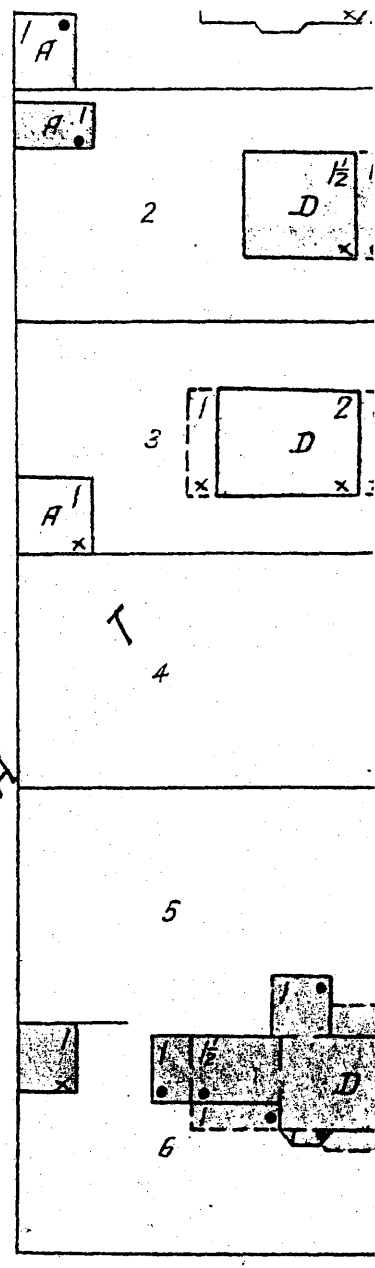
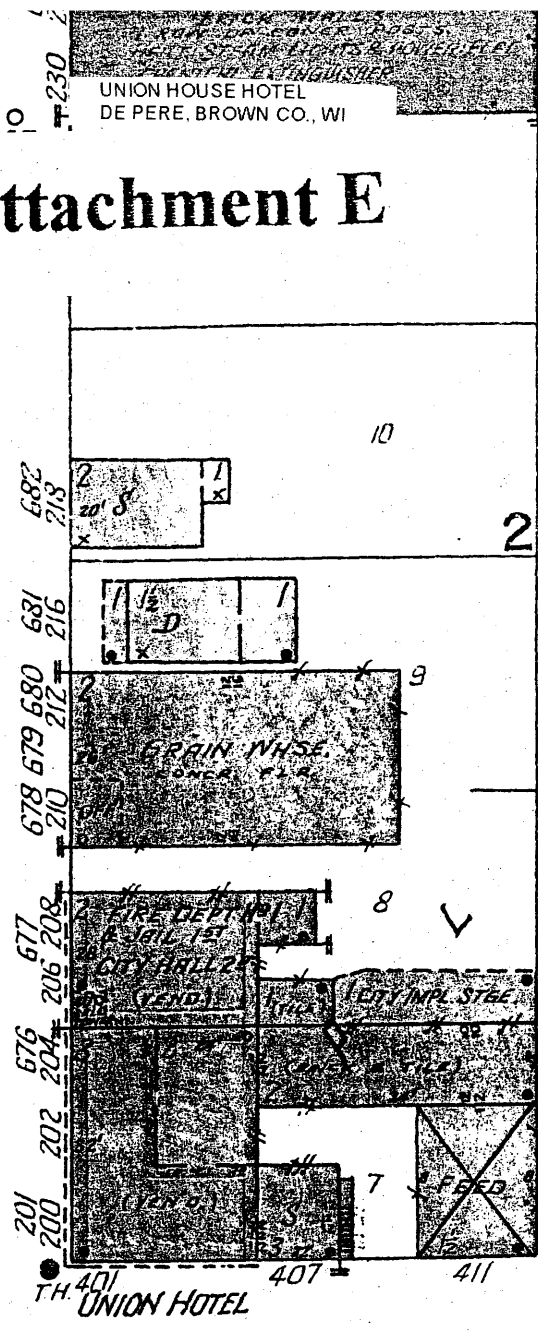


DWAY





N. BROADWAY



6" W. PIPE (WOODEN)

1922

JAMES

