

PH0676489

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED APR 3 1979
MAY 18 1979
DATE ENTERED

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Myers - Newhoff House

AND/OR COMMON

Century Building

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

121 North Parker Drive

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Janesville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
First

VICINITY OF

STATE

Wisconsin

CODE
55

COUNTY
Rock

CODE
105

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

M & S BanCorp attn. Alan Dunwiddie, Jr. ✓

STREET & NUMBER

12 West Milwaukee Street

CITY, TOWN

Janesville

VICINITY OF

STATE
Wisconsin 53545

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Rock County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

51 South Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Janesville, Wisconsin

STATE
53545

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Rock County Historic Survey

DATE

1975

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Rock County Historical Society

CITY, TOWN

P. O. Box 896, Janesville

STATE
Wisconsin 53545

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Myers-Century Building is a vernacular-Greek Revival gable-roofed house built of local vermilion brick over limestone foundations. Its dimensions are 22' X 52'. The original block was 22' X 34' with a three-bay front. It was also three windows wide on the sides. The house was extended 18' (two bays) to the rear, probably soon after construction, for in spite of a visible seam at the juncture, the brick is a close match and so are the stone windows and sills and the foundation. Broad limestone lintels are flush with the walls; the slightly projecting stone sills are much narrower. Because the house is built into a hill, the foundations are exposed to the rear as a full story.

There is a simple frieze board and flat (boxed) eaves, but no returned cornice nor evidence there ever was one. Presumably the entrance was originally recessed under a flat stone lintel, but it is now topped by a low, segmental arch of brick voussoirs, and the door is flush with the entrance. It was remodeled with narrow sidelights, also flush with the entrance, by H. P. ("Mose") Nutley in 1968 when the building was adapted to office space for the law firm which presently owns the building.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GÓVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) ethnic group
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES ca. 1848

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 121 North Parker Drive is significant architecturally as one of Janesville's oldest and best preserved brick buildings, constructed in simplified Greek Revival style. It is interesting historically for its connection with Peter Myers (1819-88), a French-born immigrant who became a prominent local entrepreneur and businessman,¹ and slightly later for its brief connection with Janesville's mid-19th century Jewish community, which evidently, according to directory research, was fairly sizable in proportion to the population of the city, though it later dwindled. The 19th century Jewish community in Janesville would merit further study.

Architecture

The 1840s were the pioneer years for the growing settlement of Janesville. The Greek Revival was the first major style to be reflected in the early brick houses of the community. Unfortunately, modern development has caused the loss of many of these early structures. It is particularly surprising to see the Myers-Newhoff house remain, so close to the heart of downtown. Of the few early brick Greek Revival houses left, the Myers-Newhoff is among the most intact. In addition, the Myers-Newhoff house is of an early type of brick construction once prevalent in Rock County and seen elsewhere in southern Wisconsin, but now relatively rare. The lovely orange color of the brick is native to the area.

History

Peter Myers, who arrived in Janesville in 1845, was praised in 1889 for "the erection of more and finer buildings than any other man in Rock County."² Yet the largest and most famous buildings which were associated with him have all been destroyed. These included the Myers Opera House (1870 & 1891 - 1977, NRHP); the Myers Hotel (1859 & 60-ca. 1960); the Myers-Armory Block (1881-ca. 1974); and the impressive Milwaukee Street residence he had purchased by 1871, and which was demolished ca. 1950. The two principal buildings left are 121 North Parker and 123 North Main, the Myers pork packing plant of 1851.³

Myers obtained Lot 4, on 121 North Parker Drive, in 1848, a year after he bought Lot 5 adjacent to the west, where he built his Main Street residence, facing his pork packing plant. The Main Street house was presumably destroyed when its land was sold to the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul & Pacific Railroad in 1901.

It is conjectured that he built the Parker Drive brick house for speculation. He sold it in 1858 to Aaron Newhoff and his wife Carrie. Newhoff was a sales clerk or clothier. As early as 1857 he was listed as living on this corner, presumably in this house. Perhaps he was renting. He worked for clothier David Alsbacher & Co. (also spelled

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Abstract of Title, 121 North Parker Drive, in possession of owners.
 1858 Map of Rock County
 Janesville and Rock County Directories
Portrait and Biographical Album of Rock County, 1889, pp. 595-96.
 Telephone interview with Myer Katz, La Crosse, January 1978.
 Files of the Rock County Historical Society

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY .026

QUADRANGLE NAME Janesville, West, Wis.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCE:

A 16 334 2710 4727 5910
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

the building only

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Nancy Belle Douglas, Preservation Coordinator

ORGANIZATION

Rock County Historical Society

DATE

January 19, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P. O. Box 896

TELEPHONE

(608) 756-4509

CITY OR TOWN

Janesville

STATE

Wisconsin 53545

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Rubena Murray

TITLE Director, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DATE 3/26/79

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

W. Smith

DATE 5/18/79

ATTEST: Nancy B. Franklin
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

DATE 5-17-79

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SIGNIFICANCE (continued)

Alsbercher).⁴ Alsbacher's store was on Main Street between Milwaukee and North First, now called Wall Street. By 1858 Newhoff may have bought out his employer, for Alsbacher was no longer listed in Janesville, and Newhoff was then listed on Main, but a block south, between Milwaukee and Court.⁵ With a new house and business Newhoff may have overextended himself; in 1860 the Newhoffs lost their residential lot "with the buildings and appurtenances" in a law suit tried in April at the District Court in Milwaukee, to Abraham Cohen and Morris Sely. By 1862 Newhoff was no longer listed as living in Janesville. The house was sold at auction and conveyed by deed to Joseph Seligman of New York City in 1861. Acting locally through William Seligman as his attorney, Joseph Seligman sold the house in 1864 to Edward and Michael McKey. All of the individuals involved in these transactions, from Newhoff to the Seligmans, are believed to have been of German-Jewish origin.⁶

The McKey family owned it until 1888, when it was sold to Hattie George Allen. It remained in the Allen-Gross family until it was acquired in 1968 by the law partnership of Murphy, Rude & Forrestal, who then renovated it for adaptive reuse as the Century Building law offices.

1. "Myers Opera House," Form 10-300, National Register of Historic Places, 1976.
2. Portrait and Biographical Album of Rock County, Wisconsin 1889, p. 596.
3. Douglas and Hartung, Rock County Historic Sites and Buildings, Janesville, 1976, pp. 206, 207, 209-10.
4. Rock County Directory, 1857-58, p. 164.
5. Rock County Directory, 1858-59, p. 45; Map of Rock County, 1858.
6. Telephone interview with Myer Katz, La Crosse, who has done research on 19th century Jews in Wisconsin, January 1978

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Katherine E. Hundt, Architectural Historian

State Historical Society of Wisconsin

October 1978

816 State Street

608/262-2970

Madison, Wisconsin 53706