

# Building Plaque Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Building Address 18-15 DOUGLAS AVENUE  
Building Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(for public/commercial structures)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Original Owner C. Kohn AND M. Schramm  
Date of Construction 1883  
Architect (if known) \_\_\_\_\_  
Builder (if known) Louis Schroeder

Check if attached:

**Statement Of Value**

Please review the criteria on page 5. The Elgin Heritage Commission uses these criteria to review your application and award a plaque. Attach an explanation of the historical **and** architectural value of the building. Attach photocopies of relevant materials such as copies of Sanborn maps, original property deeds and City Directory listings. Applications without these requirements will not be considered by the Elgin Heritage Commission.

**Building Alterations**

Describe any alterations to the **exterior** of the building and include dates. Attach description to the application.

**Photograph**

Include a recent photograph in which the building is clearly visible. Additional photographs depicting a close up and details of decorative features are helpful.

## Stipulations

If the building is not awarded a plaque, the application fee of \$15.00 will be refunded:

This application and submitted materials shall be retained by the City of Elgin as a part of the permanent record of the building.

The Elgin Heritage Commission has the authority to edit and publish the information submitted in the application. This does not prohibit others from using the information.

When awarded, the plaque will remain the property of the City and cannot be altered or removed from the building. It is the City's responsibility to replace the plaque if and when the situation warrants it.

In addition to agreeing to the above stipulations, the undersigned attests that the information provided is, to the best of his/her knowledge, accurate.

Owner's Signature

Federice Steffe

Date

MAY 30, 2001

Signed

Mary M. Hill

Date

May 29, 2001

## Historical/Architectural

James T. Gifford platted the town of Elgin on the east bank of the Fox River in the mid 1830's. It was called "James T. Gifford's Original Plat of Elgin." In block 16 of the plat, lots 3, 4, and 5 were bounded on the north by Milwaukee St., on the west by Mill St., on the south by an alley. The lots were diagonally cut through by the Galena and Chicago Union Rail Road. Milwaukee St. was renamed Highland Avenue and Mill St. was renamed Douglas Avenue after the Civil War. The railroad was renamed the Chicago and Northwestern Rail Road.

In 1843, Gifford sold lot 5 to Thomas Wrightman for \$140. The lots were just north of Market Square, ( now Fountain Square) the trading center of the town. Residences were built at the "edges" of the town, such as where now is a loft building at 160 E. Highland Avenue, Al's Cafe, and at what is now the YWCA. Mill Street, at the time, had several small wooden buildings along it used as businesses; e.g., a grocery and a "ball alley." William Barker had a jewelry business there in 1845. In 1852, Andrew Waldron , an attorney, and Garrett Rosenkranz, a carpenter, acquired that part of the three lots that laid west of the railroad. They sold part of them them to Adolph Sass in 1858. Lots 3, 4, and 5 had been divided into 6 pieces, each about 22 feet wide and running in depth to the railroad right of way. Mr. Sass bought the 2 pieces just north of the existing alley, what came to be known as 13-15 Douglas Ave. In 1860, he sold the piece at the alley to Charles Kohn, and the piece next to it to Conrad Schramm, 13 and 15 respectively.

In April, 1883, the Elgin Advocate reported that Theodore Kohn, Charles Kohn, and M. Schramm had petitioned the Elgin City Council to build a three story brick building on Douglas Avenue. It was to be 44 feet long (wide) and was to be used for stores, offices, and a hall. In May, the Advocate reported that during excavation for the building, a package of coins, dating between 1820 and 1830, was found. The first occupant of 13 Douglas Avenue was the Nordstrom Drug Store, quickly turned over to the Stone Brothers, who continued in the same business. At 15, the Schramm brothers, John and George, operated a confectionery and ice cream parlor. Today, in 2000, the address 11 Douglas Ave. is included in the building. On Sanborn maps starting in 1887 and onward, 11 Douglas Avenue was a building on the south side of the alley while 13-15 was the building on the north side of the alley. Perhaps when a business was opened in the basement of 13-15, 11 was incorporated into its address.

Louis Blum, a native of Germany, came to Elgin in 1888 and began working for the Schramm brothers. The Elgin City Directory from 1892 lists him as living at 15 Douglas Avenue. By 1900, Louis Blum had gone into business for himself at 15 Douglas Avenue. It remained an ice cream parlor until 1934, when Blum hired a cook and the business expanded into a restaurant. The third floor was used by the Modern Woodmen, Knights of Pythias, and the Royal Arcanum, among many others, for meetings and social activities; later by the American Legion. The second floor was used for Blum's candy making operation. Louis Blum acquired the building from the Schramm's in 1937. Blum's son Edmund continued in the business until 1964 when he decided to close the restaurant. The January 20, 1965 Elgin Daily Courier-News reported that while packing up, Edmund Blum found " a large number of long stem fruit glasses...neatly stacked with 1914 Republican campaign posters used as spacers..the glasses had not been used since the time of the campaign."

By 1900, 13 Douglas Avenue had become a drinking establishment operated by S.J. Noble. Later on, other businesses occupied the store.

In 1998, Frederick Steffen, well known Elgin attorney and true rarity in Kane

County--a Democrat, bought (11-)13-15 Douglas Avenue. He intended to restore the facade of the building, taking advantage of the city of Elgin's facade grant program. After seeing what others in downtown Elgin had done with their buildings, namely, turning some of them into loft residences, Mr. Steffen became inspired to develop 13-15 into a loft residence. The street level remains storefront/restaurant potential, the third floor is the residence for Mr. Steffen. The second floor was joined with the second floor of 17 Douglas Avenue, also owned by Steffen, creating approximately 5,000 square feet of office space.

In 2000, Fred and Judy Steffen's dream came true when they moved into their third floor loft. Fred's second dream is to create an Italian restaurant in the first floor area. Also in 2000, Mr. Steffen received a Mayor's Award for his faithful replication of the original brackets on the facade in his restoration of 13-15 Douglas Avenue.

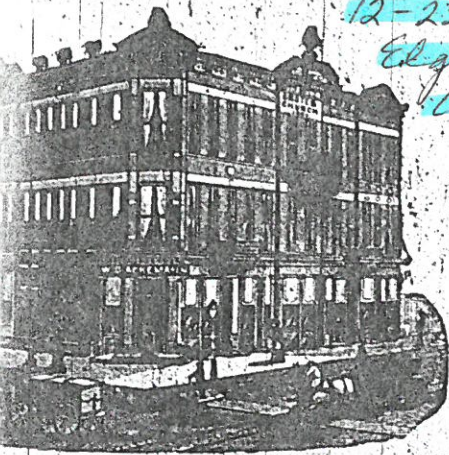
### Architectural

The front facade of the building is red brick, original on the upper two floors. A band of bricks projecting out from the wall surface outlines the second and third levels. The center of the building has a row of brick on either side of the center window in the second and third floor that rises vertically as a continuation of the street level center access door to these floors that has since been replaced, a device to pull one's eyes skyward and to "separate" the two sides of the structure. The upper two floors are divided horizontally by light colored concrete containing decorative detail. There are brackets--faithful replicas of the originals--at the top of the third floor with round decorative detail immediately below. Brackets are repeated at the street level though with less emphasis than above. Windows, most of them original, are 1 over 1 paned. At the street level, the two store fronts have been reclaimed with the centered access door to the upper levels replaced with a glass block window. The facade, from top to bottom, is symmetrical--evenly spaced windows over two store fronts separated by the former centered door and the center vertical device mentioned earlier. The massive brackets at the very top and lesser ones below enhance the the Italianate style of the structure.

mmh/may01

and finds him, five, and energetic. Such is Mr. W. J. of W. J. Hunter & wood, and brick, and yard is located east of the Fox Hunter has been a its thirty years.— in his home for that t, seemingly at an of life; it must be me young. At the here Mr. Hunter In 1850—the year th us—the old Ga—the first railroad ay was completed g in, and was duly edingly large event ple then clustering. This was before the du Lac road, now n of the great Chi— corporation, had ay. The old Ga—rough to Freeport ched the shores of mbitious and prome— leader, founda— turbulent waves are." Mr. Hunter way work with the 1851, the year suc— here. He was the in a train over the rt. This incident ed to at a Freeport quet, recently by, thus artist Mr. Platt takes great pride in his work, and in every department of it is bound to give complete satisfaction at the lowest living prices.

house. Sixteen years ago Mr. Platt first engaged in the business at Warren, Ill., and since then he has been continually at work at that which to him is a fascinating life occupation. He has been at it in Oneonta, N. Y., Burlington, Anamosa, and Lansing, Iowa, Darlington, Wis., and Marengo, Ill., and at all of these places the name which he left behind is one of which he has reason to feel proud. He removed to Elgin from Marengo in 1881, and fitted up very nice rooms at the location above mentioned. Since residing here he has brought out two valuable inventions, the Lady Elgin head rest and the Elgin National Dry Plate. The former is something that all who have sat for their pictures can easily appreciate. The Dry Plate advantages will readily be seen by the practical photographer. Both the inventions have not only added to Mr. Platt's fame, but they have aided in heralding abroad the name of our fair city. Besides attending to the wants of his numerous patrons, he finds time occasionally to contribute to the Philadelphia Photographer. His gallery is supplied with everything which the highest perfection in photography requires. A specialty is made of rustic scenery. With characteristic enterprise, Mr. Platt has always been early in the field to make likenesses of important events occurring in our midst, and invariably produced those which were exceedingly faithful. As a painstaking, conscientious artist Mr. Platt takes great pride in his work, and in every department of it is bound to give complete satisfaction at the lowest living prices.



JENNINGS HOUSE.

old of the early not in the habit of with such tales, ed between whiffs ve interesting re— fun, the hardships brooding, in those t accommodation did not equal the ousive days. The old employment to admit it, but it o make that rail— er in the long ago— sions, as the cor— lly limited to one y were fortunate e speed of the one catching an— ished his work bu d in June of that esent location in ck business. He n interruptedly at the oldest dealer He has closely id has prospered, owner. A good o-ahead business s contributed in

**A TEMPERANCE HOTEL.**  
A HOUSE WITHOUT A BAR TO BLOCK MADE THE PATH OF SOBRIETY.  
MESSRS. REIN & TEAGUE AND THEIR SPLENDID SUCCESS.  
As a general thing a stranger entering a city can gain a very good insight to the enterprise, push and energy of its people by the quality of its hotels. A one-horse caravansary casts a cold chill upon travelers, and gives the town a name for quietude that is not at all compatible with spirit and life. The tourist, who stops once in Elgin, even for a night, and lays his weary frame upon one of the easy couches that have helped make the Jennings house famous, knows that by our remarks above we had not this hotel in mind. The Jennings house, as our Elgin readers do not need to be informed, is centrally located in the new and handsome Grote & Church block, with a frontage on

gether as to form handsome suites. The corridors and all hallways are very broad—a fact whose great advantages in case of fire are too apparent to need enlargement. The house is supplied throughout with water and other conveniences of modern usage. A laundry is connected with it for the accommodation of guests and others. Toilet rooms for ladies and gentlemen are on both floors and bath rooms on the second floor, while most of the sleeping apartments contain grates and mantels, adding largely to the home comforts of the house. Double parlors on the first floor, a dining room that will seat seventy-five guests, electric calls in each room, and many other things might be mentioned had we space. The house gives employment to seventeen persons, and is a hotel of which Elgin may well feel proud.

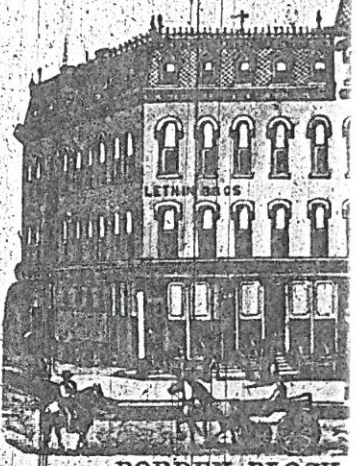
**STONE BROS.**

A NEW BUSINESS HOUSE THAT HAS ALREADY ACQUIRED FAVOR.

Probably the newest Elgin business house of note is the Douglas avenue drug store of Stone Bros. The store, which is at No. 13 Douglas avenue, was started in October by Gus Nordstrum & Co., November, 10, the "Co." the same being the Stone Bros., succeeded to the business and are now successfully conducting it. The firm consists of Dr. C. A. Stone and Mr. D. B. Stone. Dr. Stone has been an esteemed citizen and practicing physician in Elgin for six years past. Mr. D. B. Stone, while as yet a new comer, is rapidly acquiring acquaintanceship and friends. Prior to removing here he was engaged in business in Nebraska for several years. Both of these gentlemen came originally from our neighboring city of Belvidere, Boone county. They have a bright and handsome drug store, and under the electric light the handsome light furniture and the new walls are radiant, the whole making a pleasing picture. The pharmacy is, without doubt, one of the heaviest that has ever graced our city. In the prescription department the proprietors are determined to give their customers the very best of service and the purest and freshest of drugs. In a general way they have the stock incidental to a drug house, toilet articles, perfumeries, etc., and invite the especial attention of the public to this department. The Messrs. Stone are strong young business men of the kind it pleases us to have locate in Elgin. The store is in the business block erected the past summer by Mr. Louis Schroeder. As new as the habitation is, the stock is newer still. The importance of a fresh drug stock can not be overestimated. From all appearances, we feel safe in saying that the engineers of the City Drug Store are comprised of stuff that will enable them to keep abreast of the procession.



ing little city, in such a place the real estate man naturally looms up as a central figure. The subject of this sketch is thus prominent in the history of Elgin. That is, he is especially prominent as such, for he has been prominent in the history of our city in various commendable ways in all the years he has resided in our midst. Pre-eminently a city of brisk business men, in the real estate business W. H. Wilcox is what we would classically term a hustler among the hustlers. An observer of the drift of things and trading somewhat in land principally for others, Mr. Wilcox, about three years ago, possessed of that "sand" producer known as the courage of his convictions, embarked in the real estate business on a large scale. He has ever since continued, and since the period mentioned has doubtless been one of the largest individual dealers in the city. He has been and is thoroughly impregnated with the future of Elgin, and has acted with an according nerve. Mr. Wilcox has doubtless heard, as has the writer, some of his ventures characterized by timid mossbacks and croakers as reckless. But these very ventures terminated grandly, nevertheless. They were born of recklessness, if you so like to call it, but a recklessness engendered by an active, progressive spirit; a recklessness springing from the loins of faith and courage; a recklessness that develops wastes and builds cities; a recklessness of a quality that is needed to crowd communities on to the success that will never come to the passive loiterer. We remember early in the



BORDEN BLOCK.

present season when he purchased twenty-seven acres of west side property. The croakers were about in the land then, as for all time. Captain Wilcox was kept busy listening to queries as to when he would move onto his farm and how soon he would commence the erection of his country residence. But he was not troubled in spirit. Not to speak of, in fact, he was much to the contrary, and he would pilot the putters of such interrogatories over to see the land. Once there, he would prove to them by their own eyes that from any spot of his purchase they could almost look down upon the whole of our splendid city. He would convince them of the other advantages of the place, and then, taking them back to town, induce them into his office, and demonstrate to them on a map of Elgin that his land was far out only because it was not yet built upon. That it was, in fact, nearer to Fountain square than much of the city already inhabited. The result was the property was offered for sale and sold, and is to-day a growing portion of the city. And so with other deals Mr. Wilcox has made. He purchased the old fair

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FOR FLOUR

And all Kinds of FEED, call at  
**EXCELSIOR MILLS,**  
56 RIVER STREET.

SC

212

SC

- 1889-90
- Schneider Kate, wid James, r 74 Ryerson ave.  
 Schneidevint Theodore, lab, r 268 n Gifford.  
 Schoeni Arnold, wks w fac, bds 107 May.  
 Schoeni Ferdinand, wks w fac, r 107 May.  
 Schoeni Flora Miss, wks w fac, bds 107 May.  
 Schoeni Oscar, wks w fac, bds 107 May.  
 Schoonhoven Henry, farmer, r 255 Douglas ave.  
 Schoonhoven James S, capitalist, r 57 Kimball.  
 Schoonhoven —, wid James, r 333 Douglas ave.  
 Schoonhoven Lea, wid Nicholas, r 168 Brook.  
 Schoonhoven Minnie Mrs, r 263 Prospect.  
 Schoonhoven Nathaniel, constable, r 236 Spring.  
 Schoonhoven William H, teamster, r 70 Dundee ave.  
 Schoonmaker Kate, wks Cook's Pub Co, bds 147 Prairie.  
 Schork Annie Miss, wks w fac, bds 55 Stella.  
 Schork Henry, wks w fac, r 146 Grace.  
 Schork Henry J, machinist, bds 146 Grace.  
 Schorzen Laattie Miss, domestic, 232 Walnut ave.  
 Schrader Emma, wks w fac, bds 129 Brook.  
**SCHRADER LOUIS**, saloon 19 and 21 Douglas ave, also meat  
 market, 51 Chicago, r 129 Brook.  
 Schrader Lulu, wks w fac, bds 129 Brook.  
**SCHRAMM BROS**, (John W and Geo C), fruit, confectionery  
 and ice cream parlor, 15 Douglas.  
**SCHRAMM GEO**, (Schramm & Co) rms 152 Grove ave.  
**SCHRAMM JOHN**, (Schramm & Co) rms 152 Grove ave.  
 Schramm Margaret A Mrs, r 152 Grove ave.  
 Schramm Minnie Miss, bds 152 Grove ave.  
 Schranck Chas H, wks w fac, bds 116 Raymond,  
 Schranck Chris P, wks w fac, bds 116 Raymond.  
 Schranck Lillie Miss, wks w fac, bds 353 Railway ave.  
 Schranck Mary Miss, r 116 Raymond.  
 Schranck Sophia Miss, wks w fac, bds 116 Raymond.  
 Schroeder Chas, lab, r 202 Bridge.  
 Schroeder John, carpenter, r 407 Franklin.  
 Schroeder Lou, wks w fac, bds 133 Grove ave.  
 Schroeder Louis, wks w fac, rms 188 Grove ave.

**ELGIN LAUNDRY**

B. STROMMINGER, Proprietress.

PRICES CHEAP.  
LIGHT MENDING FREE.  
8 CHICAGO STREET.

A. R

SC

- Schroeder L  
 Schroeder R  
**SCHROEDER**  
 River at  
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 Schuknecht J  
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 Schuid Fred.  
 Schuld Henry  
 Schuller Max.  
**SCHULTZ**  
 Fountain  
 Schult  
 Schults Mabel  
 Schultz Christ  
 Schultz Emma  
 Schultz Fred,  
 Schultz Fredri  
 Schultz H, rm  
 Schultz Herm  
 Schultz John,  
**SCHULTZ**  
 Milwaukee  
 Schultz Rea  
 Schultz Ida M  
 Schultz Wm, k  
 Schulz Adolph  
 St John.  
 Schulz A F, w  
 Schuiz Carl, b  
 Schumacher E  
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**ELGI**

Steam La

HOUSES AND LOTS in all parts of the City; also GOOD FARMS in the vicinity of Elgin and elsewhere for sale.  
MONEY TO LOAN on approved Real Estate Security. Also money received in small or large sums and loaned for persons having money to invest at the current rate of interest on good real estate security.  
WM. GROTE, Home Bank Building, Elgin, Ill.

300

~~Elgin~~ Elgin City Directory.

1894-95

- SCHRADER LOUIS, saloon, also agt U S brewing co 19 and 21 Douglas ave, also alderman Second ward, h 275 Brook (See adv page C)
- Schrader Lulu H Miss, bds 275 Brook
- Schram Sidney, attendant I N H I
- SCHRAMM BROS (George C and John W) fruits, confectionery and ice cream mfrs 15 Douglas ave
- SCHRAMM GEORGE C (Schramm Bros) h 174 Grove ave
- SCHRAMM JOHN W (Schramm Bros) also alderman Fourth ward, h 468 Laurel
- Schramm Margaret A Mrs, h 174 Grove ave
- Schranck Charles H, emp w f, h 425 Raymond
- Schranck Chris P, emp w f, bds 147 Grove ave
- Schranck Lena Miss, emp w f, bds 147 Grove ave
- SCHREIDER, see also SCHADER, also SCHRADER
- Schreider Charles, laborer, h 402 River
- Schrein Adolph, emp National house
- Schrepfer Anna Mrs, wid Jacob, h 371 Summit
- Schrepfer Jacob, emp W C co, h 371 Summit
- Schrepfer Rose D Miss, emp W C co, bds 371 Summit
- Schriner John P, emp at Martins's, bds 521 Douglas ave
- Schroeder Albert L, bds 200 Grove ave
- Schroeder Carl, bds 946 Bellevue ave
- Schroeder Dorothy Mrs, bds 435 Prairie
- Schroeder Ida Mrs, clk Swan's, h 946 Bellevue ave
- Schroeder John M, carpenter, h 489 Franklin
- SCHROEDER LOUIS F, harness, collars and saddlery 24 River, h 946 Bellevue ave
- SCHROEDER THEODORE, fire marshal h 200 Grove ave
- SCHUA, see also SHEA
- Schua Ellen Miss, bds 426 Summit
- Schua Jerry, bds 426 Summit
- Schuchert Henry, emp A H Ruegnitz, h Sadler add beyond limits.
- Schucknecht Emma M Miss, emp w f, bds 26 S Union

JAN  
HO

ALWAYS Fresh and Pure, the finest  
Creamery Butter produced . . .  
Manufactured by JOHN NEWMAN CO.

# "Springbrook"

314

ELGIN CITY DIRECTORY

1900

Schoeni Ferdinand (Mary) canvasser, h 639 Raymond  
Schoeni Mary M Miss, emp W F, h 639 Raymond  
Schoeni Oscar A (Maude) emp W F, h 514 Sherman ave  
Scholler, see also Schaller, also Scheller  
Scholler Max, barber, bds 58 Kimball  
Scholtes, see also Schiltz, also Schults  
Scholtes John (Lizzie) barber 154 Milwaukee, h 108 Kimball  
Schooley Elliott C (Eva) wagonmaker Plummer, h 269 Milwaukee  
Schoonhoven Bessie Miss, clk Sauer, h 415 Douglas ave  
Schoonhoven Clarence W (Ida M) teamster, h 357 Center  
Schoonhoven Ella Miss, h 357 Center  
Schoonhoven Ella Miss, emp W F, h 413 Douglas ave  
Schoonhoven Etta Miss, emp W F, h 413 Douglas ave  
Schoonhoven Eva M Mrs, emp W F, h 58 S Union  
Schoonhoven Henry (Martha) retired farmer, h 413 Douglas ave  
Schoonhoven J S, retired, h 115 Kimball  
Schoonhoven Mabel Miss, h 58 S Union  
Schoonhoven Mary E, wid N W, h 370 N Spring  
Schorch L, emp I W C co  
Schork, see also Shork  
Schork Barbary Miss, emp W F, h 666 Grace  
Schork Henry G, emp Moseley, h 666 Grace  
Schork Tillie Miss, emp W F, h 666 Grace  
Schow Charles, h 422 Summit  
Schow Thomas (Mary) emp I W C co, h 422 Summit  
Schrader, see also Schader, also Schroeder  
Schrader Albert, h 275 Brook  
Schrader Charles (Sophia) emp C & N W, h 60 Cherry  
SCHRADER LOUIS (Louisa) saloon, alderman 2d ward, 19-21 Douglas ave, h  
275 Brook  
Schrader William A, emp E B T co, h 354 Dillings  
Schramm Amelia Miss, h 174 Grove ave  
Schramm George C (Frieda) ice cream, fruits and confectionery 15 Douglas ave  
h 64 N State  
Schramm John W, nigr Chicago telephone co, rms 3-6 Hubbard blk, h 468  
Laurel, tel 99  
Schramm Margaret, wid Conrad, h 174 Grove ave

STORE A  
OFFICE F  
RINEHIMEF  
East End Kimball Street

Schranck Charles H (Ellie)  
Schranck Lena Miss, clk I  
Schranck Mary Miss, dress  
Schrein Adolph, emp Natl  
Schreiner George, clk Swa  
Schreiner John (Annie) en  
Schreiner John P, clk Swa  
Schrepfer J, emp I W C co  
Schrepfer Jacob, emp C F  
Schrepfer Rose Miss, emp  
Schroeder, see also Schade  
Schroeder Charles, h 946 B  
Schroeder Edwin, student I  
Schroeder Ernest, emp E S  
Schroeder Ida Miss, emp W  
Schroeder Lottie Miss, mill  
Schroeder Louis F (Ida) p  
Schroeder Theodore (Charl  
Schubert Albert (Emma) h  
Schuett Fred, clk Ackeman  
Schuett Fred, emp E S P co,  
Schuett Louis, emp E S P co  
Schuette Edward, bds 555 A  
Schuhknecht Fred (Mary) fr  
Schuhknecht Lena Miss, h 1  
Schuhknecht William, clk S  
Schuhknecht Minnie, wid Cha  
Schuld, see also Shold, also S  
Schuld Fred (Minnie) grocer  
Schuld Henry (Lizzie) emp  
Schuler Mary Miss, houseke  
Schult Herman, emp E B T c  
Schults, see also Schiltz, als  
SCHULTS CHARLES J (Em  
Schults Edna D Miss, stenog  
Schults Elsie I Miss, h 730 D

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Springbrook  
Creamery Butter

RECORDS

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h 416 South

16 South  
Page

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Fulton

**WM. BELL,** Concrete Sidewalks and Felt Gravel Roofs.  
.....Built and Repaired at Reasonable Prices  
RESIDENCE, 509 HILL AVE. TEL. 713. OFFICE, ROOM 2 McBRIDE BLK.  
OPEN EVENINGS.

ELGIN CITY DIRECTORY

259

1900

- Nieweem John (Barbara) emp W F, h 320 Orchard
- Niles John, emp E S P co, h 116 Perry
- Niles John (Minnie) janitor Home bank blk, h 116 Perry
- Nillis Nicholas J (Susan) asst supt Metropolitan life ins co rm 16 Cook blk, h 160 Franklin
- Nils John, h 461 N Crystal ave
- Nilson, see also Nelson, also Willson, also Wilson
- Nilson Inga Miss, emp I N H I
- Nimmo Charles (Sarah) shoemaker 315 North Spring, h do
- Nimmo John (Nellie E) shoemaker, h 615 Douglas ave
- Nimmo Kate, wid William C, h 315 N Spring
- NISH BROS (William H and Leon D) hardware 13 N State, tel 13
- Nish David, driver hose co no 1, bds 645 Forest ave
- Nish Electa, wid John, h 216 Hamilton ave
- NISH LEON D (Mabel) (Nish Bros) h 216 Hamilton ave
- NISH WILLIAM H (Nish Bros) rms 119 Center
- Niss Albert C, salesman Stumme & Pierce, h 241 Grove ave
- Niss Anna M Miss, emp W F, rms 53 Center
- Niss Charles A, salesman Stumme & Pierce, h 241 Grove ave
- Niss Emma Miss, emp C F
- Niss Herman C (Susie) salesman Stumme & Pierce, h 150 Grove ave
- Niss Ida C Miss, emp W F, h 271 River
- Niss John (Hannah) retired, h 241 Grove ave
- Niss John (Sophie) laborer, h 271 River
- Niss Susie P Miss, emp W F, bds 150 Grove ave
- Niss Walter, student, h 150 Grove ave
- Nitchman Grace Miss, emp shoe factory, h 827 Cedar ave
- Nitchmun Herman (Minnie) janitor library, h 827 Cedar ave
- Nix Henry (Liatle) h Villa e limits
- Noble Joseph (Etta) emp E B T co, h 445 Lawrence ave
- NOBLE S J (Louise) saloon 13 Douglas ave, h 21 Villa**
- Noble William, emp E B T co, h 445 Lawrence ave
- Nofs Louis A (Julia) emp E C R R co, h 319 Orange
- Nofs William A (Anna) motorman, h 7 Commonwealth ave
- Noiret Bertha Miss, emp W F, bds National house

ins)

ter ave

9  
38  
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9  
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8



ELGIN CITY DIRECTORY.

75

1903

Bloomfield Guy (Anna) emp shoe factory, h 566 N Liberty  
 Bloomfield Harriet A (wid N J) h 313 Dundee ave  
 Blossom Edward O (Delia H) music teacher, h 325 Walnut ave  
 Blossom James E (Tillie) emp Am ex co, h 416 South  
 Bluestein Maxwell (Charlotte) junk and fruit, h 222 N Spring  
 Bluff City Baking Powder Co, Edson A Perkins, prop, 20 Grove ave  
 Bluff City Cemetery, main entrance Bluff City blvd and Wright ave  
 Blum Charles (Augusta) wholesale confectionery 15 Douglas ave, h 678 Slade ave

**BLUM LOUIS (Anna E) confectionery and ice cream parlors 15 Douglas ave, both teils 175, h 194 Grove ave, N W tel 407**

Blume William F, pub Elgin Uhr 14 Douglas ave, h do, N W tel  
 BOARD OF EDUCATION, Frank B Perkins, sec, office hours 9 to 12 a m, room 13 City hall, C tel 210

BOARD OF WATER COMMISSIONERS, rm 7 City hall, C tel 118

Bock Martha Miss, emp w f, bds 174 Villa  
 Bode Adam (Christena) lab, h 420 River  
 Bode Adam R (Isabelle) emp w f, h 410 Washington  
 Bode Bertha Miss, h 420 River  
 Bode Charles A (Jessie) clk Stumme, h 541 Grace, N W tel 272  
 Bode Elizabeth Miss, h 541 Grace

Bode George (Mary) canmaker canning factory, h 362 Seneca

Bode Jacob (Elna) emp B C M co, h 34 Lynch

Bode John A (Edith M) emp w f, h 269 Raymond

Bode Lena Miss, emp Cook pub co, h 362 Seneca

Bode Mabel Miss, emp w f, h 420 River

Bode Maggie (wid Jacob) h 384 Summit

Bode William, emp I W C co, h 420 River

Bodenschatz Charles, soapmaker Butler, h 319 Brook  
 Bodenschatz Emily Miss, teacher, h 319 Brook

BODENSCHATZ FRANK E (J W Bodenschatz & Son) h 805 Prospect  
 Bodenschatz Frederick H, emp w f, h 805 Prospect

BODENSCHATZ J W & SON (John W and Frank E) saloon 123 Douglas ave, N W tel 97  
 Bodenschatz J William (Agnes) emp w f, h 350 Lincoln ave

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# Building Plaque Application

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

If applicant's name is different from above:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Original Owner CHARLES KOHN AND CONRAD SCHRAMM

Date of Construction 1883

Architect (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Builder (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

Check if attached:

**Statement Of Value**

Please review the criteria on page 5. The Elgin Heritage Commission uses these criteria to review your application and award a plaque. Attach an explanation of the historical and architectural value of the building. Attach photocopies of relevant materials such as copies of Sanborn maps, original property deeds and City Directory listings. Applications without these requirements will not be considered by the Elgin Heritage Commission.

**Building Alterations**

Describe any alterations to the exterior of the building and include dates. Attach description to the application.

**Photograph**

Include a recent photograph in which the building is clearly visible. Additional photographs depicting a close up and details of decorative features are helpful.

## Stipulations

If the building is not awarded a plaque, the application fee of \$15.00 will be refunded.

This application and submitted materials shall be retained by the City of Elgin as a part of the permanent record of the building.

The Elgin Heritage Commission has the authority to edit and publish the information submitted in the application. This does not prohibit others from using the information.

When awarded, the plaque will remain the property of the City and cannot be altered or removed from the building. It is the City's responsibility to replace the plaque if and when the situation warrants it.

In addition to agreeing to the above stipulations, the undersigned attests that the information provided is, to the best of his/her knowledge, accurate.

Owner's Signature *Fredrick Steffe* Date 8-24-2000  
Signed *Judith Steffe* Date \_\_\_\_\_

## STATEMENT OF VALUE

James T. Gifford's Original Plat of Elgin, which was drawn up in the 1830s, documented most of what was found along our east bank of the Fox River at that time. On that plat were 3 lots bisected on a diagonal by the Galena & Chicago Union Rail Road. Bounded by Milwaukee Street, Mill Street and an alley, even old time Elginites may not recognize this location. Here's a clue: After the Civil War, Milwaukee Street was renamed Highland Avenue, and Mill Street was renamed Douglas Avenue for Stephen A. Douglas. And you don't have to be too much of an old timer to recall the railroad tracks that cut through Elgin's downtown. They were removed and paved over more recently, in the 1990s.

The plot of land we're referring to is on the east side of Douglas Avenue, just south of Highland. Across the street was Market Square (now called Fountain Square). This was the trading center of the town, ripe with prime lots and eager buyers and speculators. Douglas Avenue was dotted with several small wooden buildings which were used as businesses. There was a grocery, a "ball alley" and a jewelry shop. Surrounding the town center, at what was then the edge of the town, were residences. There were no surrounding neighborhoods then -- settlers lived on Highland Avenue, where Ackemann's Department store used to be, or where Al's Cafe is located, and just at the top of Chicago Street, where the YWCA now stands. These locations have long been considered part of Elgin's commercial downtown, and not until the recent trend towards downtown living has that true residential flavor returned to this area.

In 1852, Andrew Waldron, an attorney, and Garrett Rosenkrantz, a carpenter, acquired 3 Mill Street lots and divided them. Two parcels north of the alley, now 13-15 Douglas, were sold separately, to Charles Kohn and Conrad Schramm, who petitioned together for a 3-story building to be erected there. The plan was for the building to be 44 feet wide for use as stores, offices, and a meeting hall.

One mystery associated with this site is that in May of 1883, during the excavation for the building, a package of coins dating from between 1820 and 1830 was found. There is no report on what became of those coins, nor theories as to how they got there.

You can see in the drawing how the building was clearly divided into two separate storefronts at street level, which would have had separate addresses. The first occupant of 13 Douglas was the Nordstrom Drug Store. The Schramm brothers, nextdoor at 15 Douglas, operated a confectionery and ice cream parlor, which had a savory history.

Louis Blum arrived in Elgin in 1888 and went to work at Schramm's Ice Cream Parlor. When he purchased the business outright in 1896, his sole flavor of ice cream was vanilla. By 1926, he had a dozen flavors on his menu.

In the early days before refrigeration, the ice cream was made in a hand-turned freezer. Production would discontinue in late October until spring, except during the Christmas season. Blum ran a restaurant during the winter months, relying heavily on sales of confections. His candy kitchens were located on the second floor, above the ice cream parlor, and offered more than one hundred varieties of sweets.

Blum's even produced hand-packed ice cream molds. Party requests included unusual shapes such as flowers, baseball bats, witches, ears of corn, and bowling pins. Favorite desserts included tortoni bisque, pineapple glaze, amber pudding, and caramel pecan, with delivery offered to any part of the city.

A community institution for two generations, Blum's enjoyed customers who were usually greeted by name.

Downtown patrons could stop in for a Borden's egg malted milk, an orange julep, a pineapple melba, or a tutti frutti sandwich. Yikes -- hold the mayo!

Having owned the business for over 40 years, Louis Blum purchased the building from the Schramms in 1937, and his son Edmond kept the ice cream and restaurant business going until 1964, when he decided to close down for good. While packing up in January of 1965, the Elgin Daily Courier-News reported that Blum found "a large number of long-stem fruit glasses, neatly stacked with 1914 Republican campaign posters used as spacers -- the glasses had not been touched since the time of the campaign."

In the meantime, the meeting hall on the 3rd floor of the building attracted groups such as the Modern Woodmen, Knights of Pythias, and the Royal Arcanum. There was also a ballroom which was used for social activities and later, by the American Legion.

Fred Steffen, a well-known Elgin attorney and true rarity in Kane County -- a Democrat -- bought into the building nextdoor in 1981, to house his law offices. Having seen the potential of 15 Douglas for so many years, he bought that building in 1998, planning to restore its facade and facilitate its use as a vital downtown business once again. It wasn't until after he owned it that the idea of living there came to him. Through other residential development in the area, Fred and his wife Judy were inspired to convert one level of the building into their retirement haven. They have transformed the 3rd floor to a bright expanse of modern living space, just the right size and style for them. This year's Restoration in Progress, it's reminiscent of the magic worked by Demi Moore and Patrick Swayze when they rehabbed a dusty, dismal New York loft space in the 1990 movie, Ghost

The former ballroom space features an open floorplan, with ceiling ornament and moldings recreated from original clues left behind. The room is visually divided into many spaces -- a formal dining domain, a fireplace gathering spot, an entertainment area, and a cozy library corner with floor to ceiling bookshelves. A polished oak staircase leads to the rooftop garden, and a monstrous sculpted cage hangs from the ceiling to house Ouagadougou, a large African Grey Parrot.

Many fixtures and furnishings are antique, or created from antiques to keep the flavor of this 19th century space intact. Even the floor has been specially restored to hold its truly artistic patina. Doors throughout the space were collected from an architectural salvage, and an original interior staircase meanders down the back of the loft to the guest room -- the only part of this residence on the second level of the building.

The Steffens are an old Elgin family. Fred Steffen was born in the "bumble bee house" as GPA affectionately calls it, at the corner of Park and Gifford Streets. He and his wife, Judy, both attended Elgin High School, where Fred was Homecoming King. Judy grew up in Elgin's northeast neighborhood, the daughter of Dr. Kenneth P. and Doris Johnston, and taught for 18 years in U-46. Currently, there are three generations of Fred & Judy's families living in the Spring-Douglas corridor. Fred and Judy occupy the downtown loft, Judy's mother still resides in her historic home at Spring and Cherry streets, and son John Steffen and his wife, Kerry Kelly, live at 838 Douglas. Another Steffen, daughter Julie, works at the University of Chicago, and lives in Flossmoor, and the youngest son, Bob, lives in Kane County and is currently running for State's Attorney.

Although he's taken much ribbing about the non-historic facade of his office building nextdoor, Fred has been able to breathe life back into 15 Douglas with his sensitive restoration of the inside and outside of this historic building. And he's not the only one who will enjoy it. On the second level, where Louis Blum's candy kitchens once steamed with enticing aromas, Fred plans to lease office space. With luck, a new Italian restaurant with an even more tantalizing bouquet will lure passersby at the street level.

Note: Special credit goes to Jean Bednar, Bill Briska, Mary Hill and Mike Alft for the research they provided on the history of this property.

#### BUILDING ALTERATIONS

A cast-iron fire escape wrapping around the south and east sides was added sometime ago, and certain windows were altered to allow doorways out onto the fire escape. Also of unknown age is the iron stair case from the second floor rear of the building to ground floor. Many outbuildings that were located where the rear parking lot is now were removed at an unknown time. (see attached sanborn footprint of buildings on lot) The Front of the Building was significantly altered in 1971 by the then landlord, Ben Corn. (see attached photo of these 'renovations' ongoing) He tore off the metal cornice at the top of the front elevation and bricked the front facade, reducing the number of windows from 14 to 4 and significantly reducing their size. The south side and east rear windows were also bricked up. It was at this time that the front stairs was pushed back into the heart of the building to make room for an elevator. These changes have been removed and the front is being restored to a close approximation of the original design, starting in 1999. 4 new windows were added on the south elevation, 2 on each of the the 2nd and 3rd floors, matching in size the originals. 3 windows were added to the north elevation, 3rd floor. Access from the 3rd floor onto the roof of the building at 17 Douglas, which now has a 1500 sq. ft. deck, was added in 2000, along with the aluminum fencing on top of 17 Douglas Avenue.

#### PHOTOGRAPH

A recent photograph of the front facade of the building has been e-mailed to Sarosh for inclusion with this application.

This Indenture, made this Thirtieth day of April in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Sixty

Between Adolph Sass and Mary his wife of Kane County State of Illinois party of the first part and Charles Weber of the second part

Witnesseth, That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of Fourteen Hundred Dollars in hand paid by the said party of the second part, (the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and the said party of the second part fully released and discharged therefrom,) have granted, bargained, sold, remise, released, aliened, and confirmed; and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, remise, release, alien, and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, all the following described lot piece or parcel of Land, situated in the County of Kane, and State of Illinois, and known and described as follows, to wit:

The South twenty one (21) feet of Lot five (5) four (4) and that part of Lot three (3) lying West of the Rail Road right of way and bounded as follows Beginning at the South West corner of said Lot No five thence East on the South line of said Lot to the said Rail Road right of way, thence North Westerly along the West line of said Rail Road right of way to a point twenty one (21) feet north of said South line, thence West parallel with said South line to the West line of said Lot five (5), thence South on said West line of said Lot five (5) twenty one (21) feet to the place of beginning. Said Lot being in Block (6) sixteen original Town of Elgin Kane County Illinois. Reserving ten feet in width across the East end of said Lot for public Alley

Together with all and singular the hereditaments and appurtenances therunto belonging, or in anywise appertaining; and the reversion and reversions, remainder and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof, and all the estate, right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever of the said party of the first part, either in law or equity, of, in and to the above bargained premises, with the hereditaments and appurtenances; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said premises, above bargained and described, with the appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part. His heirs and assigns FOREVER. And the said party of the first part for themselves and their heirs, executors and administrators, do covenant, grant, bargain and agree, to and with the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, that at the time of the enacting and delivery of these presents they are well seized of the premises above conveyed as of a good, sure, perfect, absolute and indefeasible estate of inheritance in law, in fee simple, and have good right, full power and lawful authority to grant, bargain, sell and convey the same in manner and form aforesaid; and that the same are free and clear from all former and other grants, bargains, sales, liens, taxes, assessments and incumbrances of what kind or nature soever; and the above bargained premises, in the quiet and peaceable possession of the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns, against all and every person or persons lawfully claiming or to claim the whole or any part thereof, the said party of the first part, shall and will WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND.

In Testimony Whereof, The said party of the first part hereunto set their hand and seal the day and year first above written. SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED IN PRESENCE OF A. J. Waldron A. S. Sass Mary S. Sass

STATE OF ILLINOIS, } ss. 1 A. J. Waldron a Notary Public COUNTY OF KANE.

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616

CHAS. BONNE, Stationer, 51 and 53 La Salle Street, Chicago.

This Indenture, made this thirtieth day of April in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighty.

Between Adolph Nass, and Mary his wife of Kane County, Illinois party of the first part, and Conrad Schram of the second part:

Witnesseth, That the said party of the first part, for and in consideration of fourteen hundred dollars in hand paid by the said party of the second part, (the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and the said party of the second part forever released and discharged therefrom,) have granted, bargained, sold, remised, released, aliened, and confirmed; and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, remise, release, alien, and confirm, unto the said party of the second part, and to his heirs and assigns forever, all the following described lot piece or parcel of Land, situated in the County of Kane, and State of Illinois, and known and described as follows, to wit:

A part of lots five (5) four (4) and three (3) in Block No. Sixteen (16) of the original town of Colquhoun, as said lots and recorded in the Recorder's office of Kane County, aforesaid, bounded as follows: Beginning twenty one feet (21) north of the South west corner of said lot five (5), and in its west line thence East, parallel with the South line of said lots, to the west line of the Rail Road right of way. Thence northwesterly along the west line of said Rail Road right of way to a point four feet three and a half feet (47 1/2) north from the South line of said lots. Thence west, parallel with said South line, to the west line of said lot five (5). Thence South, on the west line of said lot five (5) twenty two and a half (22 1/2) feet to the place of beginning.

Together with all and singular the tenements and appurtenances therunto belonging, or in anywise appertaining; and the reversion and reversions, remainder and remainders, rents, issues and profits thereof, and all the estate, right, title, interest, claim or demand whatsoever of the said party of the first part, either in law or equity, of, in and to the above bargained premises, with the hereditaments and appurtenances; TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said premises, above bargained and described, with the appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns FOREVER. And the said party of the first part for themselves & their heirs, executors and administrators, do covenant, grant, bargain and agree, to and with the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, that at the time of the executing and delivery of these presents they etc. well and lawfully owned of the premises above conveyed as of a good, sure, perfect, absolute and indefeasible estate of inheritance in law, in fee simple, and have good right, full power and lawful authority to grant, bargain, sell and convey the same in manner and form aforesaid; and that the same are free and clear from all former and other grants, bargains, sales, leases, taxes, assessments and incumbrances of what kind or nature soever; and the above bargained premises, in the quiet and peaceable possession of the said party of the second part his heirs and assigns, against all and every person or persons lawfully claiming or to claim the whole or any part thereof, the said party of the first part, shall and will WARRANT AND FOREVER DEFEND.

In Testimony Whereof, The said party of the first part hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

SIGNED, SEALED AND DELIVERED IN PRESENCE OF

A. J. Waldron

A. Sep  
Martin Post



STATE OF ILLINOIS, } ss. 1  
COUNTY OF KANE.

A. J. Waldron, a Notary Public,

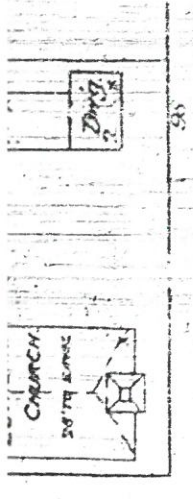
in and for said County, in the State aforesaid, do hereby Certify, that Adolph Nass, and Mary his wife who do personally know to me as the real persons whose names do subscribed to the above Deed, appeared before me this day in





DO

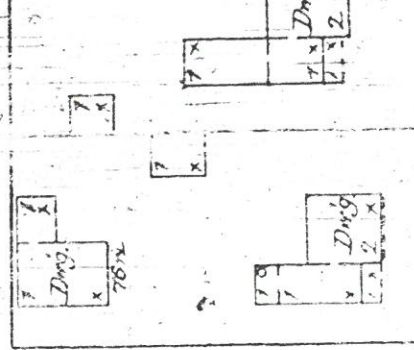
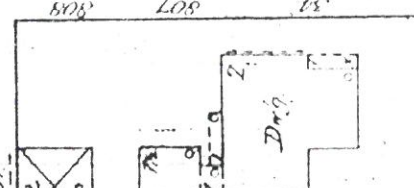
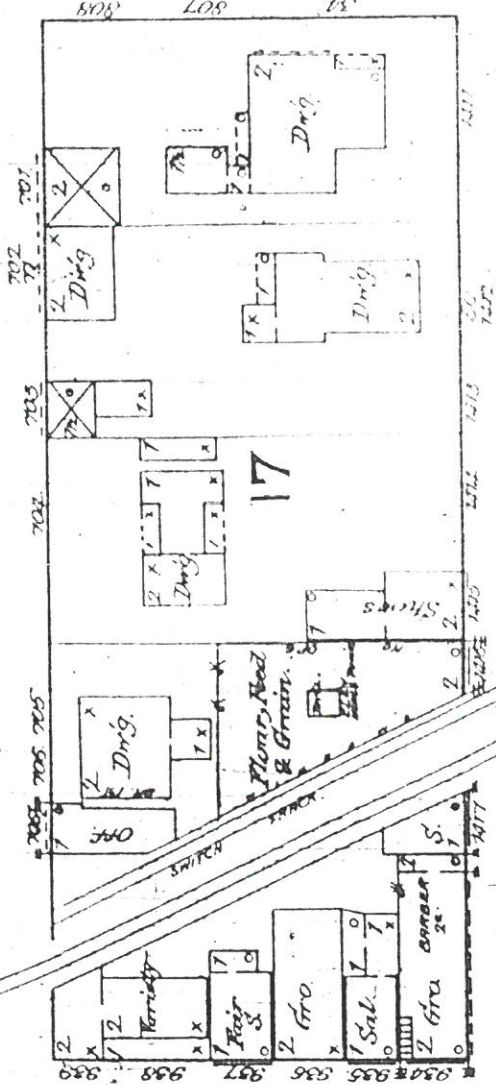
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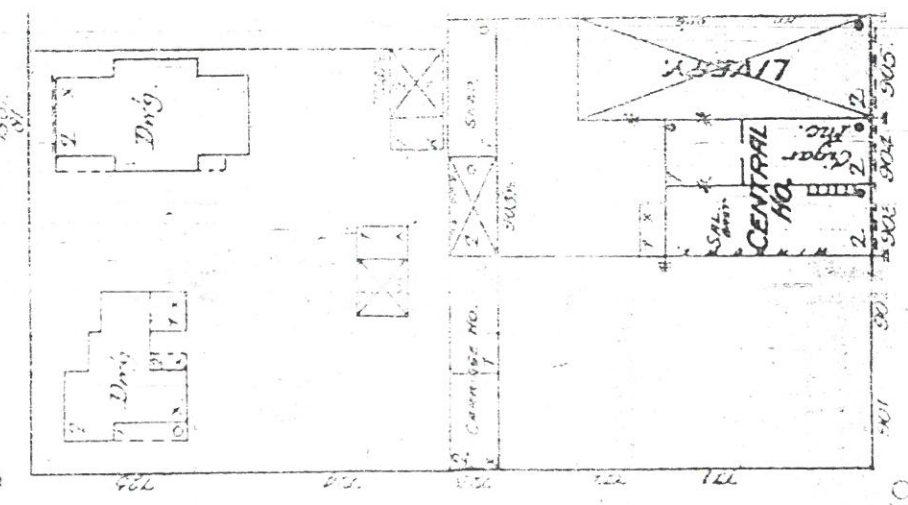
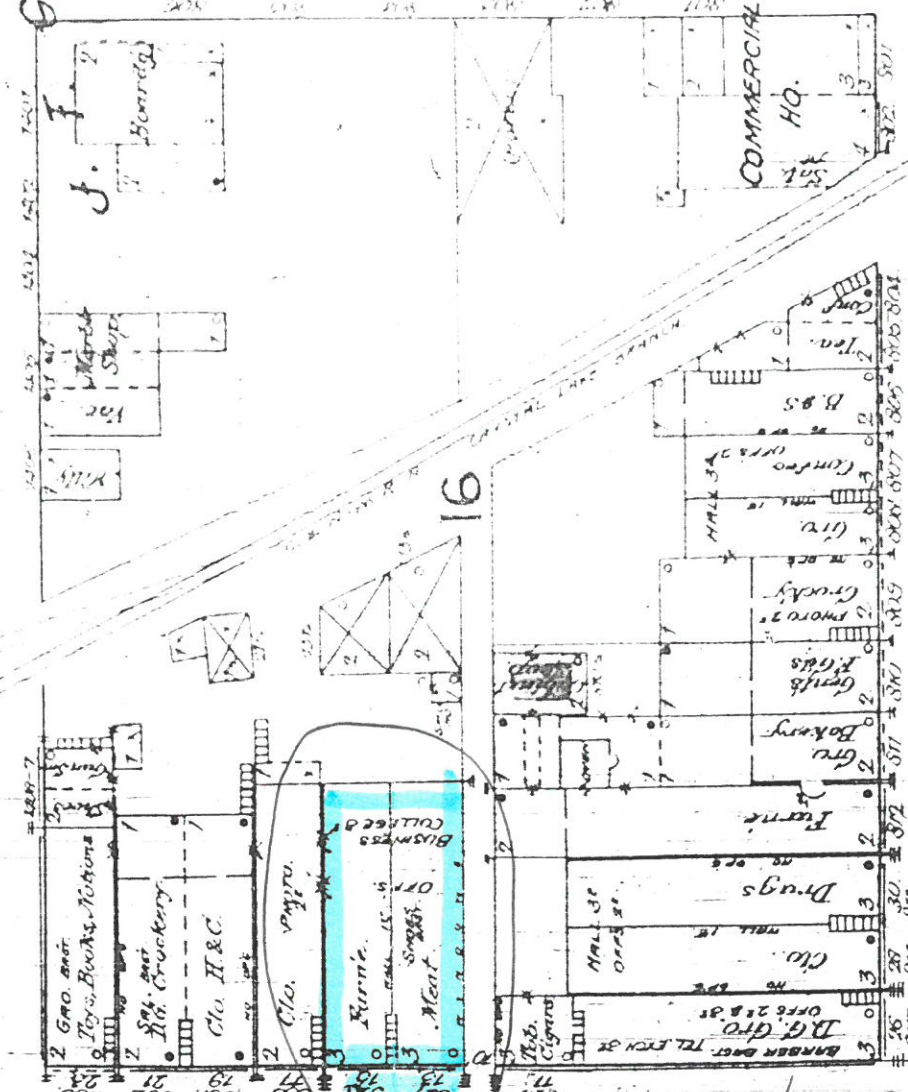


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CHICAGO

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Sanborn Map 1887

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