Old Town Triangle District
Commercial Building Historic Context Statement in support of Chicago Landmark designation of buildings on the1600-block of North Wells Street, including 1615, 1617, 1628-1630, 1645, 1647-1653, and 1655-1657 N. Wells

Introduction

The Old Town Triangle District is both a designated Chicago Landmark and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It is recognized as historically and architecturally significant as an area that largely developed as a working-class neighborhood of mostly ethnic-German residents. Thanks to pioneering post-World War II interest in building rehabilitation and neighborhood revitalization on the part of its residents, Old Town Triangle is one of Chicago's oldest surviving neighborhoods. It contains excellent examples of small-scale Italianate and Queen Anne buildings, including rare "fire-relief" cottages built immediately after the Chicago Fire of 1871 devastated much of the city, including Old Town Triangle. As importantly, the neighborhood's streetscapes remain largely intact with good historic integrity. The district has relatively few non-historic buildings, and those that exist often have significance in their own right as important examples of modern architecture.

Old Town Triangle is best known and recognized today for its residential buildings. But it always has had a mix of building types, including small commercial/residential buildings that contained saloons and small-scale neighborhood stores. It also historically had a number of other commercial buildings, including small-scale light-manufacturing structures and a larger horse car barn for a Chicago street railway company. As such, Old Town Triangle historically resembled other working-class neighborhoods in Chicago, created prior to 20th-century zoning, with this intermixing of residential and commercial buildings.

In addition, Old Town Triangle was well served by closely-adjacent commercial thoroughfares such as North Avenue, Wells Street, and Larrabee Street, where commercial and commercial/residential buildings formed dense corridors of retail, wholesale and light-manufacturing concerns that served the larger North Town area, of which Old Town Triangle was historically a part. With these commercial streets combined with the retail and commercial establishments scattered throughout the neighborhood, Old Town Triangle residents traditionally shopped in their neighborhoods, only leaving for specialty or big-ticket items better attained in Chicago's downtown shopping district centered on State Street and Wabash Avenue.

Although arguably a significant aspect of Old Town Triangle's history, commercial, commercial/residential, and light-industrial buildings have not been given their due. Boundaries for the Old Town Triangle Chicago Landmark District, designated by City Council in 1977, did not include any portions of Wells, North or Larrabee. In addition, neither the district's designation report nor its designation ordinance discusses the important commercial/residential buildings that are part of the district's streetscapes, nor do they discuss the close interrelation of residential and commercial uses that were characteristic of Old Town Triangle during its years of historic development.

Urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by more recent market-driven redevelopment, saw the destruction of much of the area's commercial architecture. Larrabee Street's historic character completely disappeared, while the north side of North Avenue was lost to the 1960s-era widening of the street. Recently, large portions of the south side of North Avenue have been redeveloped with larger-scale residential buildings with street-level retail, a development process that continues. Wells Street between North and Eugenie Street remains as one of these encircling commercial streets that retains a good percentage of historic commercial buildings, despite redevelopment starting in the 1970s.

Taken together, though, Wells Street between North Avenue and Eugenie Street, and North Avenue between Wells Street and Mohawk still retain late 19th- and early 20th-century commercial and commercial/residential buildings that exemplify the developmental history of Old Town Triangle. Old Town residents shopped in these buildings and often worked and lived in them. Together with the scattered commercial buildings in the district proper, they help explain how the working-class families of Old Town Triangle both lived and shopped in the neighborhood.

This report provides in brief the historic context of neighborhood development and vernacular, or common, building types in Chicago, with a focus on working-class neighborhoods built up in the 19th and early 20th centuries such as Old Town Triangle. It is followed by a brief overview of the development history of Old Town, discussing how residential, commercial and commercial/residential architecture historically were mixed together in the larger Old Town community. It urges the eventual extension of the Old Town Triangle District to include buildings on Wells and North that exemplify this commercial history. Although not an exhaustive discussion of this significant commercial history, this report provides sufficient information to demonstrate the importance of this historic theme and to provide a basis for the extension of the existing district to include buildings identified with the historic theme of commerce.

Specifically at this time, this report advocates for six Wells Street buildings as exemplary buildings that are a significant part of this historically-important story of commercial buildings and the Old Town Triangle District. These buildings are located at 1615, 1617, 1628-1630, 1645, 1647-1653, and 1655-1657 N. Wells. They remain the geographically closest such buildings to the existing Old Town district, with three immediately adjacent to the easternmost district boundary at Eugenie and Wells and three others close by in the same block. If added to the existing district as an extension, these buildings would strengthen and enhance the recognized commercial history of Old Town Triangle.

19th-century Chicago working-class neighborhoods, their general development, and their mix of building types and uses

"During the nineteenth century, Chicago developed as a series of tightly organized and built neighborhoods." This sentence in the "Armitage-Halsted District" Chicago Landmark designation report starts a section entitled, "The Development of Chicago's Historic Nineteenth-Century Commercial Streets." This section goes on to note that Chicago's outward expansion

Aerial view of 19th-century Chicago neighborhood

Typical 19th-century Chicago cottages

Typical 19th-century commercial street (Halsted north from Armitage)

in the 19th and early 20th centuries was based on available modes of transportation. Although some neighborhoods started as railroad suburbs, with Hyde Park and Irving Park being two examples, most neighborhoods were reached from downtown by slower forms of mass transportation. Horse cars emerged first, followed by cable and street cars, then elevated trains, then buses and automobiles.

Especially early on, these forms of urban transit could be slow and unreliable. Although downtown Chicago developed with a major shopping area centered on State Street and Wabash Avenue, most working-class Chicagoans shopped near their homes in stores and establishments found along neighborhood shopping streets. Close availability was key if a shopper was walking to stores. As the Armitage-Halsted report notes, " . . . the daily necessities of food, medicines, clothing, banking and other goods and services could be handled conveniently without leaving the neighborhood." These main neighborhood shopping districts typically emerged along arterial streets that defined the quarter sections of subdivisions (as rationally laid out originally by the United States as it subdivided the Northwest Territory, of which Illinois was a part) and that were served by horse and street cars.

These local shopping streets typically were made up of small-scale buildings that fit the overall scale of their working-class neighborhoods. Purely residential buildings might be interspersed with commercial buildings on somewhat less densely-built up commercial streets. The same was typical in reverse for residential streets, where storefront and other commercial buildings were often interspersed among residential. The result was a close interweaving of property uses—residential, retail, commercial, wholesale, offices, even light-industrial—within a working-class neighborhood.

Commercial streets such as North Avenue, Wells Street and Larrabee Avenue, along with the more residential Sedgwick Avenue, exemplify this pattern of building development and use. All were served by horse cars originally. North was the original north boundary of Chicago and a major dividing line in the layout of subdivisions on the North Side. North, Wells and Larrabee provided convenient locations for the clustering of commercial and retail establishments that would serve the Old Town community. Within the more strongly residential Old Town Triangle proper, Sedgwick provided a mid-point between Wells and Larrabee that attracted a strong yet secondary set of retail and commercial uses. Other streets within Old Town Triangle had storefront buildings, but to a lesser degree than Sedgwick.

Typical Chicago neighborhood building types

To further explain this pattern of neighborhood development, a short overview of Chicago neighborhood building types is necessary. Chicago neighborhoods are built up with a variety of common building types. For all of its world-renowned architecture, including buildings by Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan, Burnham and Root, and Mies van der Rohe, Chicago is at its heart a working-class city in terms of its architecture. It had, and to some degree retains, upper-income residential neighborhoods that were built up in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. But what truly defines the city are its seemingly endless blocks of modest cottages and

houses, small-scale two- and three-flats, and low-rise commercial and commercial/residential buildings, especially those found in working and middle-class neighborhoods.

Historically, Chicago was a wood and brick city. The earliest buildings were built of wood and structurally reflected the development of balloon-frame construction. Horizontal clapboarding and machine-made ornament, including incised lintels and decorative cornice brackets, were common. The Chicago Fire of 1871, and a latter, smaller-scale fire in 1874, pushed the City Council to ban wood-frame construction throughout what was then the city. But there was a period of several years, between 1871 and 1874, when new wood construction was allowed in Old Town Triangle, and the district's oldest buildings reflect this building trend.

Despite this, brick construction is most common throughout Chicago, and it is an important material in Old Town Triangle. Earliest buildings utilize a combination of finely-crafted pressed brick for street facades and rougher common brick for side and rear elevations. (In general, the narrowness of city lots and the close spacing of buildings meant that side elevations were often not readily visible, and therefore little thought or expense were spared on them.) Brick was manufactured in Chicago, but ready train access to other cities allowed brick from cities such as St. Louis to be used for Chicago construction. By the 1920s, wire-cut brick, with its characteristic rough textures and striations, was commonly used.

Stone was less commonly used, most often for trim rather than complete facades, although better-quality houses and commercial buildings might have street facades of stone, while other elevations were face or common brick. High-end buildings in the 19th century might be built of stone brought to Chicago from the Upper Great Lakes or even New England. More common buildings, however, made do with Joliet limestone early on, than Indiana limestone later. The Crilly Court row houses are the best examples of such use of stone in Old Town Triangle.

Residential building types

Although Chicago dates back to the 1830s, few buildings remain from the first few decades of its existence. The Chicago Fire of 1871 wiped out downtown and the north lakefront up to the then-north boundary with Lake View Township at Fullerton Ave. But even those parts of the city that weren't touched by the Fire retain little or nothing from those early decades. In addition, many early surviving buildings built of wood retain little integrity.

The results are a city with its earliest recognizable streetscapes rooted in the 1870s and 1880s. Built of wood and brick, trimmed with stone, these neighborhoods were built in the Italianate and Queen Anne styles that were most popular in Chicago during this period. The Old Town Triangle is one of the best neighborhoods to see streetscapes from the 1870s and 1880s. The following are the most common residential building types in the neighborhood, mentioned here to provide context for the neighborhood's commercial buildings.

Worker's cottages

One of the chief building blocks of Old Town Triangle, the workers cottage can be found in working-class and middle-class neighborhoods built in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Modest in scale, these buildings are 1 or 1 ½ stories in height and built of wood or brick. They are rectangular in plan, fitting the standard Chicago lot. Cottages typically have raised basements, although "fire cottages," those built immediately after the Chicago Fire of 1871, were often built close to the ground. Cottages have front gable roofs and offset entrances set to one side of the front facade, typically the only finished facade (side and rear elevations being common brick). Style is expressed through door and window surrounds and rooftop cornices, and typically is Italianate, although some early cottages are ornamented in a very late Greek Revival. The Queen Anne and Classical Revival styles are occasionally used for more elaborate cottages.

Single-family houses

Many early Chicago houses in Old Town Triangle are just taller versions of worker's cottages, similar to the Homestead House or Tri-Gable El House types popularized by *The Old House Journal* in the 1980s. They are 2 or 2 ½ stories in height and also have front gable roofs, although some have cross gables. They are narrow and deep in plan, to fit the standard Chicago lot. Like workers cottages, they can be built with either wood or brick. If brick, front elevations may be either pressed or common brick, while side and rear elevations are common brick. Again, as with workers cottages, common styles are Italianate, a very late Greek Revival, and Queen Anne.

Row Houses

In 19th century neighborhoods, groups of row houses can sometimes be found. Typically two or three-stories in height, these were usually built of brick, sometimes with Joliet or Indiana limestone fronts. Italianate and Classical Revival are the most common styles, although Queen Anne and Romanesque Revival was sometimes used. In Old Town Triangle, the best known row houses are those on Crilly Court and the Louis Sullivan-designed row houses on N. Lincoln Park West.

Two- and three-flats

These are Chicago's most common multi-residential buildings, and Old Town Triangle has its share. Two-flats are more common. Both two- and three-flats are built with one apartment per floor, each apartment similar in layout and amenities to the others. Earlier flat buildings were built of wood; these often have front gable roofs and sometimes elaborate wood trim. (Most lost such trim when reclad with asbestos and aluminum siding in the 20th century.) Later flat buildings are brick with stone trim, or more infrequently, stone-fronted. Off-center entrances are often visually balanced by two- or three-story projecting bays. Architectural styles vary widely, with most using Classical or Arts-and-Crafts ornament.

Commercial buildings

As previously mentioned, 19th and early 20th-century Chicago working-class neighborhoods such as Old Town Triangle mixed commercial, commercial/residential, even light-industrial

buildings in with residential buildings. As with residential buildings, the earliest were built of wood, although such buildings are more often the small, narrow "storefront" buildings that held modest retail concerns. Brick is the most common material, typically used in similar styles as residential, but with perhaps a greater emphasis on the simpler Arts-and-Crafts.

Commercial/residential buildings
The oldest surviving commercial/residential buildings (often simply called "storefront buildings") typically are one or two standard Chicago building lots wide (20 to 40 feet) and two or three stories in height, although later examples can extend across several building lots, and some are just one story or 4 or even 5 stories in height. Most roofs are flat, but some are front gabled. Many have projecting upper oriels, or bays, typically built of pressed metal. The earliest in Old Town Triangle were wood frame, built before the end of 1874, but more are brick. More elaborate examples have stone-clad front facades; the best examples in the vicinity of Old Town Triangle are on North Avenue. Storefronts are on the first floor. Separate entrances lead to upper floors, which could be residential, commercial, or social (fraternal halls). Styles were typically Italianate, Queen Anne, Romanesque, or (by the early 20th century) a simple Arts-and-Crafts. Many were used as saloons, and some of these were "tied-houses," built and used by specific breweries.

By the 1920s, larger scale commercial buildings were being built along major arterial streets, especially near intersections where streetcar lines crossed. Still usually 3 stories in height, these could be rather wide, extending across several building lots. They are brick with stone or terra cotta trim, although a few were clad entirely with terra cotta for street facades. A variety of styles were used, especially Arts-and-Crafts, Classical and Baroque.

Commercial and light-industrial buildings
There are also buildings that were used for purely commercial or light-industrial uses. These typically are brick in construction. In the context of Old Town Triangle, they vary from one to 3 or 4 stories in height. Relatively plain in ornament, they may have simple Arts-and-Crafts ornament. Large windows provide much of their visual appeal.

A brief development history of Old Town, especially as it relates to commercial buildings

The general development history of the Old Town Triangle District is discussed in the district's Chicago Landmark designation report and National Register of Historic Places nomination. The following synopsis is meant to provide information of use for understanding the importance of commercial buildings to the history of the district. (Also attached is the Commission on Chicago Landmarks landmark designation report for the Old Town Triangle District.)

The Old Town Triangle originally developed as a farming community at the north edge of the original City of Chicago, with North Avenue as the original north boundary of the fledgling mid-19th century city. An important part of the lore of Old Town Triangle is the use of its land early on for farming by Germans living farther south in what is now considered the Near North Side.

Old Town was known as "Cabbage Town" for this early commercial purpose and was one part of the larger "North Town" area that straddled North Avenue. (The name "Old Town Triangle" is a post-World War II name for a specific portion of this larger North Town community.)

Just to the east of today's Old Town Triangle, the nearby presence of Chicago's new cemetery, opened in 1843, slowed interest in the area for residential purposes. However, its repurposing as Lincoln Park in the 1860s created a landscape amenity that turned Chicagoans' attention to what would become Old Town Triangle and the larger Lincoln Park community. Old Town began to develop as a small-scale, working-class neighborhood of wood-frame and brick cottages, houses and small flat buildings. Towering above the neighborhood as it was developing in 1871, at the time of the Chicago Fire, was the great brick mass of St. Michael Roman Catholic Church, which served the neighborhood's largely German Catholic population.

The Fire destroyed Old Town, although walls of St. Michael Church remained in part. Quickly rebuilding, residents fashioned a new small-scale, working-class neighborhood that was built up largely with wood-frame and brick cottages, taller front-gable houses, 3 and 4-story flat buildings and similarly-scaled commercial and commercial/residential buildings. Commercial/residential buildings with saloons, small groceries and shops were especially built along Sedgwick Avenue, although such "storefront" buildings can be found throughout today's district. In addition, North Avenue emerged as the city's "German Broadway," serving the larger community as a lively center of German and Central European retail. Wells Avenue and Larrabee developed as less-dense commercial streets with a mix of commercial, commercial/residential and residential buildings.

By 1900, the neighborhood was a mature neighborhood comprised of excellent examples of vernacular, or common, building types, although buildings would continue to be built until the hiatus in such activity caused by the Great Depression of the 1930s. By 1930, the diagonal of Ogden Avenue had been cut through the larger neighborhood, creating a visually-defining western boundary for what would, after World War II, become commonly known as the Old Town Triangle. Residential was largely found on interior streets while commercial was on the larger perimeter streets. But there was a strong mix of property types in a fashion that meant that building uses were not segregated to certain streets entirely, but could be seen throughout the neighborhood. This reflected pre-zoning Chicago, especially in working-class neighborhoods, where residents lived, worked, and shopped in close proximity.

The larger Old Town neighborhood, by the 1920s, was beginning to decline as families moved to more spacious outlying neighborhoods or to inner suburbs. However, rehabilitation activity by artists starting in the late 1920s and 1930s transformed selected buildings in the Old Town area. Buildings rehabilitated by Sol Kogan and Edgar Miller are the best known by such rehab pioneers. As new residents searching for cheap, yet visually interesting housing, close to North Michigan Avenue and the Loop, moved to Old Town Triangle in the 1940s and 1950s, they rehabbed run-down buildings as part of a larger revitalization movement happening in select historic neighborhoods throughout the United States. Residents formed the Old Town Triangle

Association, which provided organizational support for such community revitalization efforts. Much of this post-World War II revitalization was encouraged by artists and other creative people living (and often working) in the neighborhood. The Old Town Art Fair, begun in 1950, brought much attention to the neighborhood and encouraged these early rehabilitation efforts.

In the wake of urban renewal efforts in Chicago in the 1950s and 1960s, OTTA urged the rehabilitation of Old Town Triangle buildings rather than their demolition. Within the Triangle proper, most vintage buildings remained, although some were demolished for new construction or open space. A number of these lost buildings had been commercial in their historic uses, and they were, at the time, valued less than purely residential buildings. In addition, the more commercial streetscape of Larrabee Street between North and Armitage was swept clean of historic buildings as part of urban renewal, while all buildings on the north side of North Avenue were destroyed in order to widen the street. These actions of the 1960s and 1970s, although seen at the time as necessary revitalization interventions into the larger Old Town community, saw the historic commercial architecture component of Old Town greatly diminished. The dramatic revival of Wells Street in the early 1960s as an "Old Town" commercial streetscape of bars, trendy shops, "Victorian" restaurants, and music venues, and its more recent transformation as a street combining upscale residential and commercial uses, gives some sense of what North and Larrabee might have become if their historic characters had been preserved.

In conclusion, as it developed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Old Town Triangle looked much like several other neighborhoods in Chicago that were built in the same period. However, with the extensive demolition and redevelopment of most of these other 19th-century neighborhoods in the 20th and early 21st centuries, Old Town Triangle remains today as one of the city's best preserved such neighborhoods. Its designation as a Chicago Landmark district in 1977 has ensured that its mix of vintage residential and commercial buildings, enhanced by modern residential buildings, remains as an unusual, and arguably unique, community in Chicago today.

How Old Town exemplifies the commercial, commercial/residential and light-industrial mix of working-class Chicago neighborhoods developed in the 19th and early 20th centuries

A look at fire insurance atlases and city directories gives greater detail concerning the number of commercial, commercial/residential, and light-industrial buildings that historically were part of the larger Old Town Triangle neighborhood and their importance to the development history of Old Town Triangle. In general, and as already mentioned, North Avenue, Wells Street and Larrabee Street provided the lion's share of commercial, retail, and light-industrial for Old Town Triangle throughout most of its history. However, a strong element of such building uses can be seen scattered through the district proper. These can especially be seen along Sedgwick Avenue, which serves as a north-south "spine" for the district, but there are examples elsewhere. So, again, there's an interweaving of commerce with residential historically in the

neighborhood. Relatively few of the neighborhood's commercial buildings were included in the Old Town Triangle District or have survived redevelopment. A "Commercial Building" historic context statement would provide the basis for district extensions, especially along Wells and North avenues, that would help remedy that omission.

Fire insurance atlases provide a "snapshot" of a neighborhood at a specific time in history, including number of buildings and their footprints, exterior building materials, and usually general use, i.e. house, flats, store, etc. Depending upon the atlas and the building's specific use, the type of use or even the name of the owner/tenant may be listed.

Robinson's Atlas of Chicago (1886)
Robinson's Atlas of Chicago of 1886, the earliest fire insurance atlas that shows post-Fire Old Town Triangle, shows the area about 15 years after the start of its post-Fire reconstruction. A majority of buildings in the district proper are wood-frame and are set back from the street, reflecting typical residential construction and placement. However, there are a number of brick and wood-frame buildings that were built flush with sidewalks. Although *Robinson's* doesn't tend to indicate property use (residential, commercial, etc.), many of those appear to be commercial/residential or commercial buildings based on their orientation to the street and checking against current buildings on the sites.

For example, the atlas shows a brick building on the southeast corner of Eugenie and Sedgwick that hugs the sidewalk on both streets. It appears to largely match the footprint of the current Twin Anchors building. A 3-story brick storefront building in the 1600-block of North Sedgwick (then 479, now 1627) is flush against the sidewalk. The two-story brick storefront building that long housed "Marge's" is flush to both Sedgwick and Menomonee. North of Eugenie and extending from Sedgwick through to Hammond (now N. Orleans) was a substantial cluster of brick buildings that served as stables for horse cars serving the Near North Side. These buildings have been replaced by LaSalle Language Academy. Although this method of identifying commercial buildings in the *Robinson's Atlas of Chicago* is not 100% accurate, it does provide some means of identifying likely commercial buildings that existed in 1886.

Other information about commercial buildings can be gleaned from *Robinson's.* The 1600-block of Wells Street hasda larger percentage of brick buildings than interior streets. Both brick and wood-frame buildings tended to be built at the front of lots, flush with sidewalks. A "R.R. Repair Shop" was located on the northeast corner of Wells and Eugenie. North Avenue had a large percentage of wood-frame buildings, with more flush to sidewalks as you get to the west towards Larrabee. A wood-frame building just east of N. Franklin (now North Park) was labeled "soap works." A large brick building at the southeast corner of North and Sedgwick was "Mueller's Hall." Larrabee had a mix of wood and brick buildings, the majority of which are flush to the sidewalk.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas (1906)

In 1906, a Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. atlas provides additional, more detailed information concerning the mix of residential and commercial building types found in Old Town Triangle and adjacent streets. There are quite a few commercial, commercial/residential and light-industrial buildings in what would become the historic district. Such buildings located in the district proper include the following (partial list - buildings are assumed general commercial/ residential "storefront" buildings unless labeled otherwise):

- Sedgwick Street
  - 1612 N. Sedgwick - saloon - extant
  - 1613 N. Sedgwick - blacksmith shop - demolished
  - 1627 N. Sedgwick - extant
  - 1655 N. Sedgwick - saloon - now Twin Anchors - extant
  - 1701, 1703 and 1707 N. Sedgwick - demolished
  - 1718 N. Sedgwick - demolished
  - 1720 N. Sedgwick - extant
  - 1721-1725 N. Sedgwick - Paper box factory - demolished
  - 1727-1735 N. Sedgwick - Valentine-Seavers Co. furniture frame finishing, upholstering and finishing - demolished
  - 1728 N. Sedgwick - extant
  - 1736 N. Sedgwick - demolished
  - 1748 N. Sedgwick - extant
  - 1749 N. Sedgwick - saloon - demolished
  - 1751 N. Sedgwick - demolished
  - 1753-1755 N. Sedgwick - bakery - extant
  - 1756 and 1752 N. Sedgwick - 1752 labeled "paints and oils" - extant
  - 1758 N. Sedgwick - saloon - recently "Marge's" - extant
  - 1761 N. Sedgwick - saloon - extant
  - 1763 N. Sedgwick - extant
  - 1801 N. Sedgwick - labeled "Drug's" - now two-story wood-frame house

- Eugenie Street
  - 301 W. Eugenie / 1656 N. Park - saloon - extant
  - 325 W. Eugenie - demolished
  - A. B. Fiedler & Sons, Braids and Dress Trimmings, 300-310 W. Eugenie / 1701-1713 N. Hammond/ 1700-1712 N. Park Ave. - demolished
  - 415 W. Eugenie - dwelling and milk depot - extant
  - 417 W. Eugenie - dwelling with cobbler in basement - extant
  - 419 W. Eugenie - extant
  - 424 W. Eugenie - a saloon - extant
  - 425 W. Eugenie / 1659 N. Hudson - bakery - extant
  - 434 and 436 W. Eugenie - demolished
  - 444 W. Eugenie - demolished
  - 450 W. Eugenie - demolished

Photograph dated 1965 showing extant commercial / residential buildings in the 1700-block of North Sedgwick, looking south from West Menomonee, inside the Old Town Triangle District.

Photograph dated 1963 showing now-demolished commercial building at 1859 N. Sedgwick (southeast corner of Sedgwick and Wisconsin), north of and outside the district

Commercial / residential buildings at 1720 North Sedgwick within the district, photograph dated 1988.

Photograph dated 1960 of commercial / residential buildings on the wide side of the 1700-block of North Sedgwick in the district.

- 517 W. Eugenie - demolished

- Wells Street
  - 1746-1748 N. Wells - extant
  - 1700 - 1718 N. Wells - extant

- North Park Avenue
  - 1641 N. Park - extant

- Orleans Street
  - 1717 N. Hammond (now Orleans) - extant

- Hudson Avenue
  - 1706 N. Hudson - demolished
  - 1733 N. Hudson - a dwelling with a milk depot in back - demolished
  - 1741 N. Hudson - a wood yard with a one-story office building - demolished

- Cleveland Avenue
  - 1656 N. Cleveland - extant
  - 1626 N. Cleveland - labeled "D" for dwelling, but with a "Cobbler" - demolished
  - 1612 N. Cleveland - 3-story "Office" building - extant

- Meyer Ave.
  - 1622 N. Meyer Ave. - a dwelling with a "Horse Radish Factory" in the basement - demolished
  - 1644 N. Meyer Ave. - a dwelling with a shoe factory in the basement - demolished

- Mohawk Street
  - 1657 N. Mohawk - demolished
  - 1619 N. Mohawk - a dwelling with a cobbler - extant

Storefront buildings located just outside the district proper to the north or west included (partial list - have not been checked for extant/demolished):

- 1810 N. Sedgwick
- 1856-1856 N. Sedgwick - the corner labeled "Sal.," or saloon
- 1856 and 1858 N. Mohawk
- 1859 N. Mohawk
- 1836 N. Mohawk
- 1758 N. Hudson
- 1754 N. Hudson - labeled "D" for dwelling, but also lists a "Carp'r. Shop in Bst"

A wood yard with a small one-story office building was at 1823 N. Mohawk.

North Avenue

North Avenue, by the early 20th century, had become a major commercial street for the North Side. By World War I, it had become a main center of retail and related uses for Chicago's ethnic-German community. By 1900, native-born Germans and their children made up almost a quarter of the city's population. Although they could be found throughout the city, certain neighborhoods were dominated by German residents and were identified strongly with this national group. Old Town was one of these, and North Avenue was the most significant commercial street serving Old Town residents. Even in the wake of German assimilation in the 1920s and 1930s, encouraged in part by anti-German sentiments stirred by World War I, North Avenue was called "the Unter den Linden of Chicago" by a tour brochure from 1938, which compared the street to Berlin's famous boulevard.

The "Yondorf Block and Hall" Chicago Landmark designation report, written for a prominent meeting-hall building at the corner of North Avenue and Halsted Street, adds further information about North Avenue's commercial importance to the largely German Old Town community:

> A former president of the North Avenue Business and Improvement Association (William Rauen in a 1930 interview) recalled it [North Avenue] as a bustling street by 1890, built up with dozens of stores, including clothiers, shoemakers, confectioners, tobacco shops, druggists, bakers, and grocers. Rauen remembered: "The language spoken along the street was nine-tenths German and there was no occasion for folks from Trier, Luxembourg, the Rhineland and Bavaria to feel homesick." A columnist for the *Chicago Tribune* [Alex Small, 1957] remembered that during the streets heyday, "One could not get around North Avenue without that language [German].

Along North Avenue, there were many commercial buildings, with largely solid rows of such buildings along both sides of the street between North Park and Larrabee (partial list based on available Sanborn fire insurance maps from 1906):

- 201 W. North / 1564 N. Wells - saloon
- 205 W. North - saloon
- 219 W. North - saloon
- 227 W. North - saloon
- 229 W. North - paints and oils
- 236-238 W. North - George Schmidt Co. soap factory
- 237-239 W. North - wagon shop
- 301 W. North - saloon
- 303 W. North - printing
- 308-314 W. North - Comedy Theatre - seating capacity 1203
- 316 W. North - 5 cent theater - seating capacity 135
- 400 W. North / 1600 N. Sedgwick - ice cream factory at rear
- 317 W. North - cigar factory
- 318 W. North - sausage factory at rear
- 326-328 W. North - livery and boarding

North Avenue, photograph dated circa 1900.

North Avenue and Larrabee Street, photograph dated circa 1900.

North Avenue and Larrabee Street, looking north on Larrabee, photograph dated circa 1900.

Larrabee Street, looking south from North Avenue towards elevated tracks, photograph dated circa 1930.

- 329 W. North - Saloon
- 331-343 W. North - Sittner's Vaudeville Theatre
- 340 W. North - bakery
- 344 W. North - saloon
- 400 W. North - ice cream factory at rear
- 401 W. North - druggist
- 404 W. North - candy factory in basement
- 422 W. North / 1601 N. Hudson - saloon
- 425 W. North - saloon
- 435 W. North - saloon
- 450 W. North - paints
- 458 W. North - druggist
- 500 W. North - saloon
- 504 W. North - photography studio

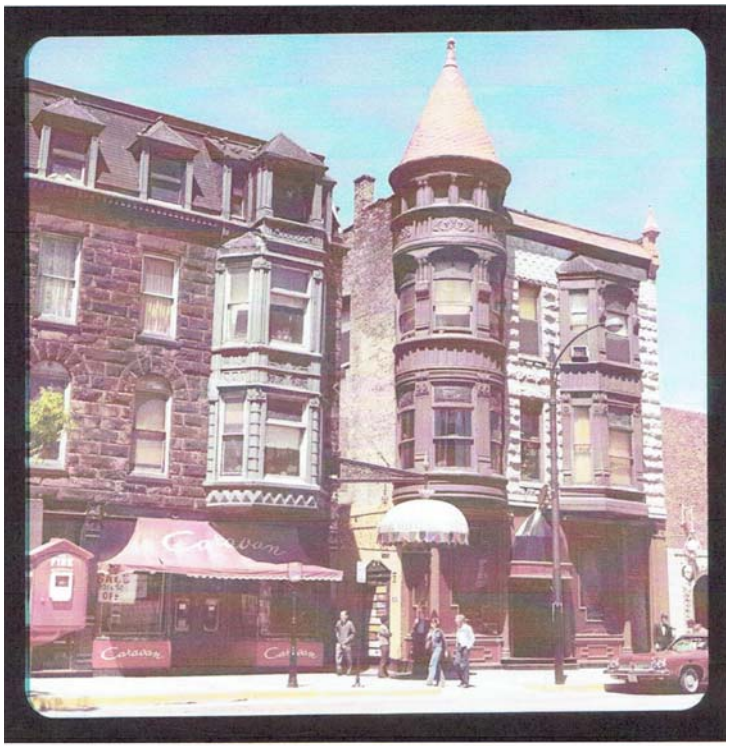
Wells Street

Along Wells, between North and Eugenie, there was an eclectic mix of commercial and residential buildings (partial list based on 1906 Sanborn):

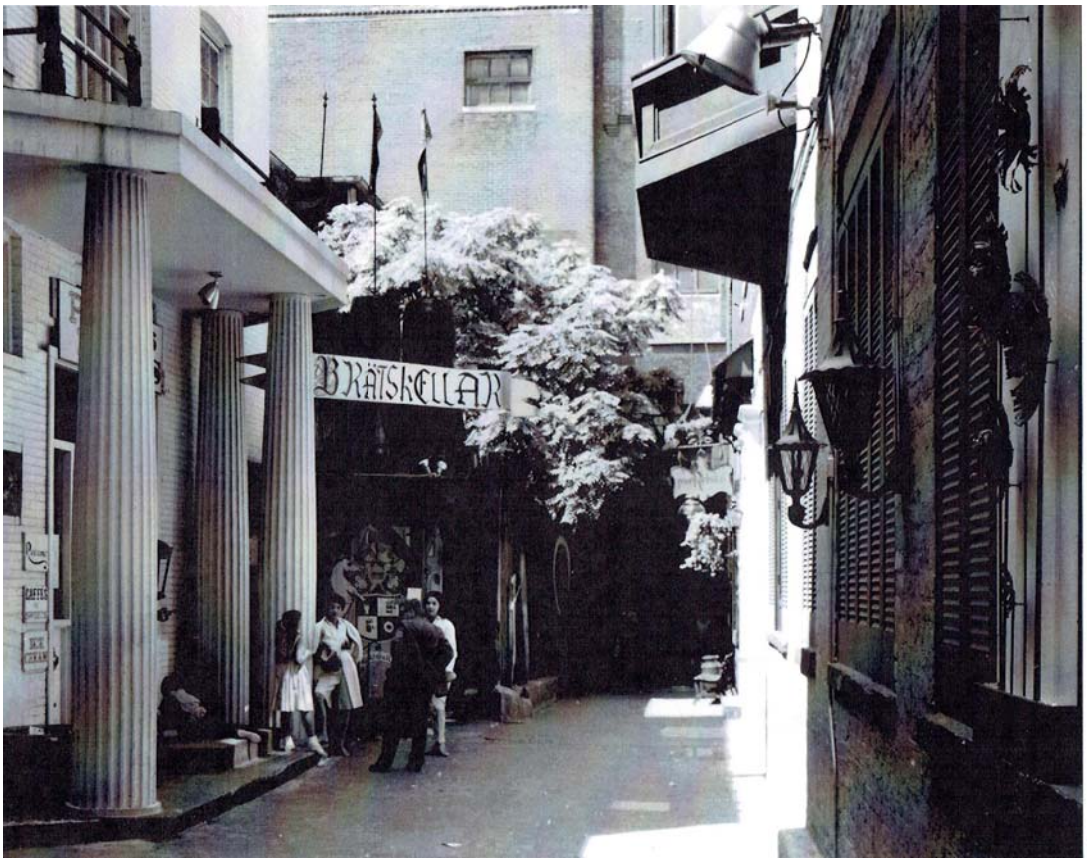
- 1600 N. Wells - saloon
- 172 W. North / 1601 N. Wells- druggist
- 1602, 1604, 1606 N. Wells - storefront buildings
- 1605-1611 N. Wells - store fronts
- 1612 - 1620 N Wells - H. Piper Company bakery
- 1615 N. Wells - 3-story storefront and 2-story rear dwelling
- 1617 N. Wells - 4-story flats and rear dwelling
- 1621 N. Wells - 3-story flats
- 1622-1626 N. Wells - Chicago Railways Co. materials yard
- 1623-1625 N. Wells - undertaker
- 1627 N. Wells - upholsterer
- 1628 N. Wells - 3-story flat building
- 1629 N. Wells - paints
- 1630 and 1632 N. Wells - vacant
- 1631 N. Wells - patent medicine
- 1635, 1637 N. Wells - storefronts
- 1636 through 1656 N. Wells (except 1644) - storefront buildings
- 1639 N. Wells - vacant
- 1641 N. Wells - brush factory
- 1644 N. Wells - dwelling set back slightly from street
- 1645 N. Wells - dwelling set far back on lot
- 1649- 1647 N. Wells - pair of dwellings slightly set back from street
- 1651 N. Wells - 1-story storefront
- 1653 N. Wells - carpenter

North Avenue looking west from Wells Street, photograph dated circa 1945.

Northwest corner of North Avenue and Wells Street, photograph dated 1962.



Piper's Alley, photograph dated circa 1965.



Interior courtyard of Piper's Alley, photograph dated 1964.

- 1655 - 1657 N. Wells - saloon
- 1656 N. Wells - saloon

Copies of 1906 Sanborn maps for the Old Town area marked with commercial buildings are attached as an appendix.

Polk's Reverse-Address Directory for Chicago (1928-1929)
The 1928-1929 *Polk's Reverse-Address Directory for Chicago* showed commercial and retail properties still in use as such throughout Old Town Triangle. The following list uses Sedgwick to make this point (partial list):

- 1610 N. Sedgwick - Mrs. Mary Scimeca beauty shop
- 1612 N. Sedgwick - Charley Lee laundry
- 1613 N. Sedgwick - Smart & Toomey blacksmiths
- 1623 N. Sedgwick - Edward Kiss barber
- 1655 N. Sedgwick - Lee Tante soft drinks
- 1701 N. Sedgwick - J.Z. Schmitt confectioner
- 1703 N. Sedgwick - [name obscured] soft drinks
- 1720 N. Sedgwick - Oscar Dreyer clothes cleaner
- 1721 N. Sedgwick - Service Cooper Shop
- 1725 N. Sedgwick - Armstrong Battery Co.
- 1727-33 N. Sedgwick - Arco Battery & Plate Co. Inc.
- 1728 N. Sedgwick - Adolph Herbig nurses' supplies
- 1749 N. Sedgwick - Apex Electric Co. electrical contractors
- 1752 N. Sedgwick - George Dalacker meats
- 1753 N. Sedgwick - Herwig Co. electric appliances
- 1755-57 N. Sedgwick - Herwig Co. lighting fixtures
- 1758 N. Sedgwick - Victor Caruso soft drinks
- 1763 N. Sedgwick - Pinto Bros. grocers

The 1935 and 1950 Sanborn fire insurance atlases showed most of these commercial buildings still extant.

The extension of the Old Town Triangle District to include commercial, commercial/residential, and light-industrial buildings on perimeter streets such as Wells Street and North Avenue

Today, the Old Town Triangle District proper retains a number of the commercial, commercial/residential and light-industrial buildings that it historically had, while many others have been demolished. Even those that survive, though, have typically been converted to all-residential use, with only a small handful retaining commercial uses, Twin Anchors being one of the most prominent. In order to properly tell the important story of commercial activities in Old Town, the district should be extended to include selected buildings on streets just outside the district's boundaries.

There is a precedent in the history of the Chicago Landmark designation program for the designation of landmark districts that have a core district combined with outlying, free-standing properties, or for extensions to already-existing districts. A contiguous extension to a Lincoln Park-area landmark district was the extension to the Mid-North District, extending the district along the north side of W. Belden St. to Clark St. in 2004. Non-contiguous districts or extensions have been done for areas with a significant history, but where more recent demolition and redevelopment have left significant buildings separated from each other by newer construction, vacant land, or older buildings without historic integrity. Examples of this kind of "non-contiguous district" include:

- North Kenwood District
- Oakland District
- Washington Square District with 2 Extensions
- Motor Row District

Commercial buildings in and around Old Town Triangle were devalued during the period of urban renewal, redevelopment and landmark designation that occurred during the 1960s and 1970s. A "Commercial Buildings" historic context statement that would provide the basis for outlying district extensions would help right this neglect.

Requirements for inclusion in Old Town Triangle District under commercial building historic context statement

Commercial, commercial-residential and light-industrial buildings have significance to the development history of Old Town Triangle. In order to be considered for inclusion in an expanded Old Town Triangle District, a building would need to meet the following requirements:

- They would need to be located within a block or two of the existing district along North Avenue, Wells Street or other streets adjacent to the district.
- They would need to date from before the start of World War II in 1941.
- They would need to have a history of use for retail, commercial or light industrial, either originally or through adaptive reuse.

Wells Street properties, their history and how they exemplify historic context statement

As a first effort to add commercial buildings to the Old Town Triangle District, it is proposed that a group of historic buildings in the 1600-block of North Wells Street be added to the existing district. The following section provides information about the buildings, including dates of construction, architectural styles, and known historic information, including owners and tenants. Other information about Wells Street is also provided for context.

An overview of Wells Street

Wells Street developed in the 19th century as a north-south street providing direct access from downtown Chicago to the North Side through horse and street car lines. As such, it developed with both residential and commercial buildings serving working-class ethnic neighborhoods, including North Town (from which Old Town would emerge as a distinct neighborhood in the 20th century).

The 1892 *Rascher's Atlas for Chicago* documents a number of the businesses that were on the 1600-block of Wells. The northeast corner of Wells and North had a carpenter's shop in the basement and a drug store on the first floor. Piper's bakery was at 1612 N. Wells, and the Heinemann harness shop was at 1615 N. Wells. A "German & English School & Academy" in an old brick house just north of Piper's, where Second City is today. A turner-hall, which was a German athletic and social club, occupied a rear building on this lot. A blacksmith shop was at the then-address of 642 Wells (now 1637 N. Wells) while a brush factory was at 646 Wells (now 1641 N. Wells), where Treasure Island Foods is located today. Although other buildings were not marked with specific uses, most of the rest of the block was occupied by store buildings, although many were wood frame rather than brick.

Throughout the 20th century, Wells Street served as one of the area's main commercial streets. The previous discussion of properties documented by fire insurance atlases provides details about businesses in the 1600 block of Wells during the early 20th century. By the 1950s, however, it had turned somewhat blighted. A short history of the street published in an Old Town shopping guide from 1969 noted,

> Old Town was not the shopping center it has since become [in 1969] - residents shopped at [art gallery owner] Frank Ryans' (then at 1653 North Wells), at Piper's Bakery (now That Steak Joynt) [1610 N. Wells] and later at the antique stores which began sprouting up in many of the old store fronts along the street. As I recall, Earl of Old Town [1615 North Wells] was an antique shop, Mrs. K of Rummage 'Round (now at 523 North Wells) was located where Caravan is now [1606 North Wells], and Miss Lipsky of Collector's Nook (now at 1712 North Wells) moved into the old Piper's shop when the bakery shut down.

The history continues,

> Richard Barnes' bookstore at 1628 [North Wells] is an institution in Old Town, along with Lenn Stann Interiors at 1700 and Avenue Flowers at 1832. This was the shopping center in years past. Groceries were bought from Slotten Brothers in the Crilly building, clothes cleaned at Gertrude's Cleaning and for a dinner out there was Twin Anchors on Eugenie and Sedgwick.

This emergence of Wells Street as a desirable shopping street in the post-World War II era appears to have started in the 1600-block of Wells, then spread south of North Avenue in the 1960s, when the street became a commercial "Old Town," becoming a well-known, sometimes infamous retail-dining-entertainment street that became a focus for Chicago's "hippy" culture late that decade and into the early 1970s. (Accompanying this report is the 1969 Old Town shopping guide referred to above.)

When designated in 1977, the Old Town Triangle District was extended to Wells Street north of Eugenie and included two commercial/residential buildings in the 1700-block. Buildings south of Eugenie were not included. Chicago building permit records, city directories, and other archival resources detail a picture of the 1600-block of North Wells Street as a charac-

teristic mix of residential and commercial buildings and uses during the late 19th and 20th centuries. As such, it exemplifies the intermix of uses and property types, both residential and commercial, that exemplify the larger Old Town Triangle area, but which has had less attention than the purely residential buildings that dominate the historic district proper.

Much of the 1600-block of North Wells has been redeveloped with newer buildings since the 1960s. These buildings include the Walgreens store on the northeast corner of Wells and North, the commercial building on the northwest corner of Wells and North that replaced in the 1970s most of the older structures that made up Piper's Alley, and the Treasure Island supermarket at 1639 N. Wells. Other more recent buildings on the block include the residential high-rise building at 1636-1640 N. Wells and the lower-scale commercial-residential building at the southwest corner of Wells and Eugenie. It should be noted that these modern buildings reinforced the commercial character of Wells through their inclusion of commercial spaces.

The historic buildings that survive on the 1600-block of Wells range from 1880s-era Italianate buildings to World War I-era Arts-and-Crafts structures to one mid-1920s commercial-residential building. All have commercial uses combined with residential, either as originally built or as later remodeled. As such, they are similar to commercial-residential storefront buildings that exist in the Old Town Triangle District, and they exemplify the historically close association of residences and shops in Old Town.

Target buildings on 1600-block North Wells

1615 N. Wells
620 Wells - pre 1909 address
Built circa 1885 - *guess based on Recorder of Deeds info and building style*
no historic building permit found - building is shown on Robinson's Atlas of 1886

Three-story brick commercial-residential building in the Italianate style facing the street.

The 1906 and 1935 Sanborns shows 2-story rear dwelling. According to Google Maps aerial, it is much altered with additions.

Ownership
Carl (Charles? Karl?) Heinemann appears to have owned the parcel since at least 1872. In that year he took out a "trust deed," or mortgage, on the property. He got a release from this trust deed in 1875. Heinemann then got another trust deed in 1885; the Recorder of Deeds ledger book notes, for the first time, the parcel's street address, "620 Wells." I suspect that 1885 is when Heinemann built the current front building using money from the trust deed. The rear building may date from 1872, just after the Fire.

"Charles" Heinemann died and an inventory of the property was recorded in December 1906. In 1907 George W. Heinemann appears to have consolidated ownership through quit claims from various family members. The Heinemann family appear to have held onto the property into the post-World War II era.

*Polks 1928-1929 criss-cross - commercial tenants in **bold***
Heinemann, G. W. (Ida E) harnessmaker
Maxwell, W.H. (Mary L)
Saunders, Clara
White, Winifred

1615 N. Wells was the long-time home and shop for the Heinemann family, prominent harnessmakers and leather-goods craftsmen. Karl / Charles Heinemann was a respected harness maker who made harnesses for the horses of neighboring baker Henry Piper, nearby clergyman Archbishop Feehan, brewer Joseph Theurer, and others.

The 1615 N. Wells Street building is perhaps best known today as the location of the Earl of Old Town bar and music venue. It operated from 1962 to 1984, owned and operated by Earl Pionke. In the wake of earlier folk-music venues such as the Gate of Horn, Pionke decided to offer live folk music as a draw for the bar. By the early 1970s, the Earl of Old Town had become a nationally-important folk-music venue, providing employment for well-known singers and songwriters such as Bonnie Koloc, Steve Goodman, and John Prine. Later historians of Chicago music have noted the club's importance, with the *Encyclopedia of Chicago* calling out the Earl of Old Town as one of the three most important folk-music venues in Chicago during the heyday of folk music in the 1960s and 1970s. (Articles concerning the Earl of Old Town are attached.)

Diane Gonzalez has written a short history of the building's ownership and use for the Old Town Triangle Association Newsletter - attached.

Photograph dated 1973 of east side of 1600-block of North Wells, showing the Earl of Old Town at 1615 N. Wells.

Photograph dated 1973 of 1615 and 1617 North Wells.

1617 N. Wells
622 Wells - pre 1909 address
Permit # 218, March 9, **1883**
Owner - **H. Eisert -** *Recorder of Deeds records show the owner as Henry Eisert*
3-story flats, 24 x 64 x 47

4-story brick apartment building in Italianate style - first-floor retail space probably added just after 1950 as its presence is not indicated in the 1950 Sanborn.

Building is shown on Robinson's Atlas of 1886.

1906 and 1935 Sanborn shows 3-story flats building at rear - still exists based on Google Maps aerial - front set of porches and stairs.

Ownership
Helena Thal sold the parcel to Henry Eisert in February 1883. (Ms. Thal was married to Eisert that same year.) Eisert then took out a building permit for the current building the following

month - see building permit information above. Henry Eisert then died in late 1891 or early 1892 (April 14, 1892, inventory recorded at Recorder of Deeds).

Henry W. Eisert (son) conveyed building to Helene Eisert in 1905. Helene Eisert died in late 1911 or early 1912 (inventory).

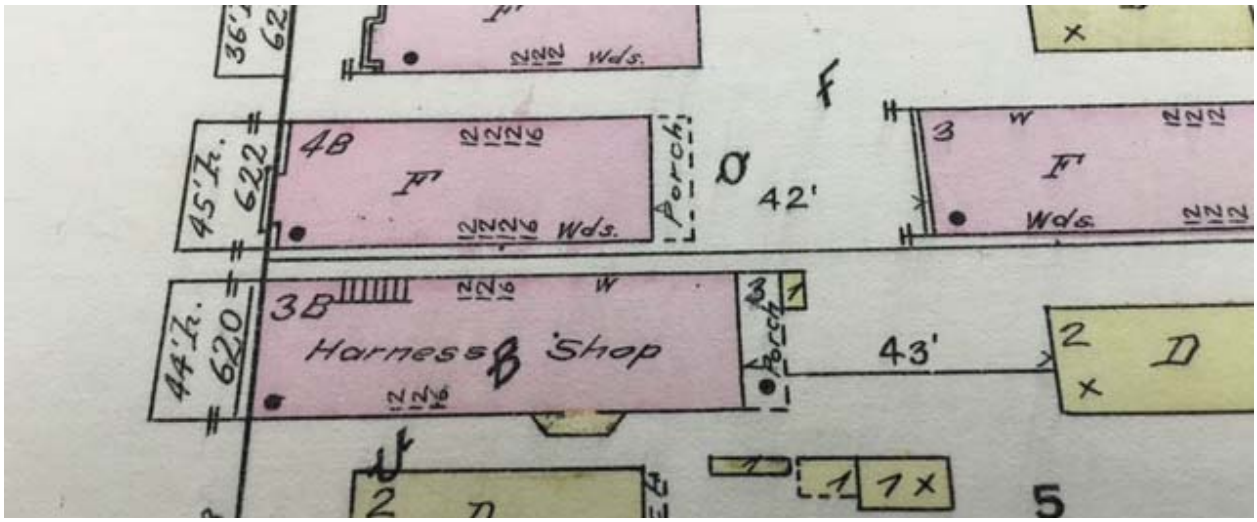
Bertha Eisert and her husband sold the building to _____ Ickler? (name is difficult to read in Recorder of Deeds ledger) in 1918. But then it seems to have been sold by the Eiserts again in 1919, this time to James A. Hual, who then sold it to William O. Olsen the following year, in 1919.

Olsen kept the building for about 4 years, then sold it to Regina Martin in 1922.

The title gets difficult to follow for the next 19 years (a problem with several of the Wells Street properties, perhaps due to the problems with property and finances during the Depression of the 1930s). But Guttman Brown acquires the property in 1941. After that, it becomes difficult to sort out what is happening with the building during the next 30 years.

Polks 1928-1929 criss-cross - includes everyone at this address, including rear building
David, Hannah Mrs.
Henehan, Anna Mrs.
Jacob, Isaac (Eliz)
Johnnan, Abraham (Martha)
Jordan, Henry (Eva)
Joseph, Alex (Lydia)
Joseph, Saml. (Mary)
Michael, Abraham (Rapck)
Siegas, John
Spondouris, H.

Diane Gonzalez has compiled research on owners and other people associated with the building - see attached.



1615 (then 620) North Wells (harness shop) and 1617 (then 622) North Wells as depicted in the 1892 *Rascher's Atlas of Chicago*

Photograph dated 1967 of 1615 and 1617 North Wells.

1628-30 N. Wells
633-635 Wells - pre 1909 address
Permit # 373, March 14, **1881**
Owner - **P. Shubert (Subert?) -** building permit misspells owner name - should be Herbert
3-story brick dwelling, 25 x 56 x 35

3-story brick apartment building in Italianate style - storefront appears added in 1951

Building is shown on Robinson's Atlas of 1886.

1906 and 1935 Sanborns list it as flats.

Sundry permit #47061 - September 1, 1950 - 1628 N. Wells - install steel beam
Sundry permit #56603 - April 20, 1951 - 1628 N. Wells - Alts. for tavern - I suspect this is when retail space was added

Later used as book store owned by Richard Barnes - see ownership below.

Ownership
Based on Recorder of Deeds ledgers, the original owner was Phillipina Herbert, not P. Shubert, as the building permit seems to indicate. She acquired the parcel from Gus W. Herbert in 1880. The 1882 city directory shows her living here. She sold the property to Levy Abraham in 1901. Abraham held the property until 1907, when it was sold to John Cassagga.

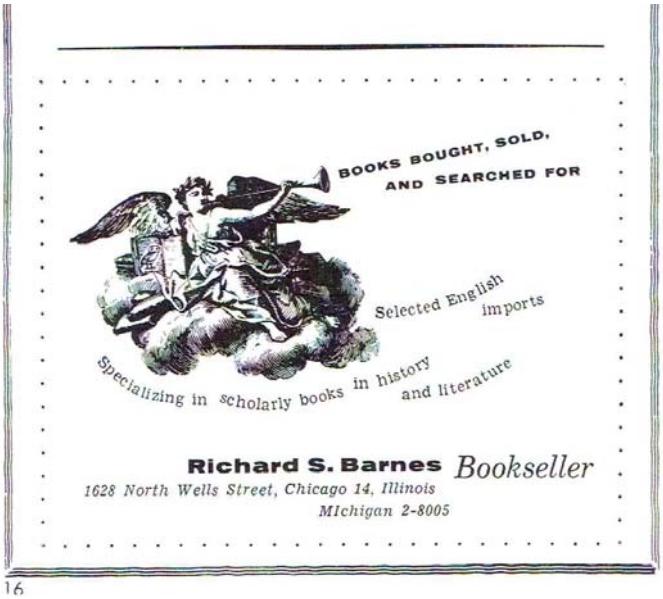
The Casaggas appear to have held the property until 1940, when it was acquired by Dolina Rouzan. (Louise Rouzan appears to be involved in the ownership at this time.) Then Marciel Rouzan sold the property to John A. Long in 1946, who sold it to Helen Vestin in 1947, who in turn sold it to W. Slaughter and his wife Velma in 1948.

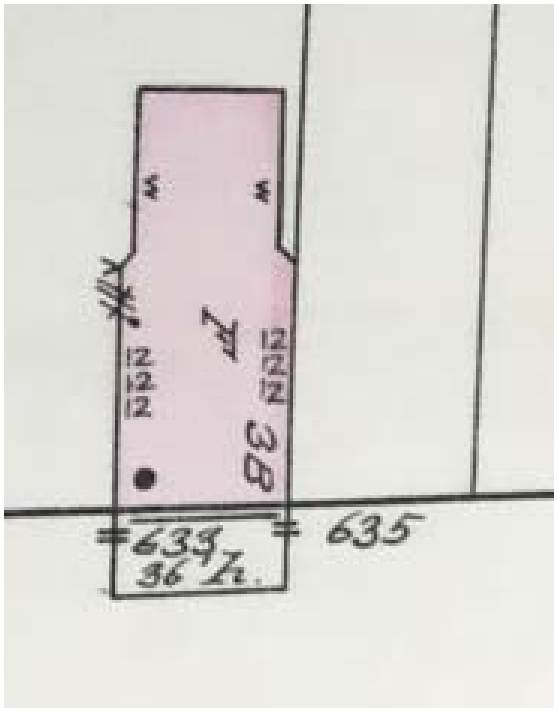
Wilbur M. Slaughter sold the property to Adelbert E. Haseltine in September 1951, apparently after the sundry permit for alterations to tavern - see sundry permit above. Haseltine sold it the next day to George D. Londos (Condos?), who then sold it to Richard S. & Catherine Barnes in 1953.

Barnes owned the property through the 1970s and into the 1980s, and was a locally-prominent bookseller, specializing in rare books. An obituary for Barnes is attached.

Polks 1928-1929 criss-cross
1628 N. Wells
Casazzu, Dorfenia
Casuzza, John
Delamaria, Lawrence P. (Irene C)

1630 N. Wells
Bussow, Carl (Fredia)
Corsiglia, Louis (Rose)





Above: 1628-1630 (then 633) North Wells as depicted in the 1892 *Rascher's Atlas of Chicago.*

Left: Advertisement for Richard S. Barnes Bookseller from Old Town Art Fair program.

early Old Town leader

Tribune

THURSDAY MAY 3, 2001

OBITUARIES

RICHARD S. BARNES, 87

Veteran bookseller shared passion for rare volumes

By Matthew Walberg
Tribune staff reporter

Richard S. Barnes, 87, knew his books and knew what made them valuable.

"A good book is one that is about something," he once told members of the Caxton Club, a Chicago literary society. "And the less it is about, and the less there is about it in the form of other books, the better."

Mr. Barnes, an Evanston bookseller sought by libraries across the United States and Europe as a source of rare books, died of heart disease Sunday, April 29, at Rush North Shore Hospital in Skokie.

He focused on scholarly books and was less interested in first editions of famous literary works. "If there was a book about how to make an elevator run in 1901, or some small episode of something that there wasn't a lot about, that's what he liked," said his wife, Pat.

Born on Long Island, N.Y., Mr. Barnes inherited his love of books from his grandfather, a publisher who traveled the country selling textbooks.

"Books were the only things that he was ever totally passionate about," his wife said.

He earned his bachelor's degree from Harvard, his master's from the University of California at Berkeley and then, while pursuing his doctoral thesis at Yale, he started a side business selling used books.

Mr. Barnes opened his first store near Dearborn and Division Streets in Chicago but soon moved it to 1628 N. Wells St., where it would be a fixture in the neighborhood for three decades. During the 1950s and 1960s, Mr. Barnes and his first wife, Catherine Watkins, fought to protect the Old Town neighborhood from being razed for new construction.

Several years after his wife died, he met Pat at his store, and the two married in 1971. In the late 1970s, they moved the store, Richard S. Barnes & Co., first to 909 Foster St. in Evanston and then to 821 Foster.

"I'm a book collector, and that's how I met him," Pat Barnes said. "I was the collector and he was the seller, and that was the only friction."

A powerfully built man who often wore a well-tied bow tie when he went out, Mr. Barnes was highly educated and deeply opinionated, with a wit as hilarious as it was caustic, his wife said. Though he often left people doubled over from laughter, "you wanted to shake him sometimes," she said.

Other survivors include a son Roderic; stepdaughters Deb Sherer and Sandra Brown; stepsons Nick Bothfeld and Hank Bothfeld; sisters Rosemary Atkins, Louise Hall and Elizabeth Byrd; and 13 grandchildren.

A memorial service will be held at 3 p.m. May 12 at the Presbyterian Home Chapel, 3200 Grant St., Evanston.

Obituary for Richard S. Barnes, long-time owner of 1628-1630 N. Wells.

1645 N. Wells
650 Wells - pre 1909 address for lot
Permit # 10470
N38, p. 161
October 7, **1926**
Owner - **E. Ferrin**
Architect - **Dubin & Eisenberg** - *Note: The Dubin is either George H. Dubin or Henry Dubin. They both were associated with Dubin & Eisenberg before founding Dubin and Dubin.*
Builder - **H.M. Lipman**
3-story brick stores & apartments, 238 x 37 x 38
Estimated cost - $63,000
Final report - February 9, 1927

3-story brick commercial/residential building in Arts-and-Crafts style with Art Deco ornament

Robinson's atlas shows a rear brick building with a big front yard. This was demolished for the current building.

Architect
George H. Dubin (1890-1958) was born in Denver, Colorado, and was educated with a B.S. from the University of Illinois. He worked for the firm of Dubin & Eisenberg before joining his brother Henry in the office of Dubin & Dubin in 1932. He designed the Orphan Home for the

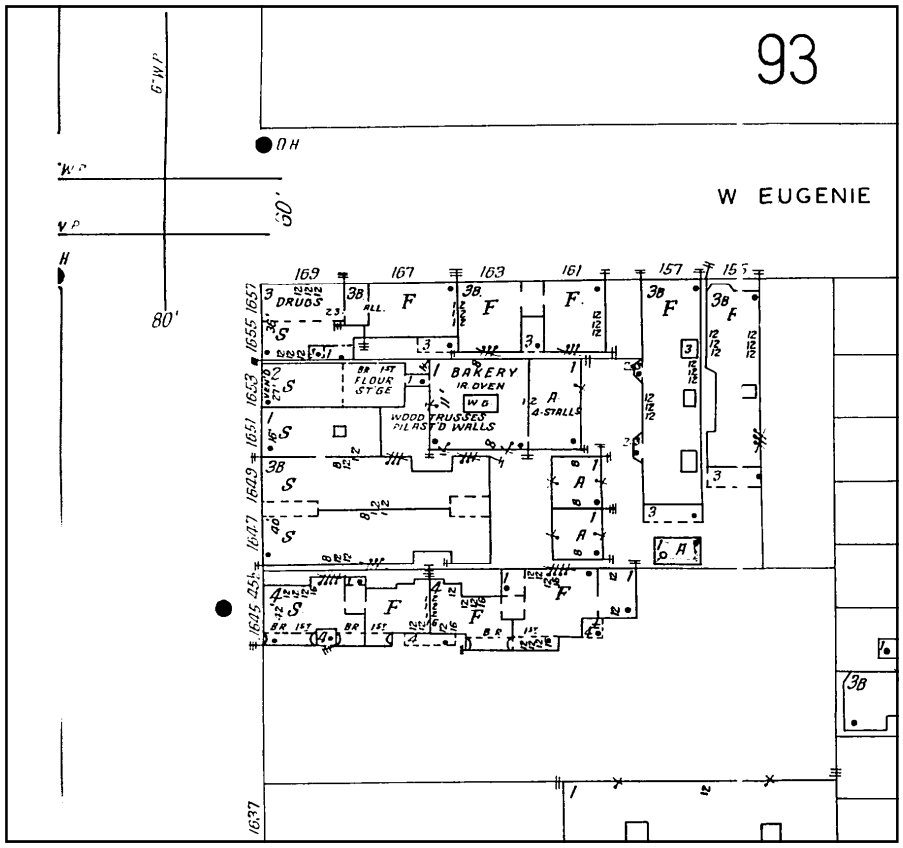
Daughters of Zion, Chicago, in 1921, a synagogue for Augudath Achim Congregation, Chicago, in 1927, and an apartment building on Marine Drive in 1951.

Henry Dubin (1892- 1963) was born in Chicago and educated at the University of Illinois, where he earned a B.Arch. in 1915. He worked as a draftsman for Holabird & Roche from 1916 to 1917, then in 1919 went to work for the firm of Dubin & Eisenberg. In 1932, he left this firm and joined his brother George in the office of Dubin & Dubin. Besides a number of the buildings mentioned under George (above), Henry designed the Sidney Hillman Health Centre for Amalgamated Clothing Workers, 333 S. Ashland, Chicago, in 1955. Dubin & Dubin also designed apartment buildings at 7337 and 7345 South Shore Dr. and 340 Wellington Ave. His home in Highland Park was touted as one of the first steel-framed single family houses constructed in America and won the 1931 House Beautiful award.

Ownership
Henry H. Eisert owned the property in 1922, when he sold it to David H. Burkland. Burkland then sold it to Gottlieb Levin and his wife Bessie in 1925, a year before the current building was built. The Levins appear to own the building through and past World War II, but the ledger record is tangled.

*Polks 1928-1929 criss-cross - commercial tenant in **bold***
1645 N. Wells
Hagerstrom, M.G. (Minnie)
Lalley, Henry (Anna)
Lalley, Kath
Lee, Y. Tung (Tom)
Levin, Gottleib (Bessie)
Milinovich, George barber and beauty shop

1645 1/2 N. Wells
Blackmore, John
Grey, H.C. (Virginia)
Hartley, G.W. (Grace)
Mehl, M.J. (Pearl)
Odum, Orville (Maud)
Strauss, Alex (Lillian)
Tinsley, Murrell (Beatrice)



Buildings at 1645, 1647 - 1653, and 1655-1657 North Wells as depicted in 1935 Sanborn Fire Insurance Atlas

Photograph dated 1973 showing 1645 North Wells (right) and 1647-1653 North Wells.

1647-1653 N. Wells
652-658 Wells - pre 1909 addresses for lot
Permit # 48908
N15, p. 359
March 2, **1918**
Owner - **Henry G. Eisert** - *Note: This appears to be the son of Henry Eisert of 1617 N. Wells.*
Architect - **Edward Benson**
Builder - **J. H. Walgren**
2 & 3-story front addition & alterations, 83 x 25 x 44
Note: No original building permit, just this front addition permit.

Three-story, one-story, and two-story buildings, all interconnected and designed in Arts-and-Crafts style

Robinson's Atlas shows a double brick building at 652-654 (old address) Wells with a party wall between. About 15 feet in front between street and buildings. These buildings may still be there, but with 3-story addition in front.

Building permits exist for earlier buildings at 1649-1657 N. Wells from 1875, 1877 and 1889.

Architect
Edward & Arthur E Benson Architects 51531 N. Clark (Edward Benson & Son) Architects. Edward (1868-1939) was born in Sweden. Arrived in U.S. age 2. He lived in Melrose Park and was involved in village affairs, including serving as president of the village board of trustees. Supposedly Edward designed over 1000 commercial buildings and homes during his 40 year career. Many were in Edgewater, and the Edgewater Historical Society published a 2010 article

that is the best information known about the architect - attached. Architect son Edward Jr. died before his dad in 1937.

Ownership
Henry G. Eisert bought the parcel, apparently with existing buildings, from Arvinia Fischer and her husband in 1916, two years before the expansion and alterations covered by the 1918 building permit - see above.

Henry G. Eisert was the publisher and board chairman of the *American Poultry Journal*, where he joined the staff in 1908. He was 78 when he died in 1962.

The ownership of this parcel seems to be hooked at that point with the ownership of the parcel to the south at 1645 N. Wells. Eisert sold this parcel to David H. Burkland in 1921, just as he did 1645 N. Wells. Burkland in turn sold both parcels to Gottlieb Levin and his wife Bessie in 1925.

A land trust, Liberty Trust & Savings Bank trust 2765, acquired this property from Bessie Levin in 1931. Liberty transferred the parcel to Ben Kaye in 1933, who then transferred it back to a different land trust, 1312, at Liberty.

The Guardian Life Insurance Co. got the building in 1939, after a period that is hazy in the ledger books. It then sold the building to the E.H. Building Co. in 1941. Albert Rosenthal then acquired the building in 1951.

*Polks 1928-1929 criss-cross - commercial tenants in **bold***
1647 N. Wells
Cormier, Dora Mrs. art gds
Apartments
(A) Davis, R.A.
(B) Barker, J.C. (Ethel)
(C) Sague, Mario (Edith)
(D) King, Wm.
(E) Krispin, John (Helen)
(F) Sale, C.R. (Barbara)
(G) Griswold, R.D. (Verna)
(H) Vacant
(I) Brattain, Richard (Kathryn)
(J) Voggenreiteo, Jos (Hannah)
(K) Russell, Geo
(L) Vacant
(M) Berglund, Alf (Mary)
(N) Larsen, Sophie
(O) Deems, Frank (Jennie)

(P) Fiering, R. T.

1649 N. Wells - Vacant

1651 N. Wells - **McFarland, J.A. restr**

1653 N. Wells
Fatler (Faller?), Cath R.
Johnson, John (Nellie)
Mary Katherine Bakery - 1-story bakery rear wing is visible on 1935 Sanborn
Meyers, Cath Mrs.

Photograph dated 1973 of 1647-1653 N. Wells.

1655 - 1657 N. Wells / 161-169 W. Eugenie
660-662 Wells - pre 1909 addresses for lot
Permit # 20997
N__, p. 564
April 16, **1914**
Owner - **T. Sparbro**
Architect - **J. Speyer**
builder - not let
3-story brick store & flats, 32 x 84 x 43
Estimated cost - $18,000
Final Report - January 9, 1915?

Three-story corner apartment building with retail facing Wells - built in Arts-and-Crafts style

Frame double building at 658-660 Wells (se corner Wells and Eugenie) in 1906 Sanborn

Architect
Julius Speyer (1845-1916) designed this building two years before his death. His son Oscar P was also in practice with him (Speyer & Speyer; also Speyer & Son).

Ownership
Amelia and Antonio Sharbaro owned the property as early as 1913. They then got a trust deed in 1914, probably to finance the current building. The Sharbaros deeded the property to their son, Antonio Sharbaro, Jr., in 1932, who then, in 1937, quit claimed it back to his father.

Antonio Sharbaro died in 1936 or 1937 (inventory). The title gets difficult to sort out after that.

*Polks 1928-1929 criss-cross - commercial tenants in **bold***
1655 N. Wells - **Ernie's Motor Service**
1657 N. Wells - Vacant

161 W. Eugenie
Egan, C.E. (Anne)
Wilkinson, M.J.

163 W. Eugenie
Bradley, C.H. (Josephine)
Schuenemann, B.H. Mrs.

167 W. Eugenie
Glass, O.M. (Christine G)
Stark, J.E. (Marie)

169 W. Eugenie
Gampert, Christ (Norean)

****
List of commercial tenants on 1600-block of Wells in 1928-1929 criss cross directory

- 1600 - National Tea Co.
- 1602 - Stephan Czupon restaurant
- 1604 - Jacob Lisitza grocer
- 1605 - Chandler Costume Shop
- 1606 - Frank J. Horvath tailor
- 1610-20 - H. Piper Co. bakers
- 1611 - Dramer's Bird Store
- 1615 - G. W. Heinemann harnessmaker
- 1622-26 - Gold Coast Garage and J. R. Murphy restaurant
- 1627 - Reliable Awning Co.
- 1631 - J. R. Murphy restaurant
- 1635 - Herman Shade Laboratories
- 1636 - Illuinato Forti leather goods
- 1638 - Peter Nochipor tobacco
- 1639 - Packard Motor Car Co. of Chicago
- 1642 - Ferdinand Rohn tailor, John Disimone barber
- 1645 - George Milinovich barber and beauty shop
- 1646 - Samuel DiBella shoe repair
- 1647 - Mrs. Dora Cormier art goods
- 1648 - Karl Feige carpenter contractor
- 1650 - Beiderman Brothers laundry
- 1651 - J.A. McFarland restaurant
- 1653 - Mary Katherine Bakery

- 1654-56 Pasquale Giomio soft drinks
- 1655 - Ernie's Motor Service

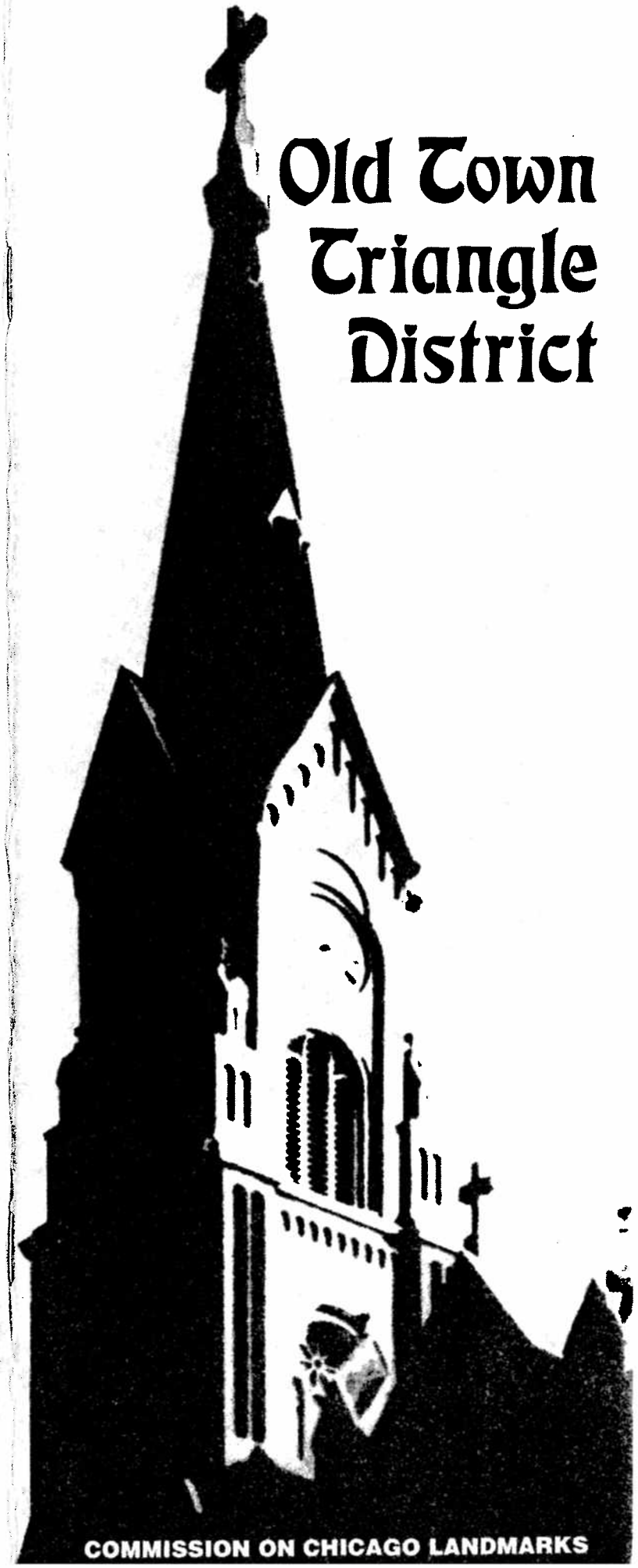
1935 Sanborn lists druggist at southeast corner of Wells and Eugenie

****

Additional information about the 1600-block of North Wells is attached as an appendix.

Prepared by Terry Tatum and Diane Gonzalez on behalf of the Old Town Triangle Association April 3, 2017, revised May 1, 2017.

Old Town Triangle District



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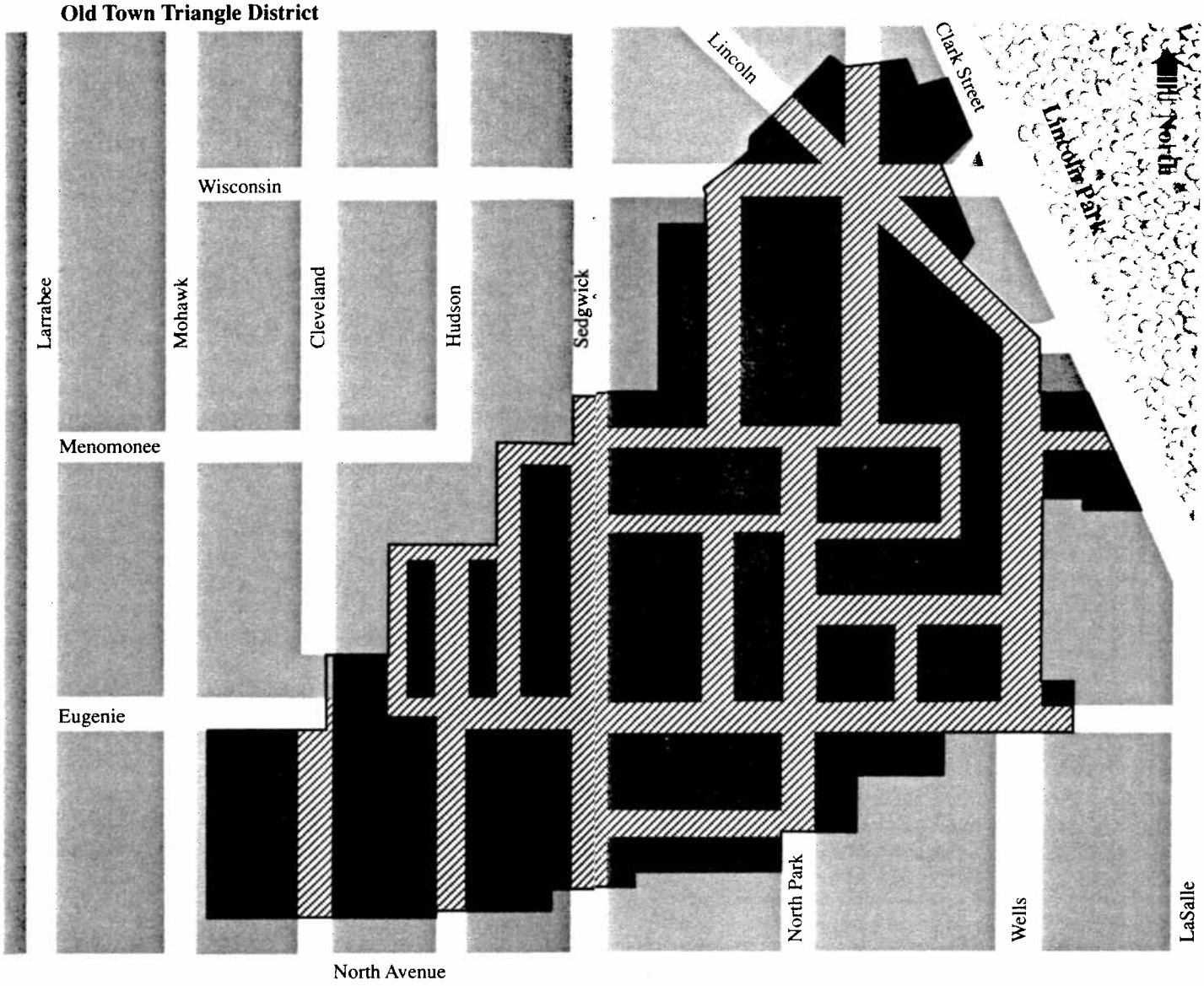
The Commission on Chicago Landmarks, whose nine members are appointed by the Mayor, was established in 1968 by city ordinance. It is responsible for recommending to the City Council that individual buildings, sites, objects, or entire districts be designated as Chicago Landmarks.

In order to ensure the protection of these landmarks, the Commission must approve in advance any work that requires a city permit, including additions, artificial siding, curb cuts, demolition, exterior alterations, fences, new construction, signage, or skylights. Ordinary repairs do not require a permit or Commission review.

The Commission maintains research files on individual landmarks and landmark districts, which are available to the public. The staff also provides technical assistance to building owners and architects.



Early Development

In the mid-1800s, Chicago's population was increased by a large immigration from the southern German states. Many were Roman Catholics seeking an opportunity to practice their religion and retain their individual customs without the interference they had experienced in Germany. The earliest German-speaking immigrants in Chicago were mainly farmers and semi-skilled workers. They settled on the Near North Side around Chicago Avenue and west of Clark Street near the factories on the Chicago River. At Chicago and Wabash avenues, these industrious Germans quickly built a church, St. Joseph's, which was consecrated in 1846.

During the next five years, many of the farmers in St. Joseph's parish moved north beyond the city limits, to the meadows above North Avenue and west of the swamp which was later drained and transformed into Lincoln Park. There they grew celery, potatoes, and cabbage and kept cows and chickens. Michael Diversey, part owner of the Diversey and Lill brewery at Chicago and Michigan avenues and a prominent member of St. Joseph's parish, owned a great deal of this farmland. In 1851, this area was annexed by the city of Chicago. William B. Ogden, the first mayor of Chicago, bought property here in 1856. Among other prominent owners of land in the area were William Rand and Andrew McNally, map publishers.

The population grew quickly and the area acquired the name North Town. (Use of the term Old Town did not begin until after World War II.) Small shopkeepers from St. Joseph's parish moved north to provide goods for North Town's residents. The parish was expanding northward due to a new wave of German immigrants. These newcomers were businessmen, journalists, and educators who formed here a solid middle-class sector of the German community. They had left Germany after their unsuccessful attempts to gain power for the middle classes during the aborted 1848 revolution against the nobility. Thus they were called "Forty-eighters." Many Forty-eighters settled to the east of Clark Street, enlarging the population of St. Joseph's parish and causing this northward expansion.

Until 1852, the Germans who moved to North Town continued to travel back to St. Joseph's on Sundays. But as the population increased, the Catholics in the vicinity of North Avenue and Larrabee Street petitioned for a new parish nearer their homes. In July of 1852, the Reverend Anthony Kopp, pastor of St. Joseph's, presided over a meeting of prospective parishioners. During the meeting, Michael Diversey offered to deed a plot of ground at North and Hudson avenues for a new church. In four months a frame church, forty by sixty feet, was built at a cost of $730 and was dedicated to Saint Michael, in honor of Diversey. A single bell in the small cupola called the parishioners to worship. In 1854, a school was built on the plot of land north of the church. Soon the modest church and parochial school became integral parts of the community.

The members of St. Michael's Church were from forty-nine different German states. Their customs and temperaments were as varied as their dialects, creating on a smaller scale the nationalism that prevailed in the German homeland. The dissension among the peoples of North Town inhibited the development of a sense of solidarity until Reverend John Mueller, a Redemptorist Father, took charge of St. Michael's Church in 1860. He encouraged the development of community spirit, using the church as a unifying institution. Loyalty to St. Michael's overcame the clannishness of earlier years, and the Redemptorist Fathers channeled the energies of the parish into building much-needed community facilities.

As the community developed, the population became more varied. The Scotch-Irish-oriented Presbyterian Seminary of the Northwest at Fullerton Avenue drew Irish truck farmers to the area around Clark Street. Here too settled Italians from Lombardy, one of the north Italian states. Several settlers of French origin purchased land west of the Italians, closer to the Germans around St. Michael's. The church was enlarged to accommodate the increasing population, and a two-story frame school and a home for the priests were built in 1861. In the same year, the Sisters of Notre Dame were invited to come from Milwaukee and teach the young girls of the parish. A convent was built for the nuns. In 1866, a separate school building for girls was erected. The cornerstone for a new, larger church was laid that same year at the corner of Eugenie Street and Cleveland Avenue diagonally across the block from the old church. This new church, the predecessor to the existing structure, was completed in 1869. A year later, a new rectory for the priests was built to the south of the church, facing Cleveland Avenue. St. Michael's was firmly established as the central institution of the area before the Chicago Fire of 1871 destroyed most of the city.

Early Buildings

St. Michael's Church was built of locally produced red brick. The parishioners would have preferred to use stone, but at that time the working-class people of the parish could not afford it. Still, the church was of grand proportions. The parishioners watched proudly while Mr. Walbaum, the builder, used a steam engine to hoist the bricks and mortar for the 200-foot tower that rose at the east end of the church front. This gable-roofed entrance facade contained three doors with elaborate windows above. Limestone trim accented the windows and the niches between them, and simplified versions of the same motifs were used on the other walls of the church. The construction of this second St. Michael's cost $130,000.

The parishioners who attended St. Michael's were either truck farmers or semi-skilled laborers who made shoes, cut cloth, brewed beer, joined wood, loaded grain elevators on the Chicago River, or laid rails for the Chicago and Rock Island lines. They lived in Chicago cottages, a particular kind of building suitable to the rapid development of the city. These cottages were built by a method that is known as balloon framing but was then called simply "Chicago construction." Balloon framing was a new method of construction that used pre-cut boards (2x4s) and machine manufactured nails. Both materials resulted in the industrialization of home building, for boards and nails could be produced abundantly and cheaply. Frames could be prefabricated and houses could be produced at reasonable cost in virtually no time. As the population of the city increased, these cottages were built side by side on narrow lots.

The cottages were small, often no more than twenty by thirty feet, and one or one-and-a-half stories high. The earliest cottages were built on log footings but later ones were put on high, common-brick foundations that formed raised basements. Often the basements were used for storage of coal and vegetables for winter. The rectangular balloon frame was sheathed in pine clapboards and topped with a pitched roof with gables facing front and rear. A broad flight of steps led to the entrance which was usually placed to one side of a pair of windows. Above, in the gable, was a window lighting the attic story. The ornament, true in form to the then-popular Greek revival style, was modest, accentuating with simple motifs the door and window openings and the pediment created by the gable. These cottages were well suited to the simple needs of Chicago's growing population.

These two cottages at 220 and 222 W. Willow Street are typical of the type that used to house the working class people of North Town.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

The Fire

The Chicago Fire began on the evening of October 8, 1871, and swept north, destroying nearly everything in its path. North Town's frame houses quickly burned to the ground. The inhabitants gathered in the streets around St. Michael's and watched their new school, rectory, and convent crumble. Flames engulfed the new church and the building was gutted. When the parishioners returned after the fire had died down, only the double brick walls on the south, east, and west ends of the church remained. Even the new church bells lay melted on the ground. The disaster did not dampen the community spirit among the parishioners for they gathered and began to clean up the debris immediately. They shoveled ashes into the cellar space beneath the church and set to work building a temporary place of worship: a lean-to propped against an old garden wall. Within a month, a more substantial frame structure facing Cleveland Avenue was completed for use as a church and schoolhouse until St. Michael's could be repaired. One year and three days after the fire, St. Michael's was restored to its original form.

The carefully carved wooden trim on many of the buildings within the Old Town Triangle District reflects the European tradition of skilled craftmanship brought to Chicago by early immigrants. Spindle railings, curved bracket supports, and unusual window trim add charm to the older frame buildings.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

St. Michael's Church has been redecorated repeatedly. These embellishments and alterations reveal the German heritage of the parish. In 1881, the interior was decorated by Karl Lambrecht, an artist from New York. The interior has been repainted at least four times, but the current color scheme of off-white, light blue, and gold is reminiscent of Bavarian Baroque church interiors, popular throughout Austria and parts of Germany. The panels of the ceiling are painted with gilded interlacing designs. Gilt accents the ribs of the vaulting and the supporting compound columns.

In 1902, the church acquired five altars. The Romanesque style high altar, fifty-six feet tall, contains a representation of St. Michael in his conquest over the fallen angels. The altar to Our Lady of Perpetual Help contains the picture of Our Lady which is said to have miraculously survived the 1871 fire. The parishioners are particularly fond of this altar. There are two large oil paintings by Hans Schmitz covering the walls on either side of the sanctuary. The extraordinarily tall stained-glass windows of the church were brought from the Mayer Window Art Institute of Munich in 1902. Later, St. Michael's acquired fourteen carved wooden stations of the cross designed by a Swiss artist named Schmalz; they are colorfully painted and typically German.

The exterior was redone in the late 1880s by Chicago architect Herman J. Gaul, who at that time also added the steeple to the tower. In 1913, the eight-foot-tall stone statue of St. Michael was acquired from Bavaria and set in the central niche of the entrance facade.

Post-Fire History

During the late 1800s, the area around St. Michael's remained populated by working-class families. Many residents worked north of Fullerton in what was then the town of Lake View (annexed by the city in 1889). Several large manufacturing plants were located there: the Deering Harvester Works, the North Chicago Malleable Iron Works, and the Northwestern Terra Cotta Works. Many other residents worked in the factories along the Chicago River. Some brewed Meister Brau at the Peter Hand Brewery on North Avenue and others worked in the large dress-trimming factory that was located on North Park Avenue.

These people had quickly rebuilt their homes after the fire. The first to be rebuilt were balloon frames but a city fire ordinance outlawed wooden buildings after 1874. Some of the frame cottages can still be found in the area. As the

This photograph, taken shortly after the Chicago Fire of 1871, shows the ruins of St. Michael's Church. The double walls on the south, east, and west ends of the church withstood the fire. Within one year and three days after the fire, the industrious parishioners of St. Michael's Church rebuilt the damaged structure. Chicago cottages like the one pictured in the center of the photograph dotted the area within days after the fire and were sometimes referred to as "relief shanties."
(Courtesy of Chicago Historical Society)

owners grew more prosperous, they often moved the original frame homes to the rear of their lots and in their place built brick cottages of more substantial quality.

In the early 1870s, the land between the lake and the eastern part of the North Town area became Lincoln Park. Previously it had been used as a cemetery. With the removal of the graves and the establishment of an attractive recreation area, the Near North Side became a more desirable place to live. Two reminders of the early use of this land still exist: the Couch Tomb just north of the Chicago Historical Society and the David Kennison memorial across from Wisconsin at Clark Street. The well-planned walking paths and waterways of the park drew new residents to the area. Their homes gradually replaced the truck farms. The new residences reflected the prosperity of their owners, many of whom were leaders in the German community. The vegetable gardens gave way to lawns, fruit trees, and flower gardens.

As early as 1872, large mansions and brick- and stone-faced townhouses began to line LaSalle Street reaching toward North Town. In the late 1870s and 1880s, developers began to build multiple-family row houses in the eastern

These Queen Anne style row houses located at 164-172 Eugenie Street are typical of the sort built near Lincoln Park in the late 1900s. The interesting rooflines, the asymmetrical window arrangement, and the variety of building materials make these houses some of the most elaborate in the Old Town Triangle District.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

portion of North Town. Many of these houses still exist and are typical of the urban housing that characterized American cities at this time: flat- or bay-fronted, tall and narrow in proportion, and usually two or three stories tall. As in the Chicago cottages, a broad stairway leads to the first-floor entrance. Bays, when used, rise the height of the building. Sandstone lintels, sometimes decorated with incised patterns, top the windows, and stringcourses of sandstone divide the stories. The contrast of this material with the surface of the wall creates variety and texture in the facades. Ornate cornices detailed with dentils and supported by brackets almost invariably top the buildings.

The building forms of the 1870s and 1880s did not vary much, but stylistic differences add variety to these row houses. The two most popular architectural styles were the Italianate and the Queen Anne styles. The Italianate style is marked by exaggeratedly tall, narrow proportioning. The wall planes are, in general, simply-treated flat surfaces. The lintels of the window and door openings are often arched and are frequently quite ornate. Cornices supported by brackets are common.

The Queen Anne style relies on the interplay of color and texture, and the use of bands of contrasting building materials is typical. Decorative terra-cotta moldings and tiles with small, classically-derived patterns are integral elements of the style. The facades of Queen Anne buildings tend to be asymmetrical and the roof lines picturesque, displaying gables and dormers.

Some of the early well-to-do residents of North Town built their homes in a meadow on what is today North Lincoln Park West. Here, in 1874, Frederick Wacker built his home at what is now 1838 North Lincoln Park West. Wacker was a Forty-eighter. He earned his living as a brewer; before establishing his own brewery, he worked with Michael Diversey. Wacker was a founding member of organizations such as the Sharpshooter's Association and the German Singing Society and was highly regarded as a leader in the German community.

The unusual house that Frederick Wacker built has a fairy tale quality about it. It has all the characteristics of a Swiss chalet: a wide over-hanging veranda supported by curved brackets, openwork hoods above the windows, and carved wooden spindle railings flanking the broad stairway. Although other houses in the area utilize interesting carved wooden trim, none approaches the picturesque quality of the Wacker house. While the Wacker home was being built, the family lived over the carriage house at the back of the property. This house was later brought to the front of the property at 1836 North Lincoln Park West and remodeled by Wacker's son Charles. Charles was one of the directors of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and later was chairman of the Chicago Plan Commission for seventeen years.

North Lincoln Park West is lined with other interesting buildings. One of the earliest is the apartment building to the north of the Wacker homes built by a brick manufacturer, Nathan Eisendrath, in 1873. Its formal character is derived from the French style window heads and plain treatment of the brick facade. To the south of the Wacker

The Wacker homes, standing side by side on North Lincoln Park West, are particularly quaint. The "gingerbread" trim on the larger house is an exceptional example of the fine craftmanship found in the construction of many of the homes in the district.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

The five houses at 1826-34 North Lincoln Park West were designed by Louis Sullivan.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

homes are five brick row houses designed by Louis Sullivan and built in 1885. These simplified Queen Anne houses are highlighted with typical Sullivanesque terra-cotta ornament. Farther down the street on the northwest corner of Menomonee and Lincoln Park West stands a simple frame farmhouse built in 1874. The "Angel Door" house across the street at 1817 North Lincoln Park West, built by a French architect, is adorned with two unusual wooden doors depicting angels. They were carved by the first owner's son, Max Tonk. The diversity of these early buildings makes the block particularly charming. Between 1876 and 1879, John B. Mallers and Benjamin V. Page developed their properties in the 1800 block of Lincoln Avenue. The row houses for Mallers's property were designed by the architect John J. Flanders.

This house at 1802 North Lincoln Park West was built in 1874.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

The 1880s saw continued development in the eastern area of North Town. Most of the homes on Orleans were built in that decade. In 1885, the largest single developer in the area, Daniel F. Crilly, began his residential project. Crilly, a South Side contractor, purchased the parcel of land from Wells Street to North Park Avenue between Eugenie and St. Paul streets from Florimond Canda, one of the French settlers in the area. (St. Paul Street was originally named Florimond Street after Canda.) Crilly put a street through the middle of the block from St. Paul to Eugenie and in 1885 developed this new street which he named Crilly Court. On one side of the street are apartments and on the other are row houses. Above the doors of the apartment buildings are carved the names of Crilly's children: Isabelle, Oliver, Erminie, and Edgar. Crilly developed the 1700 block of North Park Avenue in the years between 1888 and 1893. In 1893, the apartment buildings

A view of the west side of Crilly Court. These simplified Queen Anne style row houses were constructed in 1885 as part of Daniel Crilly's project to develop the entire 1600 block between North Park Avenue and Wells Street. The unique character of the block has been retained and today the Crilly buildings are a particularly popular place to live.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

with store fronts on Wells Street were completed. Several interesting people are said to have lived in Crilly's block. Eugene Field, journalist and poet, was one, and George K. Spoor, an early movie producer known for his Keystone Cops, was another.

The new residences in the area were interspersed with coach houses belonging to wealthy homeowners who lived south of Lincoln Park in an area called the Gold Coast. North Town's proximity to the Gold Coast made it an ideal location for the coach houses which often contained second-floor space for lodging. Many of the coach houses still exist today and have been converted into family residences.

Gardens such as this one at 1802 North Lincoln Park West are proudly displayed during the annual Old Town Art Fair.
(Barbara Crane, photographer)

A Town Within A City

The German cultural heritage of the community bound together the residents of the newly developed areas and the older settlers around St. Michael's. Many of the new middle-class residents, who were predominantly Protestant, attended St. James German Evangelical Church at 1718 North Park Avenue. German was spoken in both churches well into the twentieth century, effectively maintaining the ethnicity of the community. Strongly supported secular institutions also helped maintain the German culture. The Lincoln Park Cycling Club, which stood where the Lincoln Hotel now stands, and the Germania Club at Clark Street and Germania Place were popular gathering places for various German societies. Zahner's Tavern, which was located at the southwest corner of Wells and Eugenie streets, provided food and drink for its regular clientele. North Avenue was lined with German shops: Moll's Meat Market, the Wieland Cafe, and Kuhn's Delicatessen, which is now located farther north on Lincoln Avenue. Piper's Bakery at 1610 Wells Street was another German favorite. Sports were also an integral part of the local social life. A focal point of the community was the *Turn Gemeinde*, a gymnastic hall on Wells Street. In 1898, a swimming facility, Fritz Meyers' Natatorium, was opened nearby. The Menomonee Club at Willow Street and North Park Avenue was a bowling alley for the local enthusiasts. All these facilities, along with the German language newspapers that circulated throughout the area, helped maintain the German culture in North Town.

Old Town Today

In the early 1900s, North Town stopped growing. An elderly man interviewed in 1928 said that the area had not visibly changed since he had bought his hat store on North Avenue in 1896. But the neighborhoods to the south and west of the area changed as a result of the construction of the elevated railroad in 1900. It dissected the neighborhoods through which it passed, and these areas witnessed a decline. The Swedes to the south of North Town moved out, and the area eventually became a predominantly low-income Black community. Many of the Germans around St. Michael's moved farther north to St. Alphonsus' parish on North Lincoln Avenue.

The streets to the west of North Town became populated with new waves of immigrants: Poles, Slovaks, Serbians, Roumanians, Hungarians, and Italians. Small apartment buildings were converted to rooming houses and thus accommodated the influx of this heterogeneous population, and the area became densely populated. Light manufacturing downgraded the character of Halsted Street, once lined with neighborhood shops. The deterioration of the neighborhoods west of North Town had its inevitable effect on North Town. Housing in the area was not as carefully maintained as before. Asphalt siding and other inappropriate materials were sometimes applied to the exterior walls in an effort to "modernize" the older buildings.

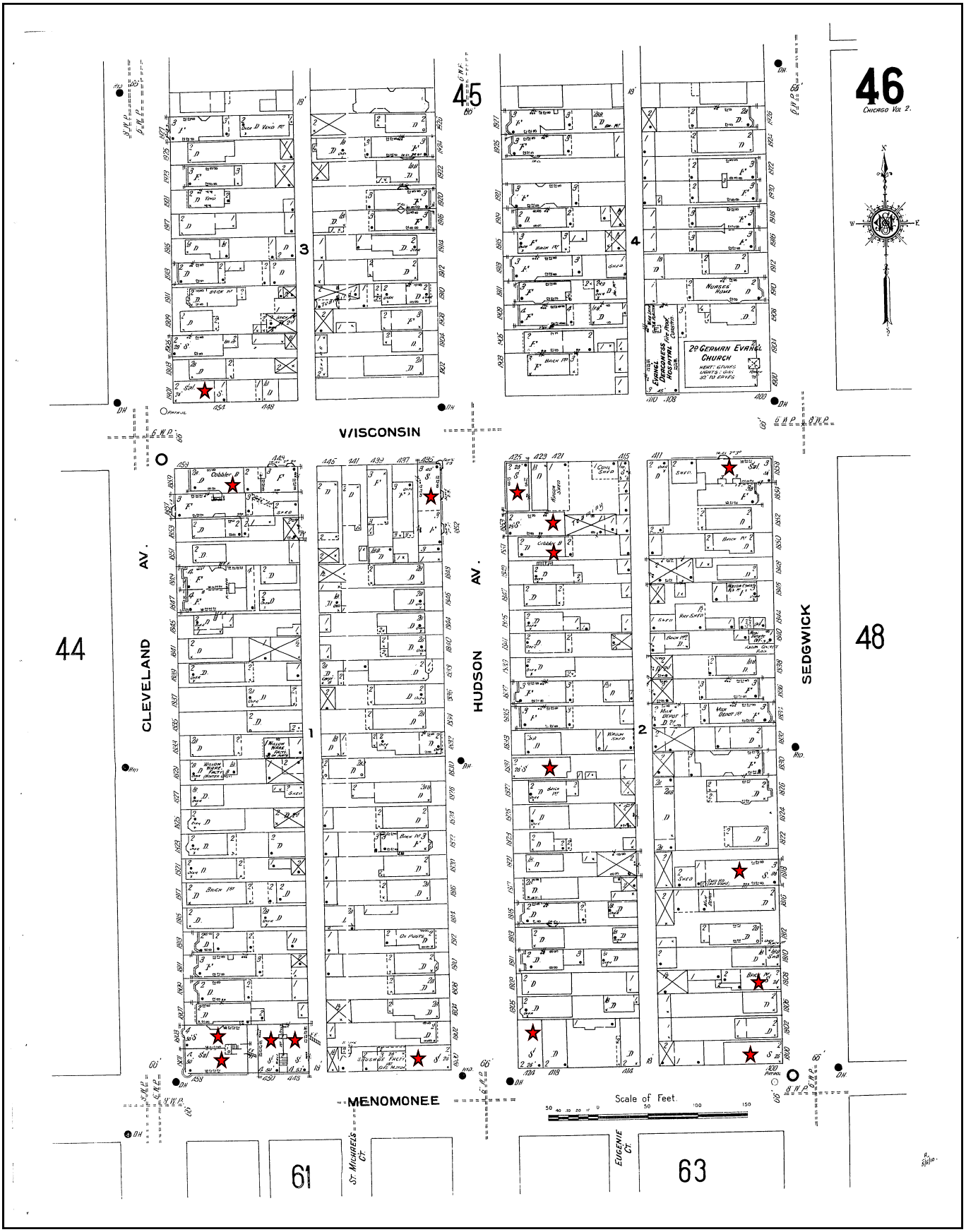
The eastern portion of North Town, however, retained much of its original character. In the twenties and thirties this area almost completely escaped the growing trend of replacing older structures with new apartments and apartment hotels. The visual scale of the area was maintained, and only the spire of St. Michael's rose above the rooflines of North Town. The character and charm of the neighborhood was assured by the renewal of community spirit in the 1930s. Edgar Crilly, son of the original developer, rejuvenated his buildings in the area and his efforts inspired others. After World War II, the name Old Town came into use and the Old Town Triangle Association, which has done much to promote community spirit, was formed in 1948. The organization provides a base for social activities which have built a spirit of neighborhood cooperation. Members of the organization (anyone in the Old Town area may join) believe that the neighborhood can be bettered through cooperation. The organization has served as a liaison between the community and city agencies. It has also encouraged the maintenance of property standards and has organized tree plantings in an effort to beautify the neighborhood. The current charm of Old Town owes much to this active group.

Old Town today is a spirited community. It is proud of its history and of the past and present accomplishments of Old Towners. During the heyday of radio in the late 1930s and early 1940s, when such unforgettable shows as "Ma Perkins" were produced in Chicago, many of the men and women responsible for these productions lived in Old Town. The neighborhood was convenient to the broadcasting studios in the Wrigley Building and the Merchandise Mart. The building at 1852-56 North Lincoln Avenue, then called "Whiskey Point," was a popular residence for radio people such as Art Jacobsen, John Larkin, Genelle Gibbs, Dolph Nelson, and Sarajane Wells. These radio personalities

Staff for this publication
Suzan von Lengerke Kehoe, *writer and designer*
Janice Van Dyke, *production assistant*

Appendix

1906 Sanborn fire insurance maps of the larger Old Town area with commercial, commercial/residential and light-industrial buildings marked with red stars



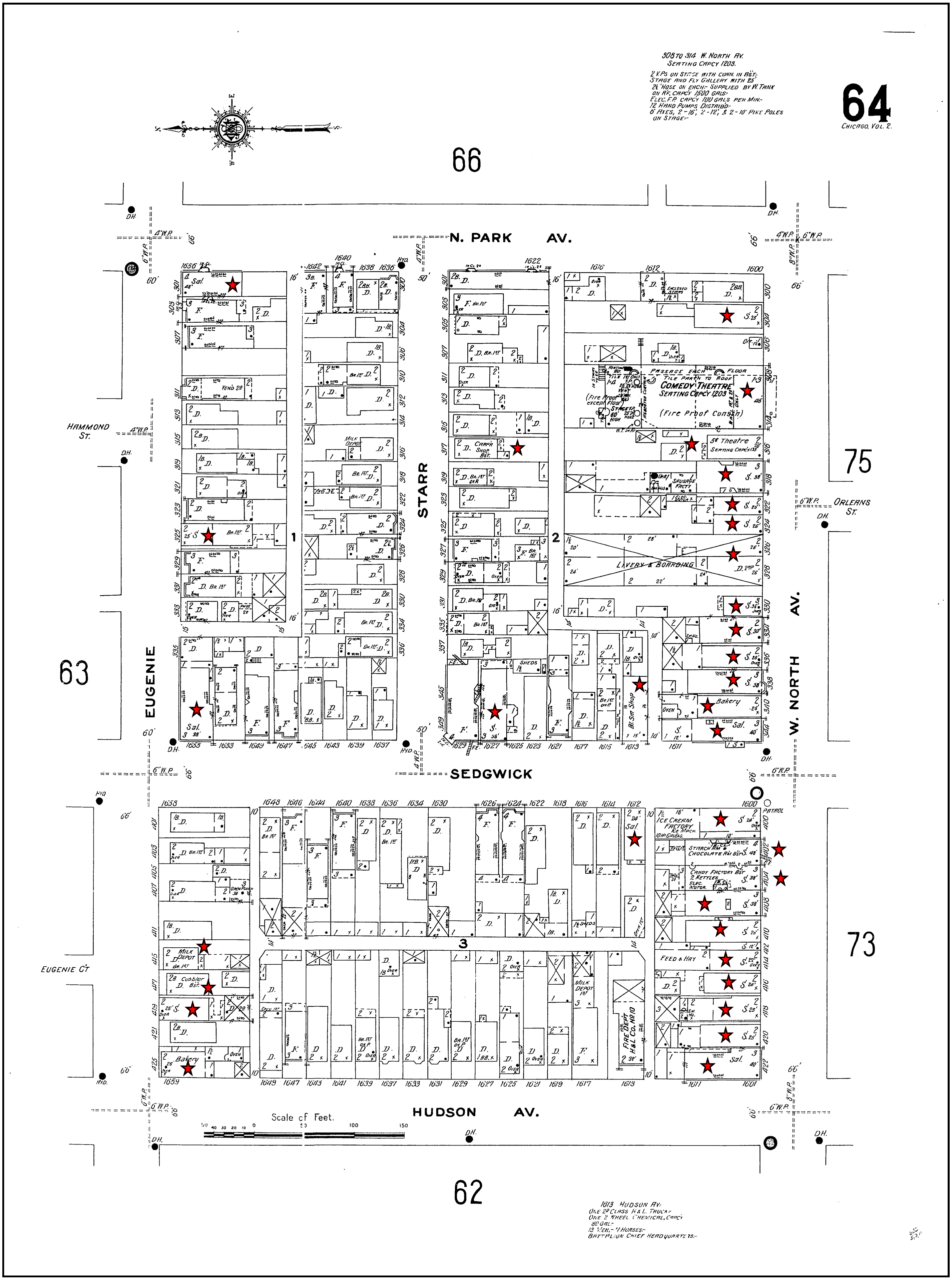

47
48
CHICAGO VOL. 2
LINCOLN
AV.
LONERGAN
WISCONSIN
SEDGWICK
HAMMOND
NORTH PARK AV.
MENOMONEE
46
49
63
65
N PARK AV
Scale of Feet.
50 40 30 20 10 0 50 100 150


49
CHICAGO VOL. 2
47
49
WISCONSIN HOTEL
WISCONSIN
N. CLARK
LINCOLN
PARK
CHICAGO ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
MATTHEW LEFLIN MEMORIAL
CENTER ST.
AV.
NORTH PARK
47
49
48
LINCOLN
AV.
NORTH PARK
AV.
PARK
LINCOLN
AV.
WELLS
ASTORIA HOTEL
AUTO TAXICAB CO.
MENOMONEE
65
Scale of Feet.

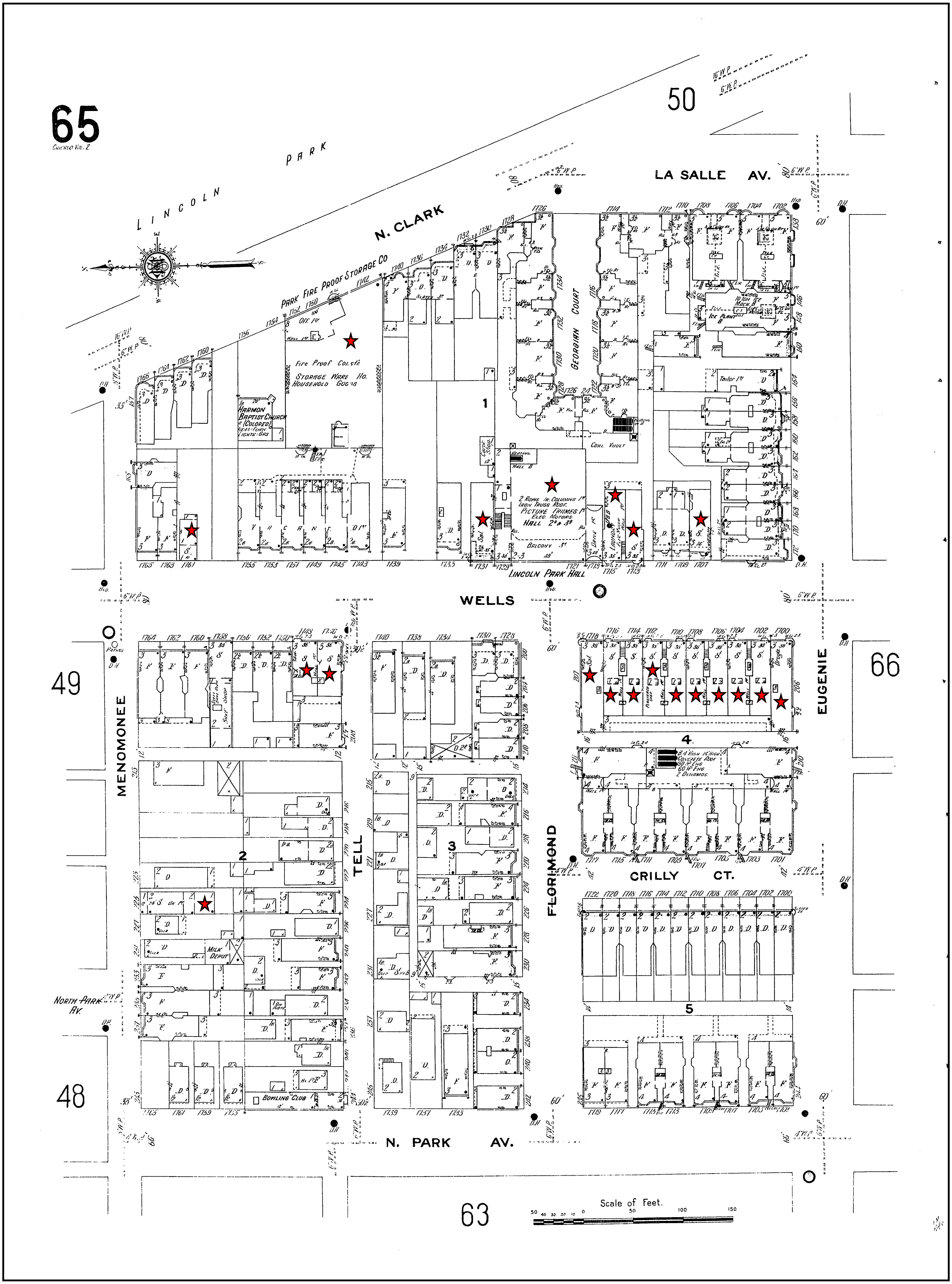

61
CHICAGO VOL. 2
63
HUDSON AV.
ST. MICHAELS CT.
CLEVELAND AV.
MOHAWK
LARRABEE
MENOMONEE
EUGENIE
WILLOW STA. N.P.
46
44
62
42
60
1
2
3
4
SISTERS OF NOTRE DAME CONVENT
JOHN HETZEL PACKING CO.
RUN DAY & NIGHT
Scale of Feet.
50 40 30 20 10 0 50 100 150


64
62
Chicago Vol. 2
HUDSON AV.
ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL
KINDERGARTEN
CONVENT OF OUR LADY OF HELP AND HOME MAIDS OF JESUS CHRIST
SCHOOL RMS. 1ST ST. MICHAEL'S
HALL 2ND
CHAPEL 2ND
GIRL'S SCHOOL
HALL 2ND 3RD
BRICK WALL 10' HIGH
ST. MICHAEL'S R. C. CHURCH
BOY'S SCHOOL
BROTHER'S
PILASTERS
73
CLEVELAND AV.
MEYER CT.
EUGENIE
W. NORTH AV.
61
71
MOHAWK
LARRABEE
Scale of Feet.
60


63
N. PARK AV.
65
TELL ST.
FLORIMOND ST.
48
HAMMOND
HAMMOND ST.
MENOMONEE
TELL
EUGENIE
64
SEDGWICK
46
EUGENIE CT.
HUDSON AV.
61
CITY STURGE YARD
ST. JAKOBIS EVANG. CHURCH
A. B. FIELDER & SONS
BRAIDS & DRESS TRIMMINGS
LA SALLE PUBLIC SCHOOL
VALENTINE-SEAVERS CO. 2ND
FURNITURE FRAME FINISHING
COLBORNE MFG CO. 1ST
STORAGE OF MACHINERY
VALENTINE-SEAVERS CO.
FURNITURE FRAME FINISHING
UPHOLSTERING 1ST
FINISHING 2ND
A. C. STAYART
PAPER BOX FACTY
WAGON SHED
BAKERY
FLOUR & FEED
WOOD YARD
MILK DEPOT
1700 TO 1712 NORTH PARK AV. & 300 TO 310 EUGENIA ST.
WATCHMAN - NO CLOCK-
HEAT & POWER: STEAM - LIGHTS: GAS & ELEC-
NO FIRE HYDS-
Scale of Feet.
50 40 30 20 10 0 50 100 150



308 TO 314 W. NORTH AV.
SEATING CAPCY 1203.
2 V.Ps ON STAGE WITH CONN. IN BST.-
STAGE AND FLY GALLERY WITH 25'
2½" HOSE ON EACH:- SUPPLIED BY W. TANK
ON RF. CAPCY 1500 GALS:-
ELEC. F.P. CAPCY 100 GALS PER MIN.-
12 HAND PUMPS DISTRIB'D:-
6 AXES, 2 - 16', 2 - 12', & 2 - 10' PIKE POLES
ON STAGE:-
64
CHICAGO, VOL. 2.
66
N. PARK AV.
STARR
SEDGWICK
HUDSON AV.
EUGENIE
W. NORTH AV.
HAMMOND ST.
ORLEANS ST.
EUGENIE CT
63
75
73
62
COMEDY THEATRE
SEATING CAPCY 1203
(Fire Proof Constn)
5¢ Theatre
LIVERY & BOARDING
SAUSAGE FACTY
Bakery
ICE CREAM FACTORY
STARCH RM & CHOCOLATE RM BST.
CANDY FACTORY BST
FEED & HAY
MILK DEPOT
FIRE DEPT. H. & L. CO. No. 10
Scale of Feet.
1613 HUDSON AV.-
ONE 2D CLASS H & L. TRUCK:-
ONE 2 WHEEL CHEMICAL, CAPCY
80 GAL:-
13 MEN, - 7 HORSES:-
BATTALION CHIEF HEADQUARTERS.-



65
LINCOLN PARK
N. CLARK
LA SALLE AV.
PARK FIRE PROOF STORAGE CO
Fire Proof Const. Storage Ware Ho. Household Goods
HARMON BAPTIST CHURCH (COLORED)
GEORGIAN COURT
LINCOLN PARK HALL
WELLS
MENOMONEE
TELL
FLORIMOND
EUGENIE
CRILLY CT.
N. PARK AV.
North Park Av.
MILK DEPOT
BOWLING CLUB
50
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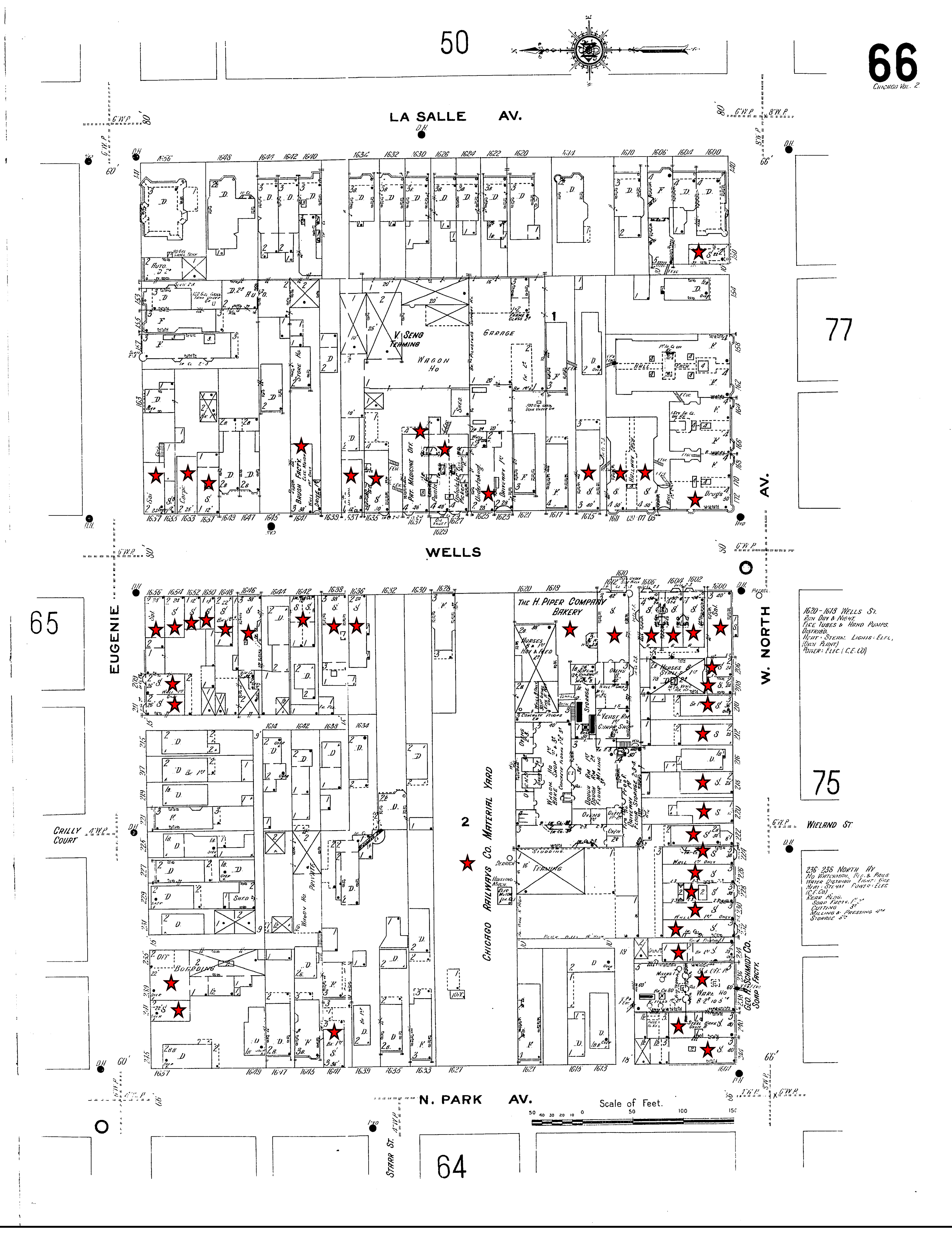
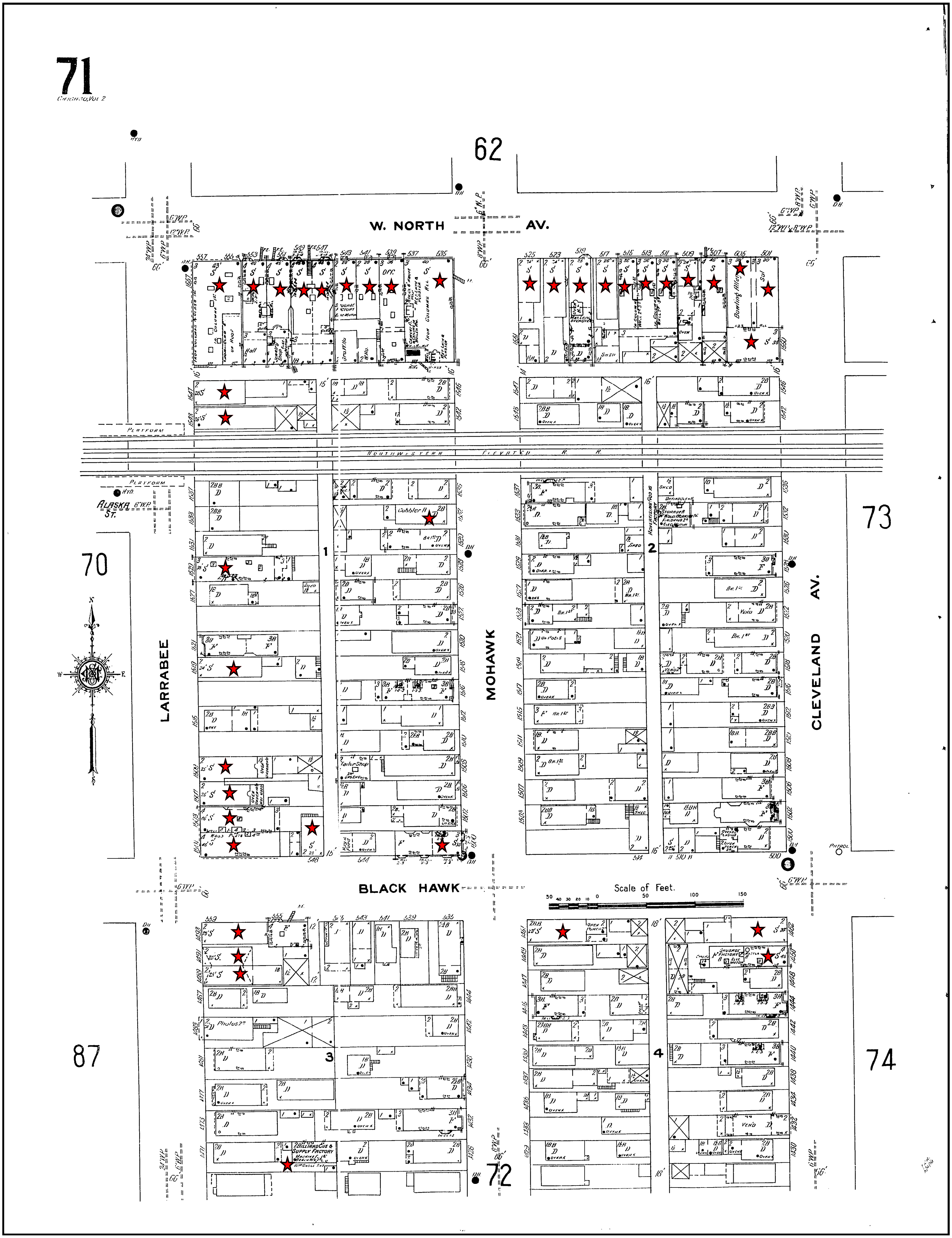
48
66
63
Scale of Feet.



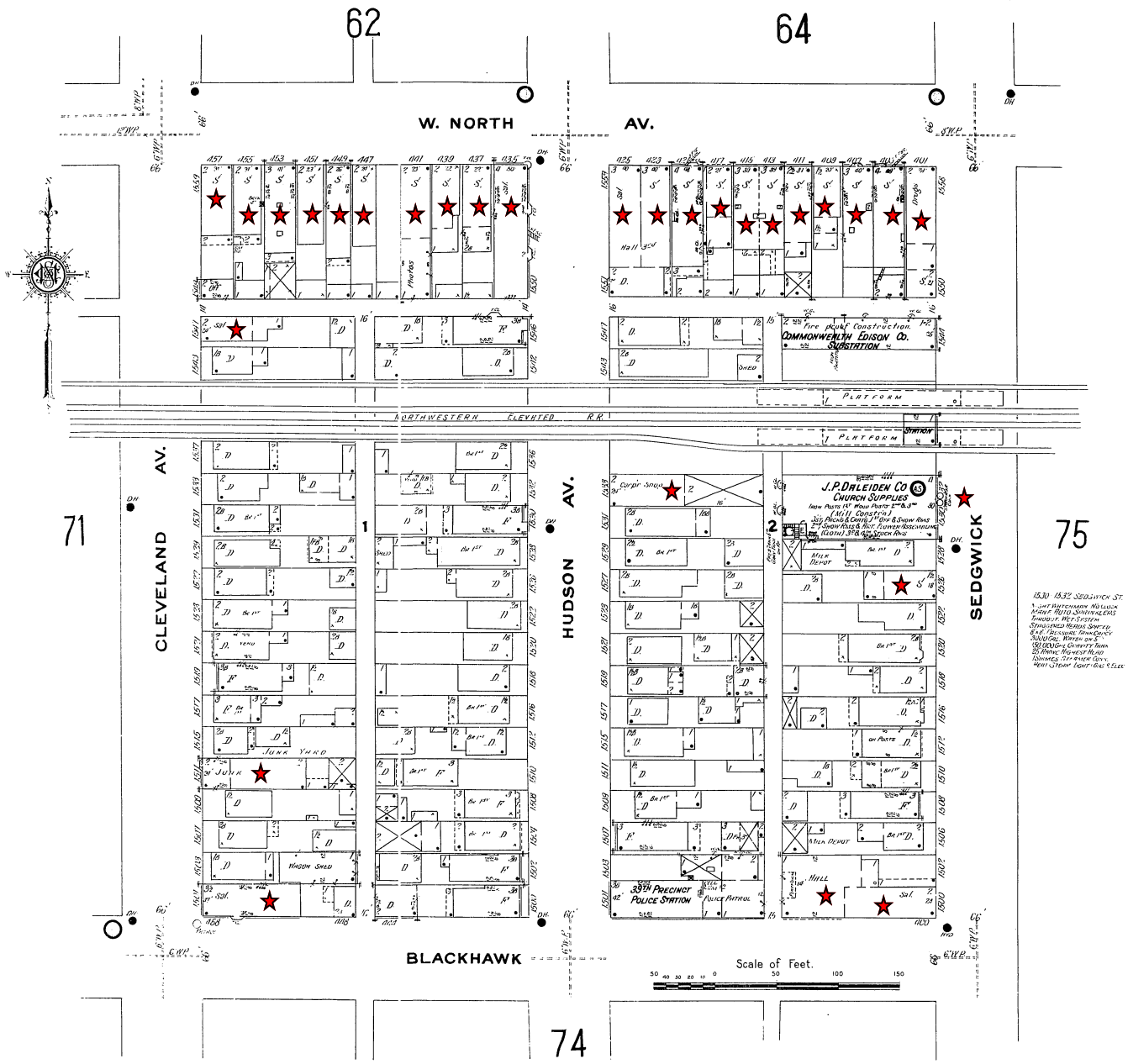
50
66
CHICAGO VOL. 2
LA SALLE AV.
WELLS
EUGENIE
W. NORTH AV.
N. PARK AV.
65
77
75
64
CRILLY COURT
WIELAND ST
STARR ST.
V. SENG TEAMING
WAGON HO
GARAGE
BRUSH FACTY.
PAT. MEDICINE OFF.
UNDERTAKING
DRUGS
THE H. PIPER COMPANY BAKERY
CHICAGO RAILWAYS CO. MATERIAL YARD
GEO. H. SCHMIDT CO. SOAP FACTY.
BOARDING
TEAMING
1620-1618 WELLS ST.
RUN DAY & NIGHT.
FIRE TUBES & HAND PUMPS.
DISTRIB.
HEAT: STEAM. LIGHTS: ELEC. (OWN PLANT)
POWER: ELEC. (C.E. CO)
236 238 NORTH AV
Scale of Feet.

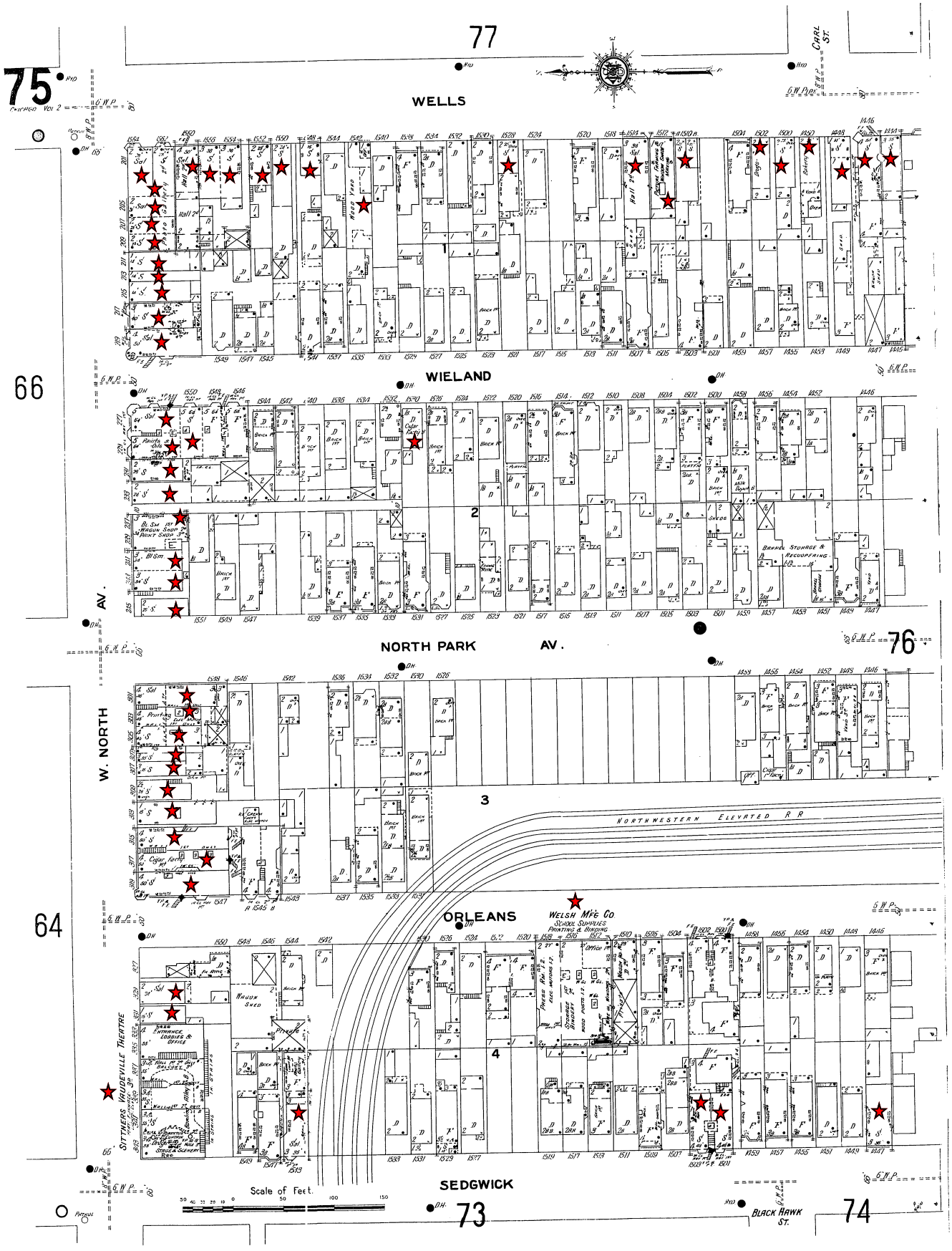


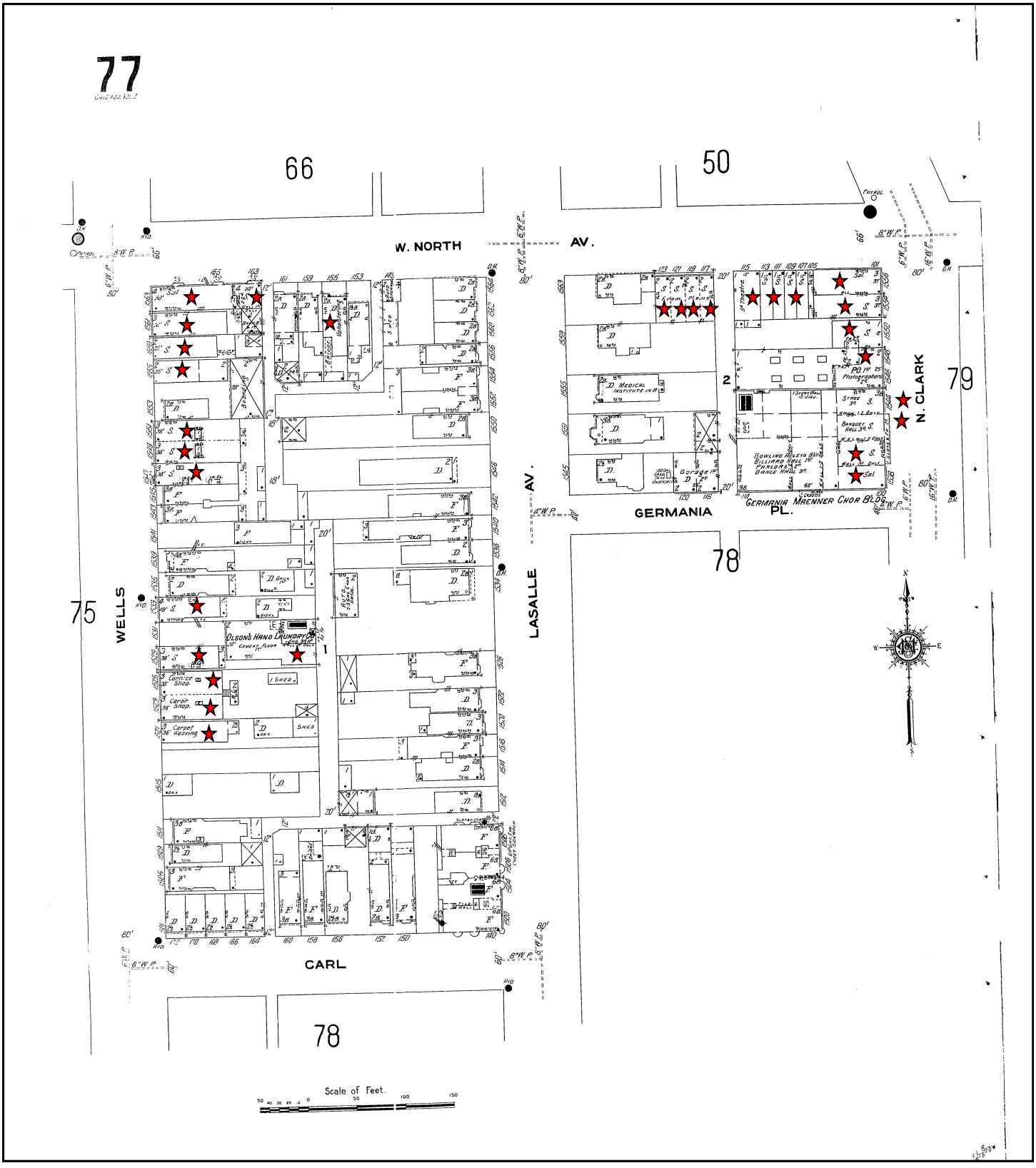
Chicago, Vol. 2
62
W. NORTH AV.
NORTHWESTERN ELEVATED R. R.
PLATFORM
ALASKA ST.
LARRABEE
MOHAWK
CLEVELAND AV.
BLACK HAWK
70
73
87
74
72
1
2
3
4
Scale of Feet.
Bowling Alley
Cobbler
Tailor Shop
Hall
Billiard Cue & Supply Factory
Sausage Factory

73

CHICAGO, VOL 2




77
75
WELLS
CARL ST.
WIELAND
66
AV.
NORTH PARK AV.
76
W. NORTH
3
NORTHWESTERN ELEVATED R R
64
ORLEANS
WELSH Mfg Co
SCHOOL SUPPLIES
PRINTING & RULING
4
SITTNERS VAUDEVILLE THEATRE
SEDGWICK
Scale of Feet.
73
BLACK HAWK ST.
74


77
66
50
W. NORTH AV.
GERMANIA PL.
N. CLARK
LASALLE AV.
WELLS
CARL
75
78
79
Olson's Hand Laundry
Medical Institute
Germania Maennerchor Bldg.
Scale of Feet.

1615 N. Wells: From Horses and Hippies to Corcoran's

In 1889 Martha Esmond paid a visit to a harness shop on Wells Street near North Avenue where her family was purchasing new reins and harnesses for their bays. Martha described eight workmen sitting at tables and benches; she was impressed with their fine, tiny stitches. She questioned that she could sew so beautifully on linen let alone leather. In addition to Martha's family, this respected harness maker served the steeds of neighboring baker Henry Piper, nearby clergyman Archbishop Feehan, brewer Joseph Theurer, and others.

The proprietor was Karl Heinemann who with his family resided above the shop; their business had been on Wells since before the 1871 Fire. They lost all during the blaze, but two days afterwards lumber had been delivered and rebuilding was soon underway.

The 1889 story related by Martha Esmond was actually authored by Herma Clark. Martha was a pen name for Clark who wrote a *Tribune* column, *When Chicago Was Young,* for thirty consecutive years. Clark was personal secretary for a well-known Gold Coast family whose experiences somewhat mirrored Clark's columns. Her Heinemann Harness story matched the site and the occupants of 620 N. Wells in 1889. The image of eight harness makers is unconfirmed, but Clark was known for her accuracy.

The 1870 city directory validated that the Heinemann's resided on Wells before the Fire. The 1870 U.S. Census revealed Karl and his wife Charlotte had four children under age eight. Their oldest son George had little sisters, Hannah, Augusta, and Catherine. Where and how did the Heinemann's flee the Fire with four young children?

Clark's article depicted the shop in 1889; city directories from that year confirmed that the business continued to be operated at 620 N. Wells by Karl Heinemann. In 1937 Clark wrote that son George Heinemann still had his harness company on Wells which had been renumbered 1615 N. Wells in 1909. The wooden building rebuilt after the Fire had been moved to the back of the lot and a brick building sat on the sidewalk. In 1937 instead of horse reins, Heinemann was crafting dog harnesses, belts, and other leather goods.

Better known than the Heinemann's was beloved, Chicago legend Earl Pionke who from 1962-1984 ran the Earl of Old Town Café and Pub in the former harness shop. Well-known folk musicians not only played there they stayed there. Chicagoans from far outside Old Town recall listening to Steve Goodman and other favorite musicians. For those too young to recall the "hippie days," the structure is today's Corcoran's, a fun pub and grill.

Diane Gonzalez
3/11/17

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Stories

The Birth of The 606: A Look at the Historic Transformation of Chicago's Bloomingdale Trail

Mar 27, 2014

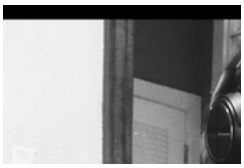
Dusting Off An Old Chicago Gem: The Story Of The Earl Of Old Town

On May 23, 2014

Hello and welcome back! This time around I've taken another look back into a chapter of Chicago history, specifically to Chicago's Old Town neighborhood decades ago. For many Chicago residents, the walk up Wells Street near North Avenue in Old Town is a familiar one: Second City on your left, Wells on Wells on your right. If you peel back the pages of history a bit, you'd find that

Pastures & Peace of Mind: A Visit to Blue Moon Ranch

Mar 24, 2016



Look What Kelsey Made(r): Giving a New Home to "Our House"

Mar 19, 2015

Observations from The Road

Aug 26, 2014

Old Town used to look and sound very different. What is now Cocoran's Pub was once home to a legendary folk music club called The Earl of Old Town.

I first learned of The Earl of Old Town when I found a recording of 1970's "The Gathering at The Earl of Old Town". I became enthralled with the performances song writing of Jim Post, Steve Goodman and other famed Chicago folk singers, and immediately grew curious about what exactly this place was on the front cover. After digging deeper, it was clear there was a story to tell and I didn't have to look hard to find help telling it.

To compliment the story below, I offer my own attempt at injecting new life into The Gathering's opening track called "Prepare for Invasion" by Jim Post. The original song features Post's remarkable voice without accompaniment, so I thought I'd do my best to lend a hand. A special thanks goes out to Ed Holstein, Chris Farrell and Patti Rain for all the wonderful stories and insight they shared with me.

Dusting off an Old Chicago Gem: The Story of the Earl of Old Town

May 23, 2014

A look at The Earl of Old Town circa 1970, as shown in the liner notes of "The Gathering at the Earl of Old Town".

The Earl's Early Days

Earl Pionke was a proud Chicagoan through and through. Born and raised on the city's south side, Earl held his city close to his heart. After jumping between jobs to help support his family, Pionke tended bar at a few local saloons before taking aim at opening his own.

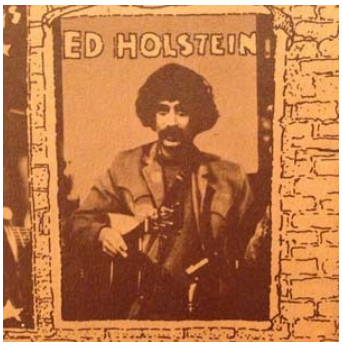
Chicago's famed Old Town neighborhood had become the epicenter of Chicago's emerging music scene and Earl knew there was an opportunity to join the movement and make something special. When Pionke first opened The Earl of Old Town 1962, he was confident he could get people in the door. He just didn't yet know how.

A colorful and boisterous man, it was Earl's infectious personality that helped first build the reputation of his club. As longtime Chicago folk mainstay Eddie Holstein recalled during Earl's 80th Birthday Celebration, "You don't meet Earl Pionke, you hear him coming". After inviting a few local folk singers to play, the unexpected rousing success of their performances set Pionke off: The Earl of Old Town was destined to showcase the emerging talent and songs of the times.

Once the spark was lit, it didn't take long before The Earl of Old Town quickly became the hottest club in Chicago for emerging folk music. Famed Chicago singers and songwriters including John Prine, Bonnie Koloc, Jim Post, Steve Goodman, Fred & Eddie Holstein and many others all got their start playing to the warm audiences and bare brick walls of The Earl. For Eddie Holstein, The Earl was the perfect venue for new emerging artists.

Earl Pionke at the Earl of Old Town in 1982. (Photo via the Chicago Tribune via ChicagoTribune.com)

"You'd really learn how to deal with an audience, what songs work, what didn't. It was a great experience", Holstein remembers. Holstein currently teaches at The Old Town School of Folk Music and still performs around Chicagoland.



Ed Hostein in 1970 via "The Gathering at The Earl of Old Town".

The Earl of Old Town featured live music on a nightly basis, and consistently the crowds piled in.

It was a welcoming place. The Earl was refined enough to catch your eye while still holding enough charm to make you feel at home. The intimacy of the room created an unmistakable and important sense of presence for both the audience and the performers.

"It was a listening room," says Chicago folk veteran Chris Farrell, "you came to hear the music."

Chris Farrell performing at the Earl of Old Town in 1975.

The music at The Earl thrived for years and the relationship between Earl and his performers became an atypical one. They were more family than hired talent. He more a fan than a benefactor. As quoted in the liner notes of 1970's "Gathering at the Earl of Old Town", Pionke insists "They're my kids, my pals, I love 'em".

The Magic Continues

Throughout the late 70's and early 80's, Earl Pionke maintained his reign atop the local folk music scene in Chicago. So many artists depended on consistent sets at The Earl, and the club's reputation only grew over time.

As the careers of Prine, Goodman and Koloc took

off nationally, their successes helped put The Earl of Old Town on the map. Soon during the mid-to-late 1970's, musicians were flocking from all over the country to try their hand in Chicago's folk music scene. And, as Chris Farrell remembers, "It was soon clear that The Earl of Old Town was the place to be".

> **"It was a listening room. You came to hear the music."**
>
> — Chris Farrell

Inspired by the evolving career of Bob Dylan, Patti Rain was one of the many young artists looking to find their niche in the thriving Chicago music scene. A Chicago native, Rain returned to her hometown to pursue her music after spending several years in California and New York. in 1978, Rain saw an ad in the front window of The Earl looking for help serving. Primarily a painter by trade, Rain was just beginning her career as a musician and saw a glowing opportunity to get her foot in the door. Soon she began performing opening acts and sets of her own, all the while absorbing as much as possible from the musicians making their regular appearances at The Earl.

"It was my graduate school," says Rain. "It was where I learned how to write and play". Rain

became a regular performer and still reflects fondly on her time at the Earl as the catalyst of her music career.

"The beautiful thing about The Earl was even towards the end, amazing musicians would pop in. You never knew who might stop by," says Rain. "You'd be on the stage singing, and here comes Jackson Brown".

Patti Rain's 2001 Release "I&I". Patti was awarded as the LA Music Awards Americana Artist of the Year in 2010. The Album also won album of the year.

When I asked Patti about some of her favorite memories from The Earl, she immediately recalled a special impromptu tribute concert she organized the night John Lennon was killed on December 8th, 1980. Along with the rest of the music world, the news of Lennon's passing came as an unthinkable tragedy. She quickly organized a group of performers of all genres and types to come together to celebrate and pay tribute to Lennon's life.

"The room was overflowing that night, it was truly incredible," she remembers.

The End Of An Era

The music played on and the fun continued at The

Earl for the next few years, but as the saying goes, all good things must come to an end. After business slowed and Pionke grew older, he closed up shop in 1984, closing the books on 20 years of Chicago music history.

“It was heartbreaking,” remembers Rain.

Pionke stayed very involved and active in the local music scene, having also been a partner in a club called Somebody Else’s Troubles on Lincoln Avenue for many years. Later, after briefly running a bar in Chicago’s Pullman neighborhood, Pionke sadly fell ill to pancreatic cancer. Earl Pionke passed away in 2013 at the age of 80.

The legacy of The Earl of Old Town depends on those who continue to tell it’s story. As time marches on, stories like that of The Earl of Old Town become more and more difficult to preserve and share. When I first asked Eddie Holstein to help illuminate what the early years of The Earl of Old Town were like he joked, “Well they’re aren't very many of us left alive, these days”. While in many ways Eddie is correct, the ripples of Earl Pionke and his beloved Earl of Old Town will hopefully continue to be resonate for years to come.

Check out my retooling of Jim Post's "Prepare For Invasion", originally recorded in 1970 at The Earl of Old Town!

← Observations from The Road

comments (5)

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Preview Post Comment...

Grant 2 months ago

I pulled out my copy of the album you refer to. Can't recall when and how I obtained it but it lead me here. I recall ads on the radio (WXRT) for shows at the Earl of Old Town when I was much too young to get there. Unfortunately I never made it in later years either. I came to love most of the artist that started there. Thanks for sharing the history

of a place I only visited in my mind. I walked past it a many times as Cocoran's in later years and never knew that was the Old Earl.

Jim 9 months ago

I was a student at Northwestern in the early 1970s. We used to go to the Earl to hear John Prine, Steve Goodman and Bonnie Koloc. It was a great place to hear music.

Lynn 2 years ago

I enjoyed it all.....the story writing, the history, pics and music ! Nice job Mr. Maxx

jan 2 years ago

Keep exploring...keep creating!! What a gift to share your peeks into history!

Erin Geesaman Rabke 2 years ago

beautiful!!!

SEE ALSO
Aragon Ballroom
Dance Halls
Entertaining Chicagoans
Ethnic Music
Great Migration

HISTORICAL SOURCES

ENTRIES : MUSIC CLUBS

ENTRIES
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Music Clubs
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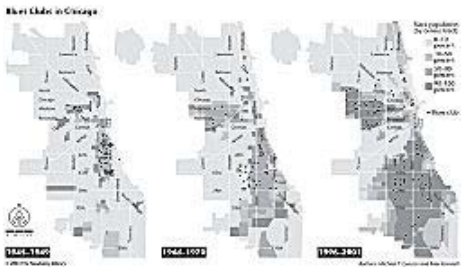
Music Clubs

CHARLIE PARKER MEMORIAL CONCERT, 1957

As hopes of prosperity inspired waves of migration from the South to the industrial North at the turn of the century, Chicago's position as the transportation hub and economic powerhouse of Middle America made it very attractive to musicians of all kinds. Through the "Jazz Age" and the "Roaring Twenties," Chicago established its reputation as a thriving, wide-open city, with an increasing number of entertainment options.

Jazz was born in New Orleans. Chicago is where the music came of age, with Louis Armstrong's move to the city in 1922, when he joined King Oliver's band at the Lincoln Gardens Cafe, considered a milestone along the historical path of American music. Chicago became the center of black American culture, with jazz flourishing in clubs such as the Plantation and the Sunset, and later in the Grand Terrace and the Club DeLisa. In a variety of locations, Joe Segal's Jazz Showcase has remained one of the oldest jazz clubs in the world.

While the Mississippi Delta is celebrated as the cradle of the blues, the South Side Chicago clubs are where the music transformed itself and sustained its greatest popularity, from the boogie-woogie piano that flourished in the 1920s through the electrified, guitar-powered urban blues of the 1940s and 1950s. From neighborhood taverns such as Pepper's Lounge and Theresa's to "chitlin' circuit" palaces such as the Regal Theater, Chicago nightspots have enjoyed a storied reputation among blues fans.



BLUES CLUBS IN CHICAGO (MAP)

Chicago has supported a varied and increasingly diverse array of music clubs, from 1960s and 1970s folk clubs such as the Gate of Horn, the Quiet Knight, and the Earl of Old Town to sophisticated supper clubs such as the London House and Mister Kelly's. Through the latter half of the twentieth century, rock has been a mainstay of the Chicago club circuit, with dozens of clubs competing for the younger music audience. More recently, Chicago clubs have been an influential incubator in the development of house, techno, and other forms of dance music.

Don McLeese

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ON THE TOWN: Recalling the Earl: songs for a burger
Leonard, Will
Chicago Tribune (1963-Current file); Apr 16, 1972; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune
pg. P12

ON THE TOWN

Recalling the Earl: songs for a burger

By WILL LEONARD

● ONE NIGHT, years ago, a young man drifted into the old Blue Note and asked Frank Holzfeind, the manager, if he could sing with the band—just for the experience. Frank said it wasn't up to him; told the stranger to ask the permission of the band leader. So—a singer by the name of Tony Bennett sang for absolutely nothing with a jazz band in the Blue Note. Those are things you remember.

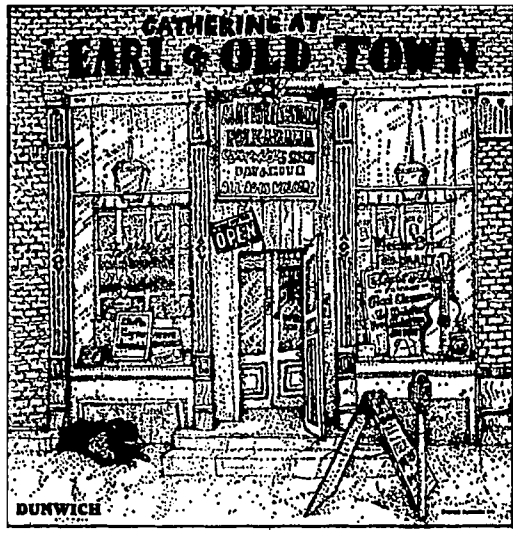
And that's the kind of thing that happens all the time at a Wells Street saloon called the Earl of Old Town. We have seen youngsters walk in off the sidewalk on a cold night, ask if they can borrow somebody's guitar and sing a song in exchange for a hamburger. And we've seen the same wayfaring minstrels, a few years later, when they have a record or two going for them—and they're back at the Earl, either singing with a right good will, or simply hanging around the ol' alma mater, listening to new guys and gals and guitars.

That's how the Earl is. Folk singers who used to work there, folk singers who are working there this week but have a night off, embryo folk singers who would like to work there some day—they all seem to spend their spare time there. Many an unknown lad, untrained but with the makings buried beneath his amateurish approach, strives to please and scarcely succeeds. And many a contemporary customer of the Earl will be looking at big name stars on network television a decade from now, and saying: "I saw that guy play for nothing but a hamburger, at the Earl of Old Town 10 years ago."

This is an exciting place. The music starts at 9 p. m., and it goes until 4 a. m., an hour after almost every legitimate spot in Chicago has closed. And the strange thing is that, when you walk in the Earl at 3:30 a. m., you find a sober crowd paying attention and applauding at the right moments, instead of the sodden and argumentative drunks you expect to encounter at most places with a 4 a. m. license.

Folk music on the Chicago saloon scene began at the Blue Note in 1952, with Win Stracke, Chet Roble, Big Bill Broonzy, and Larry Lane doing "I Come for to Sing" on Monday nights. The first full-time folk-song night club in Chicago was the original Gate of Horn, which opened on Feb. 29, 1956, in the basement of what then was called the Rice Hotel, on Dearborn Street at Chicago Avenue. Theo Bikel and Glenn Yarbrough were brand new names, and you could hear Odetta and Bob Gibson on the same bill for $2.

After that, Old Town had the New Wine Singers at the Rising Moon, Will Holt at the Old Town North, and folk music



Dez Strobel drew this graphic likeness of the unpretentious facade of the Earl of Old Town, Wells Street's remarkable folk song temple, for the record album made by Earl Pionke's home-grown stars, "Gathering at the Earl of Old Town."

at the Blind Pig, the Sacred Cow, the Crystal Palace, Small World—all of them long gone.

There were the Fickle Pickle near State and Division, the Oblique on Rush Street, the Montmartre on Chicago Avenue, Phase One in Hyde Park, the second Gate of Horn on State Street, Easy Street, and the Fat Belly, and the Art Pub on Cottage Grove Avenue, and the Howling Owl on Devon Avenue.

Then, overnight, folk music faded away like the hula hoop. There wasn't a folk song to be heard at a saloon in Chicago, and this column fearlessly stated that it was gone forever.

But in November, 1966, Earl J. J. Pionke, then a beardless youth who had been running a silent saloon called the Earl of Old Town since 1962, confided to us that he was going to bring back music, and we told him that he might as well try to bring back the buggy whip.

So . . . today the Earl of Old Town is famous from one coast to the other, and youngsters who write their own songs and sing them themselves, instead of taking them to Tin Pan Alley or to a recording firm, are making it one of the most exciting rooms in town.

Fred Holstein, the grand old man of the Earl, who came there from the Montmartre, has been present almost uninterruptedly since the beginning, and continues to grow. Bonnie Koloc won fame at the Earl—nowhere else. Steve Goodman first sang his "City of New Orleans" there.

Now it's a room where John Prine and Utah Phillips and other touring professionals are to be seen and heard once in a while. But, basically, its strictly Chicagoana.

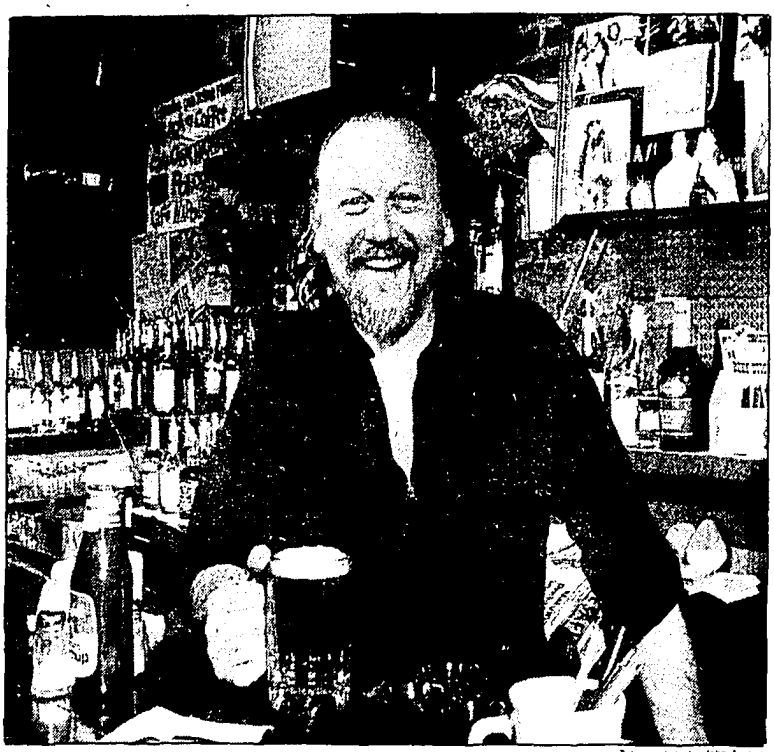
The Christmas wreaths have hung undisturbed for years. A schedule on the wall proclaims "Earl's Fall Calendar," of stars who are coming there last October and November. Posters tacked to the north wall advertise acts and folk song concerts at rival establishments. The front windows are emblazoned with an artistic design that includes names of all the employes of a year and a half ago, and the greeting: "Happy New Year, 1971."

Two fireplaces crackle thru the winter nights. Gus Johns, the bartender who leads the Earl's basketball team, will convince you the Cubs are going to win the pennant. Pete Karich, another bartender who once pitched for a St. Louis Browns farm team, will show pictures of his kids. And the smell of the grease from the cookstove in a far corner isn't redolent of the great outdoors.

But the Earl of Old Town is a true chunk of Chicagoana. Twenty years from now, when it's gone, old-timers will look back nostalgically, remember the unbelievably stimulating nights, and sigh: "I remember . . ."

FOLK: At 20, the Earl of Old Town is down--but far from out
Reich, Howard
Chicago Tribune (1963-Current file); Jun 13, 1982; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune
pg. G6

FOLK



Tribune photo by John Austad

Pionke: Both he and the Earl of Old Town have seen plenty of ups and downs in the last 20 years.

At 20, the Earl of Old Town is down — but far from out

By Howard Reich

It has been 20 years since Earl J.J. Pionke opened the Earl of Old Town folk club on North Wells Street, and there is no doubt both he and the nightspot have seen better days.

"The best times were the late '60s, though we didn't know it then," recalls Pionke on the occasion of the Earl's 20th anniversary.

"When the street warfare broke out in Chicago in '68 [during the Democratic National Convention], we had to close our doors for seven or eight days. Actually, I wanted to stay open, but I figured the customers might not have liked having a Molotov cocktail thrown at them through the front window.

"But the funny thing was, after we reopened, business was better than ever. Though Old Town was at its very depths, with shops closing everywhere, we were flying high. It was as though every act we booked was a big name, which was not the case. The people just flocked in because they wanted to hear the music of the subculture.

"In fact, that's when the singer-songwriter was really born. People came to the Earl because they didn't want just performers anymore; they wanted to hear what the songwriters had to say. Folk was the music for the time."

Though the last 20 years have brought both glory and pain to Pionke and his storefront folk club, the late '60s and early '70s represented the Earl at its pinnacle.

"For a while there," says Pionke, "we could do no wrong. If I had had the means back then, I could have made a fortune. I could have packed a house that holds 300, instead of just the 125 that can be squeezed into the Earl.

"But it wasn't only the political unrest of the times that made the Earl so hot. It was also Steve Goodman, John Prine and Bonnie Koloc. All three of them got their start at the Earl, and they all became successful at about the same time. Their reputations did wonders for the Earl.

"The first time Goodman or Prine even played in a club was at our open stage—the Monday night sessions where amateurs perform and get paid with a cheeseburger and a beer."

How did the Earl's three most distinguished alumni make it to bigger things?

"One night Goodman was opening for Kris Kristofferson at the old Quiet Knight [the now-defunct folk club that was located on West Belmont Avenue]," recalls Pionke, "and after the show, he persuaded Kristofferson to come to the Earl to hear his friend Prine perform.

"By the time they got to the club, it was 3 a.m., and Prine was at the bar asleep in his beer. So Goodman woke him up and got him to start singing. Two weeks later Kristofferson had taken them both to New York where they signed their first recording contracts.

"With Koloc, the press heard her here and loved her immediately. Her name was all over the papers. Eventually, the recording companies came here to hear her."

Has Pionke ever speculated on why these three never achieved major star status?

"The main problem is being tabbed a folk singer," he says. "If you say the word 'folk' to promoters and producers, they think you're from a leper colony. The market is just so small. But all three of those singers stuck with their kind of music; they had no interest in drifting into the kind of acid rock that was popular back then.

"If you want to ask why they didn't make it to, say, the John Denver level, I think it's because they just didn't move over into more commercial-type sounds as many entertainers did.

"In addition, they merged their lifestyles with their music, and that's a big reason they never were interested in pop.

"With Koloc, the problem was that she was too stubborn. She always wanted to do things *her* way. But that's not the way it is in show business. You've got to listen to your producers and managers, and then if you become a star, you can start calling the shots."

The lively scene at the Earl in 1970 inspired Pionke to open a bigger venue: the Earl of Old Town on Harlem, located in Norridge. It was a sprawling big sister to its small Wells Street predecessor. It had three separate rooms and a posh suburban decor, but

by 1974, the year it closed, it had wiped out Pionke.

"It was my big brainstorm," he says, "but I didn't realize the suburbs weren't ready to be preached at by folk singers. I got my bottom kicked. I lost everything except enough money to keep the Wells Street place open. But I wasn't demoralized. I figured I'd just go back to Wells Street where I belong."

With his finances down and his big dream shot, Pionke was practically back to where he started in 1962. Then, the Earl of Old Town [at the same location] was an unassuming little cafe that looked virtually the same as it does today: exposed brick walls, beat-up posters on the wall and tiny coffeetables scrunched into a long and narrow space.

For the first four years, the Earl of Old Town functioned as a burger joint that played jazz and classical discs as background music. ["People brought in the albums they wanted me to play," says Pionke, "and they often left them; I built up a nice collection that way."]

By 1966, most of Chicago's folk clubs had either changed formats or gone bust; casualties included the Montmarte on East Chicago Avenue, the original Gate of Horn on North Dearborn Street, the second Gate of Horn on North State Street, the Oblique on North Rush Street and Mother Blues on North Wells Street. The absence of a full-time folk saloon prompted Pionke to deduce that "Chicago couldn't be without at least one folk bar. I figured I wouldn't make a lot of money, but I would keep both the folk music and the bar alive.

"But within six weeks it was clear we were already building a folk following. Immediately, we had entertainment seven nights a week. Fred Holstein [who had formerly worked the Montmarte] performed here regularly, and since he already had a Chicago following, his name helped bring in business.

"The other talent was easy to get because there was virtually nowhere else in town for local folk singers to perform. And when the artists went out to play folk festivals around the country, they told their performer friends about the Earl. Word got around fast."

Eventually, though, the success the Earl of Old Town enjoyed in the late '60s and early '70s inspired many other spots to try the folk format. "At that point," recalls Pionke, "even Howard Johnson's and the Ground Round were getting into the folk music business. The audience was being sliced up too many ways."

When the fad withered in the late '70s, the venues began to disappear. Gone from the scene were such turn-of-the-decade arrivals as the Quiet Knight and Somebody Else's Troubles on North Lincoln Avenue [which Pionke operated with Steve Goodman, Fred and Ed Holstein, Bill Redhed and Dyke Nathaus]. A telling sign of the times came two years ago, when Pionke changed the name of Somebody Else's Troubles to Earl's Drink-Inn on Lincoln. Currently the spot is a no-entertainment saloon run by Earl's son Joey, operating under the name Fox Trap. Through it all, however, the Earl of Old Town remained.

"Part of the reason the Earl survived," says Pionke, "is simply because I insisted on hanging in. Though I did get involved in other ventures, such as Somebody Else's Troubles, the Earl was what I was always working for.

"But we also survived because of our size. Some of the bigger houses couldn't fill their seats after a while, while the smaller ones couldn't earn enough money to keep entertainment going. The Earl of Old Town was a comfortable middle-size operation, in folk music terms. [As a tribute to the club's survival, Pionke recently produced "Enterainment Nightly, Vol. 2," a 20th-anniversary record album.]

"Now, however, our weeknights are so soft I wouldn't lose any money if I didn't open my doors. And the weekends aren't what they used to be either."

The roller-coaster cycle of the Earl of Old Town represents a long journey for Pionke, who will celebrate his 50th birthday this month. Born in Old Town, the youngest of eight children, he spent his early childhood in a foster home on the South Side and his teen years back in Old Town with his family. After being graduated from Waller High School, where he "attained the high position of president of the class of 1950," Pionke spent 9½ years working at a North Side liquor packaging house. From there he opened the Earl with two partners, whom he had bought out by 1964.

Currently, he lives in Norridge with his 83-year-old mother and his second wife and their two teenage children [his son Joey is from his first marriage], and he counts the Earl of Old Town as his financial and career mainstay.

"I'll never drive a Mercedes-Benz or own a yacht," he says, "and the club is as dilapidated as it ever was. Aside from the time we shortened the bar in the '60s, we haven't made a decor improvement in 20 years.

"When I got in this business, I had a three-year lease with a three-year option, and I told my partners, 'We'll be lucky if we last the six years.' Right now, if anyone asked my advice about getting into the entertainment business, I'd say, 'Put your money somewhere else.'

"But the Earl is still my place. Folk music is still important to me. The only regret I have is that I should have taped all the wonderful music that happened here over the years. I guess I was a saloonkeeper first and a sound technician second, or never.

"Maybe in a year or two, I'll change the club totally into a restaurant on the main floor and put entertainment alone downstairs. But I'll still stick around. My motto is, 'The good Lord willing, you'll be able to hear folk music at the Earl in the year 2000.' "

Marty Peifer performing at the Earl in 1974: Folk's finest days were just about over.

1617 N Wells Research notes (Henry Eisert)

Henry Eisert wed Helena Thal in 1883 in Chicago. Both born in Germany, Henry was 30+ years older than Helen

1888 voter registration H residing in 622 Wells

They were only married for 9 years before Henry died in 1892.

It appears that Henry had been married before as in the 1880 U.S. Census he was listed as a widow with a 15 year old dau **Katie**.

When Henry remarried he chose a woman who was employed in tailoring & lived a block south of the soon to be 622 Wells (today 1617 N. Wells). 1883 was the year he pulled the permit for 622 Wells. His profession was listed as laborer in one site, but he often had no profession given. Perhaps he retired.

The couple had two sons; August born August, 1866 & died December 1886. Henry G Eisert: Born 2/22/1884 & died 2/25 1962

Henry G Eisert (son)

Henry Jr is Henry G. The Bertha M listed on the tombstone is Henry Jr.'s wife. She died in 1955.

Henry's obit stated he was retired publisher and chairman of the *American Poultry Journal*.

One newspaper article wrote that Henry Jr. had invested in a hotel near Diversey and LSD (no copy)

In the 1900 U.S Census Helen and Henry Jr lived at 622 Wells.

In the 1910 U.S. Census Henry G is a clerk in a publisher's house. His mother Helen is widow residing with her son Henry, her dau in law Bertha & Helen's year & a year old grandson are in the home. Helen is the owner of the building which has at least 3 other families as renters.

In Helene's 1912 will they remained at 1617 N Wells which would make them residents there for at least 29 years since permit was pulled in 1883!

Helene who died in 1912 and Henry Sr. a well as Henry Jr and his wife Bertha are buried in Graceland. The infant of Helene and Henry Sr. is also interred there.

In 1924 Bertha's dad Frank Sieman died. His address in his obit is 1617 Wells. Likey he rented there as the family had left 1617 before the 1920 Census.

Later Occupants:

Albert Mitchell was a milk truck driver whose wife went missing in 1952. In 1948 **Albert Mitchell** of 1617 Wells was robbed on Waveland by 2 gunmen who took $43

Later 1617 Wells went commercial as it was **Sphinx Restaurant**.

Wells Street Natives Long for Old Time Peace; Tourists Turn Once Sedate Area Into 'Madhouse'

BY SHEILA WOLFE

If you have ever been among the 250,000 people who squeeze thru Old Town on an average week-end, a question might have crossed your mind.

"What am I doing in this madhouse?"

And if communities could speak, Old Town undoubtedly might make a few introspective queries of itself: "How did I get this way and where am I going?"

Once Was Peaceful

Old Town "natives," people who lived and worked in the pleasantly worn out neighborhood before the booming 60s, speak nostalgically of the peace and quiet that once was.

"I stand at Wells street and North avenue today in utter amazement and disbelief," said a native recently.

First time visitors are somewhat awed, too, if for different reasons.

Now one of the city's top tourist attractions, Wells street as a restaurant-shopping-people watching street burst onto the scene with the opening of a few pubs and shops near North avenue.

Three a Crowd

Until then, the street was known to a few for its antique stores and artists. In those days, three was a crowd.

Earl Plonke, proprietor of Earl of Old Town and a partner in the Old Town Gate, views the current crowds as just a starter.

"Half of the 4 million people in Chicago haven't even seen Old Town yet," Earl said. "They're going to be here sooner or later."

Considered a pioneer [he opened early in 1962], Earl, 32, sees the area reaching its peak in three years.

"Old Town is going to be here as long as Chicago," he stated.

Should Be Developed

It should be developed, Earl continued, "as far as the imagination can stretch."

The shop owners and the eating and drinking establishments generally agree that they all need each other—tho some of both gladly would be waved good-by by the rest.

"There is no street in the world like Wells street, and I think it will get better," said Edwin Heinkoff, whose Town Shop was an early [1961] and continuing success.

[TRIBUNE Staff Photo]

Maze of signs which decorate Old Town area, advertising and attempting to draw patrons into various establishments. Area is considered one of city's top tourist attractions.

Foresees Improvement

"Compared to other tourist places, our crowds and stores are on a much higher plane," Heinkoff said.

"I don't think it will become a shabby street. The better places are doing better than the cheaper places, and the street, I believe, will upgrade."

Concern about the street—its present and future—is not confined to the nearby noise-wracked residents or responsible business men. The police are watching, too.

Old Town's success has brought some problems. Bigger crowds, more young people, racing motor scooters, noise, gangs, fights, drunks . . . a potpourri of simple irritations and outright law violations are among them.

Sees Good and Bad

"There's good and bad in everything," said William Mallick, owner of the Beef and Bourbon restaurant and secretary of the Old Town Chamber of Commerce.

"We want people to come to Old Town and have a nice image of the area.

"We have a good future. There is no question about the street if the police do their job. It's solely up to the police."

Makes Patrol Changes

The district's new commander, Capt. James Holzman, said he had never been to Wells street at night until he was assigned to the Chicago avenue station April 4. He said he began making some patrol changes soon afterward.

Now foot patrolmen are in evidence on the street, a sergeant is on Old Town duty full time, and the task force canine corps is "in close proximity."

Praise generally is high for Holzman so far. Some observers, however, contend that the deeds are not yet matching the words.

Calls Cars a Problem

Holzman cited the number of minors clogging the sidewalks and the cars jamming the streets as two primary sources of his problems.

Arrests frequently are made in large groups, Holzman said. These include rodwy, shouting, noisy, and otherwise disorderly clusters of young people. Arrests also have been made for such disturbances as blocking the public way.

While recognizing that the potential for trouble is a continuing one, Holzman said Wells street is not any more of a concentrated crime area than any other part of the Chicago avenue district.

Incidents Are Few

"While the crowds are dense and perhaps even frightening, the number of incidents is very small," Holzman said.

He said he has received complaints about the roaring motor scooters, adding, "I'm going to eliminate the problem." He feels also that the street could be policed better if the snarled traffic flow could be cleared up, and is working on that.

Holzman said he has received phone calls from people who are concerned about the appearance of some Wells street strollers, but this is something he cannot deal with on an official basis.

"I sympathize with them, but it is not a violation of the law to appear to be a little different," Holzman said.

Appears a Little Different

Appearing a little different, in fact, is pretty much what Wells street is all about.

Some shop owners complain that there isn't enough that is different [in merchandise, not people] anymore.

"People started coming here for the unusual, and we had it," said a successful business man. "But then the bulk of the businesses started following the tourist lines of nonsense, curio type items. It's a sorry trend."

He noted that there was not enough assortment on the street to call it a shopping area.

Should Be Unique

"Wells street ought to be unique," he said. "Customers used to come to see how each store was different, but the merchants have killed it."

But the shoppers still come. Like the street itself, tho, they have changed their habits over the years.

Bob George, owner of Cook's Cupboard, noted that when he opened in 1963, evening shopping was the thing. This has reversed and now the bulk of sales are made in the daytime.

"Often on a busy Saturday 90 per cent of our business is conducted before 6 o'clock," George said.

Young Dominate Week-ends

Young people who cannot drink and do not buy dominate the week-end night crowds now.

Wells street, in the view of a couple who lived and worked there since 1953, is "geared to the wandering herd."

"We liked it when it was simple," said Mr. and Mrs. Richard Barnes, book sellers. They feel, however, that "in another five years the whole thing could level off, the real junk places will keep collapsing, and there will be a generally quieter atmosphere."

Many Varied Opinions

But there are as many opinions about Old Town as there are opinion givers.

"Five years ago it was very nice, and the rents were still reasonable," said Mrs. Eleanor Clement, a veteran realtor in the area and officer of the Old Town Triangle association.

"In the beginning, everybody felt it was just a flash in the pan. Now we know it's here to stay."

Mrs. Clement, like many others looking to the future, places her hopes primarily on "careful and realistic landlords." Rents in most cases have soared, tho some tenants said, have remained "reasonable."

Hopes She's Wrong

"Actually, I'm pessimistic, and I hope I'm wrong," said Mrs. Clement.

Mallick of the Beef and Bourbon sees a "great future," with more establishments opening up on the north end of Wells.

"We didn't copy anything, we just happened," Mallick said. "Now we are starting to plan."

Trib May 29, 196

Owners, architects, occupants, & 1928-1929 Polk's City Directory info

1615 Wells

Heinemann, G & descendants see earlier folder in dropbox

Maxwell, WH (Mary) pkr h rear 1615 N Wells

Saunders, Clara maid h 1615 Wells

White, Winifred missionary h 1615 Wells

1617 Wells

H. Eisert see earlier folder in dropbox

Siegas, John decorator h 1617 Wells r, Apt K

Spondouris, H barber h 1617 Wells

Note: 1617 Wells occupants on your list not included above were not looked up in 1928-29 Polk City Directory

1628-1630 Wells

P Shubert (Subert) no info but **Herbert** was first occupant in 1882 so this may be a misspelling. Phillipina (or Phillipa) widow of Lewis, a barber, (from 1860 Census). Have attached docs but Phillipina was in the house through 1900 Census. One of her sons Henry, a tinner, also resided briefly at 633 Wells.

See also additional info on owners Catherine (gardener) and Richard H Barnes (antiquarian books) in 1628 folder in dropbox. Barnes should also be used for urban renewal info. They were very active.

Note: 1628-30 Wells occupants on your list not included above were not looked up in 1928-19 Polk City Directory

1645 Wells

Architects **Henry and George H Dubin** were brothers. Later Arthur Dubin and Martin David Dubin, two sons of Henry joined firm. Good news is CHM may have original plans. CHM's Michael will try to lookup when goes to warehouse. It's a long shot as Wells project is listed in their holdings **(Job 26-558),** and Dubin firm gave papers to CHM. But 1645 Wells papers not on site and may not even include actual plans. Michael knows you're interested. If plans are located, & one of the D's signed off on the plans we'd know if it were Henry /George. George died in Jan, 1958 & Henry few years later in 1963. (See George & Henry obit scans) BTW listing at CHM states Gottlieb & Levin not E. Ferrin.

Henry resided 1624 Highland Ave Wilmette and George resided at 460 Deming Pl. in 1928-29 Polk. **Abraham J Eisenberg** besides being an architect was listed as pres of Capitol Paint and Varnish Works. H at 5046 Woodlawn.

E Ferrin not listed again this may be error as ***Economist*** (Oct 9, 1926 p. 982) listed **G. Levin** 2012 W. Division st. 3 story store and apts. 23 x 137, 1645 N Wells Archt Dubin & Eisenberg 14 W. Washington St. mason **H.M. Lipman** 5079 W. Monroe st, carp H. Kapaln 2012 W. Division, $63,000.

Milonovich, George had barber & beauty shop. Directory listing for George beauty shop at 1645 Wells. H 3330 N Ashland.

Note: 1645 & 1645 ½ Wells occupants on your list not mentioned above were not looked up in 1928-29 Polk City Directory

1647-1653 Wells

Eisert info in 1615 Wells folder already in dropbox. ***Economist*** (March 9, 1918, p. 455) stated permit for Henry G Eisert, secy American Poultry Journal Publication Co. 542 S. Dearborn st, 3 story store and flat addition, 25x 83, 1647 -1653 N Wells, Architect Edward Benson, 118 N LaSalle, mas JH Wahlgren, 1613 Winona Ave, carp John A Lundstrom, 1455 Balmoral Av, $12,000.

Edward & Arthur E Benson Architects 51531 N. Clark (Edward Benson & Son) Architects. Edward (1868-1939) born in Sweden. Arrived in U.S. age 2. Supposedly Edward designed over 1000 commercial buildings and homes during his 40 year career. See scanned Edward Benson article published by Edgewater Historical Society in 2010. Architect son Edward Jr. died before his dad in 1937.

JH Walgren listed above but not found in 1928-29 Polk Directory

Cormier, Dora Mrs. art gds 1647 Wells ant gds h do

Sague, Mario (Edith) slsmn EJ Paidar, h 1647 Wells, Apt C

King, Wm stockman MF Co. h 1647 Wells

Krispin, John rest 1714 Wells, h 1647 Wells, Apt 2 do &

Krispin, Helen, Mrs. cook h 1647 Wells

Sale, CR (Barbara) Chas R mngr h 1647 Wells

Griswold RD (Verna) Robert D architect h 1647 Wells Apt G

Voggenreiter (not Voggenreiteo), **Jos (Hannah)** Hannah clerk at *Chicago Daily News* &

Joseph wood carver, h 1647 Wells

Russell, Geo carp h 1647 Wells Apt K

Larsen, Sophia copyist h 1647 Wells

Deems, Frank (Jennie) tel opr h 1647 Wells Apt O

Fiering RT Richard T slsmn h 1647 Wells Apt F

1651 Wells

Mc Farland, JA. Restr J A McFarland rest 1651 Wells r 1707 Crilly Ct.

1653 Wells

Faller, Cath R mgr of Mary Katherine Bakery h 1653 Wells

Mary Katherine Bakery

Meyers, Cath Mrs. Widow of Cyrus D, h 1653 Wells

Note: All occupants from 1647-1653 Wells were looked up in *1928-29 Polk's City Directory*. If name was omitted by me that's because there was no entry.

1665-1667 Wells/ 161-169 Eugenie

Economist **(April** 25, 1914, p. 899) Building Permit T Sparbro, 3 story brick store and flats, 32 x 84, 1655 Wells st, archt J Speyer, bldr not let, $18,000.

T Sparbro not listed

J Speyer architect (1845-1916) means he would have designed this building two years before his death. His son Oscar P was also in practice with him. Speyer & Speyer it seems also Speyer & Son. The other J. Speyer architect is A. James Speyer; he's too young. Born about time building was constructed.

1655 **Ernie's Motor Service** Ernest Memmbre h 1655 N. Wells

161 Eugenie

Egan, CE (Anne) Chas E asst supt P.O. h 161 Eugenie

Wilkinson, M.J. Marian J (widow of HJ) h 161 Eugenie

163 Eugenie

Bradley, C.H. (Josephine) Chas H mech h 163 Eugenie

Schuenemann, B.H. Mrs. 163 Eugenie (no info provided but I suspect she's related to Captain Herman Schuenemann's family who at one time resided on north side of Eugenie in this block)

167 Eugenie

Glass, O.M (Christine G) Oliver M chauf h 167 Eugenie

Stark, JE (Marie) John E sergeant police h 167 Eugenie

169 Eugenie

Gampert, Cris (Norean) Christopher demonstrator WA Wieboldt Co. h 169 Eugenie

Note: All on your list of 1655-1657 Wells / 161-169 Eugenie occupants were found in 1928-1929 Polk's City Directory except for Alf & Mary Berglund