

Welcome to  
*Prairie du Chien*

*Up One Side*



*Down the Other*

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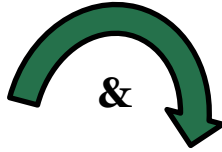
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**Blackhawk Avenue**



**West Blackhawk  
The Mississippi River**

*Up One Side*



*Down the Other*

**Historic Downtown Walking Tour**

*Blackhawk Avenue*

**Main East to Illinois  
Illinois West back to Main**

**In celebration of the 2012 Centenary of  
*The Wachute Memorial Library*  
On the Great Artesian Well site**

*Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*

**Volume IV #4**

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## Main Street

In the early days, Main Street was the only north-south path through Prairie du Chien. Before settlers called it Main Street, it was the *Old Indian Trail*.

## Bluff Street now Blackhawk Avenue

Bluff Street ran from the river east into the coulee between the bluffs— the only east-west way in and out of Prairie du Chien. The road from the Prairie to Black River Falls— one of the oldest in Wisconsin— later became *Highway 27*.

In 1930, Bluff Street became Blackhawk Avenue. Names that were attached to the street at the time being described are used here— Bluff Street before 1930 and Blackhawk Avenue after 1930.

People who do not live in Prairie du Chien sometimes assume Blackhawk Avenue is Main Street because it clearly seems to be the main street. To make matters worse, some of the early postcards wrongly identify it as Main Street. See the front cover of 100 E Bluff looking west in the 1920s.

**It is a little confusing.**

## *A 10-Block Loop Tour*

This stroll takes you **from Main Street east along the north side of Blackhawk Avenue to Illinois Street** to the railroad track and **then back west along the south side of Blackhawk Avenue to Main Street**.

The most important buildings are mentioned—so much has happened here, not everything can be included. Research is ongoing and changes will occur as the dynamic old street continually updates itself. Still Blackhawk Avenue looks a lot like Bluff Street did 100 years ago.

The underlined names denote an original brick block built along Bluff Street during the boom after the Civil War. In those years, the business district switched from Main Street to Bluff Street. The date of construction is listed when known. Most were built by German business leaders who came with the railroad in the mid-1850s—Schweizer, Kappel, Zieprecht, Poehler, Wetzels, Raffauf, Menges.

Benches along the route invite you to sit and take it in.

## *Up One Side*

**From Main Street East toward the bluff  
Along the North Side of Blackhawk**

**301 W. Blackhawk  
Rowdy's Bar and Grill**

## *Cross Main Street*



**Kaber's Corner 1940s Villa Louis Parade**

**225 W. Blackhawk  
Kaber's Restaurant & Spirits**

The Kaber family has been in business in Prairie since 1920, on Blackhawk Avenue since 1922 and on the present site since 1932 when the Suspension Bridge opened. At one point, several buildings were joined together to create the present structure. Jon is the 4<sup>th</sup> generation following Henry, Cliff & Rex.



## **Sausage Row [1867] 215-209 W. Blackhawk**

These four one-story buildings replaced similar storefronts destroyed in a fire April 1867. People called the north side of the W 200 block *Sausage Row* because Germans operated the businesses and the buildings looked like so many fat sausages in a pan.

### **215 W. Blackhawk The Main Entrance**

Prairie du Chien has a reputation for a high percentage of bars per population. Spots like these along *Sausage Row* have long been a part of our river town's heritage.

### **213 W. Blackhawk City Sounds**

This was the *Regent Theater* and later the *Prairie Schooner Bar* with a covered wagon mounted on a platform above the door. In the 1880s, a long narrow bowling alley was attached to the north end of the building.



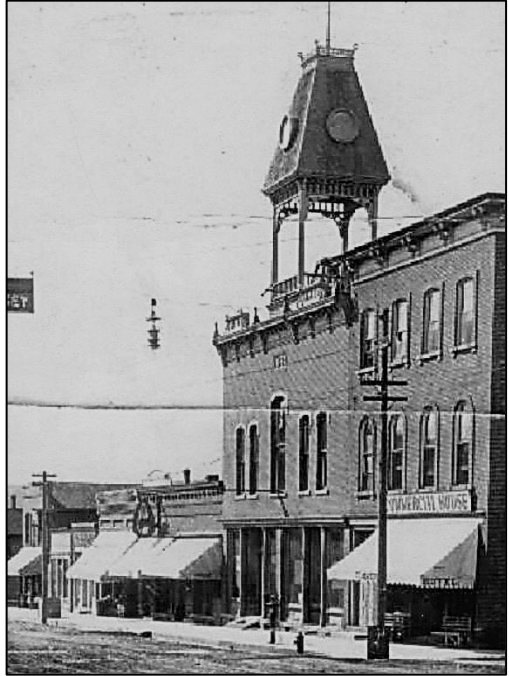
### **211 W. Blackhawk Murphy's Law**

### **209 W. Blackhawk W. Jones Accounting [See Page 7]**

Marcus Fredrick built his shop after the 1867 fire and ran a leather business until the early 1900s. His large horse collar sign was a landmark and his goods of the finest quality.

W. Jones began business in Prairie du Chien in 1957 though not at this site and is now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> generation.

The picture looks west showing the small buildings known as Sausage Row, including Fredrick's horse collar, the 1894 City Hall with its popular clock tower and the Commercial Hotel.



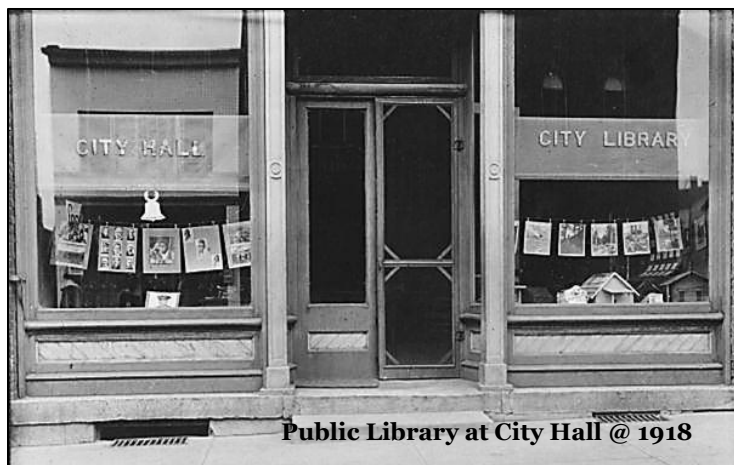
**North side of the 200 block of W. Bluff  
About 1900**

**Old City Hall [1894] 207-205 W. *National Register*  
207 W. Blackhawk Local Oven Retail Store  
205 W. Blackhawk Juniper's Home Décor**

Germania Hall on this site burned in late 1893 and was replaced by city hall in 1894. For the previous 25 years, New Year's Eve was held at the Germania. City business was conducted from this location until 2002 when the new city hall opened at 214 E. Blackhawk. The public library was housed in the council chamber from 1912 until it relocated to its present site in January 1963. A popular dance hall was on the second floor for many years.

The Old City Hall and the attached Schweizer Block were placed on *The National Register of Historic Places* in 2005.

Both *The Local Oven* and *Juniper's* are newcomers on the street and add attractive places for residents and tourists to stop and shop.



### **The Schweizer Block [1866] National Register 203-201 W. Blackhawk**

The old city hall building shares its east wall with the Schweizer Block. Built just after the Civil War it was a three-story business block with retail on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor, professional offices on the second and storage or public spaces on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. Additions were made in 1872 and 1875.

Later it was converted to the *Commodore Hotel*, which gave way to the *Commercial Hotel* and finally the *Fort Crawford Hotel*. The city bought the building in 1981 since it shared a wall with the old structure; the historic corner block awaits a new use.

### *Cross Prairie Street*

#### **129 W. Blackhawk The Grelle Building [1900]**

Christopher Grelle settled his carpenter business on this corner in the 1850s. His building burned, and his son, Charles, replaced it with this one in 1900. You will notice the Grelle name on the cupola, a turn of the century design feature. The Grelle father and son also ran an undertaking business. Henry Whaley and Seipp and Otteson continued the tradition of furniture sales and funeral home. *Tiller Furniture* owned the space for years before moving to Marquette Road. Since 1987, it had been a hair salon.



## **127 W. Blackhawk Ken's Barbershop**

This small building has been a barbershop since 1915. Current owner Ken Walters has been there since 1985 and is only its 5<sup>th</sup> barber. In 1891, it was *Sebastian and Nelson Tonsorial Parlors* and a tailor and shine shop around 1920.

## **119 W. Blackhawk Stark's Sport Shop**

Frank Stark opened a restaurant in 1940 and began a sports shop across the street in 1944. In 1957, he moved to the current site and in 1968 enlarged this site. Frank's son Dick was the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation and Dick's sons, Randy and Ron are the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## **117 W. Blackhawk Higgins Optometry**

In 1934, Dr. Lechtenberg opened this optometrist office. He was followed in 1949 by Dr. Taylor, who in turn was succeeded by Dr. Donna Higgins in 1980. Dr. Higgins uses her professional skill in photography to create a wildlife calendar, which she sells, donating the profit to local charities. Her 2012 calendar is filled with eagles.

## **113 W. Blackhawk Sports World**

Jack Curry began the *Tiger Store* on another site in 1932. His son-in-law, Cy Yeomans, managed it. In 1935, Curry



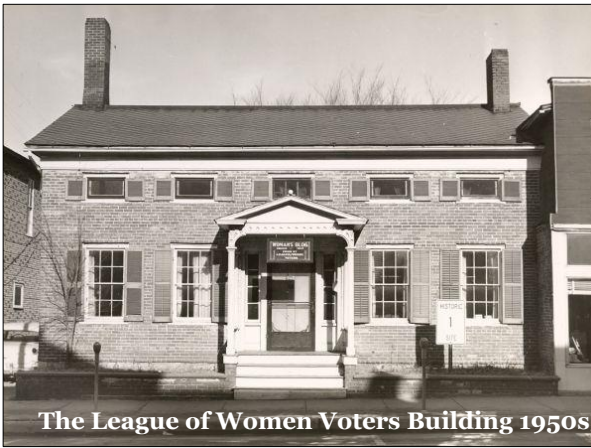
**Du Charme Variety Store 1922-1935**

bought *Du Charme's Variety Store*, which was the Nugent's Livery in the 1890s and later a cigar factory. Du Charme upgraded the storefront. It became the *Gamble's Store* in 1940. Cy's sons, Rich and Larry, ran the business with their mother, Aleda. In 1979, the family changed to *Sports World*. Larry's children, Penny, Todd and Scott are the 4<sup>th</sup> generation.

## **109 W. Blackhawk**

### **W.H.C. Folsom House 1842 *National Register***

The location of PDRI, owned by the State Historical Society, is one of the oldest buildings in town. The red brick came from Kahler's kiln in Bridgeport. *The Patriot* was published here in the late 1840s. It was law office and a family home known variously as Knowlton House, the Pelton House



and the Newton House. While it was owned by E.W. Pelton in late 1859, John Muir spent happy hours with the Pelton family. The League of Women Voters bought it in

1923 to save it and later donated it to the historical society. [For more about the Folsom House see *Lady Franklin* Volume IV # 2, *Without Provocation* Volume I # 2 *Send a Story of Prairie du Chien.*]

## **Beaumont Road**

### **North Beaumont Road**

**Beaumont Road** is the street that divides Blackhawk Avenue— street numbers go from Beaumont west toward the river and east toward the Bluff.

Church Street indicated **St. Gabriel's Church at 506 North Beaumont Road**. [Don't miss it on its site since 1836 and wonderfully renovated in 1908. It would be hard to imagine Prairie du Chien without St. Gabe's.]

The Crawford County Courthouse at 220 N. Beaumont Road is on the **National Register**. The original courthouse built in 1867 is on the NE corner of the square.

Church Street became Beaumont Road in 1930.



## South Beaumont Road

Beaumont Road honors Dr. William Beaumont who performed ground breaking digestive experiments at Fort Crawford. **The Fort Crawford Museum at 717 S. Beaumont Road** is on the site of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fort Crawford hospital and is on the **National Register**. The Fort Crawford Museum and Cemetery are worth the effort. The cemetery is on the west side of the 400 S. block. [See also *Sacred to the Memory* Volume I # 8 *Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*.]

**The Post Office at 120 S. Beaumont**, on the **National Register**, was a Depression era construction, which opened in 1938. The city donated land from its Artesian Well Park, and the federal government put up the building. A WPA artist did a wall sculpture, which hangs inside.

**132 S. Beaumont Road** has been the home of the *Courier-Press* since 1912. Five generations of the Howe family have published the *Courier* since 1911 when Hank Howe bought it. It had been publishing since 1852 making it one of Wisconsin's oldest small town papers. [See *The Howe Way* Volume III # 9 *Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*.]

## Cross Beaumont Road

### The Kappel Block [1866] 101-103 E. Blackhawk

#### **101 E. Blackhawk Lorenz Chiropractic**

*The Corner* is an important location. The Kappel Block only had five owners. Fred Otto's family owned it for the longest period. The west side started with a grocery store and had other



Northwest Fur Company 1808

grocery stores.

In 1987, Pat and Donna Lorenz bought the Kappel Block for his chiropractic office, which has been on the west side since. The small building now attached

to the north end of the Kappel is the Northwest Fur Trade office built in 1808 making it one of the oldest structures in town.

### **103 E. Blackhawk Evie Mae's Pizzeria**

The west side was Wright's and Garvey's Drugstores for 50 years. In January 1869, shortly after Wrights moved into the store, Emory Wright was attacked in the rear of the building and later died from his injuries. His attacker, a Dr. Miller, –not really a doctor–was captured and confined to the Crawford County jail. People threatened to lynch him. He committed suicide. No cemetery would bury him, so authorities buried in on one the islands in the Mississippi

For many years following the departure of Garvey Drugs it housed a series of restaurants, the most popular was the Savory Café. [For more on the Kappel Block, See *The Corner Volume II # 8 Send A Story of Prairie du Chien.*]

### ***The Big Fire February 8, 1899***

In 1899, the buildings east of the Kappel Block on the north side of 100 E Block were heavily damaged or destroyed. Only the Kappel Block was spared. Although the fire threatened the buildings directly across the street, they survived with extensive paint and window damage. Enterprising business owners rebuilt and were back in their new and better stores as early as August 1899. [See *The Big Fire Volume II # 1 Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*]

### **105 E. Blackhawk *The Masonic Block [1874]* Czajkowski Higgins& Rider**

Since 1874, when the Masonic Block was completed, the Masons have held their meetings upstairs except during repairs after damage in the 1899 fire.

*The Bank of Prairie du Chien* was a long time tenant becoming *Prairie City Bank* after the Depression. Scheffer & Queram Law Offices followed the bank. Czajkowski's firm succeeded them. The photo shows the laying of the cornerstone in November 1873.



## **The Zieprecht Block [1899] 109-113 E. Blackhawk**

William Zieprecht, a Dubuque dentist, married a local girl and in 1871 invested in a double block. In 1884, he added a third block to the west. He considered not rebuilding in 1899 but decided to put up a state of the art triple red brick block.

### **109 E. Blackhawk Wall Street**

Grelle Dry Goods was his tenant in the west part of the building for many years. One of the Grelles eventually bought the building. Since 1981, 109 E. Blackhawk has been the address of *Wall Street*

### **111-113E. Blackhawk Rockweiler's TV & Appliance**

Mick Rockweiler began in Viroqua and expanded to Prairie du Chien in 1981. Before a variety of stores occupied the east end of Zieprecht's Building. *The Kroger Store* and the A&P were long time tenants at 113 E.

*The Big Fire* started in *Uher's Shoe Store*, which was at 113 E Bluff Street. The store went up in flames and spread east to *Beach Hardware* with so many products to feed a fire. From there it raged both ways. Many years later, a relative of the Uhers said the family story was that a still in the basement exploded. People thought it odd at the time of the fire that a shoe store would burn so fast and so completely.

## **115 E. Blackhawk Beach Hardware [1899] Dependable Solutions**

Horace Beach was a pioneer hardware owner who operated a store at 2 other sites before he built a frame structure at 115 E. Bluff in 1873. He and his sons rebuilt in brick after the 1899 fire.

Joe and Tina Ruskey have operated a computer service store there since 2009.

## **The Poehler Block [1899] 119-125 E Blackhawk**

Henry C. Poehler, like Beach was a pioneer businessman. He made his money selling grocery. In 1872, he built a single block at 125 E. Bluff. In 1873, he added another to the west. In 1875, he added a third at 119 E. Bluff Street. His family lived in a nice apartment above 125 E. Bluff at the time of the fire, so he lost his home and his business.

Although he was approaching 70, he determined to rebuild. His resolve encouraged Zieprecht and Beach who had some hesitation about rebuilding. His fine white Milwaukee brick triple block was open for business in August 1899. The post office was installed in one of the new storefronts. Poehler had lost two grocery sites and a warehouse to fire previously— one in the Sausage Row Fire. Fred P. Otto, his grandson, owned the Poehler Block for many years until recent times.

**119 E. Blackhawk Select Realty**

Select Realty set up shop here in 2005.

**123 E. Blackhawk Ritchie's Jewelry**

Don Ritchie opened his jewelry store here in 1951.

**125 E. Blackhawk Edward Jones**

Since 1995, Edward Jones Investments has been at home in the Poehler Block.

**129 E. Blackhawk  
People's State Bank Building [1923]  
Gillitzer Law Office**

From its beginning in 1915, People's State Bank rented space on the south side of Bluff Street. In 1923, they opened their attractive building at 129 E. Bluff. In the 1950s, they renovated and doubled the space. In the early 1980s, they relocated to their new building at 301 E. Blackhawk.

Recently Michael Gillitzer has set up a law office on the corner of Blackhawk and Wacouta. Sharing the address is Guaranty Title and Abstract Company & Radiance, a hair salon.



**1923 Building**



**1950s Renovation and Expansion**

## *Cross Wacouta Avenue*

### **The Metro Block 201-203 E. Blackhawk**

#### **201 E. Blackhawk**

##### **Jim's Bar [1950]**

Named for its first owner, Jim Panka, the bar opened as in 1934 following the repeal of prohibition. Previously, it housed retail clothing stores.

#### **203 E. Blackhawk**

##### **Metro Theater [1950]**

##### **Kramer Real Estate**

The NE corner of Minnesota and Bluff Street has been an important spot since the Mondell House was built there in 1856. Until it burned to the ground in December 1880, it was a center of community activities. No picture of the old Mondell House has surfaced.

Fire devastated this corner four times.

Frank Smrcina developed the old Mondell site into the Metro Block. In 1900, his son, Vince, installed a new theater called *the Metropolitan*. It featured vaudeville acts, high school graduations and other community events like wrestling matches and political speeches. The pre-Lenten masquerade balls sponsored by the Bohemian CSPA were held at the Metro most years. These all night dancing parties were a highlight of winter for half a century.

The Metro Block burned in 1903 and was replaced with a grand new Metro in 1905. After Frank's death in 1913, John Panka bought much of his property including the Metro Block. Later, his son George ran the theater for many years.

In 1936, another fire forced a major upgrade. In March 1937, the Metro reopened.

In October 1949, the third Metro fire leveled the building. In May 1950, the current building reopened.

Bohemians like Frank Smrcina, F.V. Zeman, John Panka, the Ceckas, Bohoneks and Stanley Marousek came in the 1870s and by the 1890s or early 1900s were ready to become business and community leaders.

Since 1996, *Kramer Real Estate and Auction Service* has been at home in the old Metro.



**Photos of the Metro Block**  
**1900 or 1905 Metro [top]**  
**1937 Metro Front View [Middle]**  
**1950 Metro Current Building [ Bottom]**

**The Metro Corner always a popular spot to catch a parade.**



**205 E. Blackhawk  
Panka Building [1914]  
Panka's Shoe Store.**

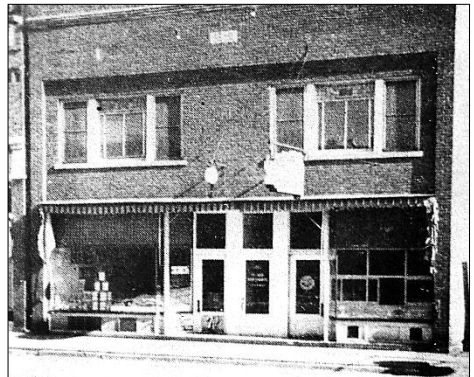
In 1919, Peter Panka, one of John's sons, opened a shoe store in the new Panka Building. The post office was installed in the new Panka Building. His daughter, Toni, followed and kept the business going for her working life. In 1940, a major renovation created the interior space as we know it



**The 1905 Metro and 1918 Panka Building**

**213 E. Blackhawk  
Bohonek Block [1919]  
Gunderson Eye Clinic**

The Bohonek brothers completed a double block in 1919 by doing a major expansion of a residence. The *Faultless Bakery* was in the east bay and *Bohonek's Quality Market* in the west. Dr. Robert McWilliams installed his eye clinic there in the 1950s. His son, Tom, bought the building in 1978 and spent his working life there. Currently it's the home to Gunderson Lutheran Eye Clinic.



**Bohonek Quality Market  
& Faultless Bakery**

**223 E. Blackhawk  
Howe Printing Company**

In 1997, the Howe family expanded to this site, the former Francis Bohonek Coast to Coast Store. Custom printing jobs are done at this second location.

**227 E. Blackhawk  
Krause Monument**

**229 E. Blackhawk  
Bob's Bar**

Bob Kuckenbecker opened this bar in 1958, a favorite place of many locals.

**231 E. Blackhawk  
Deb's Nail & Salon**

*Cross Michigan Street*

**301 E. Blackhawk** [See 129 E. Blackhawk]  
**People's State Bank [1980]**

Since 1915, People's State Bank has been one of the most important institutions in Prairie du Chien. In 1930, it closed, reorganized and reopened. Within a year, all depositors had recovered their money. Today it is a successful locally owned bank with branches in many small surrounding communities

**325 E Blackhawk  
Dagnon Motors [1935]  
Recently closed Great Country Motors**

In August 1900, a disagreement at Stabin's Bar on this site got out of hand and escalated into the Buffalo Bill Riot. It is a wild story and one of our favorites [See *Hey Rube! Volume I # 10 Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*]

Another of our favorite stories concerns the legendary Blackhawk Tree that once stood in the road in front of the Blackhawk Apartments at 695 E. Blackhawk. A plaque celebrating the tree is posted in front of the apartments. [See *The Legend of the Blackhawk Tree Volume II # 2 Send a Story of Prairie du Chien.*]



When the **Burlington Railroad** was built in 1885, it was at the very eastern edge of the city. It was placed there so it wouldn't interfere with the normal activity— a far cry from the many trains that bisect city and halt traffic today.

In the heyday of the railroad, people could travel to any corner of the country by catching a train at the local depot; the Burlington was one block north at Illinois and Hayden Streets. Travelers seeking treatment at the *Turkish Remedial Institute* could get off the train and go a couple of blocks to the sanitarium.



## *& Down the Other*

**Cross to the south side of Blackhawk  
Go west toward the river to Main Street**

## Halpin's Tire Service

Three generations of the Halpin family have served the area since 1957 and since 1959 at this site. They survived and rebuilt after a major fire in May 1991.



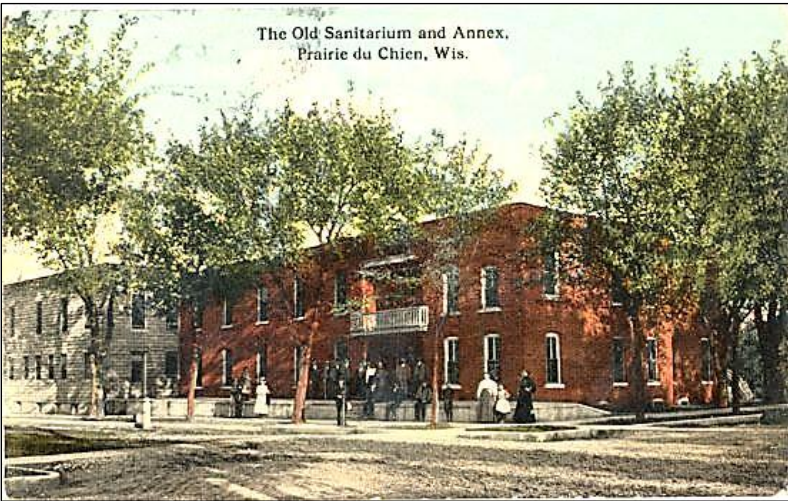
## 300 E. Blackhawk

**The Turkish Remedial Institute 1877**

**Old San Hotel until 1964**

**Prairie City Bank 1968**

**Citizen's Bank 2000**



In 1876, the Artesian Well Company drilled a deep well on the NW corner of Minnesota and Wisconsin Streets. By 1877, John Conant, a respected surgeon who served at the Swift Army Hospital during the Civil War, opened The Turkish Bath and Remedial Institute on the SE corner of Michigan and Bluff Streets. He made use of the mineral waters in various alternative therapies. Dr. John Rathbun took over after Conant's death.

In 1920, a group of investors bought the old sanitarium and turned it into the *Old San Hotel*, which burned in 1964.



In 1968, *Prairie City Bank* opened in its new building. Previously, it had a long tenure at the Masonic Block. The local bank was sold to F&M Bank, which sold again to Citizen's Bank in 2000. Notice the sculptures on the east side of the bank symbolizing the early cultural influences on Prairie du Chien.

## *Cross Michigan Street*

### **226 E. Blackhawk**

A recent fire destroyed the old Lochner Motors Building and left this vacant lot.

### **216 E. Blackhawk [1920] The Monkey's Tale**

A new addition to Blackhawk Avenue replaces Hamann's Variety Store, a fixture in Prairie du Chien for 80 years.

### **214 E. Blackhawk City Hall [2002]**

Step inside city hall and see the wall of mayors and the wonderful Cal Peters murals of Prairie du Chien's early history. Peters worked here as part of the Depression era art projects. The murals are on display courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society. Fittingly, the *Voyage of Marquette and Joliet* hangs in the council chambers. Prairie du Chien dates its history to June 17, 1673 when they entered the Mississippi from the Wisconsin River.

## **200 E. Blackhawk Bargain Boutique**

Owned and operated by Coulee Cap, *the Bargain Boutique* has been around since 1978 but not always on this site. The Garrity Block which housed the 1<sup>st</sup> Eddie's Inn was on this corner. See the inside back cover.

## *Cross Wacouta Avenue*



### **Wachute Memorial Library on Wacouta Avenue**

**Wacouta Avenue** was Minnesota Street. Charley—the last Wachute—left family money to the city provided they change Minnesota Street to Wacouta Avenue. The Wachute family home is at 109 S.

The Wachute family had a variety store on Blackhawk for 50 years. For some reason known only to Charley, he changed the spelling of the family surname. On holidays like July 4<sup>th</sup>, he stood on the corner of Minnesota and Blackhawk playing his violin rather badly while dressed in red white and blue. He was as Bohemian as they come, but he celebrated St. Patrick's Day by wearing the green and playing music.

His brother Joseph and his wife Emma gave money for the construction of a library, which opened in January 1963 at 125. S. Minnesota. It was on site of the city's Artesian Well Park purchased in 1912 from the Artesian Well Company. The Great Artesian Well was drilled in 1876 and was the impetus for the sanitarium related businesses that boosted the city's economy for 50 years.

**The library celebrates its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2012.** Officially, it is the *Joseph and Emma Linzenmeyer Wachute Memorial Library* on Wacouta Avenue—named for two brothers. [See *Wachute Memorial Library on Wacouta Avenue Volume I # 6 Send a Story of Prairie du Chien.*]

*The B.F. Fay House* built in the 1881-82 by the first mayor is across Wisconsin Street from the library.



**Blackhawk Avenue looking west in the 1960s**

**130 E. Blackhawk  
Grace Block [1872]**

**Something for Everyone**

John Grace built a double block for his grocery store. The Panic of 1873 changed his plans and he sold to Brower Drugstore for their uptown location. It was Brower Drugstore, Flood Drugstore and Farrell's Drugstore. For most of its years, this was a drugstore. The Wachute family bought the block and added it to their two blocks west of it.

**124 E. Blackhawk  
Wachute Block [1874]**

**Children's Clothes Line**

Joseph Wachute Sr lost his legs in a railroad accident in the early 1870s. He used his settlement to start a business. He was shrewd, frugal and hardworking and became very successful. This was his original block. Later he built a second one to the west.

**122 W. Blackhawk  
Wachute Block II [@1885]  
**Nail Salon****

**116 W. Blackhawk  
Vondrak Building [1886]  
Althof Television Center**

Albert Vondrak built this in 1886 as a saloon featuring a shooting gallery. Directly across the street from the hottest part of the 1899 fire it was the most in jeopardy. The roof caught fire, but the fire department was able to put the fire out and save the building.. The F.V. Zeman and William T. Smith families were long time owners. Althof's had been on this site since 1978.

**114 E. Blackhawk  
Smrcina Hall 1881  
Telephone Building 1915  
Welter Family Dentistry**

Frank Smrcina bought the lot from H.L Dousman and built stone veneer building in 1881, which housed a tavern and dance hall. Frank Vanek had a shoe store before he sold to the Telephone Company in 1915. For most of the mid to late 1900s, it was Lloyd Caya's Barber Shop with the family home upstairs.

The beautifully renovated building has been home to *Welter Family Dentistry* since 2003. Hats off to the Welters!

**The Raffauf Block [1870] 108-104 E Blackhawk**

Jacob Raffauf built the block in 1870 and soon ran into financial difficulties. He declared bankruptcy in 1874. Mrs. Nina Dousman bought the block at a sheriff's sale in 1876. She owned it during the *Big Fire*. *The Courier* was upstairs. They had a difficult time getting the records and part of the equipment out. The fire was so hot; it melted some metal type.

Later John Panka bought the building and leased it to various businesses. See *The Metro*. [*See the Raffauf Block Volume I # 7 Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*]

**108 E. Blackhawk Windy Cove Treasures**

This gift shop had been operating since the summer of 2009. *Send a Story of Prairie du Chien* is sold exclusively here by Wendy and Chris Kotte. in progress.

**104 E. Blackhawk River City Tattoos**

*Cross Beaumont Road*





South side of W 100 Block after 1902

**100 W. Blackhawk**  
**The Wetzel [1872] & Garvey [1874] Blocks**  
**The Pickett Fence**

This building was two separate blocks. In the 1960s, they were converted to one. Wetzel[east] was a jeweler and the Garvey Brothers[west] were in the dry goods business. A variety of retail businesses from grocery to drugstores to dry goods have occupied the store fronts. *The Pickett Fence* had been in business since 1998 and on this corner since 2006.

**The Crawford County Bank Building**  
**Jewel Casket Company [1902]**

**106-108 W. Blackhawk** [See p 25]

Leonard Cornelius built this for his jewelry business and installed a vault in the east bay. He was approached by the *Crawford County Bank* for space. He rented the east bay to them and put his *Jewel Casket Company* in the west side. He made a tidy sum buying and selling pearls. Sons Jack and Frank ran the jewelry store until 1955.

**106 W Blackhawk Sutton Insurance**

Sutton Insurance has been in business since 1957 with 3 generations contributing to the business.



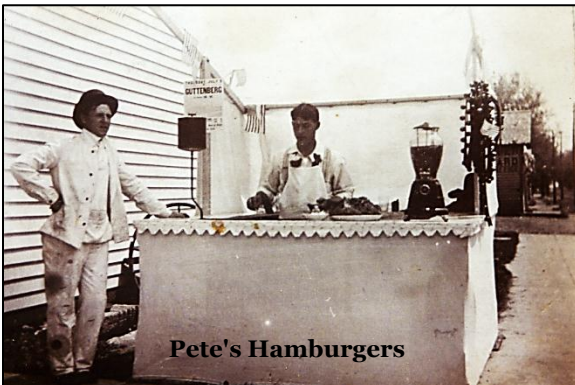
**108 W. Blackhawk Merle Norman**

**110 W. Blackhawk  
Sports World Outlet**

This second store across the street from the flagship Sports World has been open since 1995.

**114 W. Blackhawk  
White's Insurance Agency**

White Insurance Agency has been in business since 1933 through 3 generations. The Otto Insurance Agency was their long time forerunner. Fred A. Otto sold some of the first policies in Prairie du Chien.



**Pete's Hamburgers [1909]** [See p 26]

Since 1909, the family of Pete Gokey has been selling their signature hamburgers during the summer months. Much of the profit is given to local organizations. Pete's is a unique Prairie du Chien experience as the long lines suggest.

**118 .W Blackhawk  
Stark's Boat Shop [Check]**

See Stark's Sport's Shop

**126 W. Blackhawk  
Vierbicher Agency**

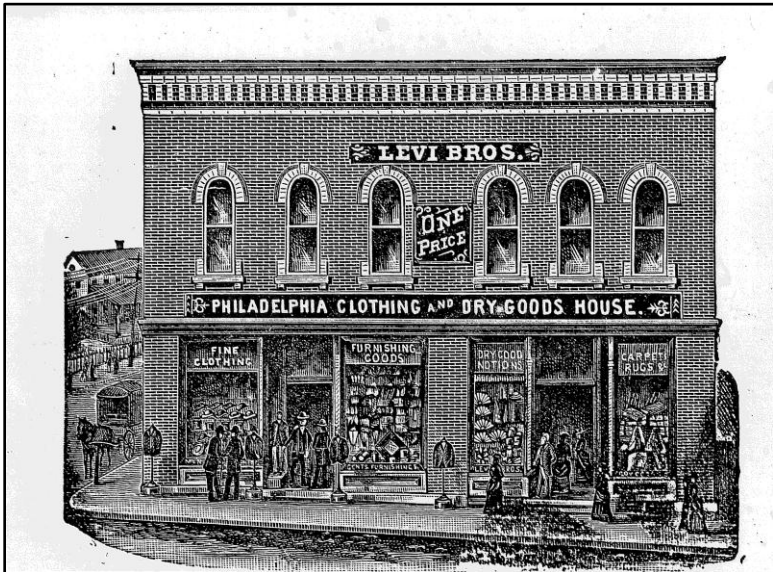
Occupants have been City Bakery, Rhein's Saloon, an ice cream shop, a barbershop and several restaurants.

Vierbicher has been at this location since 2007.

*Cross Prairie Street*



**Don't Miss  
Valley Fish & Cheese  
304 S. Prairie**



**Siegbert Block 1872**

## **The Seigbert Block [1872] 200-204 W. Blackhawk**

Henry Seigbert built his block in 1872; as soon as it was completed, it caught fire. He repaired it and reopened. He was a grain merchant in addition to his regular dry goods business. He suffered financial reversals and committed suicide in 1879. His family sold the business to Levi Brothers who ran it until early in the 1900s. Their Philadelphia Store was the first chain store in Prairie du Chien.

Another tragedy was associated with the building. In 1914, Will Zeil was killed when he fell while working on the east side of the building. Various businesses including McCloskey *Menswear*, *Crystal Cleaners*, *Wood Distributing*, and *Seipp and Otteson Funeral Home* have occupied the Seigbert Block.

### **200 W. Blackhawk**

### **204 W. Blackhawk Simply**

*Simply* opened in the full block in 2005 and has since reduced its size to the west half.

### **206 W. Blackhawk**

### **The White Front Tavern [1915]**

### **The Sawmill Saloon**

Built as a tavern by Leonard Cornelius in 1915, this has been a favorite local spot. Denny and Bonnie Fuller have operated the *Sawmill Saloon* since 1978.

### **214 W. Blackhawk [See Page 29]**

### **The Old French Store [1855]**

### **Fort Mulligan's Grill Pub**

Julius Famechon and Augustus Galliard went in business in the 1840s, hence *the French Store*. They built on this site in 1855 reportedly from stone reclaimed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fort Crawford.

Leonard Cornelius bought it next; his family lived on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors. It stayed in the family until the mid-1970s.

In the mid-1900s, it was Slab Mattie's *Circle Bar* featuring its signature curved bar.

Current owner, Blair Dillman, leases to the operators of *Fort Mulligan's Grill Pub* in place since 2000. The pillars outside await a much promised balcony. It could take a while.

**French Store**



**Circle Bar**



## *Back at Main Street*

The empty SE Corner of Main and Blackhawk Avenue was home to the three story Dousman Block from 1856-1955.

The empty SW corner was Case's Corner after Lawrence Case who ran his business there for 50 years. Later as the Prairie Dairy, it was razed in the 1960s.

Case was one of the transplanted Yankees who created businesses along Main Street from the late 1830s through the 1850s. Others were James H. Lockwood, Thomas Savage, John Thomas, Samuel A. Clark, O.P. Martin, Edward P. Lockhart, Horace Beach, B.F. Fay and others. Alfred Brunson and his son Ira were influential. Also prominent were the Pelton and the Wright families who came from the same Massachusetts town.

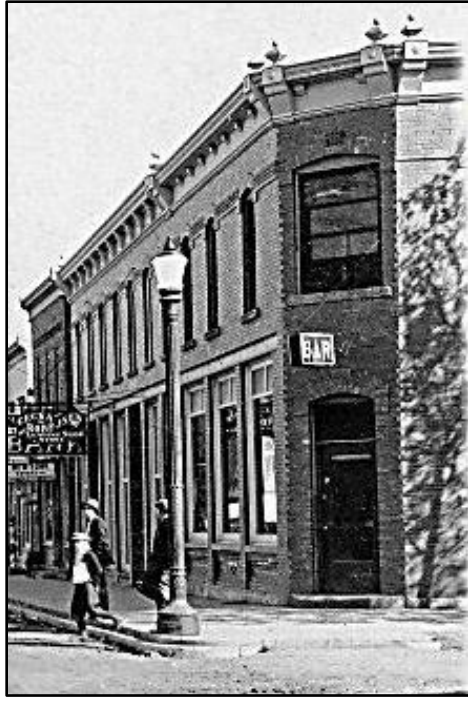
Directly across Main from The Americinn is the site of an early hotel, the Phoenix that expanded into the Kane Hotel when the railroad came. The Kane Fire in 1873 ended the reign of Main Street as the central district. [See Volume I # 9 *The Kane is on Fire! Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*] Hopefully, another motel complex will one day stand where the Kane was.

South across Wisconsin Street is the area tourism center and the home of the Chamber of Commerce. The Marquette Statue was installed at St. Mary's Academy in 1910 and moved to its current location in 1979. A gift from the Cornelius family provided the money for Prairie du Chien western gateway park. [See Volume II # 6 *An Ever Present Spirit Send a Story of Prairie du Chien*]

St. Feriote Slough just west of Main Street is a favorite spot for eagle watching in winters when the water is open. Fishermen also favor the slough especially the ice just north of the Blackhawk Avenue Bridge.

In 2009, the author began publishing ***Send a Story of Prairie du Chien***, a series of pamphlet sized stories. Volumes I, II and III each contain 10 stories. Volume IV is in progress. All are available exclusively at ***Windy Cove Treasures***. Copies are also available at the Prairie du Chien and McGregor Public Libraries.

You may want to select a story and send it to a friend or someone interested in Prairie du Chien.



**Looking east from the intersection of Minnesota & Bluff Street @ 1914  
Above Garrity's Block and east of that, Marousek's Bakery razed in  
1972— much to the disappointment of residents.**



**Looking east from 100 E Bluff Street after 1900**



**Looking west from 200 E Bluff street @ 1914**