

Bruno P. Beck Building  
(Redding's Restaurant)  
101-103 South Main Street  
Jefferson  
Jefferson County  
Wisconsin

HABS No. WI-352

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WIS  
28-JEFF,  
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY  
Rocky Mountain Regional Office  
National Park Service  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, Colorado 80225-0287

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## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

### BRUNO P. BECK BUILDING (Redding's Restaurant)

Location: 101-103 South Main Street, Jefferson, Jefferson County, Wisconsin.

Present Owner: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, Madison, Wisconsin.

Present Use: Vacant (to be demolished 1997).

Significance: The Bruno P. Beck Building, constructed in 1921, displays the commercial Queen Anne style. It retains historic character and was included as a contributing resource to the Main Street Historic District, determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 1994.<sup>1</sup> Architectural features of the building include a storefront with large display windows, two bay windows on the second floor, and an upper cornice with brackets.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

##### A. Physical History:

###### 1. *Date of Erection:* 1921

The Beck Building was preceded by a frame structure that was well known in Jefferson as Kispert & Roessler, clothier and shoe store. The building was erected in the 1850s and housed Kispert & Roessler from c. 1880 until its demolition in 1920. Kispert & Roessler was the last frame structure on the 100 block of South Main Street. In 1921, the Beck Building was constructed for the Beck family, who lived on the second floor and operated a shoe store on the first floor until 1940.<sup>2</sup>

After the Becks, the building remained vacant for about six years. Purchased by Earl and Elizabeth Smith, the shoe store was converted to a hardware store and operated in that capacity

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<sup>1</sup> The Main Street Historic District was determined eligible by the State Historic Preservation Office on April 26, 1994. Listing on the NRHP is pending.

<sup>2</sup> The Jefferson Banner, 4 August 1921 and 8 September 1921.

for about 14 years, until 1960. In that year, Rose Redding purchased the building, remodeled it, and operated a restaurant. For over 30 years, the building was known as Redding's Restaurant. Since 1993, the Beck Building has been intermittently vacant.

2. *Architect*: Unknown.

3. *Original and subsequent owners*: 1920-1940, The Real Shoe Store, Bruno P. and Emily Beck; 1940-1946, vacant, Watertown Building and Loan Association; 1946-1960, hardware store, Earl F. and Elizabeth Smith; 1960-1993, Redding's Restaurant, Rose Redding; 1993-1997, vacant, Cynthia Hanson.

4. *Original plans and construction*: No original plans are known to exist.

5. *Alterations and additions*: The building's storefront has been altered with a different window configuration than the original. From the front, the original display windows were angled toward the center door. This window configuration can be seen by the edges of the original tile that remain in the storefront recess. The current window pattern has four windows that join at right angles on each side of the center door. Bulkheads have been retained below the windows. Also on the main facade, various types and sizes of outdoor signage have been added and removed over the years. Remnants of these signs, such as drilled holes and sign mounts, can be seen.

The west facade was altered with the addition of a one-story, two-bay garage. The garage is brick and concrete block with overhead wood doors and a flat tar roof.

The interior reflects modern alterations: the first was the conversion of the hardware store to a restaurant. The interior of Redding's Restaurant remained unchanged from its beginning in 1960 until 1993. In 1995, the building was leased for a short period, operating as the Sunrise Cafe. As the Sunrise Cafe, the interior was remodeled, with booths replacing free-standing tables and chairs, and carpeting laid over the original tile. On the second floor, the only alteration was a kitchen remodeling in the 1960s.

B. Historical Context:

### **History of Jefferson**

The first permanent Euro-American settlers, Rodney J. Currier and Andrew Lansing who hailed from Milwaukee, arrived in Jefferson Township in December 1836. They chose the juncture of the Rock and Crawfish Rivers to locate their new settlement—the present-day Jefferson.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Margaret Torgerson, "Jefferson: From Village to City in 1878," Daily Jefferson County Union, 17 March 1978; and The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin, (Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879), 466.

In time, other settlers, led by Enoch G. Darling, began arriving by boat from the downstream community of Bark Mills, currently known as Hebron, on the Rock River. The group from Bark Mills transported a frame structure by boat. The building was erected on the site of the current Jefferson Hotel, at Main and Milwaukee Streets, and served as the first courthouse, tavern, and trading post. Two years later, in 1839, the community's first hotel, the two-story frame Sanborn House, was erected on Main Street. In 1840, a frame courthouse was built.<sup>4</sup>

Beginning in 1842, a large number of German immigrants settled in Jefferson County. Early development of commerce and industry coincided with this infusion of settlers.<sup>5</sup> That same year, Darling and partner Gilmore Kendall built a dam across the Rock River and erected a sawmill on its east bank. By 1845, the village of Jefferson contained 80 inhabitants and included a blacksmith shop, Isaac Savage's gunsmith shop, two lawyers' offices, county buildings, two doctors' offices, a schoolhouse, a sawmill, and several small stores.<sup>6</sup>

Between 1845 and 1850, Jefferson saw a great influx of population, increasing from 80 residents to 550. The first brick commercial building was constructed in 1850 by James Barr at the northeast corner of Racine and Main Streets (extant). By 1853, the downtown included three brick commercial blocks, two brick churches, and numerous brick residences and frame buildings. The Waldo & Murray brickyard in Jefferson supplied the bricks for most of these structures. Yellow brick was predominantly produced by the Waldo & Murray brickyard and according to an article in the Milwaukee Daily Wisconsin, "compare[d] very favorably with the famous Milwaukee brick...."<sup>7</sup>

The greatest nineteenth century population increase in Jefferson occurred between 1850 and 1860, when the population rose from 550 to 2,006.<sup>8</sup> In 1856, Jefferson was chosen over Watertown as the county seat and a year later incorporated as a village—both contributed to the community's growth. Population and business growth were further spurred by Jefferson's connection to the railroad in the late 1850s. The first Chicago & Northwestern Railroad Company train arrived

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<sup>4</sup> Torgerson; John Henry Ott, Jefferson County, Wisconsin and Its People: A Record of Settlement, Organization, Progress and Achievement, (Chicago: S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917), 44; and The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin, 466-467.

<sup>5</sup> Centennial Celebration and Bridge Dedication, (N.p., 1936) 15.

<sup>6</sup> The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin, 466-467; and Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory, 1895-1896, (Chicago: R.L. Polk & Co., 1896), 495.

<sup>7</sup> Ott, 221-222; and "Main Street Historic District" Determination of Eligibility, April 1994, in the files of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Historic Preservation, Madison, Wisc.

<sup>8</sup> Ott, 303.

in Jefferson in October 1859, and regular service between Chicago and Oshkosh began in November of that same year.<sup>9</sup>

After 1860, the population influx slowed, only increasing slightly every decade. Four major industrial companies of early Jefferson were formed during the 1860s, including the Michael Kemmeter Brick & Coal Company; the Jefferson Boot and Shoe Factory, later known as Copeland & Ryder; the Jefferson Woolen Manufacturing Company; and the Wisconsin Manufacturing Company. Smaller businesses in Jefferson in the 1860s included sawmills, flour mills, and tanneries.<sup>10</sup>

By 1870, there were 3,272 farms occupying 317,249 acres in Jefferson County.<sup>11</sup> As farms were established in Jefferson Township in the 1860s and 1870s, the city of Jefferson became the commercial center for the surrounding agricultural community. Several new buildings were constructed during the large growth period of the 1860s and 1870s. Jefferson's first bank, the Farmers & Merchants Bank, was founded in 1873 and built on Main Street.<sup>12</sup> The A. Puerner and Son Company grocery and dry goods store was established in 1878.<sup>13</sup> These two prominent buildings were constructed in popular styles of the period, enhancing the architectural character of the downtown. Industries established in the 1870s included the Jefferson Foundry and the Riverside Cheese Factory.

With a population near 3,000, Jefferson was incorporated as a city in 1878, and Ira W. Bird, a lawyer in Jefferson, was elected as the city's first mayor.<sup>14</sup> Due to the increased prosperity from a growing population, Jefferson's downtown expanded with many new commercial buildings constructed. By 1880, Jefferson contained ten general stores, a variety of millinery shops, drug

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<sup>9</sup> The C&NW Railroad continues to operate freight trains through Jefferson; The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin, 470-471; and Ott, 223, 273.

<sup>10</sup> The population peaked in 1925 at 4,000; Sanborn Map Company, Fire Insurance Maps for Jefferson, Wisconsin, (New York and Chicago: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd., 1904); Ott, 230, 303; The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin, 477-479, 482; and Centennial Celebration and Bridge Dedication, 21, 57-64.

<sup>11</sup> Ott, 303; and "Main Street Historic District," Determination of Eligibility, April 1994, in the files of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Historic Preservation, Madison, Wisc.

<sup>12</sup> The building is extant but covered by a metal screen.

<sup>13</sup> The company operated under the Puerner name until 1947, and then operated under the name Heilemann's, owners of the store and the adjacent brewery building, until 1978. "Jefferson Centennial 1878-1978." [ N.p., 1978. ]; and "Puerner Block/Bruenig's Brewery" National Register Nomination, listed June 14, 1984, in the files of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Historic Preservation, Madison, Wisc.

<sup>14</sup> Torgerson.

stores, grocery stores, a bank, harnessmaker shops, blacksmith shops, law offices, physicians offices, a bottling works, flour and feed stores, and a meat packing company.<sup>15</sup>

Two major industries, brewing and cigar manufacturing, were found downtown in the early days of Jefferson. Both industries were located within the commercial district, providing both employment and services to the residents of Jefferson. Drawing from the readily available tobacco crops of southern Wisconsin, Jefferson was home to a large cigar industry that during the 1880s and 1890s supported more than eight manufacturers. Jefferson's proximity to Milwaukee and its large German population also made the city a prime location for the brewing industry. More than eight breweries were in operation between the early 1850s and Prohibition in Jefferson, with some breweries operating as long as 40 years. The success of these businesses influenced building trends in downtown Jefferson as well. Between 1870 and 1890, new buildings were constructed to house sample rooms operated by Neuer, Breunig, Bienfang, and the Jefferson Brewing Company, and cigar manufactories under Leutz, Seitz, and others.

From the 1890s through the turn of the twentieth century, many civic improvements enhanced life in Jefferson. Electricity was installed in Jefferson after 1893 and provided lighting services from sundown until midnight. License for the city water system was granted to Edward Mueller, proprietor of Jefferson House, in 1893. After 1900, the city acquired both utilities and merged them into the City Water and Electric Department. Other civic improvements included the first street paving in 1906 and the installation of sewers in 1908.<sup>16</sup>

Specialized businesses established after the turn of the twentieth century included the Waverly Manufacturing Company, the Union Upholstering Company, and the Sheboygan Evaporated Milk Company.<sup>17</sup> Prior to World War I, commercial businesses evolved, offering expanded services to the residents of Jefferson. Harness makers, carriage works, and liveries started to give way to gas stations. To attract larger numbers of customers, dry goods stores and general stores evolved into department stores that seemed to provide a myriad of items. Some grocery stores and meat markets combined to form one-stop grocery stores. New services in downtown Jefferson included four moving picture theaters, an American Express office, a separate building for the post office on South Main Street.

Specialty stores, such as bookstores and shoe stores, evolved to better serve the growing population of Jefferson. From working with several partners, Bruno Beck had become familiar with the clothing and shoe business. In 1921, Beck established "The Real Shoe Store" in a new building at the corner of Main and Racine Streets. The Real Shoe Store was successful as a specialty store in downtown Jefferson, operating for nearly 20 years. Hardware stores, furniture

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<sup>15</sup> The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin, 477-496.

<sup>16</sup> Ott, 227.

<sup>17</sup> Centennial Celebration and Bridge Dedication, 60 and 62.

stores, professional offices, and saloons also remained important components of the commercial center.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. *Architectural character:* The Beck Building exhibits a commercial version of the Queen Anne architectural style. The Queen Anne style was popular in Wisconsin from 1880 to 1910 and was prominently used for commercial buildings statewide as well as in Jefferson's Main Street Historic District. Also popular for residential buildings, the Queen Anne style is often defined by corner turrets, bay windows, and period decorative details. The Beck Building displays bay windows and period details, and is comparable in stylistic detail to prominent examples of the style in the historic district, such as the commercial building at 105 South Main Street and the J.A. Fisher Building at 109-111 North Main Street. In terms of integrity, a large number of buildings within the Main Street Historic District display modern storefronts and other alterations, but largely retain their upper-story architectural features. The Beck Building also retains a high level of integrity from its second-story architectural features. The altered storefront has not diminished the historic character of the building.

2. *Condition of the fabric:* The building is in very good condition.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. *Overall dimensions:* The building occupies nearly the entire lot of 140 feet x 60 feet and is two stories in height with a full-size cellar.

2. *Foundations:* Above the ground on the north facade, the foundation is seen as stone, but brick portions toward the rear can only be seen in the cellar. A concrete block foundation is installed under the garage addition.

3. *Walls:* The building and garage walls are red brick. The south wall of the garage, which abuts an addition to 105 South Main Street, is concrete block. The only frame portions of the building are the two bay windows on the main and north facades, and the large second-story porch on the west facade.

4. *Structural system, framing:* The building is supported by brick masonry walls and the foundation.

5. *Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:* On the west (rear) facade, a large porch is attached to the second story. The wood porch is entirely enclosed with windows and supported by three large square posts fixed to the top of the garage. The north and south facades of the porch have two, eight-pane, single-sash windows. The west facade contains eight identical windows.

6. *Chimneys:* A small brick chimney with a concrete cap protrudes from the roof near the north roof parapet.

7. *Openings:*

a. *Doorways and doors:* The storefront door is a wide wood door with a large single pane of glass in the center. The door retains original knob and latch equipment. A narrow transom is above the door. The second door on the main facade, south of the storefront, is also wood and features a single pane of glass above two inset, vertical wood panels. A large transom window is above this door. The third exterior door is on the west facade and allows access from the rear of the building onto the roof. The door matches the second door on the main facade. A large transom window is also above this door. A fourth exterior door added with the garage, is a simple wood door that enters the garage from the north facade.

b. *Windows:* The main facade windows include tall storefront windows and a wide band of luxfer prism panels above the storefront.<sup>18</sup> The southern window on the second story is a tall, one-over-one, double-hung window with an elaborate projecting crown of wood moldings. To the north of that window is a bay window with three wide, one-over-one double-hung windows, all with four-pane storm windows. The bay is decorated with a sunburst pediment over the center window. Above these windows are a single window and band of three small fixed windows of horizontal orientation with brick lintels.

The north facade contains numerous windows. From east to west on the first story, the windows include five fixed, single-pane windows of horizontal orientation, and three tall single openings. From east to west, the first opening displays a tall, one-over-one, double-hung window, the second a metal vent and plywood, and the third a tall, one-over-one, double-hung window with a four-pane storm window. On the second floor, from east to west, the windows include a pair of tall, one-over-one, double-hung windows with four-pane storm windows; a pair of regular size, one-over-one, double-hung windows with four-pane storm windows; a single, small, one-over-one, double-hung window with a four-pane storm window; a pair of regular size, one-over-one, double-hung windows with four-pane storm windows; a bay window with three wide, one-over-one, double-hung windows with one four-pane storm window for the center bay; and a pair of small, one-over-one, double-hung windows with four-pane storm windows. The bay window is decorated with a sunburst pediment over the center window. Excluding the bay window, windows on the north facade feature straight brick lintels and concrete or wood sills.

Due to the enclosed porch on the second floor, there are only three windows on the west facade. To the north there is a pair of tall, one-over-one, double-hung windows. Between this pair and the west facade door, is a single, tall, one-over-one, double-hung window with an eight-pane storm window. All three openings on the west facade have straight brick lintels. Windows on the garage addition include two three-over-one, double-hung windows.

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<sup>18</sup> The luxfer prism panels were commonly used for commercial buildings to project light into the back of dimly lit stores.

8. *Roof:*

a. *Shape, covering:* The entire building is covered by a rectangular flat roof of tar. Extending from the building's upper cornice are brick parapet walls, descending in steps toward the rear.

b. *Cornice:* The building's upper cornice displays curved end brackets with bull's-eyes. The end brackets are topped with ball knobs. Between the end brackets, the cornice features thin moldings and an overhang of 12 small, curved brackets.

C. Description of Interior:

1. *Floor plans:*

a. *Cellar:* A cellar with 12-foot ceilings underneath the building has roughly the same dimensions as the building. A wood-framed coal shed is extant within the cellar. The entire cellar is used for storage.

b. *First floor:* The first floor of the Beck Building is devoted to the restaurant. A long formica counter with stainless steel stools consumes the center and northwest corner of the dining area. Behind the counter, aligned along the north wall, is equipment such as a milk machine, soda fountain, large refrigerator, mixers and shelving. At the front of the restaurant, a portion of the north wall is lined with booth seats and tables with chairs. Similar furniture is also aligned on the south wall. First-floor bathrooms are located on the south wall. The west end of the first floor is the kitchen and is separated from the dining area by a wall that contains an arched entryway and a kitchen counter. The kitchen contains restaurant equipment such as a cooking grill, stove, ovens, refrigerators, freezers, sink, tables, shelves, and counters.

c. *Second floor:* The second floor contains the living space of the Beck Building. The L-shaped living room is the largest in the apartment, consuming the easternmost third of the second floor. Moving west, toward the back of the building, the next rooms along the north wall are the bathroom, dining room, kitchen, and rear porch. The center of the second floor contains three bedrooms. The two smaller bedrooms are in the center of the floor, each accessed by three doors. The larger bedroom is in the rear, only accessible from the kitchen. The apartment is decorated in a contemporary fashion.

2. *Stairways:* The flight of cellar stairs are located underneath the flight of stairs to the second floor in the southwest corner of the building. A third flight of stairs ascends from Main Street and terminates in a second-story bedroom. Each flight is composed of steeply rising wood stairs.

3. *Flooring:* The cellar floor is concrete. Flooring in the restaurant includes speckled tile with ceramic tile accents on the north floor, and short fiber carpeting on the south floor. Bird's-eye maple wood floors are used on the second floor.

4. *Wall and ceiling finishes:* The stone and brick cellar walls are unfinished. The ceiling is composed of floor joists and wood planking. In the first floor restaurant, the walls and ceiling are plaster. All walls on the second floor are plaster. The majority of ceilings on the second story are also plaster, though some rooms have been covered with a drop ceiling of rails and tile.

5. *Doorways and doors:* One entryway on the first floor is a large arched opening with no door between the kitchen and the dining area. First-floor doors are plain wood doors, functional in appearance, and include two for the bathrooms, a closet door, and one to the basement. Doors on the second floor living space are oak, with some including etched glass panels or inset wood panels as ornamentation.

6. *Decorative features:* The decorative feature of the first floor is the ceiling of high-quality wood moldings and crossing beams, which extend the length and width of the dining area. The wood creates the effect of having a coffered ceiling. On the second floor, all doors and windows are surrounded with oak moldings. The bay windows provide three consecutive windows for the second-floor living space and added interior shelf space. Built-in items include bookshelves in the living room and a hutch in the dining room. The living room also features a colonnaded entry with square wood piers illustrating the Arts and Crafts style.

7. *Lighting fixtures:* The restaurant is lit by two ceiling fan lights and a series of modern hanging fluorescent lamps. Second-floor lighting also includes modern fluorescent lamps.

D. Site:

1. *General Setting:*

The Bruno P. Beck Building is located at the corner of Main and Racine Streets, which serves as an anchor of the downtown business district and Main Street Historic District in the city of Jefferson. The historic district contains 47 properties in Jefferson's central business district, including 39 contributing buildings and 7 noncontributing buildings.<sup>19</sup> Within this area, two buildings commonly referred to as the Puerner Block/Breunig Brewery were listed on the NRHP in 1984. Contributing to the environment of the district are three blocks of brick paved streets at the west end of the district. The setting also includes the Rock River, which runs north-south, one block west of the district.

Buildings in the district were built between c. 1850 and 1930 and commonly display two-to-three-story height and brick construction with decorative upper cornices. Most alterations are limited to the storefronts, while the upper stories largely remain intact. The main facades of contributing buildings often include a decorative storefront cornice, prominent window treatments, and ornamental brickwork. Both upper and storefront cornices typically feature brackets of varying size, dentils, corbelled brick, and raised geometric shapes.

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<sup>19</sup> Due to its planned demolition, the Beck Building was not included in the National Register nomination for the Main Street Historic District.

Architectural styles prominently represented in this district include Italianate and Queen Anne. To a lesser degree, Neoclassical and Eclectic buildings (drawing motifs from the Italianate, Queen Anne, Neo-Gothic, and Art Deco styles) are seen. These styles were popular in both the country and the state at the time of construction. A large number of the brick buildings feature a "yellow brick," similar to the Milwaukee cream city brick.

The historic integrity of the district has not been diminished by the alterations to historic buildings with modern commercial storefronts and facades. As is commonly seen in commercial historic districts, alterations to the buildings have occurred primarily to the first-level storefronts. Modern additions to storefronts include aluminum and wood coverings, large signage, metal doors, and metal-framed windows. There is a small amount of infill buildings between the numerous historic buildings that create the original fabric of the district.

## 2. *Neighboring Buildings:*

The corner of Main and Racine Streets includes the William Muck & Co. General Store (1892), an Eclectic style commercial building to the north; the Puerner Block (1893), a group of Italianate style buildings that includes the first brick commercial building in the city (c. 1850) to the northeast; and the Farmers & Merchants Bank (1911-12), a Neoclassical style bank to the east with a 1966 addition. All three buildings have been identified as contributing resources to the Main Street Historic District. The building adjacent to the south, 105 South Main Street, is a Queen Anne style commercial building with similar proportion and character to the Beck Building. The east approach of the Racine Street Bridge (1935-36) terminates in the intersection with Main Street, immediately north of the building.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Centennial Celebration and Bridge Dedication, Jefferson, Wisconsin. N.p., 1936.

The History of Jefferson County, Wisconsin. Chicago: Western Historical Company, 1879.

Jefferson Banner. Various dates, 1860-1935.

"Jefferson Centennial, 1878-1978." N.p., 1978. Located in the vertical file of the Jefferson Public Library.

"Main Street Historic District" Determination of Eligibility, April 1994. In the files of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Historic Preservation, Madison, Wisc.

Ott, John Henry. Jefferson County Wisconsin and Its People, Volume 1 and 2. Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1917.

"Puerner Block/Bruenig's Brewery" National Register Nomination, listed June 14, 1984. In the files of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Division of Historic Preservation, Madison, Wisc.

Sanborn Map Company. Fire Insurance Maps of Jefferson, Wisconsin. New York and Chicago: Sanborn-Perris Map Co. Ltd, 1904.

Torgerson, Margaret. "Jefferson: From Village to City in 1878", Daily Jefferson County Union, March 17, 1978.

Wisconsin State Gazetteer and Business Directory. 1895-96, 1903-04, 1911-12, and 1919-20. Chicago: R.L. Polk & Co.

#### **PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION**

Documentation of the Bruno P. Beck Building was undertaken in compliance with a stipulation of the Memorandum of Agreement for the Racine Street Bridge replacement project. The replacement of the bridge has prompted the demolition of the Beck Building. The work was performed by Mead & Hunt, Inc., of Madison, Wisconsin, as a subcontractor to Ayres Associates. Mead & Hunt architectural historian Kirk R. Huffaker completed the documentation in January 1997.

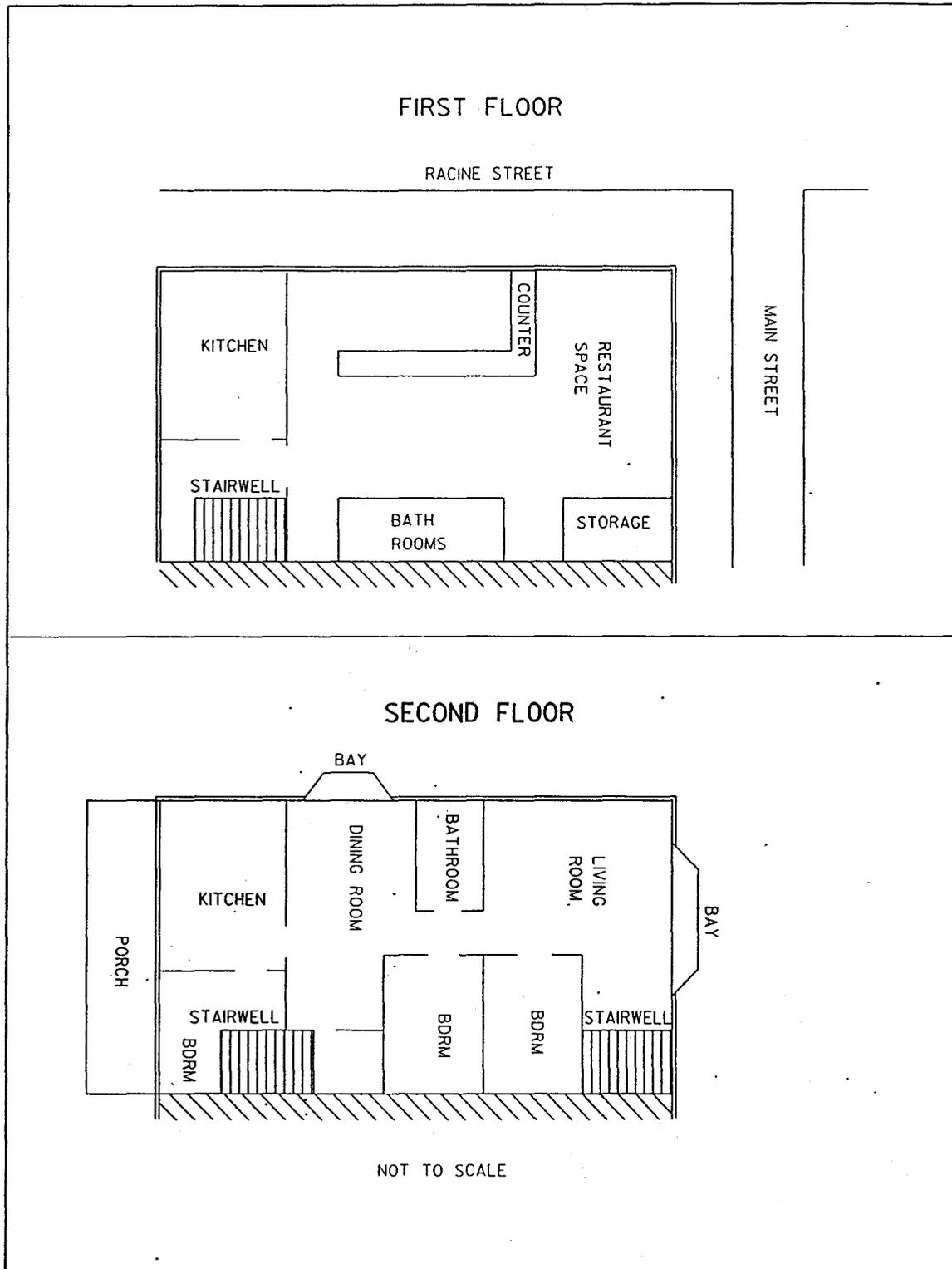


Figure 1: Floor Plan for the Bruno P. Beck Building (Redding's Restaurant), 101-103 South Main Street, Jefferson, Wisconsin.