

Downtown South Milwaukee circa 1893

We hope you enjoyed your walking tour of the downtown South Milwaukee area. If you would like to become a member of the South Milwaukee Historical Society, please fill out the form and mail to the address below.

*South Milwaukee Historical Society*  
717 Milwaukee Av  
South Milwaukee, WI 53172



### Open House Third Saturday of the Month

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# South Milwaukee Historical Society

## *Downtown Walking Tour*

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South Milwaukee Historical Society  
717 Milwaukee Ave  
South Milwaukee WI 53172

*Thank you for your support*

**1 C. & NW. Railway Depot** (1893). 1111 Milwaukee Ave. Charles Summer Frost architect. Served as passenger station for the Chicago & North Western Railway through the 1950s. This building was saved from the wrecking ball in 1981 by Edwin Benkowski and has been restored. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Currently the business offices for Benkowski Builders. Be sure to stop by the Crusher statue while you're here!

**2 Bucyrus Steam Shovel & Dredge Company.** 1100 Milwaukee Ave. The company moved here from Bucyrus, Ohio in 1892, with plant operations beginning in May 1893. Bucyrus steam shovels were used in the construction of the Panama Canal (1904-1914). Bucyrus was purchased by Caterpillar in 2011.

**3 South Milwaukee Hospital** (1904). 1215-1217 Milwaukee Ave. This 20 bed hospital was opened by a transplanted Canadian, Dr. Sidney M. Smith. Dr. Smith served as the city's mayor from 1908-1910 and was successful in lobbying for the construction of the first water filter process plant on the Great Lakes in 1911. The hospital is currently a private residence.

**4 Site of the Lake View Clubhouse.** Built in 1892 and originally intended as a cultural and civic center, a "defective chimney" was blamed as this beautiful, 3-story building burned to the ground on March 2, 1893. This was the first major fire in South Milwaukee and led to the creation of the South Milwaukee Fire Department soon thereafter. This site was also home to the city's water tower from 1895 to around 2006.

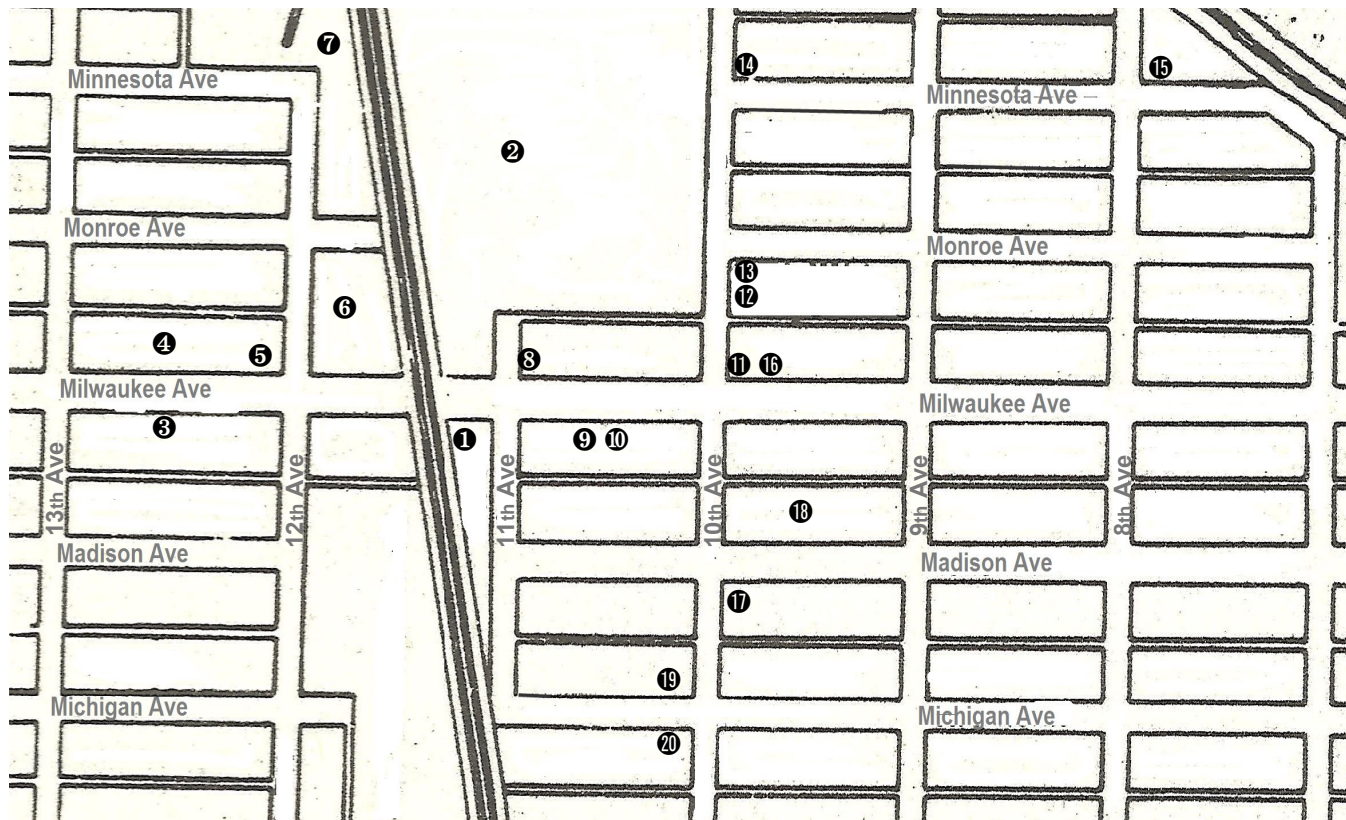
**5 Zych's Drug Store** (1917). 1200 Milwaukee Ave. This popular drug store had one of the finest soda fountains in South Milwaukee. Ice cream was sold for 10 cents a pint and in the summer could be enjoyed in the small, outdoor park with dance pavilion on the west side of the building.

**6 Schutz Bros. Furniture Factory** (1892). 1919 12<sup>th</sup> Ave. First factory built in South Milwaukee. Their advertising claimed that they produced "3 1/2 miles of extension tables per week." The building was sold to the Racine Fire Engine Company around 1900 and was purchased by Bucyrus in 1911 and used for many years as a community center. Currently Skyline Catering & the Bucyrus Museum.

**7 Site of Hatch Cutlery.** N.E. corner of 12<sup>th</sup> and Minnesota. In 1893 Hatch Cutlery touted itself as being the "largest shears works in the world," turning out some 2,000 shears and scissors per day. Hatch Cutlery products earned several medals at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. Owner Walter P. Hatch served briefly as village President. The building burned to the ground in January 1895 and the company moved shortly thereafter.

**8 Site of the South Milwaukee Hotel.** 1028 Milwaukee Avenue. Built in 1891-1892 by Frederick Koch, it was the first commercial building constructed in South Milwaukee. This venerable old edifice served many local business purposes until it was razed in the late 1970s.

**9 Palace Meat Market** (1897). 1009 Milwaukee Ave. Built by Henry Donsing, one of South Milwaukee's early civic and business leaders. On the second floor was Donsing's Hall, which hosted many community functions.



**10 The Garden Theater** (c. 1920). 1005 Milwaukee Ave. Built by Edward Wagner, this popular movie house served the community until 1977. Currently Board Game Barristers.

**11 Site of the Hotel Blatz.** 928 Milwaukee Ave. Originally built in 1894 as Bettinger & Zilg's dry goods store. The building was taken over by Charles Franke around 1902 and served as the Hotel Blatz and later as the Franke Pharmacy for many years. Charles Franke would serve 8 terms as city mayor. The building was torn down in 1963 and replaced with current structure.

**12 Site of the old City Hall.** 2005 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. Served the city from 1893 to 1929, when current structure was built. Currently apartment complex.

**13 Bettinger & Sons' Department Store** (1902). 2001-2003 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. South Milwaukee's first department store opened December 23, 1902. Currently the Kane Building.

**14 South Milwaukee House** (1892). 1815 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. Built by Michael Bedessem, this tavern was a favorite watering hole for local politicians and boasted the first electric lights in the city. The original tile floor remains. Currently Powers' On 10<sup>th</sup>.

**15 South Milwaukee Musical Instrument Company** (1892). 726 Minnesota Ave. Built by Julius Schipkowsky, this company manufactured autoharps, zithers and guitars - and later office furniture before being converted into apartments.

**16 Bergmann's Drug Store** (1907). 926 Milwaukee Ave. Henry F. Bergmann ran this drug store for nearly 40 years. Upstairs was a large hall that served as a movie theater. Currently Sorce Martial Arts.

**17 Park Saloon** (c. 1895). 929 Madison Ave. Captain John Wexstaff, a retired Great Lakes skipper from Kenosha, operated his business here for many years. The area behind this building was a park and consisted of picnic groves, winter ice rinks and baseball diamonds.

**18 Welbes Dairy** 914 Madison Ave. Founded by Frank Welbes in 1907. The building along the alley was the Welbes Dairy plant until 1947 when the company was sold to Huebner Dairy in Cudahy.

**19 South Milwaukee Post Office** (1931). 2210 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. James Wetmore architect. This beautiful neoclassical building still serves the community and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. South Milwaukee Landmark status.

**20 Doerman Shoe Mfg. Co.** (1923). 2300 10<sup>th</sup> Ave. Founded by Scott H. Doerman in 1922. This factory employed 150 people and manufactured the popular "Great Scott" children's shoe line until closing in 1956. Served as a temporary home of the South Milwaukee Library.