

# HOME

REAL ESTATE • BUILDING • REMODELING • ARCHITECTURE • FURNISHINGS • GARDENING

## Do Walls Hide Earlier Story?

By H. RUSSELL ZIMMERMANN

When Christopher Latham Sholes, inventor of the typewriter, presented his first working model to Judge Henry L. Palmer, the latter was "not then fully impressed with its commercial value."

But later, when Judge Palmer was president of Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co., his firm installed nearly 100 of the ingenious machines and loved them.

This was not the only time that the paths of these prominent Milwaukeeans crossed. Palmer purchased the old Sholes residence on (then) Division St. and lived at that address for the last 33 years of his life.

Even more interesting historically is the strong possibility that the very house in which the inventor lived during his famous accomplishment still survives beneath two major remodelings at 1042 W. Juneau Ave.

The exact date when a house first appeared on this lot is lost in the hazy documentation surviving from that early period. We do know, from tax rolls, that one Joseph Lampion was assessed \$100 for improvements as early as 1851. That would indicate, perhaps, a humble frame dwelling of a type not uncommon in the Yankee Hill area before the Civil War.

The property was not purchased by C. L. Sholes until 1863, and by that time it had changed hands more than half a dozen times. We can be sure a house was there in 1863, since Sholes is first listed at this address in the city directory for that year.

The earliest picture we have of a house on this lot dates from the late 1870s and it shows the eastern end of Division St. (later E. Juneau Ave.) at the intersection of N. Prospect Ave.

The picture shows a two story frame Italianate house with a lower two story rear wing and a hipped roof with a widow's walk. This, and a later photograph taken from the east, are the only known views of the house where Sholes lived. There is not enough evidence remaining to tell us whether he bought that house or built it himself.

What we do know is that during the years he lived at this address C. Latham Sholes began the development of the typewriter and was granted a patent on the invention.

He purchased 302 Division St. in April 1863. The next year he was appointed collector of

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—H. Russell Zimmermann Photo

Unraveling of clues suggests a history linking portions of this apartment building at 1042 E. Juneau Ave. with what was once the century old home of Christopher Latham Sholes, inventor of the typewriter.

## The Past In Our Present

## Bockl Building Sold

By WILLIAM J. MANLY  
Home Section Editor

George Bockl has sold his Bockl Building once again — this time on a land contract for about \$3.44 million — give or take a few hundred thousand, just about what it cost him to complete the seven story office building 23 years ago.

At least that's the indication, although when big time operators get involved in multi-million-dollar deals the exact numbers sometime become a little hazy.

After passing through the hands of several huge New York and Florida based corporations, the building at 2040 W. Wisconsin

is being sold in a limited partnership involving a number of local investors. The general partner operating 2040 Associates is the Anathon Corp. The president of Anathon is David Adash-ek, who also is president of Associated Equity Investors here. The latter firm is active in the field of organizing syndicates of local investors to participate in real estate ownership.

The transaction was recorded at the Milwaukee County Courthouse, with revenue stamps attached to the land contract indicating a sales price of \$3,447,000.

Back in 1955 when Bockl, long a major real estate broker, investor and developer here, first announced plans for his new build-

ing, five years later the building was sold to Management Miami, Fla. The state mutual company had changed its name to Inc.

While it was announced, it was said that Bockl had been the same \$1 million invested.

The building was sold to Bockl in 1960. Last week, the East Coast firm announced how to operate. They let the building begin to lose value just dropped

## Realty Sees C...

By WILLIAM J. MANLY  
Home Section Editor

While consumers and alike flock into the real estate market by the thousands and fewer supervisors seem to be minding the store.

Since 1975, the number of licensed brokers and salesmen in the state has increased 122% to a current total of 40,000. Applicants now are being accepted at the rate of about 100 a year, with perhaps 50% of them failing tests and obtaining licenses.

In contrast, there has been a decline of almost 60% in the number of members of the Wisconsin Real Estate Board, the state's supposed watchdog for both licensees and consumers. And a further decline looms.

This situation was outlined by Robert P. Ellis, board chairman, in an interview here last week. He also is a licensed broker and active in the sales field as vice president of McKy-Ellis Realty Inc., a major residential real estate firm in Madison, Wis.

"It's the trend toward deregulation, I guess," he said. "It seems to be a public feeling for less government, less real estate supervision."

But shouldn't the real estate industry be happy with the deregulation?

"Ask for a vote on cutting the police force," he replied. "Who are the first to be cut? The crooks."

"Deregulation hurts the consumer, not the industry, because

## Stark Apartments

By LOIS HAGEN

Journal Home Furnishings Editor

"I wanted it to be homey and warm," Wini Schulz said of her new condominium at Regency House, 929 N. Astor St.

She had just moved, after divorce, from a large house in Hales Corners, and unlike many who make a new start at midlife, she wanted a cozy home environment, not a swinging pad. The two bedroom unit, which had been used as an office by the developer, was stark and plain, without a trace of personality.

"I had to redecorate completely," she said.

She had a good idea on recreat-

rust, the same color she used before but in plush plaid rather than shag.

"It was a practical choice, easy to live with," she said. She used it throughout the apartment because she planned to furnish the same color scheme throughout.

"I wanted a flow of color because the apartment is only about 1,200 square feet compared to 3,200 in the larger and a hodgepodge of colors make it seem even smaller," she said.

Most of her existing furniture was reusable. The living room needed only two new ottoman chairs and a club chair and ottoman.

# In Search of Sholes' Home

From Page 1

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On June 23, 1868, Sholes and two partners were granted a patent for the world's first workable typewriter. And in December of that year he sold the house and moved to 833 Racine St. where he spent the rest of his life.

After Sholes' death in 1890, his house on Racine St. (now Humboldt Ave.) was sold at auction and billed as the "house with a history." A

*The author, an architectural historian and design consultant, also is curator of the Wisconsin Architectural Archive here.*

newspaper story about the sale at that time claimed that Sholes had "thought out" the typewriter in that building.

Actually, this is misleading, because the basic invention was already patented before the move to Racine St. It should be noted, however, that Sholes did continue to refine the concept for many years thereafter.

### A Humble Dwelling

Meanwhile, Sholes' old house on Division St., had become the home of George W. Green, a dry goods merchant. In less than two years it was sold again, this time to A. Whipple Wilkins, the bookkeeper for Angus Smith & Co. During Wilkins' occupancy the neighborhood began to develop into a prestigious area that attracted wealth and impressive architecture.

Among the leading businessmen who followed the migration to this north Yankee Hill neighborhood was County Judge Henry L. Palmer. In January, 1874, he was elected president of Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. and, in April of the next year, he purchased the old Sholes house.

One might have expected a man of Palmer's prominence to live in a large and elegant mansion, but the humble Sholes house was good enough for him. A long time friend, Gen. F. C. Winkler, once said of him, "ostentation is one of the attributes he most heartily detests."

But the time did come when more room was needed and the old residence was changed. In 1888, the tax assessment on his property improvements more than tripled, indicating that either the Sholes house was razed and replaced or that it was rebuilt into a larger dwelling.

For several reasons, the latter seems more likely the case. Architecturally, Palmer's house was one of the worst conglomerations of unrelated shapes in the city.

The only surviving photographs of the house during that period show that the final shape was dictated by what already existed. It had no discernible style and in 1932 it was described as belonging to the period which architects then called the "dark ages."

### Bay Seems Grafted

The double bay windows on the east side of the house also point to a remodeling. As we can see in the only known photograph of the Sholes house from this side, there was a three faceted, two story bay in the same general location as the present bays. The two existing bays are proportioned differently and grafted together in an irregular fashion.

This is a feature which would almost never appear unless one already existed and the second bay was added later.

Victorians were very stingy with materials. Labor then was cheap, but unlike today, building materials were never wasted. Houses of all sizes were sold and moved to new locations, or they were taken apart by hand and the materials were reused. More often



C. Latham Sholes

the old Cream City brick was sandblasted and dyed red. A handsome new scrolled pediment entrance was designed in high English Georgian style.

A newspaper reporter, describing the newly completed remodeling made this interesting observation: "It is an odd commentary on so-called progress that this building was modernized by changing it from the period of the late 19th century to the period of the early 18th century."

Under the name of Langdon House, the apartment has changed hands a number of times since. It was purchased in 1972 by the law firm of Prieve, Gerlach & Meyer. The two upper floors are now occupied as apartments while the first floor is an office for the owners.

### Fame Came Late

Even if nothing remains of Sholes' historic house, it is good to once again remember the man who was rated by the State Historical Society as one of "Wisconsin's 10 greatest persons" and the "foremost of the state's inventors."

He received little fame and fortune in his lifetime, selling royalty rights for his typewriter for \$12,000 to the manufacturing firm of E. Remington & Sons.

After his death Sholes slipped into what was described as "overmodest oblivion." It was not until 1916 that it was decided to raise money for an appropriate grave monument in his honor.

His plight was summed up by fellow inventor, Thomas A. Edison, who sent a \$100 contribution to the monument drive and wrote, "Mr. Sholes was the father of the typewriter and got nothing but trouble and neglect in connection with the invention. He fell into the hands of promoters, with the usual result."

A more recent honor came earlier this month, when a plaque honoring Sholes was dedicated by the Society of Professional Journalists, Sigma Delta Chi, in the lobby of the present Milwaukee Sentinel Building, 918 N. 4th St. Sholes was editor of The Sentinel from 1861 to 1865.

an owner would reuse all of his materials right where they stood by rebuilding and enlarging an existing structure.

It is very likely that the old Sholes frame structure was enlarged and sheathed in brick. The best place to appreciate this technique is the Leander Frisby house at 304 S. Main St., in West Bend. On this particular building one can look into a basement window well and see up between the two walls where the original clapboards still survive.

The changes at 302 Juneau Ave. were only just beginning. In 1909, Judge Palmer died and his widow followed in 1915. This left their son, Charles H. Palmer, as owner and occupant of the old house.

He added a bay window on the west in 1913 and a sleeping porch at the rear in 1917. But the big change was yet to come.

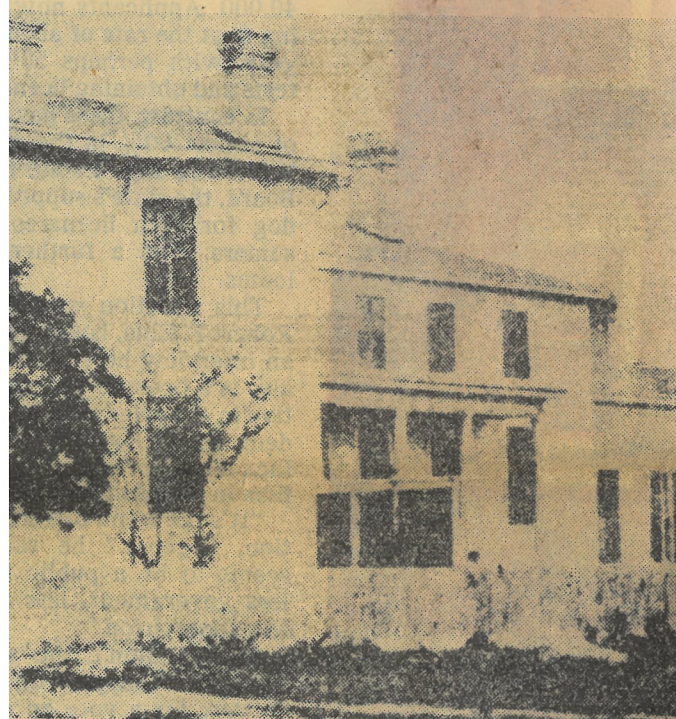
### Cut Into Apartments

By 1932, Charles apparently no longer needed all the space in the family home and he decided to remodel it into three apartments and occupy the first floor only.

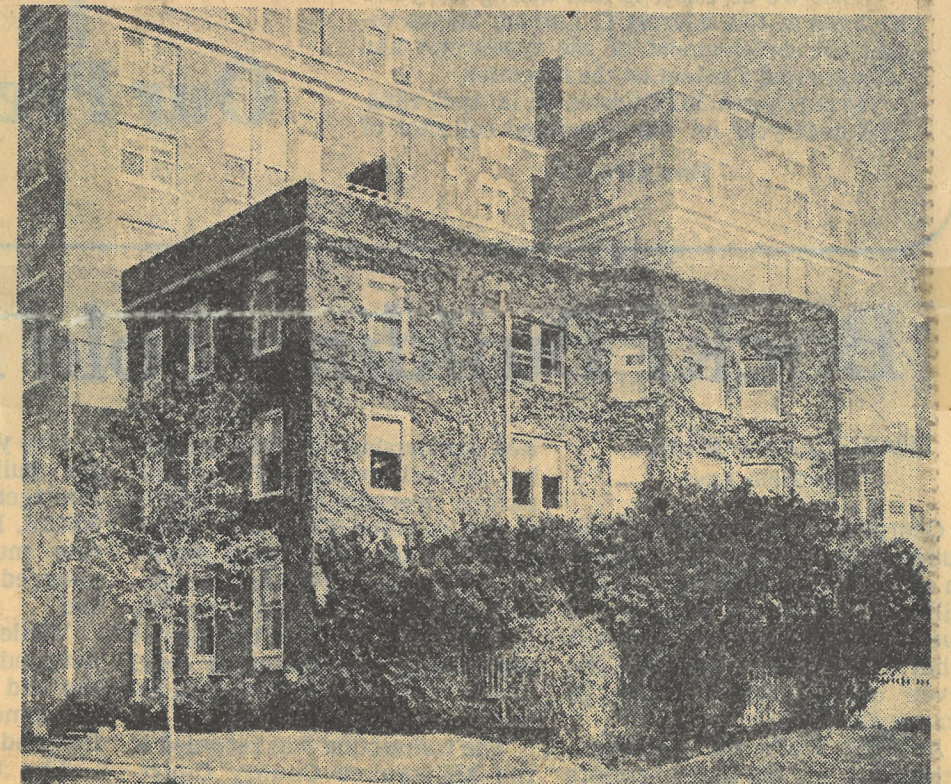
The architectural firm of Eschweiler & Eschweiler was retained to design the rebuilding. The walls of the old house were extended up to the roof peak and squared off, making a flat roof garden for the new third floor apartment. Each of the other floors became an almost identical 2,200 square foot apartment.

The brick front of the old house was destroyed and a substantial new Georgian addition was connected which added a large 15 by 30 foot living room to each apartment. To match the red brick of the addition, all of

corner of Division St. (now E. Juneau Ave.) and N. Prospect, and the Stephen A. Harrison house, across N. Prospect from the Downer house. In the far distance can be seen the original St. Mary's Hospital (since razed) and the Water Tower.



This photo of the Henry L. Palmer house, 1042 E. Juneau, is from an old souvenir book published by the Evening Wisconsin in 1891. A comparison of chimneys and the bay leads architectural historian H. Russell Zimmermann to suspect that the house actually encases the original C. Latham Sholes



In 1932, the former Palmer house was remodeled into three floors of apartments by the son, Charles Palmer, who squared off the walls and extended them to the roof lines, giving the structure the appearance it has today (above).

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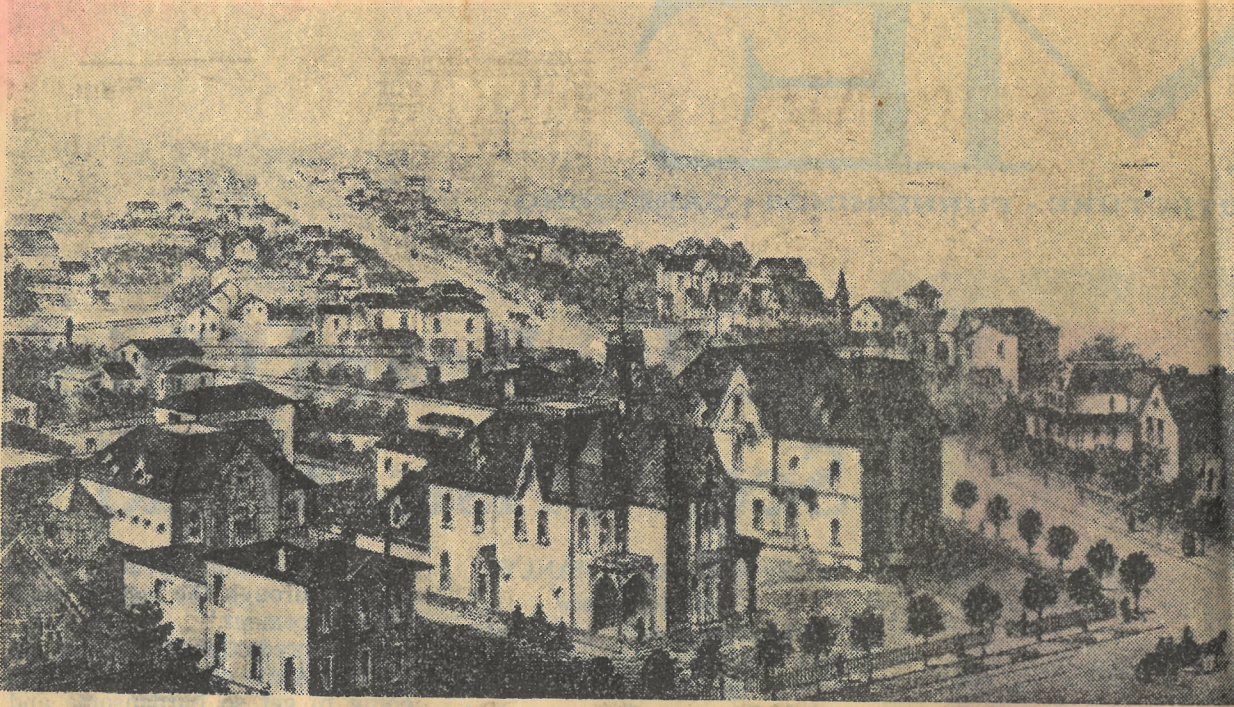
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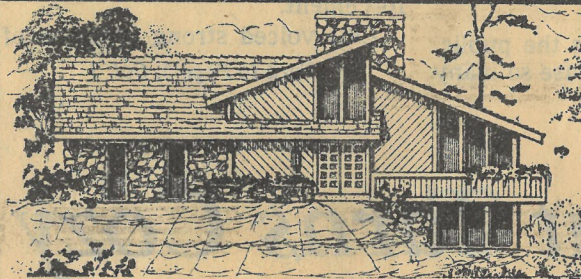


This old lithograph (circa 1878) offers an early view of Milwaukee's East Side. The C. Latham Sholes (later Henry L. Palmer) house is at the lower left. Several others are still standing; the Jason Downer house at the lower right, at the

corner of Division St. (now E. Juneau Ave.) and N. Prospect, and the Stephen A. Harrison house, across N. Prospect from the Downer house. In the far distance can be seen the original St. Mary's Hospital (since razed) and the Water Tower.



This is the only known view of the Sholes house from the east. Note the two story, three faceted bay and the three chimneys and their placement in relation to a later view of the building on the same site shown below.



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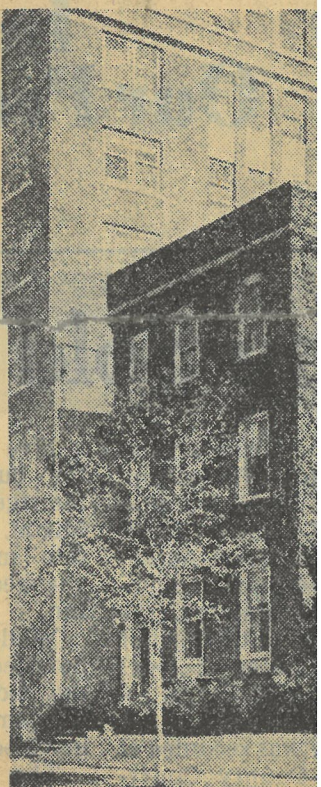
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## Mortgage Loans

### Low Down Payment

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