

F. Hirzy

Ferdinand Hirzy, the well known jeweler, watchmaker and manufacturer of musical instruments, was born in German Hungary, and came to this city 8 years ago when he established his business here. With the exception of 8 months, which he spent in Europe, he has been a resident of Marshfield. In addition to being a skilled mechanic, Mr. Hirzy is also what may be termed a first-class musician having perfected his studies in Europe. He gives instructions in both brass and string instruments, and has done much in the advancement of music of this city. He is the leader and instructor of the juvenile band, who are making great progress under his able direction. Mr. Hirzy's place of business is in the Adler block, on Central avenue, where can be found a choice selection of watches, jewelry and musical instruments. Mr. Hirzy is a quiet, unassuming and progressive man, and a creditable citizen to the city of his adoption.

(The Marshfield Times, September 14, 1894)

By 1898,... In addition, Ferdinand Hirzy had opened a jewelry store and also sold musical instruments in the Greisinger Building at 114 South Central (127 South Central). Six years later...Frank L. Zweck had replaced Ferdinand Hirzy at 115 South Central.

(from the City of Marshfield, WI, Intensive Survey Report, July 1991)

The Recorder

- *Hirzy Here in 1886*
- *Visited Native Land*
- *Returned in 1893*
- *Daughter in Budapest*

Mentioning the name Hirzy in Central Wisconsin brings to the mind of most persons the fact that

Col. F. A. Hirzy of Stevens Point married a granddaughter of the late Madame Schumann-Heink. But to Marshfield old-timers it means more than that. For we who came here in the early 90's recall that the colonel's father—frequently given the courtesy title of Professor Ferdinand Hirzy, because he conducted a boys band and orchestra—had a jewelry shop and his residence on N. Central avenue, where he also repaired watches and sold musical instruments, and that he left here with his family in the summer of 1892 for his former home in Germany. We also remember that the family returned a year later, and left again in 1901.

But contemporaries of the Record may be interested in hearing more about this one-time local family, whose name was brought into the news this week with the announcement that Frank Zweck, founder of the jewelry firm which observed its 50th anniversary yesterday, was an apprentice for several years in the shop which



The Greisinger Building, built in 1893. Hirzy Jewelry was located at Avenue.

(photo from North Wood County Historical Society)

Ferdinand Hirzy Sr. opened after his second arrival in Marshfield. Incidentally, Mr. Zweck said he learned the trade of watchmaker in the same building which the firm now occupies.

A letter—perhaps it should be called a questionnaire—sent to Col. Hirzy in midweek brought an immediate reply containing data which, supplemented by further facts from old Marshfield newspapers, should be given an important place in the history of early Marshfield business men. According to family records, Mr. Hirzy arrived in Marshfield, Dec. 26, 1886, after an ocean trip of three weeks on a sailboat whose motive power was supplemented by Historical Society)steam. This information tallies with an article which appeared in the Marshfield News of Oct. 2, 1890.



*107 South Central
(from North Wood County Historical Society)*

Included in the special edition of the News, featuring local business and professional men and firms, the article is captioned "Ferdinand Hirzy; Dealer in Watches, Clocks, Jewelry, Gold and Silver Ware, Musical Instruments, etc.," and reads thus: "It is always a pleasure for us to call the attention of our readers to a man who by energy and application has built up a business in a few years, especially one whose only capital on the start was pluck.

Mr. Hirzy, who was born in Germany, came to America four years ago and one year later started in business in Marshfield. He now owns the building where he does business and has as well a neat and clean stock of goods. His building is 20 x 50 ft. in size. Mr. Hirzy is a very pleasant gentleman and one whom it is a pleasure to meet. He is a member of the Catholic Knights."

The Hirzy building, located just south of the former Radloff home, was purchased in 1892 by the late Michael Steinmetz, who built the first unit of the present Consumer's Store, at the corner of E. Arnold and Central Avenue. The report of the sale as it appears in the June 30 issue of the News is as follows: "During the past week Merchant Michael Steinmetz of the North Side purchased of A. Radloff the house and lot on the corner of Central Avenue and A Street, also the lot and store owned by F. Hirzy which had been occupied as a jewelry store.

He is having the Radloff house removed and will commence work at once in building a handsome new business block to which he will transfer his general store. The new building as now planned will be 44 x 80 feet in dimension, two stories high, and is to be built of brick. Work on the cellar commenced today, and it is expected that the new building will be completed by Sept. 15. Mr. Steinmetz sold his present location to his brother Theodore for a consideration of \$2,200. The Radloff place sold for \$1,500 and the Hirzy place

brought \$1,900. Mr. Radloff will build a new house in some other part of the city. Mr. Hirzy will leave for Germany early in July where he expects to remain for some time, possibly permanently.

May 12, 1893, the Marshfield Times announced the return of the Hirzys in the following page 1 paragraph: "Prof. Ferdinand Hirzy, who was formerly in the jewelry and musical line in this city, and last summer, sold out and went to his home in Hungary, taking his family with him, returned to this city last Sunday, his brother Anton accompanying the family to America. The Professor and his brother will engage in the musical and jewelry line at once, probably occupying the building vacated by Jas. Tallant, in Doll's block, Central avenue. The members of the Juvenile band are all pleased to meet their leader again and the Professor is satisfied that Marshfield is a better place for him than his old home."

The partnership did not materialize, however, and Anton opened a jewelry store in what is now Wisconsin Rapids in July of that year. His wife also accompanied him from Hungary. His death occurred Oct. 25, 1938, when he was 69 years old. Ferdinand, according to family records, opened his store in the Greisinger building, and it was there that Frank L. Zweck began his apprenticeship. When Mr. Hirzy made his second return to his old home in 1901 to settle his father's estate and visit his mother, he again disposed of his business here. The News of April 18 reported: "Ferdinand Hirzy and family will depart next Wednesday for Europe to be absent for an indefinite period. His stock of jewelry, watches and musical instruments have been purchased by John Kraus, who will continue the business. This evening the Marshfield Maennerchor, of which Mr. Hirzy is Treasurer, will give him a farewell reception at Saenger Hall, to be followed Sunday evening by a social given by Mr. Hirzy to his friends.

During their second visit to Europe, the Hirzy's oldest daughter, Mary, was married, and did not return to Wisconsin with the rest of the family in 1903. Her home is in Budapest, Hungary, and her 12 children have had "much difficulty with the Russians because of their democratic views and their leanings to the U.S.A." One of her sons is being tried as a political prisoner, and two others are still prisoners of war in Russia. When the Hirzys returned after their second visit they located in Rhineland, where the father was in business for eight years.

In 1911 he took his wife, their son, and three daughters back to Hungary for a two-year stay, and in June, 1913, settled in Stevens Point. Here the mother died July 10, 1921, and the following year the father made his last trip to Hungary, where he died June 14, 1922. Since then Mary has made one visit to Wisconsin, and among the friends she called on in Marshfield was a school-days pal, Mrs. Jacob Ruder, the former Anna Adler.

Other daughters of the Hirzys are Mrs. Einar C. (Rose) Olson, Wisconsin Rapids, who has one son; Mrs. J. F. (Regina) Hein, Stevens Point, who has two sons and two daughters, and Mrs. B. E. McAuliffe, also of Stevens Point. Col. and Mrs. Hirzy have three sons and two daughters. The colonel, who served overseas in both World Wars, was retired during the last one because of disabilities suffered in the European theatre. (from the Marshfield News Herald, May 8, 1948)

If you have any additional information (including pictures) regarding this business or location, we would really appreciate you contacting us and sharing. We will add information whenever possible.

For questions, or for sharing additional information, please contact us at schnitz1@charter.net. Please include what story the information relates to. Attach your text information in the form of a word document, please no PDF's. Photos should preferably be in jpeg format.

For additional stories on the historical sights and businesses of Marshfield, visit our website at:
<http://www.marshfieldgenealogy.com/QR-Codes-of-Historical-Marshfield.html>