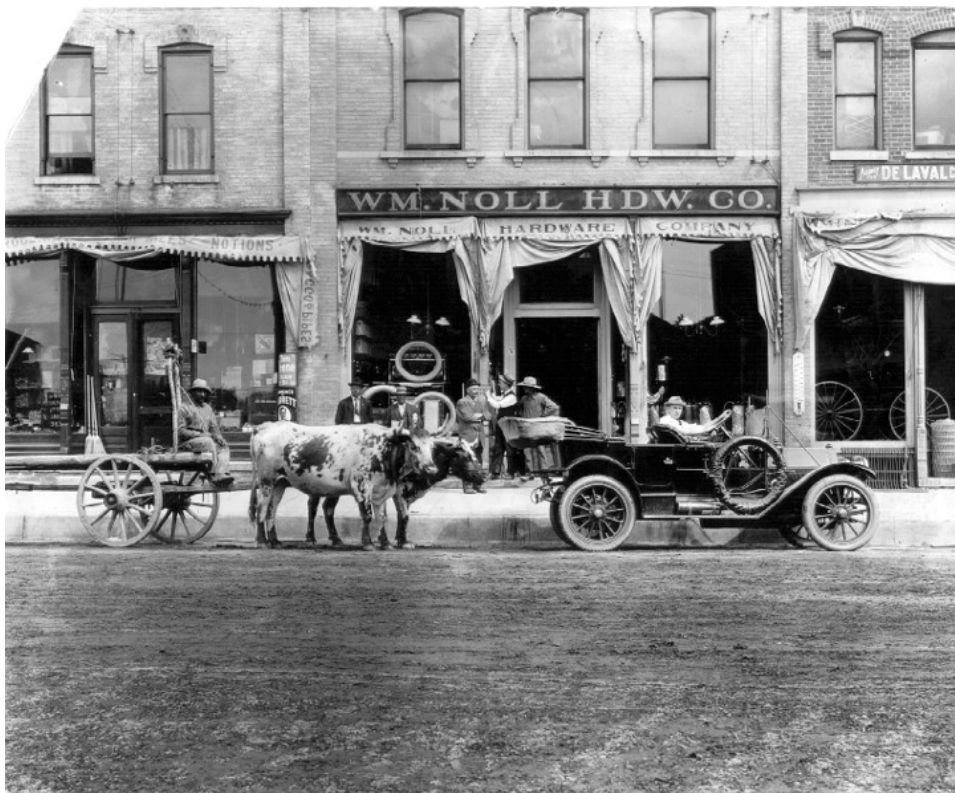


## ***Noll Hardware Store***

*Because of the death of Phillip HELD on Christmas day, 1886, William NOLL became the new owner of Ph. HELD and Co. on Jan 15, 1887. The business became known as William NOLL and Sons. William was a resident of Cascade, WI in Sheboygan Co where he was engaged in the hardware and furniture business with a branch hardware store at Oconomowoc, WI. The Marshfield business was to run in connection with these two businesses. William's sons, Frank A and Charles were placed in charge of the new business.*

*The newly established NOLL hardware store was destroyed along with scores of business places in the great fire of June 27, 1887. William NOLL and Sons decided to rebuild at once. Another brother of Frank and Charles, William Jr., known as W. W., was an experienced tinner, came to Marshfield in July of that year. He and Charles took over the tinsmith work which was part of the business, while Frank continued in charge of the sales department.*

*About three years later, William Sr. moved to Marshfield and became the active head of the firm which had expanded into the manufacturing field.*



*William Noll Hardware Company (Marshfield Public Library)*

*As the dark forests gave way to farm lands, cheese factories began to spring up in the area. The NOLLs established their own cheese factory, an enterprise that did much to establish Marshfield's reputation as a manufacturer of this staple. The manufacture of milk cans and cheese vats was an important feature of the NOLL activities in 1890. Also introduced in Marshfield in 1890 by the NOLL was the artificial hatching of eggs. They had the first incubator in the city and proposed to put it in their show window, fill it with eggs and hatch the first lot where everyone could see it. It had a capacity of 100 eggs. The result of the experiment was never reported.*

*The firm, which was incorporated in 1892 became known as the William NOLL Hardware Company. The business continued to grow steadily becoming one of the leading retail hardware stores in Central Wisconsin.*

*William's son, Charles died May 25, 1902 from complications of an unfortunate accident that had happened at the Hardware store two weeks before. He was struck on the head by a five-gallon galvanized iron oil can which fell from the top shelf in the store. He received a gash which was not considered serious at the time. Several days later, blood poisoning rapidly developed, medical skill being unavailing to save his life. Charles was forty years old at the time of his death. He left his wife, Margaret and two young children, four year old Walter E. and one year old Karl. According to The History of Wood County, "Mr. NOLL's demise was one of those sad events which leave a gap felt throughout the entire community."*

*William NOLL Sr. died in Marshfield, Mar 23, 1908. According to The History of Wood County, "Mr. NOLL was a man of refined habits, who loved his home and family more than wealth, with a wonderful mind for business and a love for domestic life. He was ever ready to take part in any enterprise that he deemed was for the betterment of his business, home, or city, and his passing left a void in the community hard to fill."*

*William NOLL Jr. (W.W.) died of a heart ailment at the age of 75, on Feb 7, 1934. He had withdrawn from the NOLL Hardware Co. several years earlier W.W. owned two or more race horses and was very interested in harness racing. He was widely known over all the racing circuits throughout the middle west. A quote from the Marshfield News Herald states; "W.W. was always attached to his friends and while those close to him knew that he was critically ill for the past two years, his death comes as a shock. The passing of a man of Mr. NOLL's affiliations and activities always leaves a void and creates a feeling of sincere regret. His wife preceded him in death. The members of the family included three sons; George, Arthur and William and three daughter; Mrs. G V KRAUSE, Mrs. R V GILMORE and Mrs. Frank NORMINGTON Jr.*

*Frank A NOLL died Dec 17, 1927 following complications from surgery. According to the Marshfield News Herald, Frank was generous and kind of heart. He was a devoted husband and father always concerned about their welfare. He never lost an opportunity of extending a helping hand to those in need. The announcement of his death cast a shadow of sorrow over the community and to many it brought a profound sense of personal loss. He was married to Miss Sadie Harkin and they had one son, Frank W and three daughters; Mrs. Thomas HAYDEN, Katherine NOLL and Agnes NOLL.*

*The death of Frank NOLL left his daughter Agnes in charge of the hardware business. A fourth generation of NOLLs entered the picture when Thomas NOLL HAYDEN took over the hardware store in 1959 and operated it until 1962 when the store was sold to Don HILLER. The name NOLL was still part of the Marshfield retail business world in the NOLL Gift Shop founded by Agnes in 1941 which she operated until the time of her death. Miss Agnes NOLL died Feb 25, 1979 from an apparent heart attack. She had been a prominent businesswoman in Marshfield and also a leader of civic affairs.*

*As I was compiling information for the history of the NOLL hardware store, I also wanted to include where I fit into this picture of the NOLL history.*

*My grandfather, Walter E NOLL was one of the two young children left fatherless when Charles met his demise with the five gallon oil drum. He was born Oct 21, 1897 in Marshfield and was a life long resident. As a*



*William Noll, Sr. with William Noll, Jr.*

*young man, my grandfather spent some time working at the NOLL Hardware store. I wonder if, while working in the store, he ever thought of his father, Charles, who helped found the store so many years before. Would anything have been different had his father not died from such an unfortunate accident?*

*Walter married Luella DESBROW on July 11, 1924. For many years before his death, he was employed by the Roddis Plywood Corporation. My grandfather died on Jun 28, 1955 at the age of 57, leaving my grandmother, Luella and my father, an only child, Walter E NOLL Jr.*

*My father was born on Aug 17, 1925. He worked at Roddis Plywood Corporation later becoming Weyerhaeuser Company for many years until his retirement. My dad is well known in the city of Marshfield for his love of golf. My mom, Donna (MACHLETT) and dad were married on May 17, 1947 and have five children; Richard, Milwaukee; Sandra (NEUMANN), Marshfield; Kristine (MORRISON), Fayetteville, NC; Carole (GODKIN), Sun Prairie; and Karl, LaCrosse. My father is the only NOLL living in Marshfield.*

*The history of the NOLL hardware Company is important to me. Even though we weren't directly involved with the hardware store, my heritage is. The Noll history has become my history and I can say with pride, from my father to my great-great grandfather, I am proud of the name Noll and what it has stood for throughout the history of Marshfield.*

*Submitted by Sandra Neumann  
(for the Marshfield History Book, Vol. 1)*

### ***Additional Notes***

*In an article ran in July of 1887, the Marshfield Times noted that Noll Hardware had lost a total of \$11,000 (buildings & merchandise) in the fire.*

*Noll Hardware Store was the first building to be built after the 1887 fire. At a later date the building to the north (originally a portion of the Doll Furniture Store) was added to the store. If you observe this building from across the street, you will see the point at the top of the building is off center in earlier pictures and now has been changed back to original location. Also look at the Noll name in brass in front of the door.*

*Some of the other businesses that have been housed within the walls of the Noll Hardware Building are Held and Company Hardware, Blenker's TV and Appliance, Inc., The Color Spot, Rice's Capital Furniture, Mayer Upholstery and Railroad Antiques.*



*Rice's Capitol Carpet  
& Mayer Upholstery*



*Noll name in front of door*



*Railroad Antique Mall*





*Double store of Wm. Noll Hardware Co. with addition to the south (on right) being built sometime between 1887 and 1891. (photo from Marshfield Illustrated, by C.W. Charles, 1905)*

### ***Wm. Noll Hardware Company***

*If you want to see one of the largest and most complete stock of everything in the hardware line in the section of the state, just go to the store of the William Noll Hardware Company, 109-111 South Central Avenue.*

*They occupy a double store, the first floor being used as a display room and the second as a stock room. They carry light and heavy hardware, tinware, stoves, farm machinery, paints, oils, guns, supplies. Etc. They are also agents for the famed Dodge autos.*

*They carry a line of auto tires of the best makes. An extensive business is done in contracting for sheet metal work, and are experts in this line.*

*They own the building which they occupy. They also own a large two-story brick warehouse on North Central Avenue, adjoining the Soo tracks, and here an immense stock is carried.*

*In it you will find everything in the way of farm implements, farm wagons, gas engines, wire fencing, etc. They are sole agents for the celebrated West Bend wagons. No matter what you need for the farm in implements or equipment they can furnish it, and it is dependable, too.*

*This is one of the big enterprises of our city and had deserved the success with which it has met. W. W. Noll is president of the cooperative, and F.A. Noll is secretary and treasurer. They have built up their company on integrity, always giving the customer a square deal, and both are liked by those who know them.*

*This company has the confidence of the farmer and it is a well-known fact that the farmer is a man who, when treated right, remains a steady customer. That is why the William Noll Hardware Company has such a large trade. The success of this company shows that after all a square deal is a right deal.*

*(from The Marshfield Times, April 19, 1916)*



*Warehouse of Wm. Noll Hardware Co. (photo from Marshfield Illustrated, by C.W. Charles, 1905)*

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Noll Company Celebrates 50th Anniversary Today** Hardware Firm is One of Oldest Retail Business Places in Marshfield

The same business, in the same location, for 50 years is the achievement of the William Noll Hardware company as it celebrates its golden jubilee today.

This company claims the distinction of being the only retail firm In business at that time to remain continuously within one family and in the same line of business during the last half century.

One firm has a longer record. Its succession, however, was from Sexton Bros, to W. A. Sexton, and then to Sexton-Demgen. This firm was organized about 1881. Others boast records nearly as long.

The hardware business has changed greatly since William. Noll bought out Philip Held's hardware store and took possession on Jan. 15, 1887, thus establishing the



*This old cut depicts the William Noll and Sons hardware store as it looked after it was rebuilt, following the Marshfield fire of 1887. This building still stands, and forms the north half of the present building on S. Central avenue occupied by the William Noll Hardware company.*



William Noll and Sons company.

### **Started by William Noll**

In those days sleighs and wagons, plush-upholstered, cutters, spinning wheels, candle molds, and similar items were among the big sellers.

Today an occasional buyer might be found who would purchase one of these items, mostly as a curiosity, reminiscent of frontier days.

The store here was not William Noll's first entry into the hardware business. He had previously owned a hardware business at Kiel and also at Cascade, Wis. He had come to Milwaukee In 1851 from Germany, where he was born March 23, 1834.

William Noll had been married In 1854 to Katherine Rupenthal, also a native of Germany, and their three sons, William W., Charles F., and Frank A., were associated with their father. In the business.

### **Lost in 1887 Fire**

Many Marshfielders will recall that first Noll store, a frame building, with shelves extending upward to the ceiling and reached by a sliding ladder. The store was one of the many buildings destroyed when the great fire of 1887 swept the thriving lumber town, and was immediately rebuilt as a brick structure.

Years later another structure of similar size was erected adjacent to it, and In 1922 the store was completely remodeled and modernized, with the double building transformed into a single large room.

A unique feature of the store when it and the community were both new was its stock of wooden shoes. Although Marshfield was never a Dutch settlement, wooden shoes were popular, and many a farmer kept his entire family outfitted with this type of footwear.

### **Furnished Pioneer Needs**

In the early days of Marshfield it was the Noll company and others like it who were largely responsible for the development of farm lands in the community. Pioneers, whose greatest asset was their will to work and build a home for their families, came to the store seeking credit. And they got it.

From blasting powder to farm implements and household necessities, William Noll supplied the needs of these men. Many were unable to make even a down payment, but they established their farms and repaid their benefactors promptly.

Besides its general hardware business, the company for many years was known as a manufacturer of cheese vats. The vats were, at that time, all hand made, with mahogany trim, and found a ready market over a wide area.

Another industry that the company branched into for many years was the production of hand made milk cans.

When the automobile arrived, it came under the heading of things sold by hardware stores, and the Noll company sold some of the first "horseless carriages" purchased by Marshfield men.

In 1892 the business was incorporated, and "William Noll and Sons" became "William Noll Hardware," a name which has existed until the present time.

One of the sons, Charles F., died in 1902, and the founder died March 23, 1908, leaving the two remaining

sons to operate the business. In 1925 Frank A. Noll obtained a controlling interest by purchasing the stock held by his brother, W. W. Noll.

Two years later the death of Frank Noll left the managerial part of the business to his daughter, Miss Agnes Noll, who had been assisting in the store for the previous two years and who has continued its operation since that time.

She holds the office of secretary and treasurer and her brother, Atty. Frank W. Noll, Aberdeen, S. Dak., is president of the concern, a closed corporation with all stock held by members of the Noll family.

*(from The Marshfield News-Herald, 15 January 1937, pg. 1 & 11)*

---

*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](mailto: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>.*