

## ***Hotel Blodgett/Tremont Hotel***

### ***The Recorder***

- ***Landmark Removed***
- ***Hotel Built in 1887***
- ***Fosters At Tremont***

*Hotel Blodgett is still a familiar name in Marshfield, but traveling salesmen and others who registered here more than 25 years ago would find little further similarity between the present hostelry and the one dismantled in October, 1928, to make way for a department store building. Early history of the original three-story brick structure, known as the Tremont House from the time of its erection in 1887 until its sale in January, 1898, to the late C. E. Blodgett, was related by his predecessor, Charles Foster, after he heard of plans for demolition of the local landmark. Mr. Foster, whose death occurred Nov. 13, 1935, in St. Paul, made his home in that city after leaving Marshfield and his son, Attorney Lucius Foster, still resides there. The News-Herald of Aug. 25, 1928, quotes Charles Foster as follows: "To the best of my recollection my father, Lucius Foster, my brother, Orr Foster, and I purchased the Tremont House, later known as the Blodgett Hotel, from John Gill in 1890 or 1891. The hotel had been built following the big Marshfield fire and John Gill was the first proprietor.*

*A Mr. Bent of Oshkosh and the late former Governor W. H. Upham financed the erection of the building, which was later remodeled by Mr. Blodgett. Prior to the purchase of the hotel I had been in Green Bay to look over the Beaumont House and on my return I met Mr. Upham at Oshkosh; he had formerly stopped with me at*



*Hotel Blodgett, ca. 1902.*

*(from post card collection of Donald Schnitzler)*



*Eau Claire when I operated the Eau Claire House. Upon learning that I was in the market for a hotel Mr. Upham, told me the North Western was grading a line to Marshfield from Wausau and the Omaha line from Merrillan and influenced me to come to Marshfield and look over the hotel. After making a careful survey of the situation I purchased the hotel through Mr. Upham and continued to operate it under the same name, Tremont. Many famous men stopped at the hotel, such as United States Senator John C. Spooner, Robert M. La Follette, Philetus Sawyer, Governor Peck, Senator Vilas, and others whose names I am unable to recall.*



*Hotel Blodgett prior to the removal of the iron railing and the addition of the lobby, pre-1903.  
(photo from the North Wood County Historical Society)*

*“It is my recollection that the first operation for appendicitis in Marshfield was performed on Fred Bauer in Room 26 in the Old Tremont house. Dr. Oviatt, then a famous surgeon of Oshkosh, performed the operation. The room was stripped of all furniture and furnishings and prepared by Mrs. Foster under the direction of Dr.*



*Hotel Blodgett after the removal of the iron railing and the addition of the lobby, post-1903.  
(photo from the North Wood County Historical Society)*

*Lathrope of Marshfield, who assisted in the operation. As this operations was new in those days and the first in the city there was of course much excitement and people gathered in groups on the street awaiting the result. For weeks thereafter Mr. Bauer was the object of much interest and curiosity. When I purchases the hotel it had 40 rooms, stove heat, and no basement. Later we installed steam heat and electric lights. At that time more ox teams could be seen on the streets than horses. Many people from Wausau bound for St. Paul used to stop at the hotel over night to make train connections. Jerome Brown, state senator, and George Bellis, leading hotel man in Wausau then, were frequent guests.” Mr.*



Bauer's operation was the subject of the Recorder column last December 13. It took place on Sunday afternoon, May 20, 1894, and is described in both the Marshfield Times and Marshfield News. Mr. Bauer's death occurred in 1937 and his widow and two sons, George and Willard, reside in Marshfield.

Turning back still farther the pages of history as recorded in the microfilmed copies of Marshfield newspapers we found in the Times of Friday, Dec. 30, 1887, this story, captioned "The Tremont Opened—Fittingly Dedicated":

"The formal opening of this elegant hostelry was held Tuesday evening of this week and was the occasion of the Masonic banquet, just six months to the day after its destruction on that memorable day, June 27th. The time, the semi-annual anniversary of that event, made the occasion a fitting dedication ceremony of the house of which our city may justly feel proud.

The hotel stands on the old site and is 51 x 106, three stories in height. On the first floor is situated the office, a parlor, dining room, kitchen, pantry, laundry,

two large sample rooms, a bathroom and three family rooms. The office, parlor and dining room are furnished in oak, the office and parlor being furnished with a fireplace. The kitchen and laundry are fitted up with all the modern conveniences, and the pantry has an ice box large enough to accommodate at least a month's supply of such provisions as it will be necessary to keep cold.

"The dining room has a comfortable seating capacity for one hundred plates. There are three entrances to the office, the main entrance being from the vestibule facing on Central Ave., one side entrance to the office, and a ladies entrance proper, on the south side of the building. The second floor contains the ladies parlor and 18 bedrooms, and room for the accommodation of the servants of the house to the number of twelve, the latter being reached by a private stairway leading from the kitchen. The third floor contains thirteen sleeping apartments. All of the rooms, halls and stairways are carpeted.



**BUILT 64 YEARS AGO**—Formally opened to the public Dec. 27, 1887, exactly 6 months after the fire which nearly obliterated Marshfield, the building shown at the extreme left in the above view of a portion of Central avenue was originally known as the Tremont House. In 1898 a change was made in ownership and name, and as the Hotel Blodgett it helped greatly in advertising Marshfield. With the completion of an addition to the Hotel Charles, and construction of the present Hotel Blodgett lobby, the building was transferred to a wrecking company 25 years ago. Just north of the landmark is shown the Kliner, Lang & Scharmann hardware store, since remodeled to serve as the Relda Theater. Next is the First National Bank, (later becoming the Marshfield Savings & Loan), and Rose Brothers Department Store (McCain-Johnson). Iron stairway between Hotel Blodgett and Kliner, Lang and Scharmann was removed in 1903. The picture was taken by A. J. Hazard soon after the turn of the century, and made available by Miss Gertrude Thuss, Oshkosh, formerly of Marshfield. (from Marshfield News Herald, October 3, 1953)



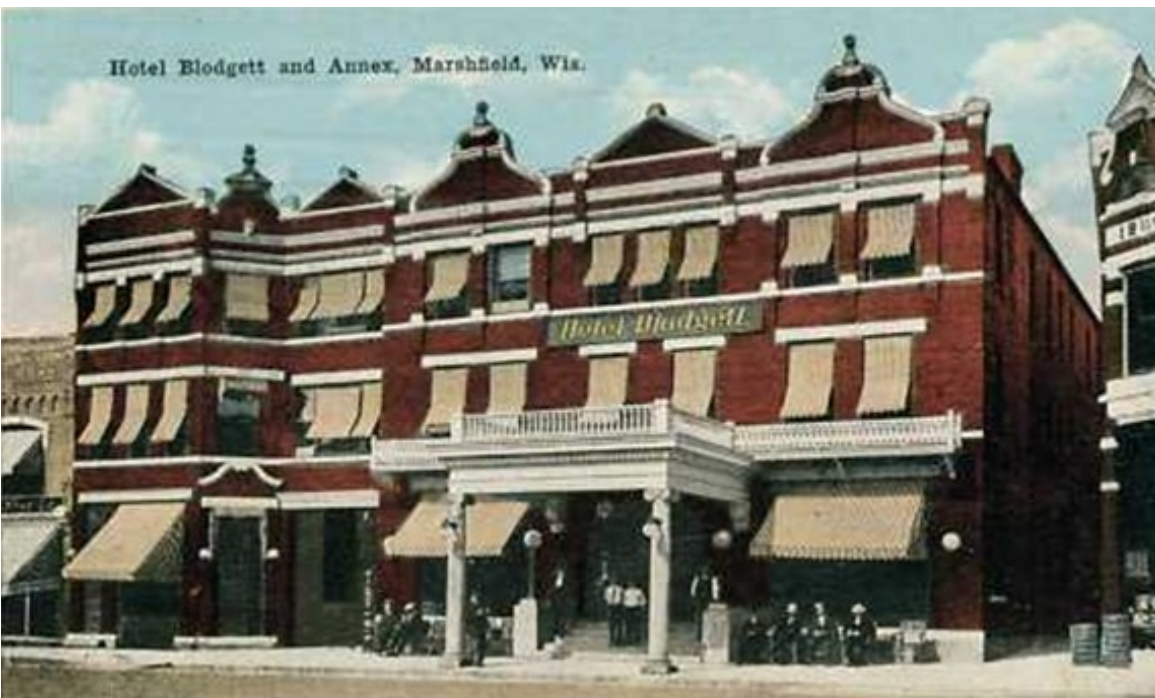
The furniture is all new, manufactured to order by Banderob & Chase of Oshkosh and is done in real oak and ash, the cost including carpets and tapestry being a little over \$5,000. The table linen and silverware was largely purchased in Chicago and the tapestry furnished by E. C. Derby of this city. The exterior of the building is of Oshkosh cream brick with Joliet free stone, black brick and galvanized iron and was designed by Architect Wm. Walters of Oshkosh, who has had the supervision of the structure from the

beginning. The builder was E. E. Stevens of Oshkosh with Chas. Meyer of the same place in charge of the mason work. These gentlemen have proved themselves thoroughly reliable in their respective positions, and the Tremont is a monument to their ability and honesty as architects and builders. The Tremont is one of the handsomest, most comfortable and convenient hotels in Northern Wisconsin, and it were useless almost for the



The 200 Block of South Central Avenue, looking north. The Blodgett Hotel is the tall brown building in the center of the block.

(photo from the North Wood County Historical Society)



Hotel Blodgett, post-1903.

(photo from the North Wood County Historical Society)

Times to add, will be kept by one of the most popular landlords in the state—John B. Gill. The Tremont is open to the public."

Mr. Foster was not certain of the date on which transfer of the Hotel property was made, but the biography of his father, published in an "1895 Commemorative Record," gives the date as Oct. 1, 1890. This is verified in the Times of Oct. 3, 63 years





*Hotel Blodgett, post-1903.  
(photo from the North Wood County Historical Society)*

ago today, and in the News a day earlier, Said the News: "The Tremont was formally transferred to the Foster Bros. by J. B. Gill on Monday, the new proprietors taking possession on the 1st inst. The excellent reputation which the Foster Bros. Have as hotel men is a guarantee that the property has passed into excellent hands and will lose nothing by the change. For the present it will be conducted by Mr. Orr Foster and wife, business matters at Rolling Prairie necessitating the presence there of Mr. Chas. Foster. Mr. L. Foster, father of the proprietors, will also take up residence here." Just below the News report is this announcement: "The Bodega was opened to the public on Monday and was fully up to the representations made of it."

**FOSTER BROS PROPRIETORS**—Wednesday October 1st, witnessed the transfer of the Tremont House which has for the last eight years and especially for the past three years been popular with hotel patrons, from John B. Gill to the Foster Bros. The new proprietors and firm is comprised of Charles and Orr C. Foster and their father all of which are to become residents of the city as soon as their individual private business can be arranged. THE TIMES has once before made mention of the contemplated change and we can not now do better than to repeat something of what was said when the sale was first contemplated. "Chas. And O. C. Foster have a well established reputation as caterers to the public, gained by the very satisfactory manner to which they have conducted the popular Eau Claire House at Eau Claire. The Foster Bros. are hotel men and popular both in their profession and as general business and society men and neither the house nor the city will suffer by their becoming residents of Marshfield." Mr. Gill will continue to officiate as Postmaster and remain a resident of the city. Mr. Gro. Shedd who has been the manager of the house under Mr. Gill will remain with the new proprietors for a time. The best wishes of the traveling public, and also the TIMES gives to both Mr. Gill and Mr. Shedd for their future as well as to

## **SIDE STORY:**

### **BLODGETT MAKES GOOD ON PROMISE—**

#### **Marshfield Boys and Girls to Have a Swimming Pool**

C. E. Blodgett, possessed of a spirit of enterprise that knows no limit, began Monday building an artificial lake on the east end of his farm just east of the bridge that spans the north fork of the Yellow river, commonly called "first bridge." The lake will be nearly an acre in size and by dredging will have a depth of from six to eight feet which will be made use of as a swimming pool.

The project is the fulfillment of a promise Mr. Blodgett made the boys and girls of this city some two years ago when he told them that some day he would make the chosen site in a swimming pool. The start made Monday is evidence of his sincerity in the matter.

The lake will be located about two miles west of this city. It will be a beautified by planting trees and shrubbery, with two bath houses, one for the boys and one for the girls, besides other swimming pool accommodations.

This announcement will cause a shout of joy to echo from the throats of hundreds of boys and girls in this city who are deprived of an enjoyment of this kind. It is useless to say that amongst the younger class Mr. Blodgett will make a name for himself equal to that of George Washington or Lincoln. (from the Marshfield Herald, June 18, 1921, p. 1)

the new proprietors. With the many advantages that the city is now obtaining it cannot fail to be a good hotel town and the Foster Bros. Are alive to the situation. They will maintain the former good reputation without a doubt and if possible make it even better.

(from the Marshfield Times, October 3, 1890)

Sale of the hotel was reported in the Marshfield News Jan. 13, 1898: "A deal was made yesterday by which the Tremont changes owners. The purchase price was \$20,000 and the property changes hands at once. The final papers were made out last night as the News went to press, and run to C. E. Blodgett. It is understood, however, that a stock com-

The Hotel Blodgett, between the Paulsen Shoe Company and Trio Theater., ca. 1925.  
(from The Wisconsin State Historical Society, Wisconsin Historical Collection, Marshfield)

pany will be organized. We understand that Mr. Dan Giles, who is now managing the Hotel Brothers at Kaukauna, has been engaged to manage the Tremont, one of the best hotel properties in northern Wisconsin. It was built after the big fire by John B. Gill and he personally managed it till he sold the property to the Foster Limited Hotel Co., who have conducted it since that time."

Further details followed a week later in this item: "The Hotel Blodgett will hereafter be the name of Marshfield's leading hotel, which for many years was known as the Tremont. One of the first changes decided upon by the new proprietor was in the name. The change is a good one, the new name not only being pleasing to the ear but also more thoroughly and quickly spreads the information that the property has changed hands. Starting in with the name, Mr. Blodgett proposes to com-



Hotel Blodgett, ca. 1925. Photo taken by J. M. Colby, Wausau's Photographer.  
(photo from the North Wood County Historical Society)



pletely transform the hotel. Many of the changes cannot be made until spring, but within the next few weeks there will be marked improvements in comforts and conveniences for the guests." The Charles Fosters continued to make their home on S. Cherry street until after the death of Mrs. Foster, which occurred in St. Paul Aug. 13, 1915. Sale of the house to late Dr. W. G. Sexton was reported in the Marshfield Herald, July 8, 1916.

When the extensive improvements now being made are completed the Hotel Blodgett will have few equals in the state. Every appointment throughout the building will be strictly up-to-date and as good as money can buy. All of the rooms have been repapered and repainted. New carpets have been laid in the halls and also in many of the rooms. Experts from Milwaukee are now at work laying tile floors in the office, writing room, halls, barber shop and wash room. The pieces of tile are round and but three-fourths of an inch in diameter. The floor in the barber shop which has already been completed is handsome in design and gives a pretty good idea of how the interior of the hotel will look when completed. In addition to this a white marble counter will be put in, marble baseboards, new mantel, eight individual writing desks, steel ceiling for the barber shop and other lesser improvements. A first-class hotel in a city of this size is a distinct advantage and does much in adding to its growth and development. We are fortunate in having in Mr. Blodgett, a hotel proprietor who is satisfied with nothing short of the very best.  
(Marshfield News, October 9, 1902, p1.)

See also story of J. C. Penney Store

See also story of Marsh-Beck Drug Store

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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 [schnitzl@charter.net](mailto:schnitzl@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>.