

# Spokane Register of Historic Places Nomination

*Spokane City/County Historic Preservation Office, City Hall, Third Floor  
808 Spokane Falls Boulevard, Spokane, Washington 99201-3337*

## 1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Rombeck-Dutch's Loan Building  
And/Or Common Name: Huppin's Building

## 2. Location

Street & Number: 421 West Main Avenue  
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201  
Parcel Number: 35184.2317

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building	<input type="checkbox"/> public <input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure			<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> residential
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes, restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes, unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

## 4. Owner of Property

Name: PBB Investments, LLC  
Street & Number: 502 West Riverside Avenue, Suite 103  
City, State, Zip Code: Spokane, WA 99201  
Telephone Number/E-mail: 509-217-5508/Chris@RenCorpRealty.com

## 5. Location of Legal Description

Courthouse, Registry of Deeds	Spokane County Courthouse
Street Number:	1116 West Broadway
City, State, Zip Code:	Spokane, WA 99260
County:	Spokane

## 6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Title:  
Date:  Federal  State  County  Local  
Depository for Survey Records: Spokane Historic Preservation Office

## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

### Condition

- excellent
- good
- fair
- deteriorated
- ruins
- unexposed

### Check One

- unaltered
- altered

### Check One

- original site
- moved & date \_\_\_\_\_

*Narrative statement of description is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 8. Spokane Register Criteria and Statement of Significance

**Applicable Spokane Register of Historic Places criteria: Mark "x" on one or more for the categories that qualify the property for the Spokane Register listing:**

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of Spokane history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory history.

*Narrative statement of significance is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

*Bibliography is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Less than one acre  
Verbal Boundary Description: RES&ADD SPOKANE FALLS W20FT LT3 of All of LT4 & E ½ of the N100FT of LT 5 BLK16  
Verbal Boundary Justification: Nominated property includes entire parcel and urban legal description.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name and Title: Jim Kolva  
Organization: Jim Kolva Associates LLC  
Street, City, State, Zip Code: 115 South Adams Street, Spokane, WA 99201  
Telephone Number: 509-458-5517  
E-mail Address: jim@kolva.comcastbiz.net  
Date Final Nomination Heard: October 21, 2015

## 12. Additional Documentation

*Additional documentation is found on one or more continuation sheets.*

**13. Signature of Owner(s)**

*Chief M. Batt*

**14. For Official Use Only:**

Date nomination application filed: Sept. 21, 2015

Date of Landmarks Commission Hearing: October 21, 2015

Landmarks Commission decision: October 21, 2015

Date of City Council/Board of County Commissioners' hearing: \_\_\_\_\_

**I hereby certify that this property has been listed in the Spokane Register of Historic Places based upon the action of either the City Council or the Board of County Commissioners as set forth above.**

*Megan Duvall*

10/22/15  
Date

**Megan Duvall**  
**City/County Historic Preservation Officer**  
City/County Historic Preservation Office  
Third Floor – City Hall  
808 W. Spokane Falls Blvd.  
Spokane, WA 99201

Attest:

Approved as to form:

\_\_\_\_\_  
City Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Assistant City Attorney

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROPERTY**

### ***Summary***

The Huppin's Building consists of two buildings that were combined into one ownership in 1986: a two-story brick vernacular commercial SRO, the Rombeck Building built in 1927, and the one-story brick vernacular commercial building (ca. 1903) adjacent to the east. The two-story building was built and operated by Henry Rombeck. The one story building at 417 West Main Avenue was built by Ernest Azzi, and operated by Dutch's Loans. Both buildings have been altered, first by combining interiors and "unifying" the two front facades, and then returning the facades to approximate historic storefronts. The site is mid-block and on the portions of two lots with original addresses of 417 and 419-425 West Main Avenue.

## **CURRENT APPEARANCE & CONDITION**

### ***The Rombeck Building – Historically 419-421-423-4231/2-425 West Main***

The Rombeck Building, a simple vernacular building of dark brown rug-face brick, is two stories in height and horizontally oriented. Nine window bays are equally spaced along the second floor.

The ground floor is asymmetrical and comprised of four storefront bays with three entry bays: one with a metal canopy over the main Huppin's entry at #421, and the second is the original entry to the second floor, and the third, an entry to the west bay. A 12-inch-wide projecting molded sheet metal cornice at the sill line of the second floor and, above the window heads, a wide, 36-inch projecting molded sheet metal cornice set below the parapet wall above, of equal width, emphasize the horizontal orientation of the building. A slightly projecting and molded sheet metal flashing caps the parapet wall. A terra cotta panel set in the brick above the center window proclaims: "ROMBECK."

The ground floor has been altered significantly by a variety of uses over the years. The existing storefront was constructed in 2014 to approximate a storefront from the early life of the building. Brick detailing is simple, with flat brick piers of the end walls rising to the brick field between the storefront opening and sheet metal sill course beneath the windows. Because of damage from a past storefront, the brick of the easterly bay (bay 1) has been clad with wood paneling. The bay is divided into three display-window sections with molded wood muntins framing the windows. The bulkheads, as the transoms above, are subdivided into two panels beneath each window section. The second bay with a projecting steel canopy consists of centered double, wood-frame glass panel doors flanked on each side by two vertically-aligned glass panels with corresponding wood panel bulkhead walls below and glass panel transoms above.

The brick pier on the west side is exposed, revealing decorative 4-inch square concrete blocks on the bottom at the height of the bulkhead walls, and at the intersection of the pier and the window heads. The blocks form corners of top and bottom horizontal brick header courses, and vertical stacked header courses that form the corners of the pier. The window heads consist of brick header courses, again running from the corner blocks. Single brick header courses also below and above the sheet metal sill band.

The centered third bay consists of three vertically-aligned display windows divided by flat wood muntins. A wide, molded horizontal beam, at the same level as the adjacent portico frame divides the display windows and transoms. The wood panel bulkhead walls and glass panel transoms correspond to the display windows.

The classical entry, flanked by round Tuscan columns of cast concrete, provides entry to the apartments on the second floor. Rising from a square cast concrete base to support a slightly projecting sheet metal entablature, the columns frame a double door entry and semi-circular fan window above. Brick headers frame the opening, run in vertical stacks that flank the columns, and run along the top of the brick field within the bay. A cast concrete keystone extends through the window arch and header course framing the top of the opening to the architrave. The entablature is simple with horizontal moldings defining the architrave, frieze—with raised rondels aligned above the columns--and projecting molded cornice. The cornice aligns horizontally with the sheet metal sill course.

The westerly bay is composed of a centered and recessed double-door entry. Two flat wood columns that project slightly from the façade plane divide the storefront into narrow vertical bays at each end, as well as the central assembly, consisting of the entry bay and equally sized display window sections subdivided into two sections with corresponding bulkhead and transom panels. The two wood columns support a broad flat beam that spans the opening between the entry to the second floor and the west end wall. The beam, like the columns, projects slightly from the façade plain and is topped by a slightly projecting wood molding that covers the brick header course framing the top of the opening.

The second floor consists of nine window bays that are framed horizontally by a projecting sheet metal sill molding and a flat sheet metal frieze band that extends upward to a projecting cornice. Cast concrete sills are beneath each window opening. The sides of the window openings are framed by the brick corners. Set into the wall plane, the sash is double-hung metal clad wood, eight-over-one lite sash. Four brass and opaque glass lanterns are centered between window openings on the brick field (originally, there were eight, one in each space between the nine second floor window bays). Centered in the parapet wall is a terra cotta panel "ROMBECK."

### ***Dutch's Loan Building – Historically 417 West Main***

The one-story building adjacent to the east is one section, divided into three bays, a centered and recessed entry bay, flanked on each side by single glass panel display windows. The façade is brick without significant detail. Flat end wall piers mark the corners, which engage a steel I-beam that spans the width of the façade. A row of horizontal brick headers runs along the top of the beam, above a flat wall section is terminated by a slightly projecting brick cornice, and capped by a sheet metal flashing. The corbel cornice is simple—three courses of brick, two header courses stacked in a pattern of alternating projections to suggest dentils topped by a stretcher course. A sheet metal flashing caps the parapet wall of the flat roof building.

The storefront is composed of a recessed and centered entry bay with double wood-frame glass panel doors, above which is a narrow horizontal two-lite transom. Two

vertically-aligned glass panels atop single panel bulkhead walls form the sidewalls of the entry approach. The shop front with large single panel display windows, on each side, flanks the entry. The wood panel bulkhead wall, divided into two sections runs beneath the storefront bays. The six-lite transom band above corresponds to the pattern of the bulkhead panels and the entry doors.

### **ORIGINAL APPEARANCE & SUBSEQUENT MODIFICATIONS**

Although photographs from ca. 1910, 1916 and 1973 are available they do not provide good detail on the appearance of the original façade. The 1910 and 1916 photos suggest standard storefronts with doors corresponding to the street addresses. Dutch's at #417 likely had a centered entry door; the Rombeck Building at 419-421-423-425 had four doors that corresponded to the four major bays.

Building permits show alterations to the buildings over the years. On 8/1/1933, Al Morse received a building permit to install a store at 423-425 West Main. In 1939, Morse again would receive a permit to alter West 425 for a beer parlor and card room. In 1942, Morse received a permit for alterations to his club and gymnasium, and in 1947 to move partitions for a tavern. In 1953, the old gymnasium would become a restaurant and cocktail lounge under a permit to Mr. Steve Zigich. The restaurant received a face-lift in 1964 when a permit was issued for interior alterations and to re-face the front of the building with stone. Subsequent alterations would include filling in the storefront of #425 with brick.

Huppín, on May 15, 1950, received a permit for 419-421 West Main to build a "New archway between stores." On September 24, 1965, Sam Huppín received a building permit to "modernize front of building – ceramic tile," for his Jewelry Store at 421 West Main.

A building permit was issued in 2003 for "exterior face lift," that resulted in the facades of the two buildings being integrated by application of a metal frame grid along the transom band of the first floor that spanned both the Dutch's and Rombeck Buildings. Emphasis was given to the main entry by a pronounced ensemble of stucco piers that rose through the first and second floors to a projecting stucco entablature. Within the span between the piers was an aluminum storefront flanking the double-glass panel door entry and a large "applique" fan window above the projecting steel-frame portico. The letters HUPPIN'S was prominently set over the portico and in larger letters atop the entablature. The names of the products available were placed in the sheet metal frieze above the second floor windows. The old Dutch's building (#417) consisted of a storefront with a single pedestrian door in the east corner, and the westerly bay of the Rombeck Building (#423-425) was brick and wood panel with a single pedestrian door in the east corner. Neither of the doors provided public access.

### **Floor Plans**

The original floor ground plans of the 1900 one-story Dutch's storefront on the east, and the two-story Rombeck Building on the west are not available. The building at #417 (formerly Dutch's) was a single room, likely with storage in the rear. The Rombeck

Building with the address #s 419, 421, 423, and 425 West Main originally had four store spaces, each with an entry to the sidewalk. Numbers 419 and 423 were conventional retail spaces, while #s 423 and 425 were combined in the 1930s to create a barbershop and gymnasium, tavern, and eventually combined into a single restaurant in the late 1950s. Typically this operation would have had a front dining area, possibly a bar area, a kitchen and storage.

The second floor, at 423 1/2 West Main, runs the depth of the building and is approached by a relatively long first floor landing and a run of wooden stairs to an intermediate landing, then switchback up to a small lobby on the second floor. From the open and balustraded second floor stair landing, a network of narrow hallways lined with transom-topped wood panel doors provides access to the 32 or so rooms jammed into the single floor. The single-room units, with closet, sink, radiator, window, and a light fixture are characteristic of a single room occupancy hotel (SRO). Bathrooms with toilet, sink and tub are down the hall. Floors are wood strip with plaster walls and ceilings.

The basement consists of storage and equipment rooms with concrete floors, sheet rock, brick, and concrete block walls, and plaster ceilings. Wooden steps provide access from the first floor.

Remodels of the ground floor of the two buildings, 417-419-421 West Main, resulted in the floors of the buildings being combined into one shop that featured groupings of various products which included cameras and film, TVs, stereos and HiFi when operated by Huppin's. The space at 423-425 West Main was used for storage and not integrated into the retail space.

The existing ground floor plans include a retail shop, Wollnick's at the combined former 417 and 419 West Main storefronts, Jaazz Salon at the former 421 West Main address, Huppin's main entrance and storefront, and Spokane Exercise Equipment at the former 423 and 425 West Main spaces.

The second floor is currently vacant.

### **Land Parcels**

The property fronts along the south side of West Main Avenue, and rests on two interior lots, the west 20 feet Lot 3, on which sits the ca. 1900 one-story Dutch's building at 417 West Main, and the Lot 4 and east half of Lot 5 (north 100 feet), occupied by the 1927 two-story Rombeck Building with the addresses 419 to 425 West Main. It is interesting to note that this parcel, and not the "Dutch's and Durkin's Buildings," includes Dutch's first shop; the first building in the block occupied by Dutch Loan Office from 1933 to 1986 was situated on the west 20 feet of Lot 3 at 417 West Main. This building and a portion of Lot 3 were sold to members of the Huppin family in 1986 and integrated into the Huppin's Block (this building and the Rombeck Building).

### **Areas of Significance**

Category A - Broad Patterns of Spokane History, Commerce

Category C - Architecture

Significant Dates: 1903-1965, constructed ca. 1903 and 1927

Architect: Unknown

Builder: F.E. Martin (1927 Building)

### **Summary**

The Huppin's Building consists of two buildings that were combined into Huppin's in 1998. They are the two-story Rombeck Building, constructed in 1927, and the adjacent one-story store building, Dutch's, constructed ca. 1903. The former Dutch's Building was constructed during Spokane's most significant growth period, 1900 through 1910, and remains an integral element of a block that contains three of the earliest of Spokane's post-fire buildings. Both the Dutch's and the Rombeck buildings continued a legacy of pawn, jewelry, second hand, and loan businesses on West Main, most owned and operated by Jewish businessmen who would become prominent families in Spokane's downtown core.

The Rombeck Building, accented by Classical elements, is a vernacular commercial building with shops on the ground floor and apartments on the second floor. Built in the late-1920s, the building retains its original character and has good integrity of form and design. Although beyond the time period of the National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form for "Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central Business District 1900-1910" - the building, nonetheless, is a classic SRO within the Central Business District. Further, it appears to have been the last SRO constructed in downtown Spokane.

### **HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

The Spokane Falls and its surroundings were a gathering place and focus for settlement for the area's indigenous people due to the fertile hunting grounds and abundance of salmon in the Spokane River. The first humans to arrive in the Spokane area arrived between twelve thousand and eight thousand years ago and were hunter-gatherer societies that lived off the plentiful game in the area. Initially, the settlers hunted predominantly bison and antelope, but after the game migrated out of the region, the native people became dependent on gathering roots, berries, and fish. The Spokane tribe used the Spokane Falls as the center of trade and fishing.

The first American settlers, squatters J.J. Downing, with his wife, stepdaughter, and S.R. Scranton, built a cabin and established a claim at Spokane Falls in 1871. James N. Glover and Jasper Matheney, Oregonians passing through the region in 1873 recognized the value of the Spokane River and its falls. They realized the investment potential and bought the claims of 160 acres and the sawmill from Downing and Scranton. The Reverend Henry T. Cowley followed in

October 1874 as a missionary and Indian Sub-Agent to the Spokan Indians. Glover and Matheney knew that the Northern Pacific Railroad Company had received a government charter to build a main line across this northern route. By 1875, Matheney became doubtful that the Northern Pacific Railroad came to Spokane and sold his stake in the venture to Glover.

The Northern Pacific Railroad arrived in Spokane Falls in 1881, providing connection to the Puget Sound. The line was completed in 1883 when the eastern and western branches of the railroad came together, thus establishing transcontinental service through Spokane Falls.

The newly incorporated city continued to grow through the 1880s. Between 1886 and 1889 the population increased from 3,500 to 20,000 people. In spite of the devastating fire of August 4, 1889, which destroyed approximately thirty-two blocks of the business district from the railroad tracks to the river and from Lincoln to Washington Streets, the city quickly rebounded. Because of city ordinance to reduce fire hazard, brick and terra cotta became the dominant building materials of the rebuilt downtown.

When Spokane rebuilt the downtown after the fire, the new buildings were constructed in an area much larger than the original business district. The business district spread east to Division Street. Sanborn Fire Insurance maps from 1891, 1902, and 1910 show a dramatic increase in the construction of commercial buildings in downtown. Frame dwellings gave way to commercial buildings that would meet the demand of the influx in population. Among the property types and businesses that were prevalent were hotels, lodging houses, and restaurants.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Spokane's population exploded from 36,848 to 104,402 in 1910. This growth mirrored the population expansion of the state that saw its greatest increase in the same decade. Many people moving to Washington settled in the states three largest cities: Seattle, Tacoma, and Spokane. Various industries rapidly developed and with it a demand for more buildings. Most of the city's urban downtown skyline was created from about the late 1890s to 1912 with the construction of office buildings, banks, hotels, department stores, and other commercial buildings. As author John Fahey describes, Spokane, which had put up 675 new structures in 1900 as migration accelerated, built 1,500 to 1,900 buildings a year from 1904 through 1909.

The economic boom and population expansion of approximately the first fifteen years of the 20th century was short-lived. Growth in both areas in the next decade slowed considerably. But prosperity seemed to return in 1917. In February the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* would announce that "Spokane Banks Made Most Gain," with the largest clearings on the west coast (2/2/1917, p8/3), and a "Rosy Future Seen for Local Business," in reporting that Spokane was named as one of the nine most promising cities in the whole country (2/8/1917, p12/1). New buildings were announced and the downtown saw construction activity. Some 32 projects were listed as proposed or under construction as proclaimed by the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* on March 6th: "Two Millions And Half for New Buildings Here," for buildings that included the Crescent, Chronicle Building, Elks Temple, and Overland Garage among others.

By 1920, the population of Spokane was only 104,437, an increase of only 35 people from 1910 (Decennial Census Counts. OFM). Investors soon realized the city was overbuilt. The region it served (the Inland Northwest) was not able to sustain the city and keep pace with the speculative growth. The 1920s and 1930s saw similar, but less drastic slow growth due to economic factors. The Inland Northwest region's dependency on extractive products from farms, forests, and mines suffered from declining demand.

The *Spokesman-Review* on June 1, 1924 reported "City Spent and Spends \$2,615,000 on Buildings and Homes This Year" (pB11/c4-5). "Industrial and Downtown Construction Will Run Well Over \$1,000,000." Railroad and oil company expansions, and the Masonic Temple Annex (\$300,000) and Western Union Life (\$275,000) on Riverside Avenue accounted for the bulk of the construction investments in the group of 14 commercial buildings, 15 garages, and 200 residences mentioned in the article. The new Ritz Theater on Main and the Goodyear Tire warehouse were constructed at \$50,000 each.

Of the approximately 22 remaining buildings built in the 1920s in downtown Spokane, 14 were related to the automobile sales and service businesses (of which the downtown was the center). Other major buildings of that decade included the Elks Temple (1921), Salvation Army Building (1921), Eagles Building (1923), Western Union Life Insurance (1924), Masonic Annex (1925), *Spokane Daily Chronicle* (1928), Paulsen Building (1929), and Montgomery Ward (1929) (the demolished Sears Building was also built in 1929). Other than the Rombeck Building, no apartment buildings were constructed in downtown during this period, and indeed, the Rombeck Building appears to be the last SRO constructed in downtown Spokane.

### **The Development of the West 400 Main Block**

The Sanborn map of 1884 shows the only the western edge of the block in which the site is located. Only a small dwelling adjacent and an agricultural implement storage shed adjacent to the south are depicted. The area further to the east was unmapped. The westerly portion of the block north of Main had store structures and the block west of Stevens Street along both sides of Main Avenue had rows of wooden structures that housed a Chinese laundry, saloons, liverys, dwellings, sheds, and other uses.

The 1888 Sanborn shows that a one-story store, a dwelling, "Rountree's Feed," and a Chinese Laundry occupied the footprint of the existing Rombeck Building. To the east is a one-story carpenter's shop, the "Cottage House Boarding," and two dwellings on the corner. A vacant lot and the 2-story wooden structure "Nevada House Boarding" were to the east. "To be wagon shop painting not finished" was on the corner to the west. Spokane Feed and Sale fronted Stevens Street on the alley south. The rest of the block, to Washington Street on the east and Riverside Avenue on the south, was half developed and filling in with boarding houses, dwellings, sheds, wagon shops, and a hay attic.

The 1890 Sanborn, the year after the Great Spokane Fire, shows only the three-story brick Bodie Block on the northeast corner of the block. The remainder of the north half was blank, and the dotted outlines of five structures were along the Washington Street frontage. South of the alley, the frontage along Riverside Avenue was being filled in with

the notes "Being Built" on two of the buildings. Surrounding blocks displayed the same pattern.

In 1891 Sanborn depicted site as undeveloped with only the Bodie Block and the three-story brick "Como" block (Lang Building-extant) on Washington Street, on the north side of the alley. The frontage along Riverside Avenue was built out with the Green Block, Tidball Block, and Temple Court (all removed).

The 1902 Sanborn depicts the southern half of the block as fully built out. The northern half of the block includes full frontage build out along Stevens Street, the Levy Block (extant) and Bodie Block, and along Washington Street, including the Como Block (Lang). Main Street is built out except for gaps on Lot 2 and Lot 3, with only the west 20 feet of Lot 3, and east half of Lot 2 developed. A one-story brick building is at 417 West Main, and, adjacent to the east are two one-story brick buildings comprising shop front #s 419, 423, and 425.

In 1910, the block was built out. Sanborn depicts a variety of buildings, all brick and stone, one- to three-story working class buildings on the north side and the imposing Old National Bank Building (extant, now US Bank) on the southwest corner and the Temple Court Building (razed) on the southeast corner. Two single-story brick "store" buildings (409 and 411 West Main), and the three-story brick store building (415 West Main) with notations of "liquor storage in basement," and "ice machine" are shown on the map.

The 1928 Sanborn depicts block as fully built out. In the north half of the block are essentially the buildings that presently exist. On the south half of the block only the U.S. Bank building remains. The eastern portion of that block is now a parking lot and drive-in bank branch. In addition to the Levy (1892) and Como (Lang, 1890) blocks on the north half are the following buildings along West Main Avenue:

- 427 – 3-story brick Bodie Block (1889, now the 1889 Building)
- 419-425 - 2-story brick Rombeck Building (ca. 1926, now Huppín Building);
- 417 - 1-story brick store (ca. 1900-combined with 419-425, Huppín Building);
- 415 - 3-story brick Durkin Building (ca. 1910, now Dutch's);
- 409-411 - 1-story brick store (ca. 1900, now combined with 415, Dutch's);
- 407 - 1-story brick Woolworth Building (ca. 1893, now Millman's); and
- 405 - 1-story Columbia Pharmacy (ca. 1900, now Hill's Restaurant, altered).

The 1952 Sanborn depicts the same pattern as 1928.

### **Chronology of the Rombeck/Dutch's Loan Buildings**

#### *R. L. Polk Directory and Building Permits for 417, 419, 421, 423, 425 West Main Avenue*

Five of six of the buildings fronting on the 400 West Main block were owned and contained shops owned by Jewish businessmen. The Duitch/Singer family and the Huppín family established their businesses and would own four buildings; Mark Soss, an owner of the Bodie Block (1889 Building), had previously operated loan businesses at 411 West Main, and at 417 West Main, both of which would later house Dutch Loans. The 411 West Main address would become part of Dutch's, and the original Dutch Loan at 417 West Main would end up as a part of the Huppín domain.

Henry Millman owned Millman Jewelry and E-Z Loans at 407 West Main, and once operated a store at 411 West Main, as did Jewish businessmen Oscar Silverstein as Uncle Oscar's, and Morris and Harry Fischbach as M & H Loan Office. The Singers, Huppins, and Millmans were long-term business operators in the block.

The property on which the buildings reside includes the west 20 feet of Lot 3 (417 West Main) which the Huppins purchased in 1986, and Lot 4 and the north 100 feet of the east half of Lot 5 (Rombeck Building - 419, 421, 423, and 425 West Main)

### **417 West Main**

#### *Building Permits and Chronology for 417 West Main (W 20' of Lot 3)*

According to the Spokane County Assessor's Office, the one-story brick building at 417 West Main was constructed ca. 1900. Permission to connect with the water main at 417 West Main, dated 3/14/1902, was issued to E.O. Azzi as the owner. (The 1900 through 1905 Polk Directories listed Azzi at 417 West Main as a seller of fruits and cigars.) E.O. Azzi, owner, also applied for a sewer permit on 12/28/1903 at the 411 West Main address. A deed conveying the property from the Northwestern and Pacific Hypotheekbank to Ernest O. Azzi was executed on 7/26/1904 by which Azzi purchased the property for \$5,000.

Peter Azzi with Mr. Vannucci operated a confectionary shop at #417 until 1910, followed for a brief span by the Grand Restaurant; electrical permits were issued in 1910 and 1912.

Mark Soss, Inland Loan Office, having previously operated at 411 West Main, received an electrical permit for #417 on 9/26/1913. On 3/19/1914, Soss requested an application for installation of a water meter. In 1933, Soss would move a few doors west into the Bodie Block at 431 West Main which he owned. Melvin Dutich, operating at Dutch's Loans (pawnbrokers) occupied 417 West Main around 1934 (Dutch Loan Office - building permit for awning 10/14/1937 with a value of \$27).

As a sidebar, the history of the buildings that comprise the Dutch's Building and the Huppins' Building are interwoven by the occupants over the years. Mark Soss started at 411 West Main, moved to 417 West Main, and ended up at 435 West Main (Bodie Block which he owned). Melvin Dutich followed Soss and moved into #417 in 1934 which became Dutch's Loans; the Singers (Pearl, Dutich's daughter, and Robert, her husband) would continue operating Dutch's at #417, but it was not until 1996 that they would own their building and eventually acquire the buildings at 411 & 415 West Main and occupy those spaces as well. The Building at #417 was sold by the Singers to the Huppins and is now part of the Huppins'/Rombeck Building.

In a rather strange action, demonstrated by Quit Claim Deed dated 7/17/1943, the Azzi property was sold by Leo T. Crowley, Alien Property Custodian of the USA, who was acting pursuant to the Trading with the Enemy Act. Sold by highest bid: "having found that the real property was property within the United States which was owned by Ernest

O. Azzi, a national of a designated enemy country, to-wit Italy; all of which is fully set forth in said Vesting Order, and said Amendment of Said Vesting Order; and ..." "...it is in the interest of and for the benefit of the United States that said real property be sold ..." With the high bid of \$12,025, a quit claim deed was awarded to Harry M. Ulrich and William P. Ulrich. Ernest O. Azzi was apparently not in Spokane during this period and was not listed in Polk after 1905.

Three years after the Azzi sale, on February 13, 1946, the *Spokane Daily Chronicle* would report: "Suit is Filed to Clear Title"

An interesting suit to clear title on the property at W417 Main, adjoining the Ulrich card room was filed in superior court today by William P. Ulrich, Harry Ulrich and their wives. The plaintiffs allege they purchased the property from Leo T. Crowley, United States alien property custodian, September 17, 1943 when the owners, Ernest Azzi and his wife, Ida Azzi, were enemy aliens residing in Italy. The suit names as defendants Ernest and Ida Azzi, their unknown heirs, the state of Washington and county of Spokane.

On February 2, 1948, William P. and Belle M. Ulrich conveyed to John L. and Martha Ann Ulrich all of Lot 3, West ½ of Lot 2, block 16.

Sidney P. Dutich [son of Melvin and Anna] received a permit to install a gas line on 10/2/1956.

### **The Singer Family**

*Lot 3 and W ½ of Lot 2, Blk 16*

Robert and Pearl Singer, still operating Dutch's Jewelry & Loans at 417 West Main, purchased the two buildings on Lot 3, and the one building on the west half of Lot 2, from John L. and Martha Ann Ulrich on April 5, 1966 (Statutory Warranty Deed). Dutch's at #417 was one of the buildings included in this transaction. Melvin Dutich was still listed in Polk as working at the store.

In the following year on 4/28/1967, Robert Singer received a permit to add a 920 square foot storage room with a value of \$4,900. Ed Iwata was listed as the contractor.

After the sale to the Singers, the Ulrich's would continue to operate the restaurant until 1972. In that year, Robert Singer would bring his sons Richard and Gary in as salesmen at Dutch's Loan, to replace their grandfather Melvin, who would move to California. The west 415 address was vacant in 1973 and 1974. Permits were issued to Robert Singer in 1975 for electrical work and to remodel the building to become a Washington State liquor store with a construction value of \$25,000.

After the expiration of the liquor store lease at 415 West Main, Dutch's moved a door east in 1985 from 417 to 415 West Main. Millman's was operating a pawnshop next door at 411 West Main in a property later owned by the Singers. Having vacated 417 West Main, the Singers sold the property to members of the Huppel family in 1986 who were operating Huppel's HiFi and Photo in the adjacent Rombeck Building.

*Convey the West 20 feet of Lot 3 to Huppins*

On 8/1/1986 by Statutory Warranty Deed, Robert and Pearl Singer, husband and wife conveyed to Charles Eugene and Gerry L. Huppins, husband and wife, the W20' of L3B16.

By 1988, #417 was listed as Huppins's Annex and would be listed as such until 1997. In 1998 only the address 419 West Main was listed under Huppins's HiFi, Photo, and Video.

**Rombeck Building**

*419-421-423-425 West Main*

Henry A. Rombeck purchased Lot 4, Block 16 from Cora W. and George Tilton for a sum of \$6,250 on October 11, 1897. On May 22, 1902 Henry A. Rombeck added to his Main Avenue ownership by purchasing from Charles H Wingate et ux for an amount of \$7,450, the north 100 feet of the east half of Lot 5, Block 16.

Prior to the construction of the current Rombeck Building, Henry Rombeck built two single-story commercial buildings between 1900 and 1912 on the site. A permit for a water meter was issued to "H. A. Rombeck" for "4 store rooms" on 12/27/1911 for 425 West Main. Addresses for the site included: #419 (Goodyear Repair Factory in 1914), #421, #423, and #425 (Central Clothing Factory in 1913) West Main.

Rombeck completed his two-story brick building in 1927 at 419-421-423-425 West Main Avenue. The building permit lists F.E. Martin as builder and a value of \$30,000. Permit 28494, was issued to construct a new brick building with stores and rooms. It appears that the permit was issued on 9/26/1926, but the copy of the permit is not legible. Other permits associated with the new building included a side sewer permit, issued on 4/29/1926, and on 3/8/1927, a permit for 50 light fixtures by Maxwell-Franks Electric.

Early occupants of the Rombeck Building included in the 1929-1930 Polk Directory were at #419, Nathan Forman Clothing (also 1928, but not 1927); at #421, Victory Loan Co, with Joseph Tillman and Samuel Bister, proprietors (but not in 1926-28); at #423, Amedeo Bombino Confectioner (1929 Lawrence Maio, confections); at 423-1/2, the Alexander Hotel (in 1928 with Martha McDonald as proprietor); and #425, Pupo Brothers Fruits (from 1928 to 1933) and Scarpelli Brothers Meats (Electrical permit to Scarpelli, 4/14/1927) who occupied the space until 1933.

Al Morse, a colorful barkeep and boxing promoter in the late 1930s-early 1940s, would run a barber shop at #423 from 1938 to 1953, and a gymnasium and beer parlor at #425 for twenty years from 1934 to 1953, before moving down Main Avenue to West 407 (now Millman's) in 1955. (At the West 407 address, Morse and Harry Silberman were owners of Al Morse Recreation which featured "Card Room, Cigars, Tobacco, and Lunch.") Various electrical and building permits between 11/15/1937 and 7/7/1943 mark the changes in his operation from Al Morse Boxing Club, to Al Morse Club & Gymnasium, which was altered to a "beer parlor" in 1942, back to a Club & Gymnasium in 1943, and Al Morse Recreation with partitions for a tavern in 1947.

The 1940 Polk listed at #419, Star Leather shoe; at #421, Victory Loan Company pawn; at #423, Al Morse barber shop; at #423-1/2, Alexander Hotel; and at #425- Al Morse Lunch.

In 1945, #419 was listed as vacant, and Abraham J. Huppin, pawnbroker, was, for the first time, listed at 421 West Main Avenue; the previous year he had been across the street at 424 West Main. Al Morse was listed at #423 as "barber," and at #425 as Al Morse's A1 Club and Gym (restaurant, card room, beer parlor, and barber shop). The Alexander Hotel continued renting rooms at 423 1/2 Main. Playland Arcade occupied #419 for a couple of years from 1947 to 1949.

The Huppin family had been operating businesses in downtown Spokane since 1909 when Samuel Huppin, tailor and 2nd hand clothing was in the basement of 214 North Washington. In 1920, the Huppin Brothers, Sam and Morris, had moved to Howard Street and moved again to 303 West Main Avenue in 1921. In 1928, Morris, Abe, and Nathan were listed as tailors and clothing dealers. The 1936 Polk lists Abraham Huppin as a pawnbroker at 424 West Main. The first listing in the Rombeck Building was in 1945-46, when Huppin was listed at 421 West Main.

In 1950, B.V. Case Watch Repair and A.J. Huppin, pawnbroker, combined #419 and #421; Al Morse Barber was at #423; and Al Morse recreation and cigars was at #425. To consolidate the two spaces, A. Huppin, as lessee, on 5/15/1950 received a building permit for addition of a "new archway between stores," with a value of \$300.

After Al Morse moved out of #423 and #425, a building permit was issued on 10/5/1953 to Steve Zigich for a café and cocktail lounge: "Interior alterations only;" "Move booths and counters and non-load-bearing walls;" "value of \$4,000." The 1954 Polk listed Turf Recreation Restaurant. Electrical permits were issued from 1956 to 1958 for the Turf Restaurant and Turf Café.

In 1955, Huppin's Men Shop (Sam I., Abe J., Sam M.), for the first time (having moved from 511 West Main), and Huppin's Loan, pawnbrokers (Sam I, Abe J. Sam M.) were in 419 and 421 West Main with the Alexander Hotel upstairs. Emile Conrad, barber had replaced Al Morse at #423 in 1954, and the Turf Tavern and Restaurant was at #425. These businesses remained in the building through 1965.

A building permit was issued to Sam Huppin on 9/30/1964 for "Interior alterations and re-face front of bldg. with stone," "value of \$7,500." The following year at 421 West Main, a building permit issued to Sam Huppin on 9/24/1965 to: "Modernize front of building – ceramic tile" to use for a jewelry store with a value of \$2,200. An electrical permit to Huppin's Men's Wear was issued on 6/1/1965.

In 1968, Huppin's entered the Photo and HiFi business at #419, with Huppin's Loan continuing to do business at #421. In 1970 Huppin's Photo & Hi-Fi occupied #s 419-421, and, at #425, the Turf added Surf to become Surf and Turf Café and Lounge.

Electrical permits from 1975-1977 listed Huppin's Hifi and Photo at 419 to 423 West Main. The 1978 Polk was the last year in which Huppin's "Loans" was listed.

In 1976, the House of Fong occupied the former Surf and Turf space. Vic's Restaurant received mechanical permit and other permits 2/18/1977-4/19/1978. The restaurant would operate at this location until 1996. In 1997, #425 was listed as vacant, and the next year all of the ground floor space in the Huppins Building was consolidated under the address 419 West Main, as Huppins Hi-Fi, Photo, and Video.

The Alexander Hotel operated until 1983, and was no longer listed in 1984. The 1983 Polk showed 19 enumerated rooms with 12 occupied all by men.

### **Henry Rombeck**

Henry A. Rombeck was born in Germany in 1851 and died, at the age of 80, in Spokane in 1931. He came to the United States in 1881, traveled to San Francisco, and moved to Spokane in 1883. He engaged in the woodworking trade and moved to Sprague to build bridges for the Northern Pacific Railroad.

He established a homestead west of Reardan and started a farm. He invested in properties in Spokane and, at one time, owned property on West Riverside on which the Masonic Temple would expand.

On November 10, 1897, Henry A Rombeck purchased Lot 4, Block 16 from George and Cora W. Tilton for \$6,250. Five years later, he would purchase the north 100 feet of the east half of Lot 5 of Block 16 (30' x 100' lot) from Charles N. Wingate and others, for the sum of \$7,450. In 1912, Rombeck was issued permits for a water meter for four store rooms at 423 West Main. It was not until 1927 that he would build the Rombeck Building that stands today at 419-421-425 West Main Avenue. The building permit listed F.E. Martin as builder of new brick building with stores and rooms at a value of \$30,000.

In that same year, Rombeck moved with his wife to Browne's Addition where he resided until his death in October of 1931. He left an estate worth nearly \$100,000 including his two story red brick building on West Main Avenue.

The following articles in Spokane tabloids reported Rombeck's ventures in Spokane.

The *Spokane Daily Chronicle* reported that the Masonic Temple was slated for expansion: "WILL DOUBLE SIZE OF MASONIC TEMPLE"

"The Masonic Temple association last night purchased from Henry A. Rombeck the lot directly east of the Masonic temple on Riverside, for \$45,000. The property has 8700 square feet and a front of about 100 feet on Riverside." (The remainder of the article reports the project and shows a sketch of the present Masonic Temple, no date.)

The *Spokesman-Review* reported Mr. Rombeck's death on 10/28/1931. "CAME TO STATE WHEN N.P. BUILT"

**“Henry A. Rombeck’s Death Took One Who Helped Construct Road.”**

A pioneer of the Northern Pacific construction period has passed in the death of Henry A. Rombeck, 80, at the Sacred Heart hospital Monday night. He had been ill for two months and in the hospital two weeks.

A Native of Steinfeldt, Germany, Mr. Rombeck disembarked at New York in 1881. He remained there and in San Francisco, Cal. until 1883, engaging in the woodworking trade until the Northern Pacific wanted bridge builders, when he came to Sprague, then a division point.

He had a part in erecting all of the important spans of eastern Washington, and while employed by the road established a homestead six miles west of Reardan. He acquired other acreage and engaged in farming on a large scale.

While there, Mr. Rombeck invested in several Spokane properties in the last 25 years. He owned what became part of the site of the Masonic temple and part of the new city hall site. He acquired property on Main avenue at the rear of the Old National Bank building.

In 1923, Mr. Rombeck moved to W2414 Pacific, where he had resided since. “He possessed a fine character and was generally aiding some one,” said R. H. Dent who has known him long.

He is survived by a widow, Katherine, two sisters in Germany, and two stepsons here, Peter Vogel and Harry J. Rombeck. ....

The *Spokesman-Review* in its November 3, 1931 edition reported (p6:4): “Henry Rombeck Left \$100,000” “Bulk of Estate of Retired Farmer Goes to His Widow”

An estate estimated to be worth nearly \$100,000 was left by Henry A. Rombeck, retired farmer, who died October 26.

His will which gives the bulk of his property to his widow, was filed for probate in superior court Monday. The exact amount of the estate will not be determined until his safety deposit box is opened, Attorney John Roche told the court.

The principal asset is a two-story brick building near Main and Washington valued at from \$50,000 to \$60,000, the court was told. He owned farmland near Deer Park and the family home at W2414 Pacific.

The will makes bequests of \$500 to Harry Rombeck, an adopted son, \$1000 each to Caroline and Josephine Rombeck, children of the adopted son; \$500 to Peter Vogel, a step-son, and \$1000 each to Kitty, Agnes, Merle, Elmer and Henry Vogel, children of the stepson.”

### The Huppins

Samuel Huppin was first listed in the Spokane Polk City Directory in 1909 as a tailor and second hand clothing dealer in the basement of 214 Washington. He also resided there. In 1915, the Huppin Brothers (Sam L. and Morris) tailors were listed at N223-1/2 Howard and also at 309-1/2 Main. By 1920, Morris was at the Veteran Tailor Shop. Samuel Huppin Clothing was at W303 Main in 1921. From 1922 to 1929 Abe Huppin Clothing was at 303 West Main, and Nathan and Morris Huppin at Washington Tailors. Sadie was listed as the widow of Sam. In 1929 Abe Huppin had moved across the street to 310 West Main and was there until 1935; and from 1936 to 1943, Abraham J. Huppin was listed as "pawnbroker" at 424 West Main. In 1945, Abe moved across the street to 421 West Main.

The 1952-53 Polk had the Huppin Brothers (Morris) Men's Clothing at 511 West Main, Gene as a student, Sam I. as a clerk at Huppin's Loan, and Sam M. as USA. Huppin's Loan (A.J. Huppin), pawnbrokers was listed at 419 and 421 West Main. In the following year, Sam M. is listed at Huppin's Loan, and in 1955, Huppin's Men's Shop (Sam I., Abe J., Sam M. Huppin) moved to #421.

KHQ Television would announce on a March 14, 2013 posting:

#### *"Huppin's Closing The Downtown Spokane Location"*

SPOKANE, Wash. - Huppin's announced on Thursday that it plans to close its downtown Spokane store at 421 W. Main. The electronics retailer will consolidate its bricks and mortar presence to the north Spokane location at 8016 N. Division.

The company will expand Huppins.com and will also continue the OneCall online retail operation. Huppin's downtown location will begin its biggest inventory sale in history on Friday, March 22. The "Three Million Dollar Moving Sale" will include everything in the downtown store.

"During our 104 years of history, Huppin's has succeeded by evolving with our customers and their shopping preferences. This change is a natural evolution of that," said Murray Huppin, President of Huppin's.

"We have seen our customer base shift to the north store where we've created a bright, open shopping experience. We know we'll have some customers who are disappointed to lose the downtown location, but we hope they'll come see us up north."

Huppin's, an Apple Specialist, offers an expanded assortment of Apple products and accessories at the north store, one of the largest selections in Inland Northwest. With twice the inventory of downtown, the Division location also features a wide variety of small appliances, kitchen vignette, computer audio products, more than 100 headphones on display and new sound rooms, as well as easy access and free parking. Huppin's will continue to be on the cutting edge with its inventory, stocking the new ultra high-definition 4K televisions just coming to market.

The company will be expanding its Huppins.com website allowing customers to browse online, compare prices and, soon, provide customers a way to easily place orders and track deliveries from their home computer or mobile phone.

Huppin continued, "The home electronics market is continuing to evolve and we're seeing an increased consumer movement to internet shopping, even within local markets." "There are so many good memories in the downtown location, but the evolution of online retail and our bigger, more accessible location on North Division makes this a good business decision," Huppin said. "We are part of a great community, and we look forward to continuing to serve Spokane."

Huppin's has a history of being ahead of the consumer curve. The company began as a small tailor shop in 1908 and grew over time, moving into dry goods retail and pawnbroking before its start in electronics and cameras in the 1950s. The company was an early entrant in the online retail space, launching OneCall in 1994.

OneCall pioneered a very successful service model to help customers make online electronic shopping choices.

**Samuel Huppin (9/15/1879 -- 7/10/1921)**

Samuel was born in Russia in 1879 and shipped over on the *Lucania*, arriving in New York on June 17, 1906. Naturalized as a U.S. Citizen on April 16, 1915, his WWI Draft Registration Card, 1917-1918, identifies him as a tailor, with his proprietorship at 303 Main Avenue in Spokane. [Note: both records cited above have a consistent birth date, and the arrival date in the U.S. is stated by Huppin on his Naturalization Document. The Death Notice below is two years off on his age, and three years on his arrival date.]

A Death Notice was published in *The Spokesman-Review* on July 12, 1921.

"DEATHS AND FUNERALS" (p7/c3)

Huppin – Samuel Huppin, age 40 died Sunday at the Deaconess hospital. Mr. Huppin came to the United States 12 years ago from Russia. He was a member of the B'nai B'rith, congregation Keneseth Israel and Elks. His wife and son arrived in Spokane two weeks ago from Russia. He is survived by his wife, Sarah; a son, Abe; two brothers, Morris and Naten, and a sister, Mrs. Kalin. Funeral will take place today at 3:30 o'clock from the Shule [sic] at Fourth and Adams to Mount Nebo cemetery. The body is at Smith & Co.'s.

**Abraham Jacob Huppin (5/15/1904 -- 7/18/1986)**

The Death Notice and Obituary were published July 18, 1986 and are included in a clipping compilation and publication by Members of the Eastern Washington Genealogical Society. (1993) [Note: members of the Society at the Spokane Public Library were instrumental in locating information used in this section.]

*Abe Hupp*

Abe Hupp, senior partner in Hupp's Photo Hi-Fi & Video, W419 Main, died Friday [7/18] at Deaconess Medical Center. He was 82.

Service for Mr. Hupp will be at 11 a.m. at Hennessey-Smith Funeral Home. Burial will follow at Mt. Nebo Cemetery.

Born in Russia [5/15/1904], he came to Spokane with his mother in 1921 to join his father, Sam Hupp, who founded Hupp's – first as a clothing store – in 1908. His father died shortly after their arrival and Abe Hupp took over management of the store. It was diversified into photo, camera and tape recorder lines shortly after World War II and now is operated by the fourth generation of the Hupp family.

Abe Hupp served as secretary of the Hebrew Free Loan Society for 50 years and was a past president of Keneseth Israel Synagogue and B'nai B'rith. He also was a member of Temple Beth Shalom and Spokane Elks Lodge 228.

His wife of 60 years, Marian (Rosen) Hupp died last October.

Survivors include two sons, Sam M. Hupp and C. Eugene Hupp, both of Spokane; one daughter Betty Rose Williams of Salem, Ore.; one brother, Sam I. Hupp of Spokane; and 10 grandchildren.

The *Spokesman-Review* published Samuel I. Hupp's obituary in its January 27, 2008 edition.

*"Samuel [Issac] Hupp, son of store founder, dies"*

Longtime Spokane resident and pioneering retailer Samuel I. Hupp has died. He was 85.

Hupp, patriarch of the Spokane-based Hupp's Hi-Fi, Photo and Video, had been in failing health and died Friday at a local hospital, family members said. He was a driving force in the store's early expansion into consumer electronics and had continued to work at the family business four days a week until about a month ago.

"Big Sam was one of the most kind and generous people you'd ever meet in your life," said his great-nephew and business partner, Murray Hupp.

He was the son of the store's founder, Samuel Hupp, who immigrated to Spokane from Ukraine to open the first Hupp's in 1908. The store initially specialized in clothing and secondhand items.

Samuel Isaac Hupp was born March 31, 1922, in Spokane. His father died shortly before his birth, and his mother died when he was 11, so he was raised by his older brother, Abraham.

His brother's family called him Big Sam, because one of Abe's sons, who was only a few years younger than Big Sam, was also named after the store founder. The younger Sam is known as Little Sam.

Samuel I. Huppín was a graduate of Lewis and Clark High School. His nephew Eugene remembers him as a typical teenager who happened to be 6 feet 3 inches tall and very handsome. "The girls adored him," he said. He played basketball as a freshman but soon decided to spend his afternoons working at the shop.

After high school, Huppín worked in men's clothing stores in Los Angeles and Las Vegas. While in Las Vegas, he worked in a men's clothier at the Flamingo Hotel and outfitted infamous gangsters, such as Bugsy Siegel and Gus Greenbaum, according to Eugene Huppín.

When he returned to Spokane in 1953, he joined his brother Abe at Huppín's, and the business expanded through the years to sell radios, cameras and electronics.

Murray Huppín, the son of Little Sam, said his great-uncle soon took over the financial affairs of the company. "He was just a smart guy and a very hard worker," Murray Huppín said. "He taught himself."

Although he had no children himself, family members say Sam Huppín loved his nieces and nephews and subsequent generations as if they were his own children.

"He loved his family," Eugene Huppín said. "And we loved him and honored him."

Murray Huppín remembers his great-uncle taking him to lunch at the Ridpath Hotel as a child. In later years, Big Sam let Murray borrow his Cadillac for the prom.

Eugene Huppín said that Big Sam was named for his father, because it is Jewish tradition to name a newborn after someone who has died. His middle name, Isaac, means "laughter" in Hebrew.

"Maybe that's why he could almost always appear to be happy," he said.

Sam Huppín was preceded in death by his longtime companion, Betty Bone. Survivors include his niece, Betty Rose Williams; two nephews and their wives, Sam M. and Norma Huppín and Eugene and Gerry Huppín; 10 great-nieces and great-nephews, including local residents Joel and Chris Huppín and Murray and Leslie Huppín. He also had 20 great-great-nieces and nephews.

Funeral services will be held at 1:30 p.m. today at Heritage Funeral Chapel, 508 N. Government Way. Interment will follow at Mount Nebo Cemetery.

**Sam M. Huppin** (01/18/1927 - 03/02/2012)

Obituary Published in *Spokesman-Review* from Mar. 3 to Mar. 4, 2012

Entered into rest March 2nd in Palm Springs, California surrounded by his loving family. He was born January 18, 1927 to Abe and Marian Huppin in Spokane, Washington.

Sam attended Lewis and Clark High School and graduated from Washington State College with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering. He was proud to be a lifelong devoted Cougar! While at school, he co-founded a chapter of Sigma Alpha Mu fraternity which brought him great joy throughout his life.

Upon graduation, Sam went to work for the Boeing Co. in Seattle followed by service in the United States Army. As an engineering instructor at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Baltimore, MD Sam had an opportunity to sightsee all along the eastern seaboard which sparked an enduring love of travel.

Following his military service, Sam passed through Spokane intending to go back to Seattle but never left. He joined his parents and uncle, Sam I. "Big Sam" Huppin in the family business that was founded in 1908 by his grandfather, transforming it from a men's clothing store and pawnshop into a camera and electronics retail store. He was an early entrepreneur in the consumer electronics industry putting Huppin's, now a 4th generation business, on course to become the company it is today. At work, more than anything, he loved to talk to his customers to share a story or tell a joke.

Sam was a longtime member of Downtown Spokane Rotary Club 21 and was a past-president of the Spokane Executives Association. He was past-president of Congregation Keneseth Israel and was a founding member of Temple Beth Shalom.

He is survived by Norma, his wife of 54 years; and his son Murray and wife Leslie of Spokane; and daughter Rochelle of Santa Monica, CA; as well as by grandchildren Melissa and Kaitlin Huppin of Seattle, and Samantha, Abraham and Lea Fleck of Santa Monica. He is also survived by brother Gene and his wife Gerry of Kirkland, WA; and sister Betty Rose Williams of Salem, OR.

Funeral service will be held at 1PM Sunday, March 4th at Heritage Funeral Chapel with burial to follow at Mt. Nebo Cemetery.

**Melvin Duitch** (9/8/1890 - 10/2/1979)

The *Spokesman-Review* published the death notice of "Melvin Duitch" (1890 to 1979) in the October 5, 1979 edition.

Melvin was the son of Moshe Taich and Ida Taich [immigrated from Russia], wife Anna. "Funeral for Melvin Duitch, 89, retired Spokane pawnbroker who founded Duitch Jewelry and Loan in 1915, will be at 11 a.m. today at Smith Funeral home. Mr. Duitch died Tuesday in Santa Monica, Calif., where he had

lived the last 10 years. [Mt. Nebo Cemetery has the dates on his grave stone, 9/8/1890 to 10/2/1979.] His wife Anna died in 1970. Daughter Pearl Dutich, born 1923 in Spokane, and married to Robert Singer.”

Melvin Dutich was listed for the first time in the 1915 Spokane City Directory (Polk) as a salesman with residence at W1614 Fifth Avenue. His first business listing was “clothing” at 229 West Main Street in the 1917 Polk. He was listed at this address as either “clothing” or “2nd hand goods” (wife Anna) through 1922. In the 1924-24 directories his “men’s furnishings” shop was at 239 West Main, and at 413 West Trent in 1928 where he operated until 1933. He then moved to 417 West Main as “Dutch Loan Office,” pawnbrokers. Melvin moved to California around 1972 and his daughter Pearl and husband Robert Singer took over the business and would remain as Dutch’s at this location until 1987.

### **Robert Singer and Pearl Singer**

#### **Robert Singer (11/21/1919-1/6/1998)**

Robert “Bob” Singer, 78, born in Pittsburgh, Mr. Singer died Tuesday 1/6/1998. He served in the 851st Aviation Engineers Regiment during World War II. Mr. Singer moved to Spokane in 1947 and became a partner and then owner of Dutch’s Inc., a pawnshop. He was a longtime shammes of Mount Nebo Cemetery, member of Keneseth Israel Synagogue, Temple Beth Shalom, the Elks Club and B’nai B’rith and was a Hadassah associate. Mr. Singer was a volunteer for KPBX Public Radio and the Ronald McDonald House. He was also a longtime fund-raiser and active supporter of the Spokane Food Bank and also spent time performing mitzvot for those less fortunate. Survivors include his wife of 54 years, Pearl; three sons, Gary and Richard Singer, both of Spokane, and Allen Singer of Orinda, Calif.; and five grandchildren. (Mount Nebo Cemetery: 11/21/1919-1/6/1998).

#### **Pearl Singer (7/7/1920-9/15/1999)**

Pearl Singer, daughter of Melvin Dutich, passed away September 15, 1999. Mrs. Singer was born in Spokane in 1920. She volunteered with the Victim-Witness Office, Spokane Food Bank, Ronald McDonald House, Project Joy, Spokane Public Radio, B’nai B’rith Dolls of Democracy Program and the Holmes School Reading Program. In 1998, Mrs. Singer and her husband received the J.C. Penney Golden Rule Award for community service. She was a member of Temple Beth Shalom, B’nai B’rith Women, Hadassah, and Keneseth Israel Synagogue, where she also was secretary. Her husband Robert Singer, died in 1998. Mrs. Singer is survived by three sons, Gary and Rick Singer, both of Spokane, and Allen Singer of Orinda, Calif.; and five grandchildren. (Mount Nebo Cemetery: 7/7/1920-9/15/1999).

Doug Clark wrote about Gary Singer after his death on February 1, 2013. “Clark: Dutch’s pawnshop will close, but Gary Singer will live on.” (online version)

Gary Singer’s crazy sign still draws double-takes and belly laughs from those who pass the storefront at 415 W. Main Ave.

Surly staff.  
Poor selection.  
High prices.  
Terrible quality.

But these days some new signs are causing an even bigger stir. Taped to the front windows, the small signs declare a shocking message in scarlet: "Closeout Sale."

There's no getting around it. What many of us hoped wouldn't happen is slowly and irrevocably coming to pass. By October's end, Dutch's Inc., Spokane's landmark downtown pawnshop and music store, will be history. There had been talk of keeping the business going after Singer's sudden death at home last February at age 66. But Singer's wife, Mary, explained that her husband was already planning to retire sometime next year and close the business that was started by his grandfather in 1915.

On February 15, 2013, Tom Sowa, of *The Spokesman-Review* would write: "Singer, owner of pawn and music shop Dutch's, dies" (online)

Gary Singer, owner and operator of downtown musical instruments store Dutch's Inc., died early this morning. He was 66.

Singer joined the family-run pawnshop and musical instrument store in 1971. He left graduate school to help his father, Bob Singer, run the business but eventually earned a master's degree in economics from the University of Oregon.

He was the third generation of family members to run Dutch's Inc., which has been in business for 98 years.

His grandfather, Melvin Duitch, opened the first location on Trent Avenue.

Duitch later moved the store – named Dutch's to simplify the pronunciation – to 415 W. Main Ave. Gary Singer took over the business when his father retired in the 1980s. Singer was found dead Friday morning in his home. Singer's younger brother, Rick, said the family doesn't know the cause and Gary Singer had not reported having any medical problems. [Note: the store was moved by Robert and Pearl Singer, and Gary Singer ca. 1985, Duitch had passed away in 1979.]

Singer was a longtime supporter of the Spokane Food Bank, which later became Second Harvest Food Bank. He served on the nonprofit's board and worked to raise community awareness

### **Pawn Shops in Downtown Spokane**

The following articles discuss the business of pawnbrokers in downtown Spokane as sort of the end of an era. With the closure of Dutch's on Main Avenue and RE Loans on Riverside Avenue, Millman's is the only operating pawnshop in downtown Spokane in 2015. Main Avenue had historically been the center of the pawnbroker business in

downtown Spokane—Main Avenue- Washington Street was the center of activity. The number of pawn businesses over the years between 1900 and 2000 ranged between six and ten, with a spike of thirteen in 1910. In 1910, for example of the thirteen pawnshops listed in Polk, four were on Main and two each on Washington and Stevens. The grouping of 300, 400, and 500 blocks of West Main, Trent, and Riverside was the center of the pawn world. In 1920, for example, of six pawnshops, four were on Main, and three on the west 400 block—Uncle Oscar's at #411, Mark Soss at #417, and National Loan Office at 419½. In 1935 all eight of the pawnbrokers had Main Avenue addresses, and half those in the west 400 block. Abraham J. Huppin was at #310, M&H Loan Office at #411, Dutch Loan Office at #417, Victory Loan Office at #421, and Inland Loans at #431.

In 1967 (3/26), Jerry Wigen of *The Spokesman-Review* wrote about the change in the business climate for pawnshops in downtown Spokane: "Oldtime Pawnshops Fading From Scene in Spokane."

The pawnshops that once did a thriving business on Trent are now boarded-up buildings. Some are gone forever, along with the tattoo parlors, the clip joints and the houses of ill-repute. Others have moved to Main Avenue. Most of them aren't the same. Only one has the traditional three-ball symbol above the door."

*"Boisterous Crowd Gone"*

Where once they catered to drinking, boisterous lumberjacks and miners, today their clientele, to use the words of one broker is "legitimate and respectable." Robert Singer, who operated Dutch Jewelry and Loans and contends that his shop is the oldest in Spokane, said most of those who come into a pawnshop today are persons with good jobs.

"They run short of money and need a few dollars to tide them over. Ninety per cent of them retrieve the item within 90 days," he said.

... The rates they charge are fixed by state law and even if they are slightly higher, no one complains because the broker is providing a service.

"Some of our customers can't get loans from banks or loan companies, because of bad credit or else they don't want to bother with all the red tape," one broker said.

*Less than 10 a Day*

Abe Huppin, owner of Huppin's Pawnbroker & Military Supplies, has been in the business since 1921. He specializes in camera and hi-fi equipment and says that his pawnshop business is a very small part of his overall business.

Huppin is one who believes that the banks and loan companies have made pawnshops almost obsolete. Once, he said, 50 to 75 persons a day would come in for loans. Now it is less than 10. He contends, however, that there is a need for the type of service the pawnbroker provides.

*Aid in Recovering Property*

... Henry Millman, Millman Jewelers & EZ Loans, has been in the business for 46 years. He is affectionately called the "mayor of Main Avenue." ... Millman recalls that years ago the lumberjacks used to steal shoes from sidewalk displays. The shoplifters who come into the store now steal everything, he said.

In September 1989, Barbara Dickson explained the role of pawnbrokers for the Spokane Journal of Business: "Pawnbrokers even out customer's cash flow."

"Gary Singer practices what a banker friend of his calls "asset- based financing." Singer who owns Dutch's Inc., a downtown Spokane pawnshop founded by his grandfather, Melvin Duitch, in 1915 (Duitch) dropped the "l" in the business's name when no one pronounced the name correctly.

Singer says Dutch's long history is typical of Spokane pawnshops. Sporting an economics degree from the University of California at Berkeley, Singer says the "collateral loan business" has been around "at least since the house of Medici" – a prominent Italian family in the 14th through the 16th centuries—and remains stable because it continues to meet a need.

"The pawnshop makes economic sense," says Singer. "A wide variety of people across the economic spectrum whose incomes fluctuate use pawnshops to even out their cash flow."

Singer, Rick and Carlin Taitch, the owners of Washington Jewelry & Loan formerly on Washington, around the corner) and Jeff Levitch, the owner of Evergreen Jewelry & Loan, Inc. say that the loans they make average \$50 to \$60.

The Spokane Journal of Business updated the pawnshop business in Spokane "Soft Economy gives pawnshops bump" on February 21, 2008.

While the U.S. grapples with a shaky economy, many people here increasingly are turning to one of the oldest professions to fill some of their more humble financial needs. They're putting up everyday items as collateral and obtaining short-term cash loans from pawnbrokers, who fill a niche for such customers.

You do see more people when the economy gets softer, says Gary Singer, third-generation owner of Dutch's Inc., a pawn store at 415 W. Main in downtown Spokane. When times are really good, people don't need loans as much.

Lending in the pawn business is countercyclical, says Singer, who expects business to pick up even more this year as talk of the slowing U.S. economy continues. ... Singer says his customers are more likely to need money for rent, car repairs, or necessities like coats for their children, than for mortgage payments.

Larry Karlson [Axels Pawnshop] says most pawn customers are working or in a seasonal layoff, and they have some assets, but not much credit. Though he says many now have debit cards, they don't have the bank balances to back them up.

We're a community bank. There's no question in my mind that we are important. We are a small community bank, says Mark Lax, president and owner of Pawn 1 Inc., a Spokane-based chain of a dozen pawn stores. ...

As much as pawnshop operators are small-time lenders, they also are, by necessity, salespeople, since the nature of their business results in an inventory of defaulted loans. ...

Karlson says the terms of pawn loans are strictly regulated by Washington state law, which defines the maximum allowed fees and interest and the minimum length of time for a loan. He says that on a \$100 loan, for example, there is a \$16 loan origination fee, and \$3 in interest accrues every 30 days, so at the end of 90 days, which is the minimum time a pawnshop must give a borrower to repay a loan, the total cost to the borrower for the loan would be \$25.

As a percentage rate its high, but as a dollar amount it's not that high, Karlson says. If the loan isn't paid off, the item becomes the property of the pawnshop, which puts the item up for sale. Collateral for such loans comes in all shapes and sizes, from musical instruments to moose antlers. If it doesn't eat and you can fit it through the door, you can pawn it, but only if the shop operator believes he could sell it if he had to, Singer says. It gets down to the very basics of what something's worth, says Singer. It's hard to make a loan on sentiment. ...

The more money a pawn shop loans, the less likely a customer is to default on a loan, Karlson says. He says his customers most often reclaim their assets within the 90-day term of a loan. He says the default rate on pawned items is about 15 percent, with up to half of customers failing to reclaim collateral from smaller loans of say, \$10. On loans of \$100 or more, however, the default rate is only about 5 percent. Craudell says he anticipates about a 40 percent default rate on the 40 to 80 loans that the Double Eagle store he manages makes each day. Singer says 85 percent to 90 percent of the items pawned at his shop get reclaimed. ...

Despite the important service pawnbrokers claim they provide to working people who often can't secure credit in more traditional ways, the trade struggles with unfavorable public perceptions. Yet, store operators here contend the pawn business is the most-regulated type of business in the state. ...

Despite the heavy regulation, Spokane has a lot of pawn stores per capita, Karlson says. He estimates there are about 25 pawnbrokers in the Spokane area and says about as many pawn shops operate in downtown Spokane as in far bigger downtown Seattle.

Of the pawn stores here, most are small, family-owned businesses, Karlson says. That's how the Pawn 1 chain began 30 years ago, Lax says. Singer's family has operated Dutch's since 1915, and Larry Karlson started Axels with a third brother and his father in 1990. Double Eagle is a family-owned business also. ...

It's competition, says Singer, but he asserts that pawnshops make straightforward loans that don't damage the borrowers ability to get cash in the future even if they don't repay the loans. He contends that payday-loan establishments are less likely to offer another loan to someone who defaults, whereas if his customers don't reclaim items against which he has loaned them money, because he can sell their collateral, he can still offer them loans later. ...

For most pawn stores, the sales side of the business is as important as the loan side and generates similar revenues. In Dutch's, for example, the blue neon sales sign is hung right next to the red neon loans sign. ... Singer says more than half of his business comes from repeat customers. You see the same people with the same items, he says. Singer's store has emphasized music and has an instrument repair shop on site. He says it has gravitated toward that inventory emphasis because many musicians are strapped for cash at one time or another.

...

On December 9, 2013, Jessie Tinsley would write for *The Spokesman-Review*, "Then and Now photos: Pawn shops on Spokane's West Main Avenue"

In the 1962 photo below, a sign on the left reads "E-Z Loans." The building was occupied by Millman Jewelers and E-Z Loan, a shop started by Henry and Sadie Millman in 1929, next door to the store's current location at 407 W. Main Ave. in Spokane. Henry Millman was born in Romania in 1900 and came to America at age 5. He became a skilled watchmaker and jeweler, and operated his store for almost 45 years. At one time, it sat next to Dutch's, in the old Ulrich's Cafe, and Huppins, both of which operated as pawn shops at one time. This year, Huppins consolidated its audio, video and photography showroom to its North Division Street location, and Dutch's went out of business following the death of owner Gary Singer, leaving Millman E-Z Loan as the last pawn shop on the block. All three businesses were owned by members of prominent Jewish families from the Spokane area. Annette Silver, who was once married to a grandson of the Millmans, has been running the Millman shop for the last 32 years. She uses Henry's watch repair cabinet as a shelf. She hopes the two empty buildings next door find tenants soon. "This whole block looks so dark. I miss the foot traffic from those places and I sure miss those guys over there" at Dutch's, she said. "They're a good bunch of guys." Henry Millman died in 1974, followed by Sadie in 1975.

### **Single Room Occupancy Hotel**

The Rombeck Building is also significant under category C as a Single Room Occupancy Hotel (SRO). Although it is out of the time period included in the multiple property National Register Nomination "Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Central

Business District of Spokane, WA 1900-1910," it meets the described physical characteristics of an SRO.

The preponderance of SROs were built in the CBD, defined approximately as lying between Division and Cedar streets on the east and west, respectively, and 3rd Avenue on the south and the Spokane River on the north. ...

Single occupancy hotels can be defined as unreinforced masonry structures of two or more stories, with commercial bays on the ground or street level, and the upper floor consisting primarily of single rooms without baths, with a limited number of rooms with baths. Some SROs had no rooms with baths, but all were equipped with at least one common bath (toilets and tub) on each floor. Some rooms had sinks, but not all. Hinged glass transoms above doors helped provide ventilation. Skylights and light wells lit interior rooms

and occasionally hallways on upper level floors. A stairwell in front usually led to a lobby or managers desk on the second floor, although some lobbies and desks were on the ground level. Secondary stairways usually existed in the central or rear portions of the buildings, with fire escapes exiting rear hall windows. ...

All, or nearly all, single room occupancy hotels contained commercial and retail space in street-level bays. While some business leasing space in SROs dealt in goods and service unrelated to working class needs, most appear to have catered to the clientele housed in those buildings. Clusters of SROs, such as along West First Avenue, provided a market base for such enterprises as cafes, restaurants, barbers shops, beauty salons, hardware and grocery stores, and the inevitable bars and taverns. (Holstine, 1993)

While pool halls, restaurants, bars, and pawnshops operated on the ground floor, the second floor catered to a resident population, the itinerant worker typically wintering from the woods or the fields in Spokane. They were conveniently located above--after the end of prohibition in 1933--a place where liquor and entertainment were plentiful.

Entered from the Main Avenue front entry that is framed by a Classically detailed portico, and approached by a straight run of wooden steps, the rooms for rent occupied the second floor. A small reception lobby, single occupancy rooms, and a toilet/bath room down the hall, were characteristics of the SRO as defined in the National Register nomination. The Alexander Hotel would operate until 1983, and at the last listing in Polk, some twelve men occupied the 19 numbered rooms on the second floor [The 1983 Polk Directory included only enumerated room.]

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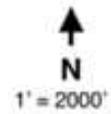
U.S. Census of Population 1940. "Mark Soss" "Melvin Duitch."

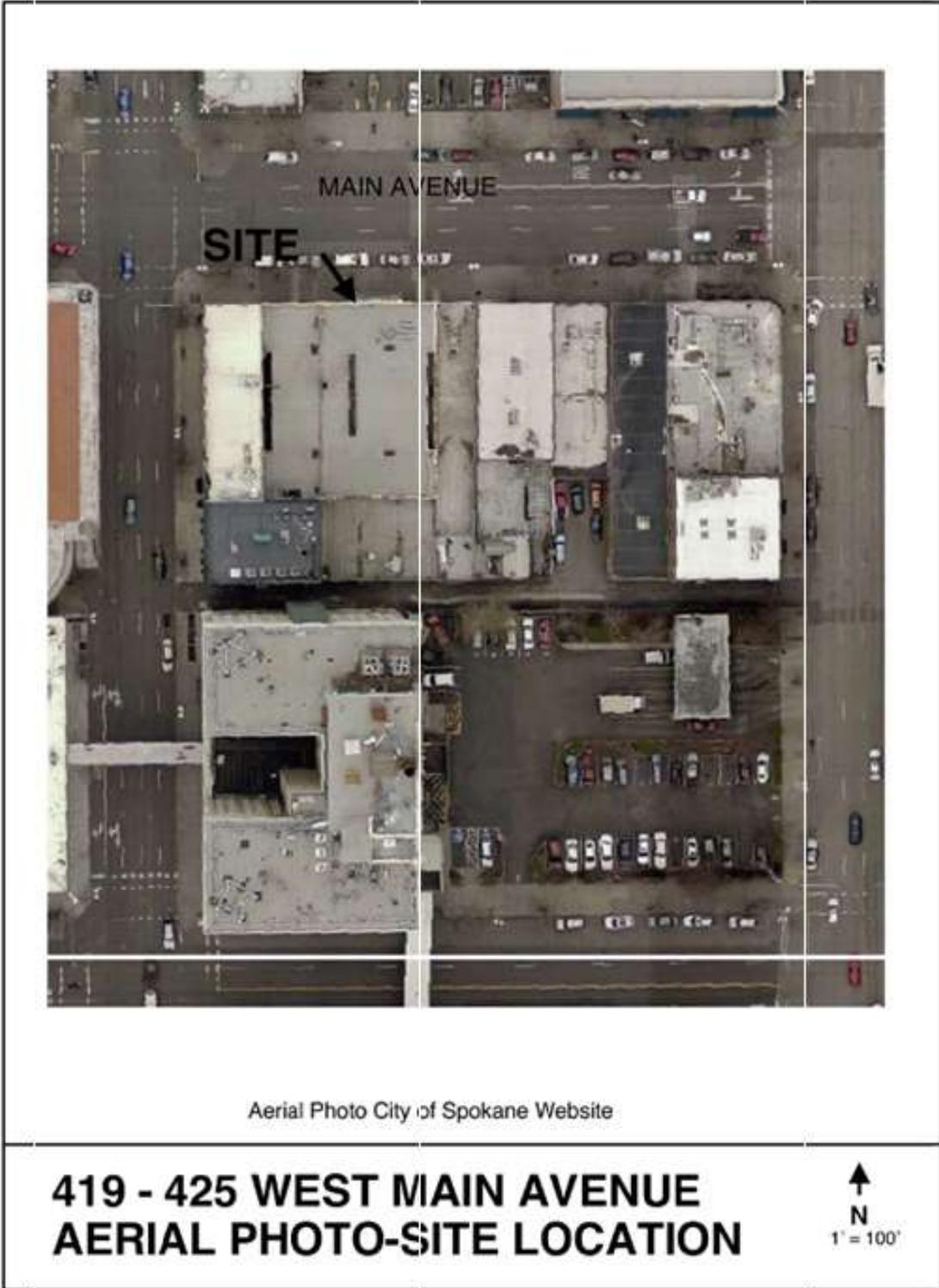
## **MAPS, PHOTOS, NEWS ARTICLES**



USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle. Spokane NW, Wash. 1974. Photorevised 1986

**425 WEST MAIN AVENUE  
SITE LOCATION**



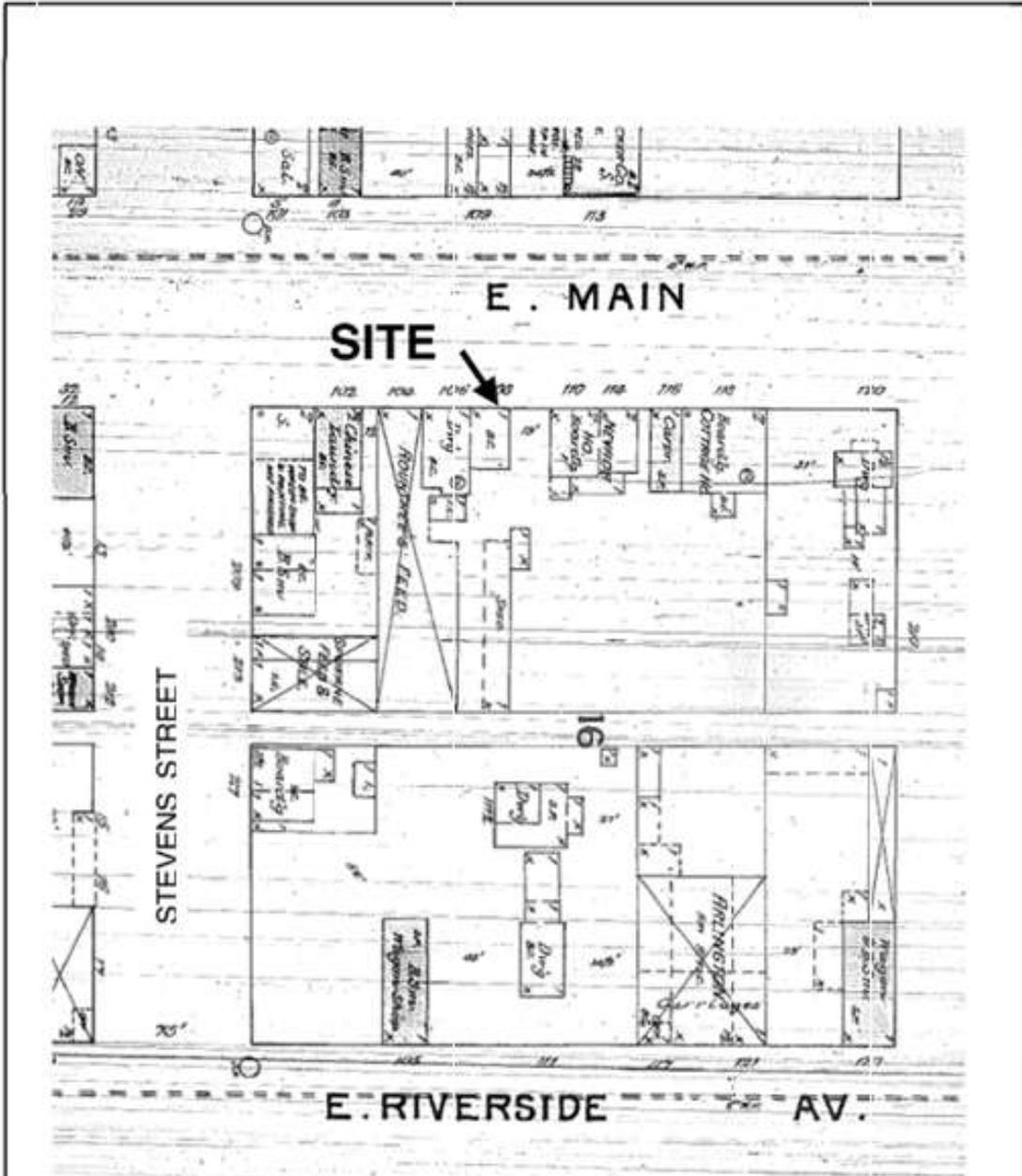


Aerial Photo City of Spokane Website

**419 - 425 WEST MAIN AVENUE  
AERIAL PHOTO-SITE LOCATION**

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1" = 100'

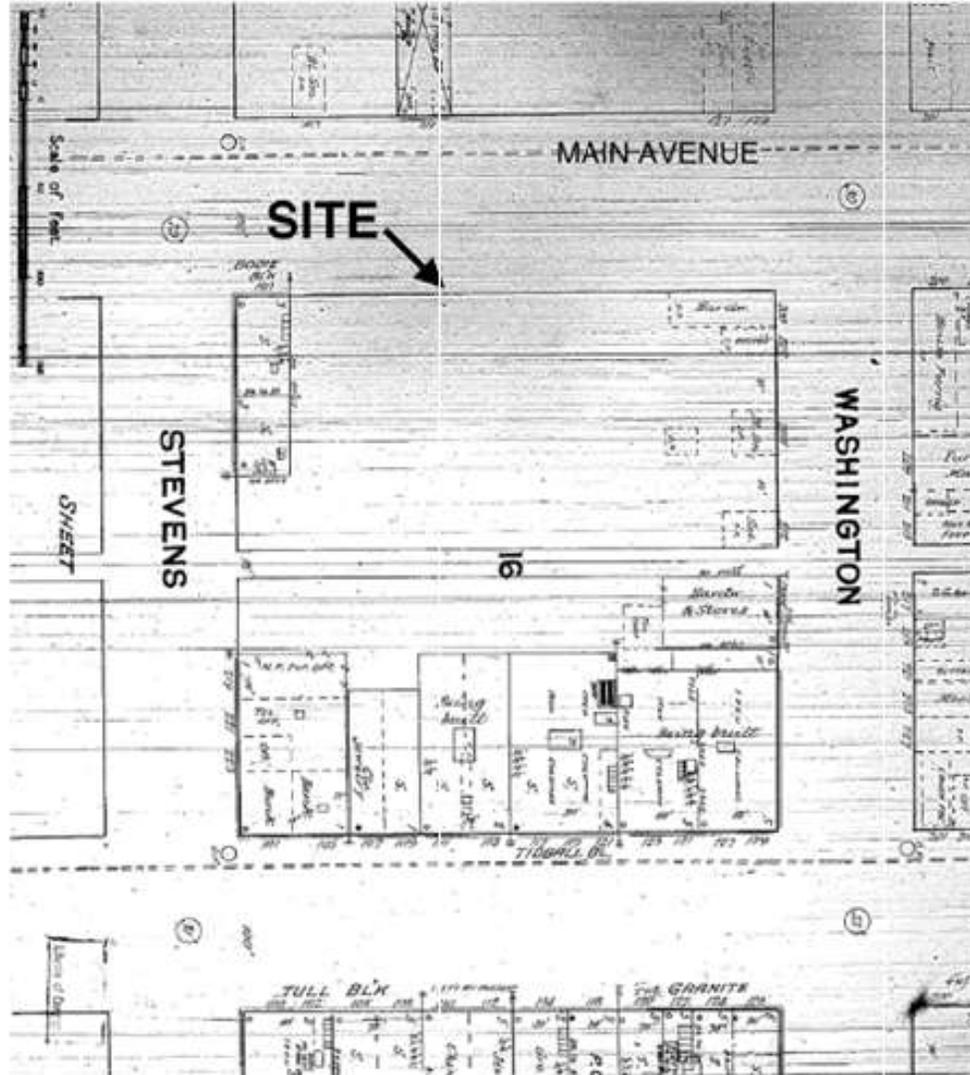




Sanborn Insurance Map - 1888 - page 3

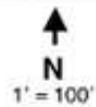
**419 - 425 WEST MAIN AVENUE  
1888 SANBORN MAP**

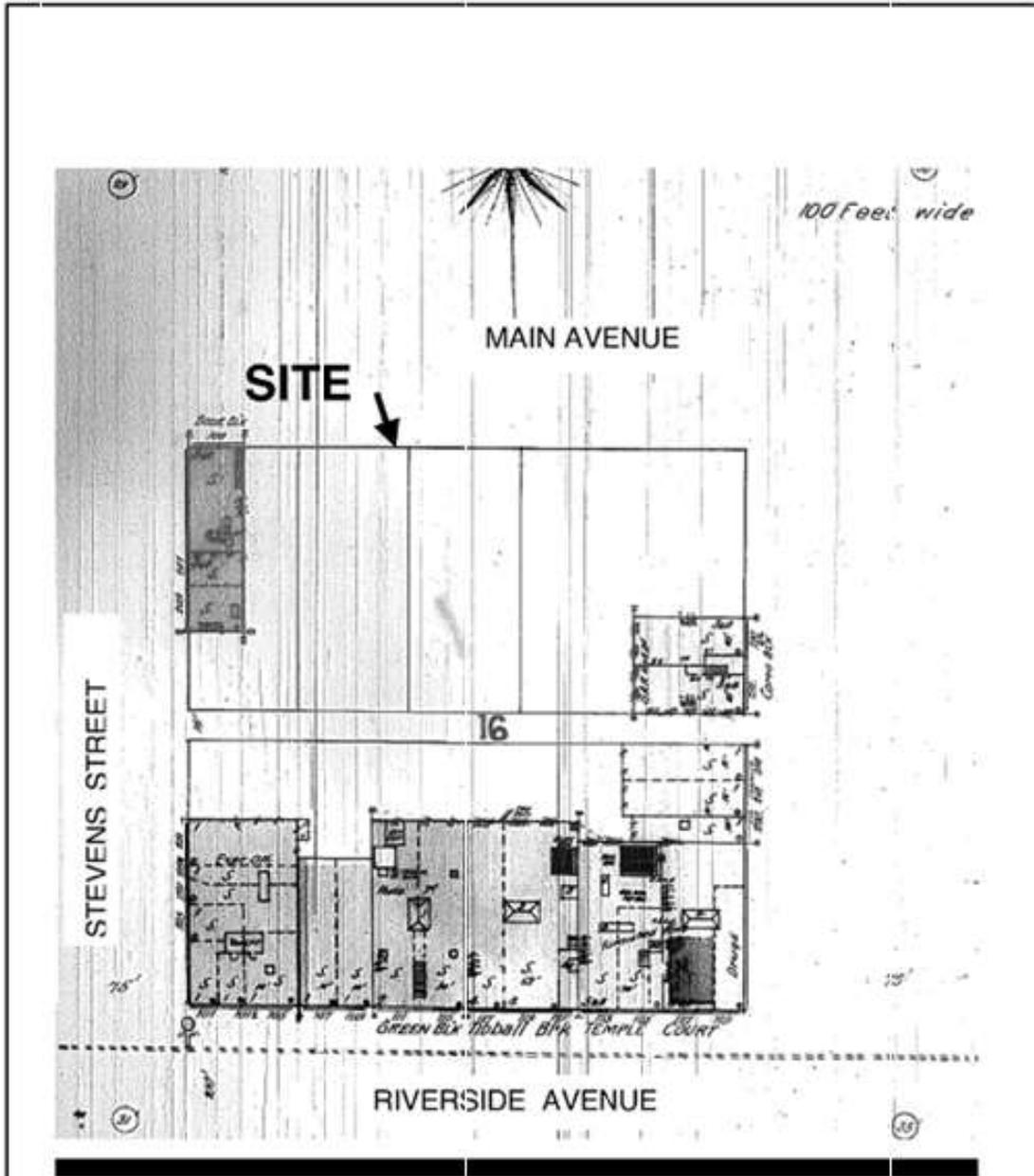
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N  
1" = 100'



Sanborn Insurance Map - 1890 - page 4

**419 - 425 WEST MAIN AVENUE  
1890 SANBORN MAP**

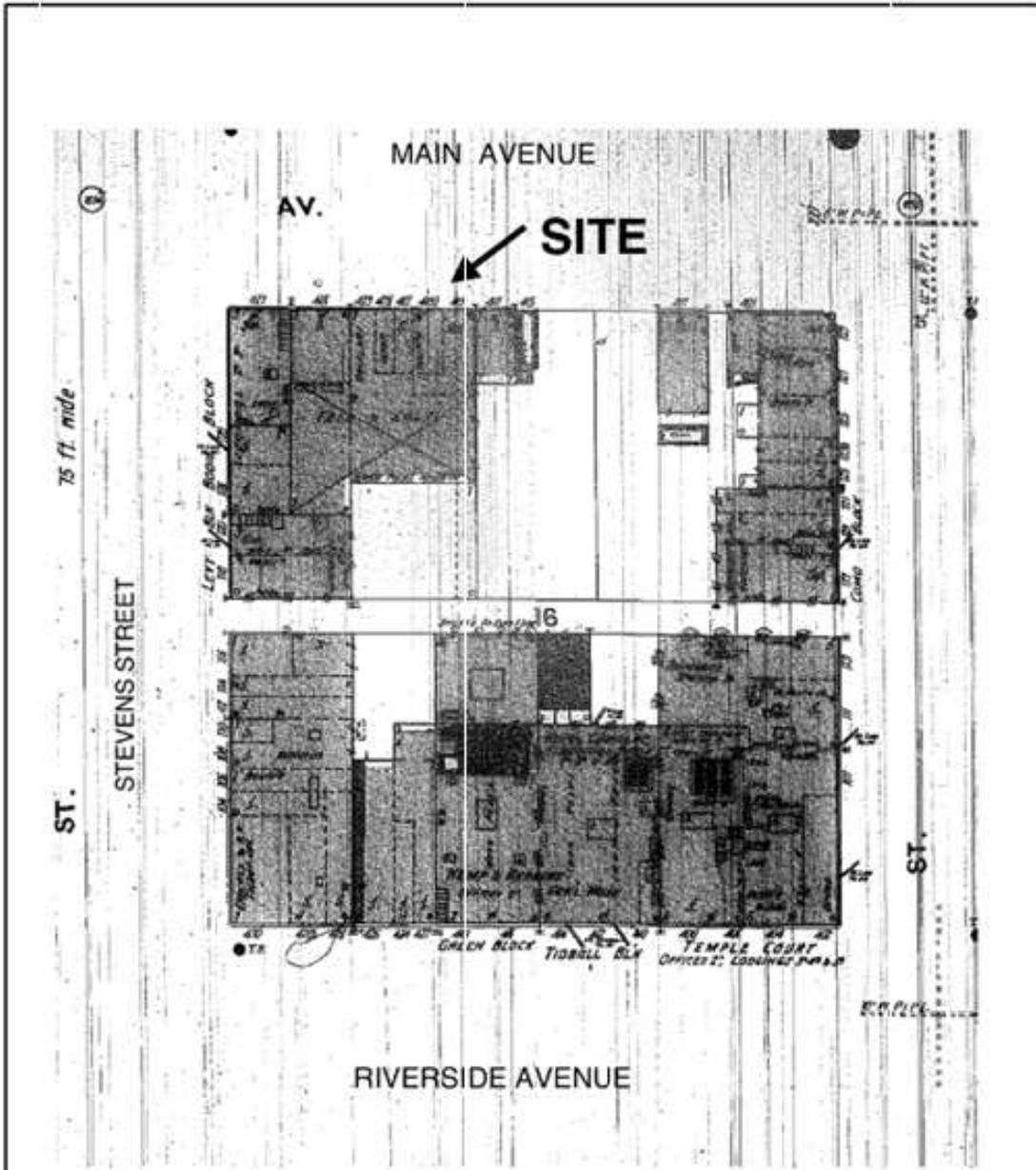




Sanborn Insurance Map - 1891 - page 5

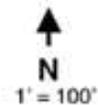
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1891 SANBORN MAP**

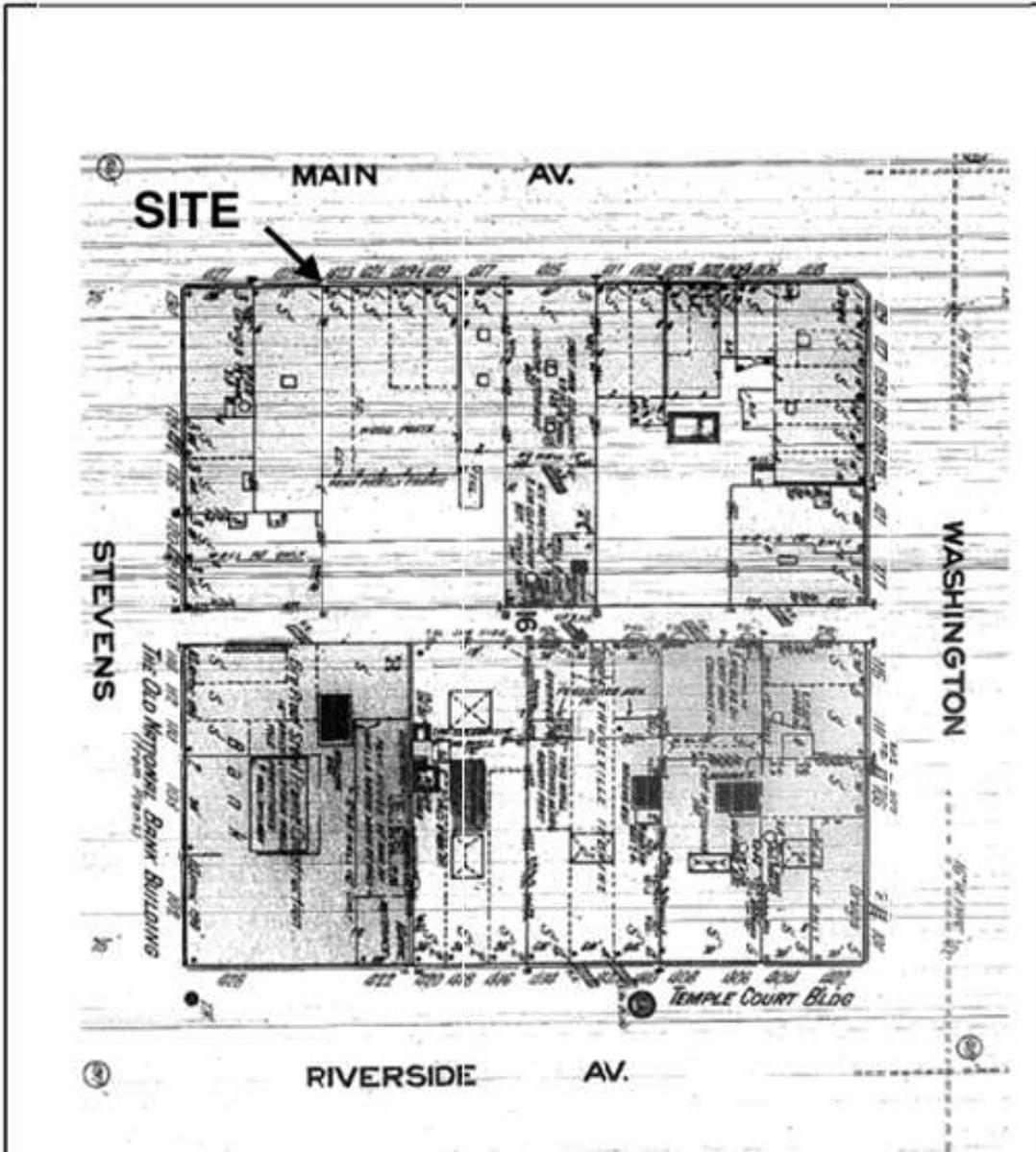
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Sanborn Insurance Map - 1902 - page 6

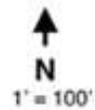
**419 - 425 WEST MAIN AVENUE  
1902 SANBORN MAP**

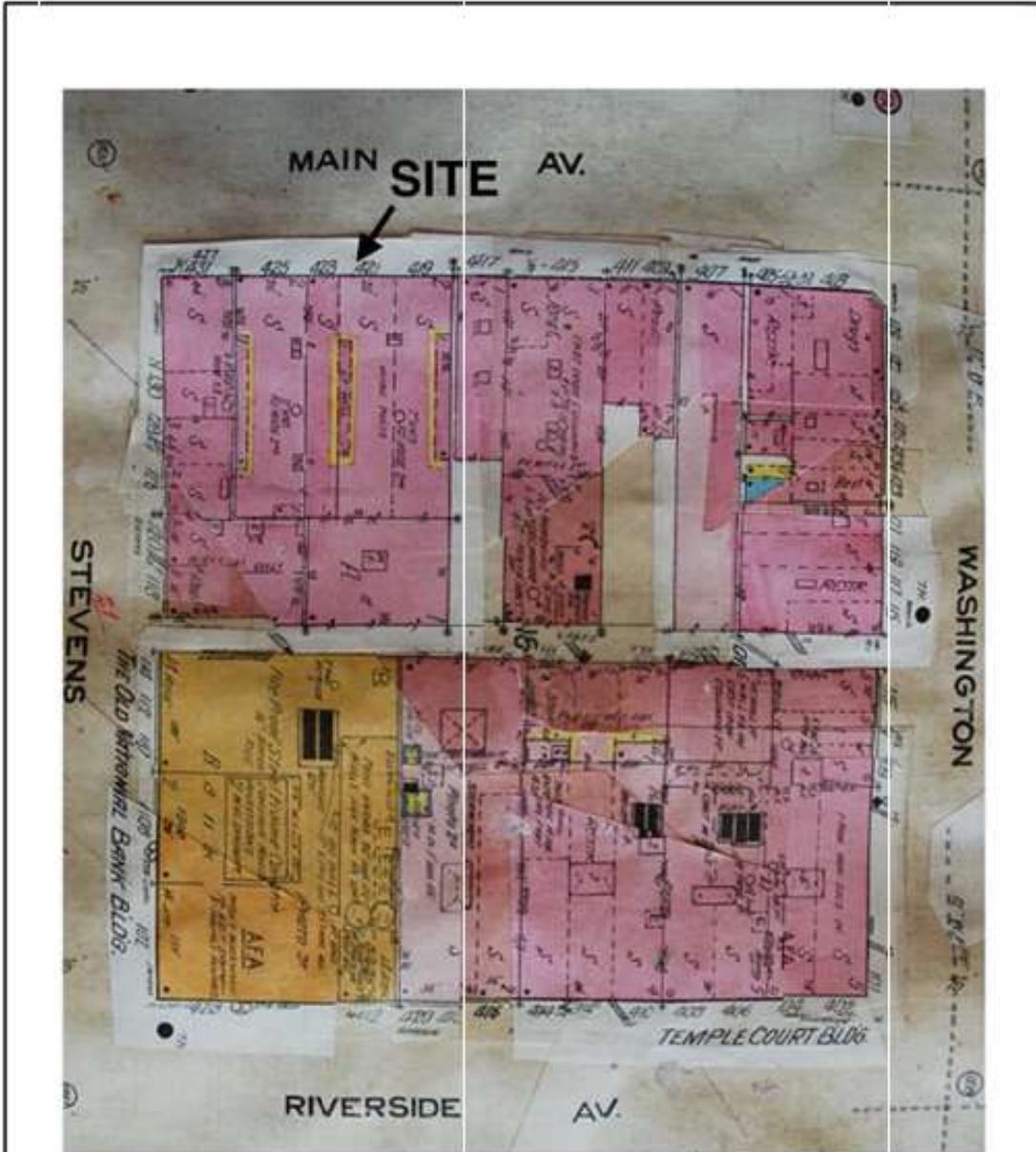




Sanborn Insurance Map - 1910 - page 429

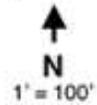
**419-421-23-25 WEST MAIN AVENUE  
1910 SANBORN MAP**

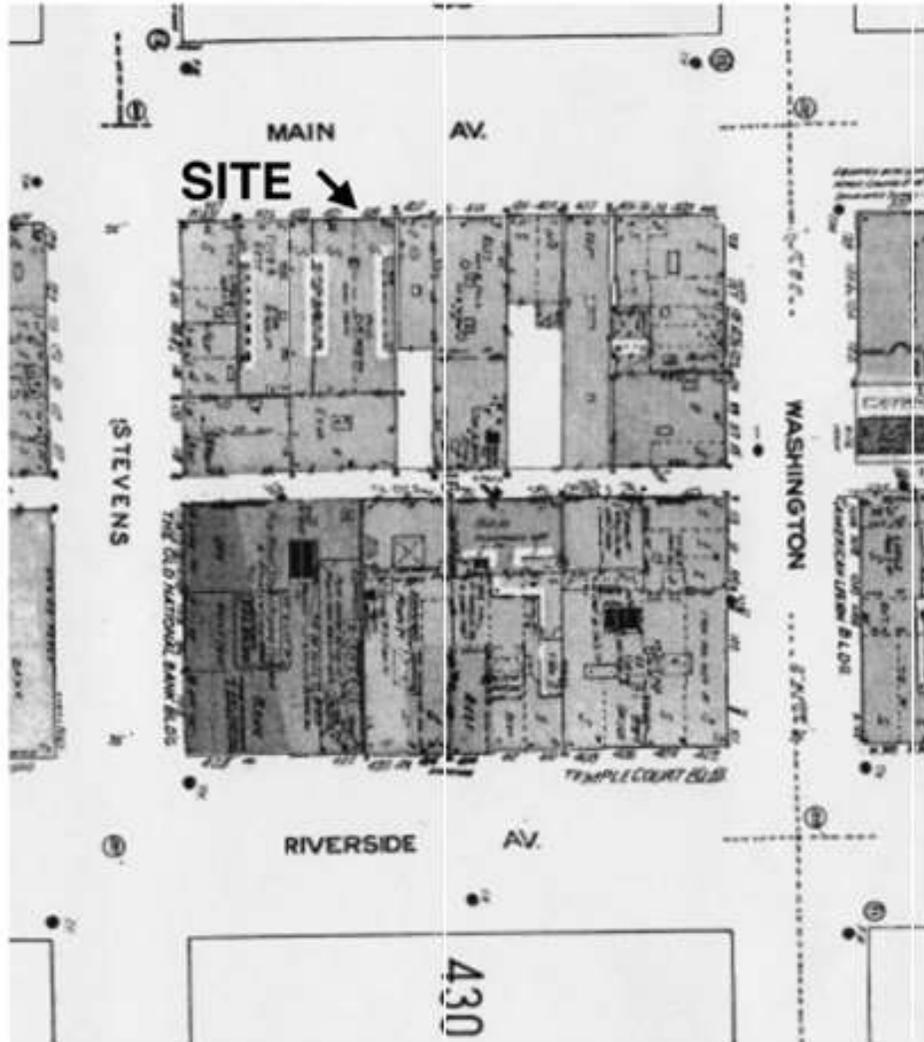




Sanborn Insurance Map – 1910 updated to 1928– page 428

**419 - 425 WEST MAIN AVENUE  
1928 SANBORN MAP**





Sanborn Insurance Map - 1950 updated to 1952- page 429

**419 - 425 WEST MAIN AVENUE  
1952 SANBORN MAP**





Photo 1 – Looking SE - Context Along West Main Avenue



Photo 2 – Looking SW - Context Along West Main Avenue

Before Photos



Photo 3 – Looking Southwest at Former Dutch's Building & Rombeck Building



Photo 4 Looking South at Huppins' Building

Before Photos



Photo 1 – Looking SE - Context Along West Main Avenue



Photo 2 – Looking SW - Context Along West Main Avenue

After Photos



Photo 3 – Looking Southeast at NW Corner of Rombeck Building



Photo 4 – Looking Southwest at NE Corner of Former Dutch's & Rombeck Buildings

After Photos



Photo 5 – Looking South at Former Dutch's Loans at 417 West Main



Photo 6 – Looking South at the Rombeck Building – 419-421-423-425 West Main

After Photos



Photo 7 – Looking South at 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor of Rombeck Building Showing Windows & Lantern



Photo 8 – Looking South at Entry to 423-1/2 in Rombeck Building

After Photos

## **PHOTOS**

### **INTERIOR BEFORE AND AFTER**



Photo 1 - Looking South from Main Entry Toward Retail Area – 421 W. Main



Photo 2 - Looking North Across Retail Bay Toward Main Entry

Before Photos



Photo 3 - Looking South at Retail Bay Along East End (Formerly 417 W. Main)



Photo 4 – Looking North Across Easterly Retail Bay (Formerly 417 W. Main)

Before Photos



Photo 5 - Storage Room at Rear of Retail Bays (South End)



Photo 6 - Basement Storage Area at South End of Building

Before Photos



Photo 7 - Looking South Across Landing and Up Stairs to 2nd Floor

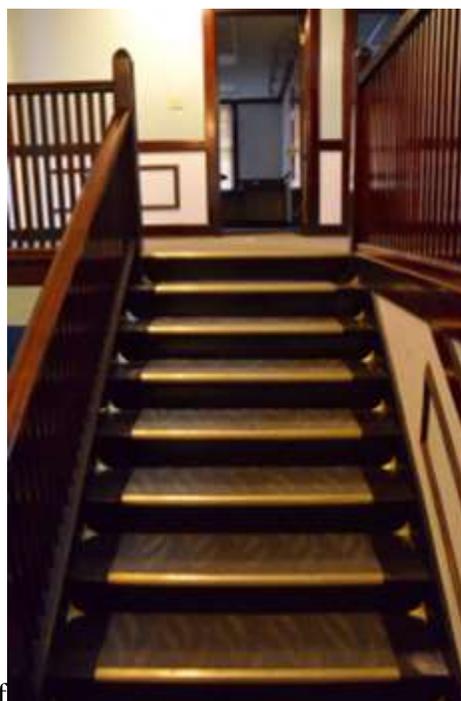


Photo 8 - Looking North From Intermediate Landing to 2nd Floor Lobby

Before Photos



Photo 9 - Looking East Along Main East-West Hallway



Photo 10 - Looking South at Central Light Well

Before Photos



Photo 11 - Looking North Toward Rear of Typical SRO Room



Photo 12 - Looking Toward Closet and Door to Hallway - Typical SRO Room

Before Photos



Photo 1 - Looking South @ Wollnick's East Bay (Originally 417 West Main)



Photo 2 - Looking North Across West Bay Toward Front (Originally 419 West Main)

After Photos



Photo 3 - Looking South at JAAZZ Salon (Formerly 421 West Main)



Photo 4 - Looking NW at JAAZZ Salon

After Photos



Photo 5 - Looking South Across Spokane Exercise  
Equipment (Originally 423-425 W.  
Main)



Photo 6 - Looking North Toward Front of Spokane Exercise