

## 554 S Central Avenue

Built in 1893 for Morris O'Brien as a retail store with two apartments on the second floor, this building was originally constructed in the "Commercial Vernacular" style. The Wells Stone Mercantile Co. owned the property between 1894 and 1899, when it was sold to Mary B. Cracraft, the first woman elected to the Marshfield School Board in 1901. Other owners between 1902 and 1904 included William H. Beseler, William M. Rogers and Ido Rogers. In 1904, the R. Miller family lived upstairs and operated the Miller Fruit Stand downstairs. Sometime after 1911 the face of the building was altered into the "Early 20th Century Commercial" style, which was popular from 1910 to 1930. This style is characterized by a simply ornamented, two dimensional façade on a broad rectangular building mass. By 1921, Brooks Tire Service occupied the building followed by the Marshfield Oil Company and the Chevrolet Garage. Between 1942 and 1980 Cole's Music occupied the building, followed by Kapston Inc. (1981), Laverne & Teresa La Mere (1985) and James & Becky Neil (1986). In 1990, Randy & Joyce Gershman purchased the property for the current site of Edward Jones Investments.



The following information was taken from the Local Historic Designation Application for the city of Marshfield:

"The building, built in 1893, was originally constructed in the "Commercial Vernacular" style. Sometime after 1911 the face of the building was altered into the "Early 20th Century Commercial" style, which was popular from 1910 to 1930. This style is characterized by a simply ornamented, two dimensional facade on a broad rectangular building mass. The style was used for small one-story storefronts and larger two or three story business blocks.

"The building is accented with simple geometric shapes in concrete. The parapet is topped with flat stone coping which crowns the building. The second story cornice features double concrete accent blocks, with simple cornices along the storefront and sides of the building."



**554 S. Central Ave.  
Marshfield, WI 54449  
Lot 11, Block 106, City of Marshfield**

**Historic Timeline**

**1890** – William Goetz sold land to Morris O'Brien.

**1893** – Current building was constructed. According to records of this year, it was listed as “store retail” with two apartments on the second floor.

**1894** – Morris O'Brien sold the property to Wells Stone Mercantile Co.

**1899** – Wells Stone Mercantile Co. sold the property to Mary B. Cracraft.

(Mary B. Cracraft was the first woman elected to the Marshfield School Board in 1901)

**1902** – Mary B. Cracraft sold the property to William H. Beseler.

**1903** – William H. Beseler sold the property to William M. Rogers.

(The property was later transferred to another family member, Ido Rogers)

**1904** – Listed as residence of R. Miller (merchant), I. Miller (prop. fruit stand), and Benjamin Miller (clerk). R. Miller's residence & business were listed as 526 S. Central. It is assumed that he operated a store out of the building.

**1908** – Listed as residence of A.J. Westenhaver (traveling salesman) & Ruby Westenhaver.

**1911** – Sometime after 1911 the front of the building was altered from “Commercial Vernacular” style to “Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial” style. It appears that the front of the building was covered over with the new brickwork, reflecting the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Commercial style.

**1915** – Listed as residence of Mrs. Etto Rogers (widow) and Mrs. Ido Rogers (clerk).

**1921** – Brooks Tire Service occupied the building.

**1939** – Marshfield Oil Company & the Chevrolet Garage occupied the building.

**1942-1980** – Cole's Music Store occupied the building.

**1981** – Kapston Inc. purchased the property.

**1985** – Laverne & Teresa La Mere purchased the property.

**1986** – James & Becky Neil purchased the property.

**1990** – Randy & Joyce Gershman purchased the property. It is the current site of Edward Jones Investments.

**\*Note\***

The original building's address was listed as 526 S. Central Avenue. Between 1939 & 1942 the address was changed to 554 S. Central Avenue.

**Sources**

Wood County Courthouse, Register of Deeds

Marshfield Public Library

Marshfield City Directories for the years 1904, 1908, 1915, 1921, & 1939

Marshfield City Assessor's Office

North Wood County Historical Society

Main Street Marshfield Inc.

Intensive Survey Report (July 1991)



526 South Central Avenue prior to 1911 when the front of the store was covered with new brickwork, reflecting the Early 20th Century Commercial style. Listed in a 1904 Marshfield City Directory, is R. Miller (merchant), I. Miller (prop. Miller fruit stand) and Benjamin Miller (clerk). The address changed in the early 1940's to 554 S. Central Avenue.



554 South Central Avenue sometime after 1990 when Randy & Joyce Gershman purchased the building for their business, Edward Jones Investments.



554 South Central Avenue after 2004 when Randy repainted his business, Edward Jones Investments.

Additional information on the property is available on the Wisconsin Historical Society's website: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Property/HI55562>