

Original building constructed 1871 / reconstructed 1883

Haley Sisters Block · 419-423 River Street

Original Building Owners - Ellen, Eliza, and Kate Haley

Ellen, Eliza, and Kate Haley moved from Grand Haven to Manistee prior to 1871 and constructed a small frame building to house the Haley Sister's Millinery Shop. The shop was destroyed in the great fire of 1871. They rebuilt soon after but, within the next twelve years, were burned out four additional times. In early 1883, the shop at 419 River Street was destroyed by fire for the last time. Fortunately, the building retained its façade through the blaze and the sisters were able to rebuild the store at it originally had been, an elaborate wood frame and brick veneer structure. They also began construction of a similarly designed double business block directly to the west of their main store. Wisely, the new portion of the store at 421 -423 River Street was constructed with walls of brick to lessen the impact of future fires. The sisters contracted with a Milwaukee firm to provide one ornate galvanized iron cornice for all three Italianate storefronts. The cornice line was, and today remains, Manistee's most elaborate.



The building was owned by the Haley family until the 1930's. The Haley's business was housed at 419 River Street. The initial tenant of 421 River Street was William Nungesser, an undertaker and furniture dealer. The 423 River Street segment initially was a grocery store operated by A.S. Haines.

The Haley Block is a fine example of High Victorian Italianate styling applied to a small town commercial building. The two story brick building, measuring about sixty feet in width, is divided into three storefront bays, each with three double hung, one over one sash balanced at the second floor level. The elaborate metal cornice over fine decorative brick corbelling presents a small name pediment at its center. Below the cornice of each bay is a narrow, raised wood decorative spandrel. The second story windows feature decorative carved stone hoodmolds. Beneath the windows rests a secondary cornice with decorative end blocks coinciding with the first floors support piers. The storefronts are defined by these masonry piers and with Manistee-fabricated cast iron columns, which frame each storefront door. A door leading to the upper story separates the west and center storefronts. The exterior of the building was renovated in 2008 and is in excellent condition.