

**JACKOBOICE FAMILY**  
*and*  
**FAMILY BUSINESS HISTORY**

***West Side Iron Works to Monarch Hydraulics***



**Ford Museum; West Side Iron Works shop/schoolhouse (1866-1982)**

**Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA**

**JACKOBOICE FAMILY**

*and*

**FAMILY BUSINESS HISTORY**

By Mike Jackoboice (Jakóbowicz) of Grand Rapids, Michigan... and  
Anchorage, Alaska... Los Andes, Chile... Las Cruces, New Mexico

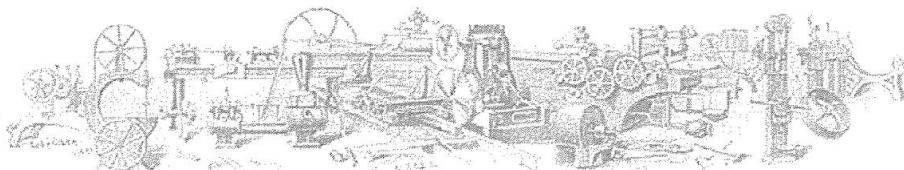
From records and research, 2008-2016



Józef Jakóbowicz (Joseph Jackoboice) was born March 16, 1824 *in or near* the old city of Kalisz in the Russian Partition of Poland (“Russian Poland”). He “learned the machinist’s trade” in Kalisz from age 16 to 20. Józef emigrated to Germany in 1844, working as a machinist for eight years. In 1852 he voyaged to America – prior to the establishment of the Ellis Island immigration facility (1892). He lived in New York City for 2.5 years, using his Polish name and/or his Germanic variant, Joseph Jakobowics. He later became known as the first Polish immigrant *to settle in the city* of Grand Rapids, Michigan (by 1855). Fluent in German, he married Prussian Catholic immigrant Frances Rasch in 1858 (he signed his marriage record “Jakobowics”). They raised their family at 22 and 52 Broadway NW, on “the West Side.” Joseph opened his first machine shop in 1860, and founded the West Side Iron Works in 1880. He died in 1899. The family business grew to become the Monarch Road Machinery Company (a.k.a. Monarch Hydraulics, Inc.) from 1931 through 2007. From the year 1844 to 1873, the family name developed from Jakóbowicz to Jakob-owics... Jacob-owicz... Jacob-o-ice... and Jackob-oice (pronounced “Jacko-boyce”).

Below, an 1864-66 church census of families led to additional vital records (over the years, the church added most dates). Italicized information provided from research by Edward Michael Jackoboice (born in 1958 as the first of several g-g grandsons of Józef Jakóbowicz):

68. *Jacaboice [as handwritten and as misspelled; the family name was most often recorded as Jacoboice in many church and other official records from 1860 to 1906], Joseph (1824-1899) and Fransiska/Frances/Francisca Josephine (1833-1912) – Aemilia/Emma (baptized 1860, died 1861), Julia (1861-85), Edu(w)ard Joseph (1864-1935), Robert (1866-68), Mary (1869-69), Helena (1870–92), Clara (1872-1957), George (1874-92), Adolph (1877-78). [An 1881 book, History of Kent County, Michigan, refers to a 10th child, Otto, who lived sometime between 1859 and 1881.]*



Logged  
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Michael  
Jackoboice  
(Jackoboice)  
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## Member Profiles

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#### Basics

**User Name:** Jackoboice  
**Real Name:** Edward Michael Jackoboice  
**Location:** Las Cruces, NM, 88005, United States  
**Birthdate:** 1958  
**Occupation:** Journalist

#### Contact Info

**Contact Member:** [Send Message](#)  
**Homepage:** <http://raschgenealogy.com>  
**Favorite Link 1:** <http://www.maf.org>  
**Favorite Link 2:** <http://www.foi.org>  
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#### Bio

Historians described Józef Jakóbowicz of Kalisz, Poland as "a master craftsman" and as "a machinist par excellence." My great-great grandfather began training for a career as a machinist at age 16 in 1840. He made machinery in Kalisz until 1844. He then emigrated to Germany and worked as a machinist for eight years. In 1852, at age 28 with "the American dream" he voyaged the Atlantic and lived in New York City for 2.5 years. In 1854 he moved to Michigan, and by 1855 became the first Polish immigrant to settle in the logging town of Grand Rapids. Known as Joseph Jackoboice, he worked with iron to build machines that turned logs into furniture - in "The Furniture Capital of America."

By 1856 and until 1860, Joseph worked for a lumber company/machine shop and for a foundry/machine shop. Two historians recorded that he started his own business in 1860 (the first of seven succeeding shops named "Machine Shop" until 1880). Joseph manufactured saws and machines for riverside sawmills, furniture factories and others (in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin). Advertisements of the late 1800s describe some products: Steam Engines... Mill Work and General Wood Working Machinery... Band Saws... Saw Arbors... Sand Papering, Boring and Shaping Machines... Shingle Machinery... Excelsior Machines... Shafting and Pulleys a Specialty... and Fire Escapes. Joseph also built Table, Rip and Cut-off saws... and developed a lumber-recording device.

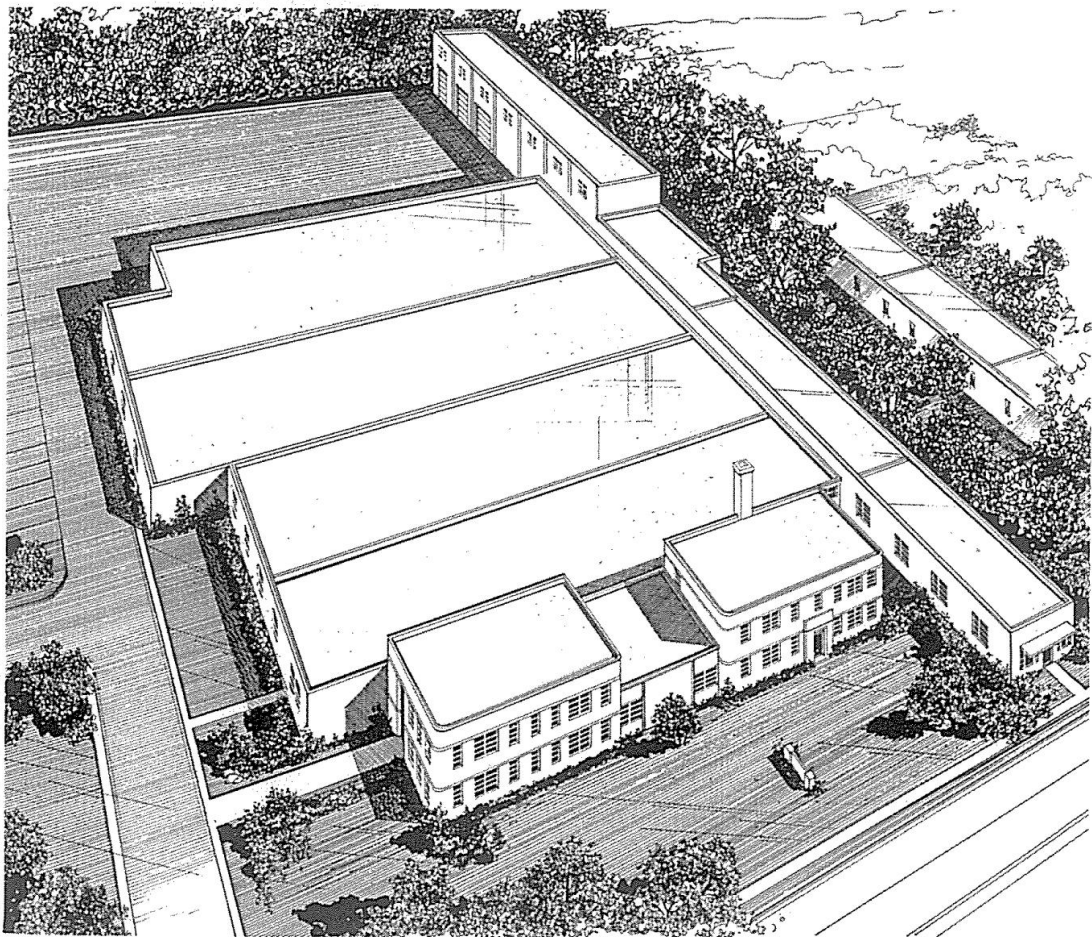
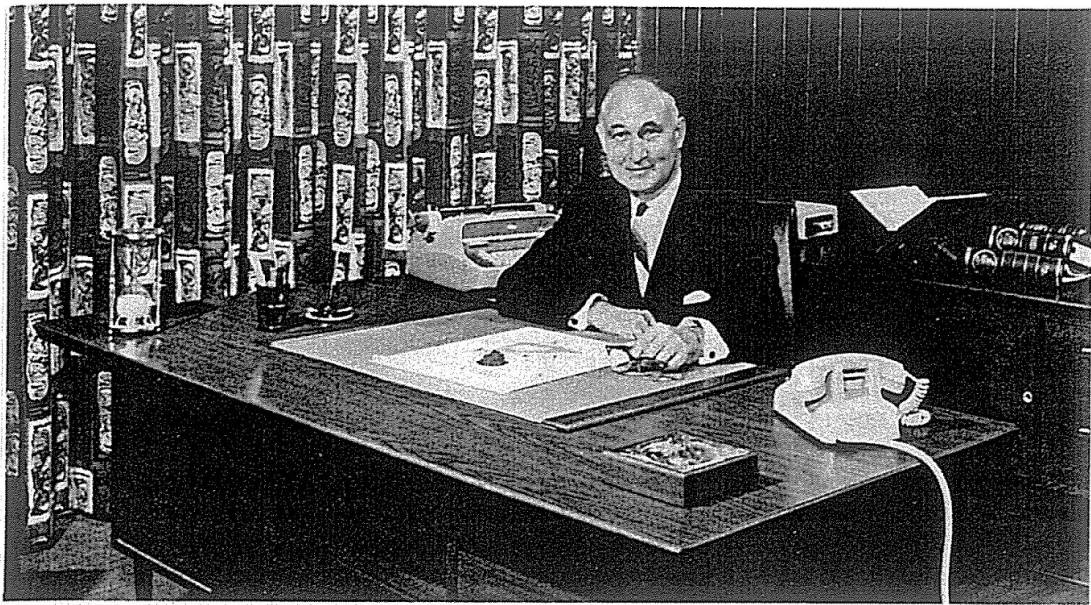
In 1880, on the west side of the Grand River, Joseph converted a large, two-story schoolhouse to a machine shop and founded the West Side Iron Works (at 31 S. Front Street). Joseph, son Edward Joseph and skilled employees became known for their big bandsaws, and for ornate fire escapes (some can still be seen aside downtown buildings). Joseph retired circa 1895, and at age 74 died at home of kidney failure in 1899.

Edward Joseph (1864-1935) married in 1906 and extended the family line and business. In the early 1900s, he manufactured woodworking machinery for car body builders (Wilson, Fisher and Briggs) during early mass production of the automobile. As drivers began demanding better road conditions, Edward began building road maintenance machinery. He sold the West Side Iron Works woodworking machinery business in 1921. But he kept the schoolhouse/machine shop and worked towards patenting a "Hydraulic scraper" (grader blade) - as the Edward J. Jackoboice Company (1922-31). This became the Monarch Road Machinery Company (1931 forward). Sons Edward William and George A. Jackoboice built the business and in 1954 moved into their new hydraulics factory (pumps, valves, cylinders, etc.). The company was aptly renamed Monarch Hydraulics, Inc., in 1983. Five generations of the family owned and operated these companies, selling products nationwide and exporting worldwide through 2007.

After the sale of Monarch, it became a subsidiary of Bucher Hydraulics and Bucher Industries in January, 2008.

On the Internet, one can see Jackoboice product patents with original illustrations and descriptions (16 patents from 1909 to 1974). Go to: [www.google.com/advanced patent search](http://www.google.com/advanced%20patent%20search). Find the "Inventor" line, type Jackoboice, click Google Search. And see Rasch Genealogy, [www.raschgenealogy.com](http://www.raschgenealogy.com) - Rasch/Gutkorn Family, Frances Rasch, Jackoboices.





George Jackoboice (top), the firm's current president and resident historian. Today, the Monarch Road Machinery Company is housed in this modern plant (bottom photograph) on east Michigan Street.



Considered by many to be the oldest town in Poland, enjoy this eagle's eye view of downtown Kalisz. It was first chronicled in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

The town/city is located 207 km west-southwest of Warsaw (a three to four hour drive).

The pronunciation of "Kalisz" is similar in Polish and German: Kah-leesh. The German spelling is Kalisch. The Russian and Yiddish spelling is Kalish.

The Jewish population of Poland dates from the 11<sup>th</sup> century....

In that era, according to the encyclopedia *Wikipedia*, "Jews were frequently massacred and exiled from various European countries. The persecution hit its first peak during the Crusades. In the First [German] Crusade (1096-99) flourishing communities on the Rhine and Danube were utterly destroyed. In the Second Crusade (1145-47) the Jews in France were subject to frequent massacres." Fleeing from Roman Catholic Crusaders, many Jews sought refuge in Poland. The large Jewish community of Kalisz was considered the oldest in Poland.

In the year 1264 the Duke of Krakow, Prince Boleslaw Pobozny V, formally recognized the Jewish community in Kalisz. He granted a charter and settlement rights. By the mid-1500s, about 80% of the world's Jews lived in Poland. In the year 1800, in Kalisz, 41% of the population were Jews (nearly every other person on the street). But 142 years later, this Jewish community *vanished* and *perished* during the Nazi Holocaust of World War II.

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# MONARCH

The Grand Rapids Press, Sunday, October 11, 1970

preserves  
the past



German-English Schoolhouse, 327 Front Ave. NW

## Old German School Escapes Toll of Times

By LIZ HYMAN

Ethnic meeting halls and buildings were a common sight last century in Grand Rapids. But as the various ethnic groups assimilated into the culture the need for such buildings declined. Time and the wrecking ball have also taken their toll.

One of the earliest such buildings, however, still remains—the German-English School Society school and meeting hall at 327 Front Ave. NW.

It was built in 1868 with classrooms on the main floor and the entertainment hall upstairs. The rear annex was a bar, which proved to be the school teacher's downfall. His frequent visits to the bar led to his dismissal.

In 1880, the building was bought by Joseph Jackoboice for use as a factory to turn out steam engines and saw mill machinery. One of the first four automo-

biles in Grand Rapids was built in this building by Edward J. Jackoboice, son of the company's founder.

Jackoboice built the first car in 1898 and even gave serious thought to going into the business.

The Jackoboice company in 1931 was incorporated as the Monarch Road Machinery Co., manufacturers of hydraulic control equipment. The factory operation was moved into a new building in 1955 and since that time the old building has been used for storage.

Thanks to Monarch, the old German-English school hall has been well preserved. The 102-year-old building is painted a deep red, perhaps a reflection on its past.

Suggestions for stories on historic sites, buildings and landmarks in Kent County may be called in to The Press weekdays at 459-1460.

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*Quality Machinery Since 1856—by Jackoboice*

**MONARCH ROAD MACHINERY COMPANY**

1363 Michigan Street, N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan • U.S.A., 49503

Telephone 458-1306, Area Code 616

## Early GRAND RAPIDS as seen by JOSEPH JACKOBOICE (1854/55 forward)

It all began upriver, near what would become the little village of Ada. In 1821, Mr. Rix Robinson "established a trading post at the mouth of the Thornapple river [where it joins the Grand River], as the agent of the American Fur Company. He was the first permanent white settler in Kent County." This information is from the centennial celebration book of 1926, *A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan*, compiled and edited by William J. Etten (published by A.P. Johnson Company). All quotations are from this book, unless noted. Rix Robinson's large gravestone/monument is located atop the Ada Cemetery hill (near Amway). As my family lived near Ada on the Thornapple River through school years and beyond (1969-1990), my grandmother Lucile is buried there too.

Back in the 1820s, down the Grand River at its grand rapids, a pioneer Baptist missionary and friends were the first white men to live with the Indians. On the river's west side, on December 1st, 1823, missionary Isaac McCoy "selected the site for a mission, just south of what is now the intersection of Bridge street and Front avenue." McCoy and helpers returned by 1826 to build and open the Thomas Mission (a.k.a. Slater Mission) with its log schoolhouse. This ministry continued until 1836, when it relocated to Prairieville.

The city's founder, "Louis Campau was the first permanent white settler in Grand Rapids. He came here in November, 1826, to trade with the Indians." In the spring of 1827 he built two log cabins on the east side of the river (at the foot of future Huron Street). After a government survey, in 1831, Louis Campau paid \$90 for 72 acres of land - which would develop into "downtown" with its sawmills and factories. Grand Rapids "became an incorporated village in 1838 and an incorporated city in 1850."

"A few German immigrants, largely from Westphalia, began to settle in and around Grand Rapids in 1840. More and more arrived, and the political troubles in the mother country in 1848 caused a tremendous outflow to America. Many German immigrants were mechanics, skilled workmen," and "others engaged in mercantile pursuits." By 1888, the book *Grand Rapids As It Is* reported a very large German population of about 7,000 (including "many of the most prominent citizens of the community")... about "1,000 Polanders"... and about 16,000 "Hollanders."

According to the abovementioned William Etten, an 1845 pamphlet listed these businesses and others: "Fifteen stores, two saw mills, three flour mills, two furnaces and machine shops, two pail factories... one woolen factory... salt works, plaster mill... several blacksmiths... two printing offices, four churches...." In 1850, "when the population was only 2,686, a business and professional summary was published which showed that there were then here twenty dry goods, two hardware, two clothing, four drug, two hat and cap and two book stores, twelve grocery and provision, ten boot and shoe stores, eight public houses and victualling establishments.... At that time there were also here two tanneries... five saw mills, between forty and fifty factories and mechanical shops of various kinds, three bakeries, two regular meat markets and about 100 carpenters and joiners. There were then seven churches, with eight resident ministers, twelve lawyers and six physicians. In 1855 there were upward of sixty stores of various kinds, besides thirty groceries, twelve physicians, and twenty-three lawyers.... The city was not altogether out of the woods, for on September 15, 1856, Simeon L. Baldwin shot a wild bear at Monroe avenue and Fulton street. And it was a big bruin, weighing 324 pounds."

For transportation, one could ride in a classic "Western" stagecoach. In Etten's book, there is an 1865 photo of a "Stage coach running between Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo, 1855 to 1868" (four horses).

"The Indians living in and about the rapids of Grand River were, in general, peaceful and contented. They were friendly towards the white men, providing the first comers with fish and game and with fruits and berries in season. Deer were plentiful, and they would save choice bits of venison for friends in the village. The Indians

also ate raccoon and muskrat flesh.... As the white settlers increased in numbers the Indians were more inclined to "swap" game, fish, fruits, berries, furs, dressed deerskins and moccasins for flour, salt, tobacco, ammunition, sugar and blankets, as well as for other articles they desired - not forgetting the firewater. The Pottawottamies were transferred from this section to their reservation in Indiana, and later the Chippewas went to northern Michigan. Separate bands of Ottawas were transported, at different times, beyond the Mississippi. The spring of 1859 was the first in the memory of white men when there were no Indian fishermen about the rapids or the islands of Grand River. Not a tent or wigwam was seen... and the Indian sturgeon trade at the rapids was ended.

"The first sawmill in Grand Rapids was built by Gideon H. Gordon at government expense, for the Thomas Indian Mission, in 1832. It was on Indian Mill Creek - a slow, small mill with the old-fashioned upright saw and it was capable of cutting 500 to 800 feet a day when there was sufficient flow of water in the creek to keep it in motion. The second sawmill was completed in the spring of 1834 along the east channel of the river, near where the Hotel Pantlind now stands.... Soon a dozen others were built, all run by water power, and one which could turn out 4,500 feet a day was considered of large capacity. About 1853 Powers, Ball & Co. built the first steam sawmill, with a circular saw. It was north of Leonard street.

"In pioneer days there were extensive tracts of pine timber along Rouge river [*sic*, Rogue River], Flat river, Maple river, Fish creek and the other affluents of Grand river... above Grand Rapids. Soon after the first sawmills began operating in Grand Rapids the river and its tributaries were utilized to float logs to this city and to other places where there were markets for them. It is claimed that the first lumber rafts down the river were sent out in 1838 by James M. Nelson. About the same time George W. Dickinson brought down a raft of at least 30,000 feet from Flat river.... For twenty years after the lumber trade began in this vicinity the only profitable avenue for shipments to other markets was by floatage to Grand Haven, where further shipment was made by lake vessels. The business grew so rapidly that in 1855 lumber shipments from the mouth of Grand River amounted to 45,000,000 feet.... An estimate of the total yield of logs from the forests adjacent to and above Grand Rapids, which found market over the waters of Grand river, would be more than three and a half billion feet. By the year 1893 almost all the available pine timber in this immediate section of the state had been cut down and sawed up, the industry gradually declining hereabouts, and logging and sawmill activities were removed to upper Michigan."

Starting in 1836, cabinet makers were the first to make furniture in the future "Furniture Capital of America." "Most of the furniture was made by hand until 1848, when Deacon Haldane built a shop on Canal (Monroe) street and installed a circular saw and lathe... and began making furniture by machinery. With a force of seven men he turned out tables, bedsteads, chairs and bureaus...." The future industrial giant William T. Powers arrived in 1847, and in 1848 he too produced furniture with machinery - a circular saw, a turning lathe and a boring machine. And it was only the beginning.... By 1923 there were 34 "Foundry and machine shop" establishments employing 998 people, many building woodworking machines for the furniture industry.

German-speaking machinist Józef Jakóbowicz, 31, of Kalisz, Poland, was the first Polish immigrant *to settle in the city* of Grand Rapids, by 1855. "Joseph" soon modified his surname: Jacob-o[w]ice. In 1858 he married Prussian immigrant Frances Rasch. She and a brother would lodge sawmill workers and river "log runners" in the Rasch House, and later in the Rasch/Clarendon/Charlevoix Hotel (site of future Hotel Rowe). Joseph "Jacoboice" was an educated, skilled machinist for 55 years. After working for others, in 1860 on Mill Street he opened his first of seven, successive foundry/machine shops. Joseph built machines for sawmills, furniture companies and others. He manufactured steam engines... saw arbors... bandsaws, table, rip and cut-off saws... "boring, shaping and sandpapering machines"... shingle machines... excelsior machines... and over 100 iron fire escapes. In 1880 Joseph Jackoboice founded the West Side Iron Works (details, photos, images at [www.VintageMachinery.org](http://www.VintageMachinery.org)). This family business was located a block south of Bridge Street at 31 S. Front, in a building which stood from 1866 to 1982. This old, red, German-English Schoolhouse was *on or near* the grounds of the pioneer Baptist mission for the Indians. One can walk the grass grounds today and see historical markers - at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Museum. A Jackoboice family marker is located at the northwest corner of the Ford gravesite fence.



## JOSEPH JACKOBOICE (Jakóbowicz) and the WEST SIDE IRON WORKS

This profile is from the 1881 book, *History of Kent County, Michigan*, by M.A. Leeson (published by Chas. C. Chapman & Co., Chicago; pp. 1050-51): “Joseph Jackoboice, proprietor West Side Iron Works, was born in Poland, March 16, 1824. He was reared and educated in his native land, and when 16 years of age learned the machinist’s trade at Kalisch [*Kalisz*], where he worked four years. He then emigrated to Germany, where he was employed at his trade until 1852, when he located at New York city [*City*]. After stopping there two and a half years, he came to Grand Rapids (in 1855), and was employed by Elihu Smith and Ball & Butterworth till 1860. He then went into business for himself, and has succeeded in making a success of his trade. A sketch of his business will be found in another chapter. Mr. Jackoboice is a member of the Masonic Fraternity, the Knights of Honor and the National Greenback party. He was married in 1860 [*actually 1858*] to Frances Rasch, a native of Prussia. Of the 10 children born to this union, five survive – Julia, Eddie, Helen, Clara and George. Emma, Mary, Otto and two infants are deceased.” *EMJ note: Joseph, in GR, may have made “Quality Machinery Since 1855.”*



The abovementioned book provides this 1881 sketch of Joseph’s business, from another chapter: “*The West-Side Iron Works*, with Joseph Jackoboice proprietor, were established in 1860, by William A. Berkey, on Canal street [*first established on east side of Grand River*]. The works were carried on there some eight years, until in 1870, when they were moved into William T. Powers’ shop. In 1880, [*Joseph*] purchased the Grand Rapids Savings Bank building, the present shop, at a cost of \$10,000. The building is 40 x 92 feet, two stories high, all of which is occupied by the works. All kinds of steam engines, mill work, and general wood working machinery are manufactured. A specialty is made of “Jackoboice’s band saw.” Sales average about \$24,000 annually. Product is sold mostly in Michigan. Six men are employed in the business.” *E.M.J. notes: This business sketch and others contain some inaccuracies. The machine shop building (originally a schoolhouse and then possibly a bank) was transferred to Joseph free of charge. He likely bought Mr. Berkey’s 1860-vintage equipment, etc., for \$10,000. Pictured above, seated in back, Joseph’s son Edward Joseph (5’6” tall) continued the business.*

## Image Detail

### Details

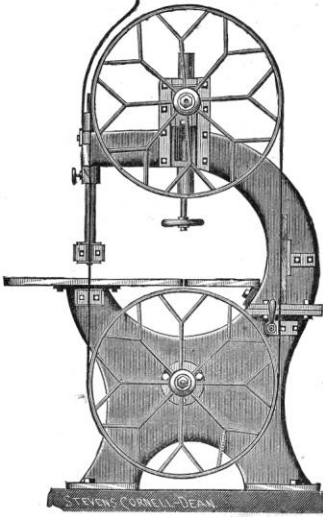
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of Improved  
Band Saws

**Source:** "The Michigan  
Artisan" Vol.  
8, No. 8. Feb.  
10, 1888. Pg.  
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### Image

JOSEPH JACKOBOICE,  
Manufacturer of Improved  
**BAND SAWS**  
AND GENERAL WOOD-WORKING MACHINERY.



OFFICE AND WORKS  
31 and 33 South Front St.  
**GRAND  
RAPIDS,  
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18" We manufacture the best upright  
Excelsior machine in the market.  
We have a second-hand 40 inch re-  
saw in good repair, which we will sell at a  
bargain.  
Send for Illustrated Circular and Prices.

STEVENS CORNELL-DEAN



Casting label from a restored band saw

## **INTRODUCTION**

During family get-togethers for birthdays, holidays, anniversaries and other celebrations, one hears a lot about family history. And sometimes one hears astonishing comments....

During my youth in Grand Rapids (1958-1977), I was most astonished when older relatives *occasionally* wondered out loud whether we might actually be Jewish. Such comments were brief, and no one ever explained why or how they had gained such an impression. So I wondered too, for a while. Then busy decades of life intervened until, in 2008 in New Mexico, I happened to meet an Israeli saleslady at the local shopping mall. As there are many Polish Jews in Israel, Amber identified our original surname suffix "owicz" as *very* Jewish (the suffix translates as "son of"). This sparked research into family/business history and surname development. The first thing I learned? Our various surname variant *root* spellings *all* translate as "Jacob."

There is only one way to describe several years of extensive, intensive research into family/business history and surname development: "one fascinating discovery after another." Above all, one might be surprised to learn that in reality, a "Jackoboice" is actually a Jakóbowicz. Fortunately, it is easier to say "Jacko-boyce" than it is to pronounce our original Polish surname: "Yah-koob-**o**-vitch."

The story began in Poland with the birth of Józef Jakóbowicz on March 16, 1824, *in or near* the old city of Kalisz. From age 16 to 20 in Kalisz, Józef trained and worked as a machinist (making machinery). He then emigrated and worked as a machinist in Germany from 1844 to 1852. And then Joseph traveled the path of adventure to "the American dream." He voyaged the Atlantic Ocean... and lived in New York City for 2.5 years. Through the years, his surname developed to Jakobowics (1844-58), Jacobowicz (1858), Jacoboice (1859-72) and Jackoboice (1873 forward).

Sources show that Joseph arrived in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1854 and was first employed on a rural farm - likely repairing mowing and threshing machines. He settled in the logging town of Grand Rapids by 1855. He first worked for Elihu Smith's lumber company/machine shop, and then for the Ball & Butterworth/Grand Rapids Iron Works foundry/machine shop. Two historians wrote that Joseph opened his own business in 1860. This was the first of his seven "Machine Shops" in the downtown area - on both sides of the Grand River from the Bridge Street area south to the Pearl Street area. He worked under the name spellings J. Jacoboice and J. Jackoboice. Ultimately, in 1880, he founded the West Side Iron Works and manufactured saws and other machines for sawmills, furniture factories and others in "The Furniture Capital of America." Joseph was also known for building steam engines and ornate fire escapes.

Working 55 years, Joseph died of kidney failure in 1899. He established a family business that grew to become the Monarch Road Machinery Company (1931), a.k.a. Monarch Hydraulics, Inc. (1983). This longtime business eventually employed 240 workers. Nationwide sales and worldwide exports generated tens of millions in annual sales. The family business endured through the year 2007. Sold, it became a subsidiary of Bucher Hydraulics and Bucher Industries.

In 2008, at the age of 50, I commenced research into family history and family business history - to put it on paper for posterity. I expected to write a five to ten page report, but it continued growing due to new research avenues and discoveries. As of 2016, the "report" could be called a book. This abridged version contains highlights and essays from the book.

This fascinating research also developed into articles for the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan and its very informative *Polish Eaglet* magazine (Summer 2014 issue)... and for the vintage machinery website at [www.VintageMachinery.org](http://www.VintageMachinery.org) (type Jackoboice into the Search box to see "Photos" and "Images" too).

*Credit* to a late uncle and co-researcher. My grandfather's brother, George A. Jackoboice (1908-1987), toured Poland seeking Joseph's birth record and its ancestral history. His keen interest was contagious – and I often wish he was still here to compare notes and enjoy so many research discoveries. While president of the Monarch Road Machinery Company, a.k.a. Monarch Hydraulics, for over 50 years, George published family business history. He had an impressive personal library, he was colorfully articulate, and he was well deserving of the title "Family Historian." Sadly, he died just prior to the age of the Internet. As a fellow journalism graduate and history enthusiast, he would have enjoyed this powerful research tool - and its links to records and publications.

Source materials regarding our immigrant ancestor Józef Jakóbowicz (Joseph Jackoboice) are surprisingly numerous. There are 1800s and 1900s history books... various articles... county records... church records... public library records... federal census records for 1860, 1870, 1880... various other records and notes... city directories for 1856, 1859-60 and 1865 forward... and, finally, *three* obituaries. From these sources and others (including the massive database of Ancestry.com), I've prepared the abovementioned "book" in MS Word and paper formats. The book includes color and black & white photos, maps, illustrations, charts, articles, lists, statistics, book reviews, biographical profiles, name studies, websites' highlights and more. Naturally, I have a "priceless" collection of old and new research notes and papers – including some old "primary source" papers. Maybe someday these will settle in the Grand Rapids Public Library's archives.

Let's give a hearty round of applause to the library and its staff. I've enjoyed phone and e-mail assistance from very helpful employees – including a former history teacher at my high school (Forest Hills Central, 1973-77). For any inquiries, phone the library at (616) 988-5400 and ask for the Local History Department (or e-mail: localhis@grpl.org). The first 15 minutes (sometimes more) of research assistance is free, then \$30 per hour.

Before sharing George Jackoboice's comments regarding our immigrant ancestor, it is helpful to know that George died before discovery of records showing the actual spelling of Joseph's Polish name: Józef Jakóbowicz. The diacritical Polish "ó" is pronounced "oo" and spelled "u" as in "Jakubowicz" - the way journalists in the early 1900s (and later historians) misspelled the family's original surname. Naturally, this is the way George spelled the surname too - in the following collection of quotes from his pen (1967) and interviews (1974). George (in photo below, circa 1970s) was always curious about our immigrant ancestor....



*The West Side Iron Works machine shop (1880-1921) became the Edward J. Jackoboice Company (1922-1931). The family business renamed the old school building as the (first) Monarch Road Machinery Company (1931-54).*

**George commented, “Joseph Jackoboice, according to the unconfirmed records, was born in Kalisz, Poland... it’s hard to get any verification because the records have been in such disarray, some of them were bombed out in World War Two....” Joseph “left nothing in a manner of identification with his parents or family.” “I personally have spent a considerable amount of money in several trips to the old country to determine why he left. Although he was a very, very successful man in business and although he had the health and the finances and the time to travel, he never did so (“... he never returned to his native land...”). He always remained in Grand Rapids, Michigan and frankly... there is very little that can be found, showing correspondence between this country and his native land. There are no letters, there is no documentation, why he came, nobody knows. He rarely ever spoke of it. And it’s kind of a fascinating and very intriguing mystery....” [Regarding the family name], “The name in its original spelling (Jakubowicz) is a very well known name in Poland.” The modified, ultimate surname spelling Jackoboice “may have been Anglicized or corrupted in spelling from (the surname of) Jakubowicz.” George added, “... in essence the name was Anglicized [made English in form or character] from probably phonetic reasons. But it was not shortened. Why he did this, nobody seems to know.”**

Decades later, research discoveries provide compelling answers. I share these discoveries in detail in a book and its abridged version. Briefly, an unknown number of Poles and *many* Polish Jews have used the surname spelling variants Jakóbowicz, Jakobowicz and Jakubowicz. The original patronymic root was “Jakób.” The suffix “owicz” was historically common in Jewish family names. All three surname variants translate as “son of Jacob.”

Joseph married a Roman Catholic immigrant, Frances Josephine Rasch, in 1858 (in Grand Rapids). Frances was born November 26, 1833 in Olbersdorf, Silesia, Prussia (near present day Zabkowice Slaskie, Poland). She came to America in 1854, and arrived in Grand Rapids in 1857. With a brother (or brothers) she helped establish the “Rasch House” hostelry and the Rasch Hotel (later the Clarendon). In the 1870 Federal Census, Joseph “Jacoboice” was listed as a Machinist, and Frances as “Keeping House.” Joseph lived to age 74 in 1899, and Frances to age 78 in 1912. Both were survived by two of 10 children: Clara and Edward Joseph Jackoboice.

One can view an online “family tree” for more information and numerous photos (descendants too) at the website: [raschgenealogy.com](http://raschgenealogy.com). Click on Rasch Genealogy, see Rasch/Gutkorn Family – and Jackoboices.

Edward Joseph Jackoboice (1864-1935), apparently at age 15, started working as an apprentice to his father. He became another master craftsman and an inventor. For fun, he built a steam-powered boat named *The Comet* for the Grand River. In 1897 he built a steam-powered automobile and drove it to Detroit in 1898 - a six-day roundtrip on horse and wagon roads which likely sparked an inclination to build road maintenance machinery.

But at the turn of the century and beyond, the West Side Iron Works continued manufacturing woodworking machinery for furniture companies and others. See one of these products at the Grand Rapids Public Museum (at west end of the Pearl Street Bridge). There is a vintage WSIW bandsaw on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor in the “Furniture City” section. Museum records describe the “Band Saw” as a “Machine used to cut wood. Band saws replaced buzz saws in furniture factories because they [buzz saws] cut less perfectly.... Wheels are open framework within a rubber layer to cushion and hold saw.... Materials: Iron, Rubber, Steel.... Dimensions: Height 84”, Width 32”, Length 48”.” From the east window of the “Line Drive” exhibit one can see the bandsaw’s casting label aside the frame (raised lettering recorded by the museum: “West Side Iron Works... Grand Rapids, Mich.... Made in U.S.A.”). This bandsaw is said to be “as old as 1880.” But a clue indicates that it was made between 1898-1921: a “J & G” triangular label likely representing the “Jackoboice & Gleason” partnership. The 1898 city directory is the first to feature this listing: “West Side Iron Works (Edward J. Jackoboice, Robert M. Gleason), Manufacturers of Wood Working Machinery, 31-33 S Front, Tel 1432.” Mr. Gleason remained a partner in the company until at least 1908, when he was recorded as co-filer to patent a Sand-belt Machine. The museum’s WSIW bandsaw could have been the 205<sup>th</sup> produced (indicated by a metal tag with number “205”). Eventual owner Carl Forslund

Jr. of the Forslund Brothers Company furniture factory (250 Ionia SW) gifted the bandsaw to the museum, which salvaged and acquired it in 1988 (for Permanent Collection, Accession #1987.113.40). Accessories include a bandsaw rack and saw blades (Accession #1987.113.5), and bandsaw patterns with wooden samples (Accession #203200.24). For the current location of these accessories, contact the Collections Curator (last known phone: (616) 446-5813). Stored in the museum warehouse at 52 Jefferson: a belt-drive bandsaw of 1875-1920 vintage (wood frame, iron, 45" high; Accession #159844), maybe made by the West Side Iron Works.

In the early 1900s, during early mass production of the gasoline-powered automobile, Edward Joseph built woodworking machinery for car body builders (Wilson, Fisher and Briggs). As more Model Ts bounced along dirt and gravel roads, the public began demanding better road conditions. To smooth the ride, Edward transitioned to the manufacture of road maintenance machines. He sold the West Side Iron Works woodworking machinery business in 1921 (to a Chicago company). But he kept his old schoolhouse/machine shop, worked towards patenting a "Hydraulic scraper" (grading blade), and renamed the business as the Edward J. Jackoboice Company (1922-31). This became the Monarch Road Machinery Company from 1931 forward.

Edward Joseph married late, at 41, to Helen Hake in 1906. Their family home was at 136 Mt. Vernon Avenue NW at Allen Street (on the southeast corner). The house was demolished for US-131 highway construction in 1962. Edward Joseph died in 1935, serving as the bridge between the two eras of the family business - from woodworking machinery to road machinery/hydraulics. His dynamic sons, Edward William (1907-80) and George A. Jackoboice (1908-87) became leaders in the development, manufacture and marketing of hydraulic products.

Through World War II and later, demand for hydraulic products grew. And Monarch grew into a new factory and office at 1363 Michigan Street NE, in 1954. Through the years, the company's pumps, valves and cylinders powered grading blades, snowplows, tailgates, and various lifts and ladders. George A. Jackoboice described the wide range of product applications: "Monarch pumps have been used on Tournament of Roses parade floats, on animation devices at Disneyland, and to power the lift on the van in the popular Ironside television series. The Swedish Army uses Monarch pumps on bullet traps, a device to catch large spent projectiles so they can be used again, and as part of the control system on drone planes used as targets by fighter pilots."

Did old Joseph ever imagine that his family business would extend... back home to Europe? That it would need assembly workers in the Netherlands and professional salesmen in Germany? Let's go back to the beginning - and observe the journey of a man and his surname.



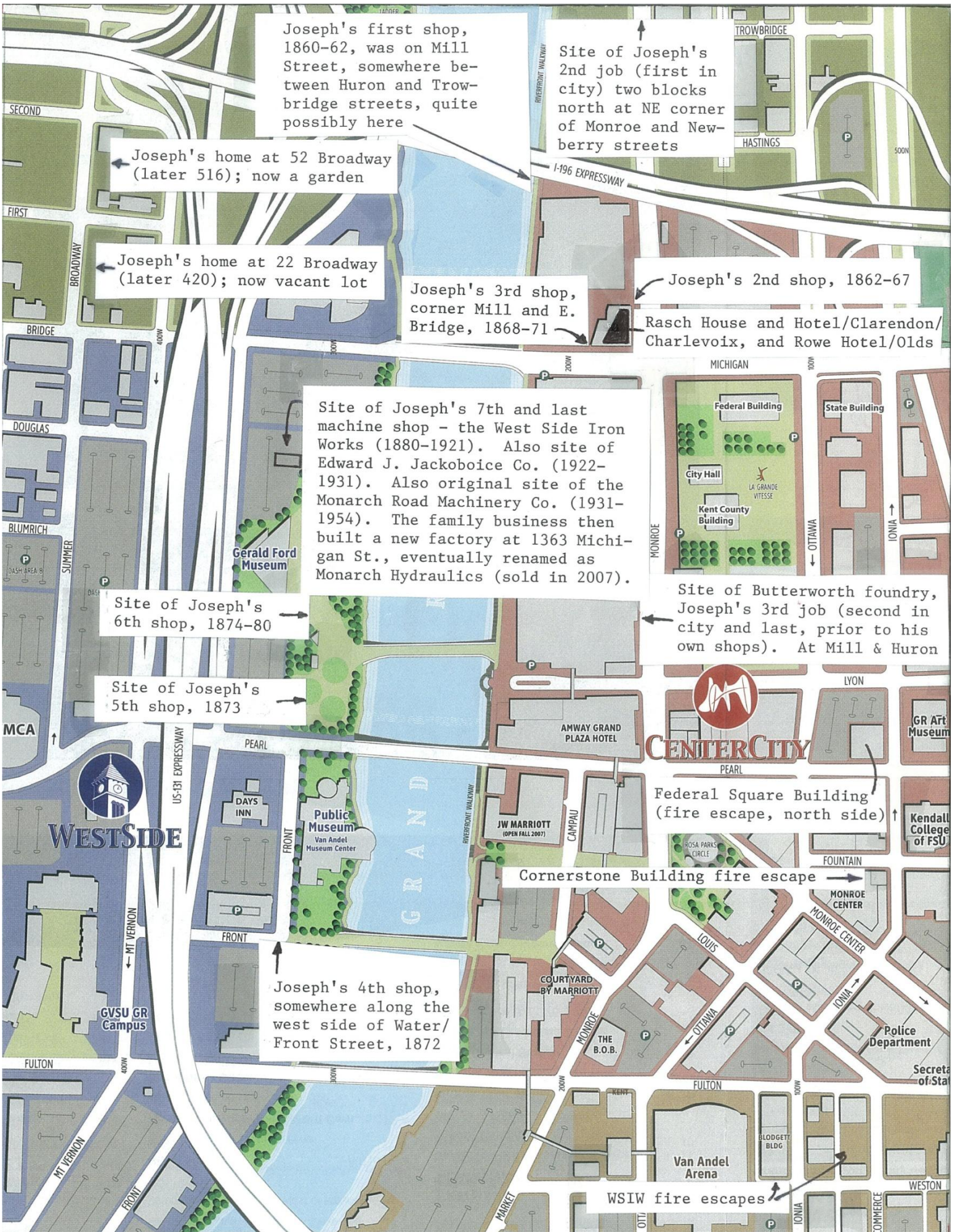




This "Line Drive" bandsaw, 8' tall, is one of many manufactured by the West Side Iron Works (1880-1921) of Grand Rapids, Michigan. This photo was taken in Louisiana circa 1995, when Mr. Dennis Reid purchased the bandsaw for \$650. He reported on restoration in 2007. Fully functional, this is one of several surviving WSIW bandsaws featured on the Internet. For more photos, go to: [www.VintageMachinery.org](http://www.VintageMachinery.org). Find the Search box and type: West Side Iron Works (Joseph Jackboice). See this entry again... and click on it. One first sees company "History." Then click on Photo Index (# of bandsaws) for photo options... and click on Images (#) to see bandsaw advertisements and family/business photos... and click on Patents (only one featured here).

Contacted via e-mail in 2012, machinist Dennis Reid shared more about the old bandsaw pictured above: "Oddly enough, the machine really didn't need that much done to it except cleaning.... It has a new, 3hp electric motor on it.... That machine is rock solid and works so well.... I can stand up a nickel on the table, start the saw and it does not shake, vibrate or roll.... Zero vibration, smooth as silk cutting, so much room to maneuver around with the large throat... and once those 36" wheels are up to speed, the momentum is so great, they keep turning for quite a while.... I built a Sam Maloof replica rocking chair for my wife using this saw to cut out the rockers without any problem. An absolutely awesome machine and the showpiece of my shop.... They were the top of their class and still are, and in this day and age can't be touched.... I can assure you of one thing... your family built *super* equipment that lasts and lasts. I just don't believe that any manufacturer comes close to the quality. This is the best money can buy...."





Joseph's first shop, 1860-62, was on Mill Street, somewhere between Huron and Trowbridge streets, quite possibly here

Site of Joseph's 2nd job (first in city) two blocks north at NE corner of Monroe and Newberry streets

Joseph's home at 52 Broadway (later 516); now a garden

Joseph's home at 22 Broadway (later 420); now vacant lot

Joseph's 3rd shop, corner Mill and E. Bridge, 1868-71

Joseph's 2nd shop, 1862-67

Rasch House and Hotel/Clarendon/Charlevoix, and Rowe Hotel/Olds

Site of Joseph's 7th and last machine shop - the West Side Iron Works (1880-1921). Also site of Edward J. Jackoboice Co. (1922-1931). Also original site of the Monarch Road Machinery Co. (1931-1954). The family business then built a new factory at 1363 Michigan St., eventually renamed as Monarch Hydraulics (sold in 2007).

Site of Joseph's 6th shop, 1874-80

Site of Butterworth foundry, Joseph's 3rd job (second in city and last, prior to his own shops). At Mill & Huron

Site of Joseph's 5th shop, 1873

**CENTERCITY**

Federal Square Building (fire escape, north side)

Cornerstone Building fire escape

Joseph's 4th shop, somewhere along the west side of Water/Front Street, 1872

WSIW fire escapes



GVSU GR Campus

Public Museum  
Van Andel Museum Center

ROSA PARKS CIRCLE

Van Andel Arena

Secret of State



## JACKOBOICE FAMILY and FAMILY BUSINESS HISTORY

By Edward Michael (Mike) Jackoboice (Jakóbowicz) – from research 2008-2016

In pioneer days, Grand Rapids was “a frontier town of native Americans, French Canadians, and Irish and German immigrants,” according to Polish historian Eduard A. Skendzel. The population numbered 2,686 by 1850. From 1850 to 1857, the first Polish immigrants found a city of four square miles within the limits of Leonard, Wealthy, Straight/Alpine, and Eastern Avenue.

Long considered the first Polish immigrant *to settle in the city* (by 1855), Józef Jakóbowicz “was one of the oldest settlers upon the West Side, and a pioneer of the Polish citizens.” The *Evening Press* obituary of 2/11/1899 also stated that he was “one of the earliest of the great army of Polish emigrants to come to this part of Michigan.” He was a founding member of Polish National Alliance (PNA) Lodge 57 (established 1878-86). And he was an honorary member of the Polish National Aid Society of Grand Rapids.

An experienced machinist, Józef worked with iron to build machines and a machinery business. Historians described him as “a master craftsman” and as “a machinist *par excellence*.”

Józef Jakóbowicz pronounced his surname the way most journalists, historians and others have misspelled it: “Jakubowicz.” Most people knew him as Joseph and by his surname modifications Jacoboice (1859-72) and Jackoboice (1873-forward). The original suffix “owicz” transitioned to the English and Polish “owice.” Joseph dropped the silent English “w” for “o-ice,” eventually pronounced “oyce” as in the final surname pronunciation “Jacko-boyce.”

Joseph’s company, the West Side Iron Works, manufactured “all kinds of steam engines, mill work [*sawmill machinery*], and general wood working machinery” (*History of Kent County, Michigan*, 1881). According to the *Grand Rapids Democrat* newspaper of 2/10/1899, “Mr. Jackoboice was the sole owner of the West Side Iron Works, had a half interest in the Clarendon hotel, and owned considerable real estate. He was widely known among the business men of the city and had an enviable reputation for business honor, honesty and reliability.” This obituary also described him as “one of the representative Polish citizens of the city,” with the headline “Honest and Industrious... a Wealthy Polish Citizen is Dead.”

During his busy life, Joseph built the foundation for a continuing family business and a modern factory exporting worldwide: the Monarch Road Machinery Company (a.k.a. Monarch Hydraulics) of Grand Rapids (established 1931). The family’s hydraulic pumps and cylinders would power snowplows, grading blades, tailgates and a variety of lifts and ladders. The business slogan: *Quality Machinery Since 1856 – by Jackoboice*

Author’s brief notes: From 1958 into the 1960s, my father Edward James worked in the schoolhouse-turned-machine shop where his father Edward William, grandfather Edward Joseph and great grandfather Joseph worked for decades. I remember the old building’s aroma of vintage wood and industry. Revived as the West Side Iron Works, the shop’s last product was a metal, accordion-like, street barricade (a.k.a. “road barrier”). Its production eventually moved into the new Monarch hydraulics factory, where my brother Tim and I worked at times. During my school and college years (1968-1981), I mowed the lawn and assembled pumps and barricades. Forefathers and cousins ran the business. I retired in 1981 as a journalist en route to life in Alaska, Chile and New Mexico.

As the last Jackoboice to labor for the West Side Iron Works, I may be the last to research the story of its founder...

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—AND—  
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Turning and General Job Work  
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All Stock Kilm Dried.

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### Steam Engines, Mill Work and General Wood Working Machinery

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Office and Shop, Front Street.

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North of Pearl St. Bridge. }

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

## **BORN to MOVE: from POLAND to GERMANY to AMERICA**

The family's founding father, Józef Jakóbowicz (a.k.a. Joseph Jackoboice) was born March 16, 1824 *in or near* the old city of Kalisz in the Russian Partition of Poland (in his words, "Russian Poland"). Historian M.A. Leeson recorded that Joseph, from age 16 to 20, trained and worked as a machinist in Kalisz [*known for its metal, lumber and wood products*]. In 1844 he moved to Germany and worked as a machinist for eight years. At age 28, fluent in Polish and German and "with a party of his countrymen," he voyaged the Atlantic Ocean to America. Joseph "came to New York in 1852" – three years prior to the first immigration center (Castle Garden) and 40 years prior to the Ellis Island facility. He lived in bustling New York City for "two and a half years."

Where did Joseph live in New York City, as he began living "the American dream"? Because he was learning conversational English, his fluency in Polish and German provides clues to his place of residence. Many immigrants sought linguistic comfort in "ethnic enclaves." "Polish American communities in New York," according to the Internet encyclopedia *Wikipedia*, "include Greenpoint, Brooklyn ("Little Poland"), North Williamsburg, Brooklyn, Maspeth, Queens, and Ridgewood, Queens around Fresh Pond Road & Forest Avenue."

As Joseph lived in Germany from 1844 to 1852, someone there might have provided German contacts in New York City – even places to live and work. As a German-speaking Pole, he could have lived amongst the approximately one million Germans immigrating to and through New York in the 1850s. *Wikipedia* notes that, "By 1855 New York had the third largest German population of any city in the world, outranked only by Berlin and Vienna." Most moved into "Little Germany," a "now-defunct" neighborhood on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. It spread from the 11<sup>th</sup> Ward to the 10<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> wards. Today, the only remaining German enclave is at Yorkville, Manhattan.

Where did Joseph work in New York City? By 1850, New York had become the industrial "Empire State." Its factories and machines manufactured approximately 20% of the nation's products. The economy was strong and there were job opportunities. According to *Wikipedia*, "Little Germany" in Manhattan had "a large number of factories and small workshops." Joseph would have been inclined to work in a foundry/machine shop, making machinery (possibly his eventual specialties: steam engines, fire escapes, sawmill and woodworking machinery). And he would have saved his income for future travel and settlement.

History book and newspaper accounts show that Joseph departed New York City in 1854 (age 30). He would have wanted to settle where he could work as a machinist, and generate income to raise a family. Someone may have suggested Michigan and the German community in the logging town at the Grand River rapids. There were iron foundries and machine shops making machinery for sawmills and furniture factories. For many years, sawmills lined the riverbank from the East Bridge Street area south to Lyon Street. The title of one book tells the city's story: *The City Built on Wood: a History of the Furniture Industry in Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1850-1950*.

How did Joseph travel from New York City to Grand Rapids? For many Poles and other immigrants there were popular, commonly used methods and routes.

## **POPULAR IMMIGRATION ROUTES from NEW YORK to GRAND RAPIDS circa 1854**

1. The Erie Canal, completed in 1825, created "a new, faster route for travelers from New York to Michigan via the canal and the Great Lakes" (according to an exhibit at the Grand Rapids Public Museum). By the mid-1840s, one could travel from New York City to Grand Rapids in 15 days (via the Hudson River, Erie Canal and steamer

around the Great Lakes to Chicago and Grand Haven). By 1855, four steamboats carried freight and passengers from Grand Haven upstream to Grand Rapids.

2. One could enjoy steamboat service across Lake Erie and stop at Detroit. From there one could travel west by foot, horse, wagon, stagecoach or train. Taking the often muddy Territorial Road through Ann Arbor, Jackson and Marshall, one could turn north via Battle Creek or Kalamazoo on stage routes to Grand Rapids. As of 1846, one could ride the Michigan Central Railroad as far as Kalamazoo – in a "4-wheel cart" with 23 other passengers.

3. One could travel to Jackson and join others boating down the Grand River to "the Rapids."

4. Another option was the overland "northern route," portions of which *roughly* traced the path of today's I-96. The old route was described in John Ball's autobiography, *Born to Wander*. Detroit to Kensington... then to Williams on the Shiawassee River... then to Scots on the Looking Glass River... then Ionia... Lowell... Ada... Grand Rapids. By 1852 there was stage service from Detroit to Lansing, by 1856 as far as Ionia.

### **JOSEPH JAKOBOWICS: ARRIVAL, WORK, NAMES and HOMES**

Various historical sources (mainly books, articles) state that Józef Jakóbowicz (a.k.a. Joseph Jakubowicz, Jackoboice) arrived in Grand Rapids in 1853, 1854 or 1855. Most sources state arrival in 1854 or 1855. Consider that an 1852 arrival in New York, plus 2.5 years in New York City, means Joseph arrived in Grand Rapids in 1854 or later. Three obituaries recorded arrival in 1854 (including the *Grand Rapids Herald* (2/10/1899), noting Joseph as "a pioneer resident...").

Joseph lived outside the city prior to settling in the city. His only surviving daughter Clara wrote that he "often spoke of his first job was working on O'Brien's farm" (two miles west of the city, out O'Brien Road). It is likely that Joseph worked at this hay and wheat farm during the fall harvest of 1854 and through the end of the year. Picture him doing farm chores and, as a machinist, repairing local mowing and threshing machines (a skill he advertised in later years).

Joseph "... came to Grand Rapids in 1855" (as recorded by historian M.A. Leeson in his book, *History of Kent County, Michigan*, published by Chas. C. Chapman & Co., Chicago, 1881; pp. 1050-51). Between 1855/56 and 1860, Joseph first worked as a machinist for lumber dealer and machine shop owner Elihu Smith (near the Grand River at the northeast corner of Canal/Monroe & Newberry St.). He then worked for Ball & Butterworth/Grand Rapids Iron Works (eventual site of the Civic Auditorium/DeVos Hall). According to historian Leeson, Joseph "then went into business for himself..." And he built machines to turn logs into furniture as Grand Rapids grew to become "The Furniture Capital of America."

The earliest known, extant document showing Joseph's presence in the city is an 1858 entry in a marriage record book. Marrying a Roman Catholic, Prussian immigrant at German-speaking St. Mary's Church, Joseph signed the record with his Germanic surname spelling "Jakobowics."

In the book, *Polish Surnames: Origins and Meanings* (Third Edition, 2012), author William F. Hoffman noted, "Once a Pole reached America he often found it expedient to let his name be spelled the way it sounded according to English phonetic values."

Józef Jakóbowicz first translated his Polish name to the Germanic "Joseph Jakobowics." He always maintained the surname root with variant spellings. As for the suffix, note the phonetic transition to "o-wice" minus the silent, English "w." Thus "o-ice" in "Jacob-o-ice." From 1859 to 1870, others heard Joseph's pronunciation of "o-ice" as "o-iss" and "o-eese" and spelled the suffix as -oiss, -oies, -ies, -oise and -oice. A shift



from “o-ice” to the single syllable “oice” (pronounced “oyce”) and an added “k” led to “Jackob-oice” and the easier “Jacko-boice.”

Where did Joseph and wife Frances (Rasch) raise their family? The only known residence addresses are just north of Bridge Street: 22 (later 420) Broadway NW (possibly 1858-59, definitely from 1860-1873/74)... and 52 (later 516) Broadway (from 1874 through Joseph’s death from “Bright’s Disease” at age 74 in 1899). In the year 2012, the 22/420 Broadway site was a vacant lot; the 52/516 Broadway site was a flower garden. Eight of Joseph’s ten children died young. The only surviving son, Edward Joseph Jackoboice, married in 1906 and fathered more sons and daughters. And so began the American line of an old Polish family.

## THE FIRST POLISH IMMIGRANTS in GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

### Who was first *to arrive*? Who was first *to live* in the city? Who was first *to settle*?

In the September 1982 issue of *The Eaglet*, historian Eduard Adam Skendzel expressed curiosity: “... who really was the first Polander to settle within the corporate limits of that small frontier outpost that was Grand Rapids in the 1850s? It has been said heretofore that Joseph Jakubowicz... was the first Polander in the city. Some sources fix his arrival as 1855, others as 1854, and still others as 1853. He came here from New York City where he initially settled briefly upon his arrival from Germany and Kalisz, Poland.... Given the lack of primary documentation attesting to the date of Joseph Jackoboice’s arrival, this issue of who was the first Polander in Grand Rapids itself is deserving of in-depth research. There are sources which assert that Andrew Puposkey (Popowski, Poposki) merits this primacy. He allegedly arrived in the city in 1850 or, at least, in 1852. He, too, was an artisan – a cabinetmaker who eventually sold his shop.... And then there was Jacob Pogodzinski, another craftsman and cabinetmaker. His date of arrival in Grand Rapids warrants further research since census records claim it to have been 1853. His descendants are attempting to verify this date in primary sources. It is for this reason that the question as to who was the first Polander to live in Grand Rapids is a matter presently in doubt and an issue demanding further extensive research by genealogists and ethnic historians.”

Extensive research reveals that there are actually three distinct primacy issues:

1. If we wish to determine the first Pole to arrive in the city, we see that Andrew Puposkey could have been first: “in 1850, or, at least, in 1852.” Another candidate was Julian John Maciejewski, a priest who arrived in the area in September 1852 and *lived outside of the city* at Pleasant (Stage Rd. and 8 Mile Rd.) while working in the Alpine-Wright “German Settlement.”
2. If we wish to determine the first Pole to live in the city, Andrew Puposkey merits this primacy with arrival in 1850, 1851 or 1852. Note that Jacob Pogodzinski’s earliest reported date of arrival was 1853. (In 1854 another early Polish immigrant arrived in the area. Joseph Baranowski Sr. and family *settled outside of the city* near Wright.)
3. If we wish to determine the first Pole to settle in the city, it is necessary to distinguish between “living” in the city (staying for a period of time) and “settling” in the city (staying for the remainder of one’s life). An article in *The Grand Rapids Herald* newspaper of September 19, 1909, shows that Andrew Puposkey [arriving 1850-1852] and Jacob Pogodzinski [arriving 1853] lived in the city for periods of time, departed, and eventually returned to settle. The newspaper reported that Jacob *settled* in the city in 1865, and that Andrew *settled* in 1875. Joseph Jakóbowicz (a.k.a. Jakubowicz, Jackoboice) settled in the city by 1855, staying until his death in 1899.

The *Grand Rapids Herald* newspaper article of 1909 states that Joseph “Jakubowicz” was the first Polish immigrant to settle in Grand Rapids. The article, “Poles of Grand Rapids are very Patriotic,” is subtitled, “Revere the Fatherland for the Honor of Those Who Gave Much for Liberty... Love Their Adopted Country for the Great Liberty It Has Given Them” (pg. 3). Joseph is the first of seven pictured “Founders of the Polish Colony in Grand Rapids” (photos). In the caption, Joseph is described as the “first of the race *to settle in* Grand Rapids, in 1855” [*italics mine, and following italics*]. The article also states, “*Among the first to come to* Grand Rapids was Joseph Jackubowicz [*Jakubowicz, Jackoboice*], who left his native home in Russian Poland and came to Grand Rapids in 1855. He with his family lived an honored life in Grand Rapids until his death in 1899. In 1864 two more came. A. Styler and Simon Dzieniszewski and a year later Valentine Pogodzinski....” And, “In 1869 there were in Grand Rapids the following Polish families all hard working and industrious people, a credit to their nationality and to the city of their adoption: Andrew Popowski, Joseph Jakubowicz, Jacob Pogodzinski...” [and nine other Polish families of: Anthony Styler (*Sztyler, Stiller*), John Podlewski, Simon Dzieniszewski (*Janshefski*), Valentine Pogodzinski, Michael Pross (*Prus*), John Witkowski, John Lipczynski, Anthony Lipczynski and Frank Szocinski]. In this article, one sees the surname Jakóbowicz as Jakubowicz and Jackubowicz, and the three variant spellings Dzieniszewski, Dzienszewski and Dzeniszewski.

Other known Polish immigrants of the 1850s and 1860s include the following family names: Bala, Baweja, Cerklewski, Damski, Glowczynski, Gruszczynski, Jablonski, Janszewski, Kolczynski, Mieras, Nowak, Ojrowski, Olbinski, Razmus, Sucharski, Szymczak and Tloczynski.

The *Herald* article of 1909, written by Frank Sparks, credited “data gathered by Mrs. John Lipczynski” (Valeria Lipczynski was an 1869 settler and journalist, actively involved in the Polish community until her death in 1930). Valeria and other citizens personally knew the first Polish immigrants and their life stories. Related comments follow:

**Comment #1:** In 1981, historian Eduard Skendzel wrote of “The First Poles in Western Michigan.” He noted, “The first person of Polish ancestry who lived in the limits of the frontier town of Grand Rapids in 1855 is said to have been Joseph Jakubowicz who was known as Jackoboice through the years and who became an industrialist. After him came other families.”

**Comment #2:** As quoted from the *Herald* article of 1909, Polish settler Joseph “Jackubowicz” “came to Grand Rapids in 1855.... In 1864 two more came. A. Styler and Simon Dzieniszewski and a year later Valentine Pogodzinski....”

**Comment #3:** In 1986, Eduard Skendzel described Joseph Jackoboice, Andrew Poposkey and Jacob Pogodzinski as early “Polanders” in the city (Lipczynski Family Papers in Grand Rapids Public Library (GRPL) Local History Department archives, Collection 179, Box 1, Folder 4, pp. 3,4): “One, Joseph Jackoboice (Jakubowicz), is said to have been the first Polander to settle in the city in 1854.” Also noted: Andrew, Jacob and Joseph attended the same German-speaking church in 1857.

**Comment #4:** Another document at the GRPL Local History Department (source and date unknown) provides another reference to Joseph as the first Polish settler in the city (in 1854). The document reports on a newspaper report: “The Evening Press on February 11, 1899 reported the death of undoubtedly the first Pole to settle in Grand Rapids under, ‘He Was A Pioneer’ as follows: ‘The funeral of Joseph Jackoboice held February 11, 1899... was largely attended by old friends and neighbors... Pall bearers were Andrew and John Poposki...’.” Apparently, Joseph’s good friend Andrew Poposki (a.k.a. Poposkey, Popowski), with arrival in Grand Rapids circa 1850-52, did not dispute Joseph’s status as the first Polish settler.

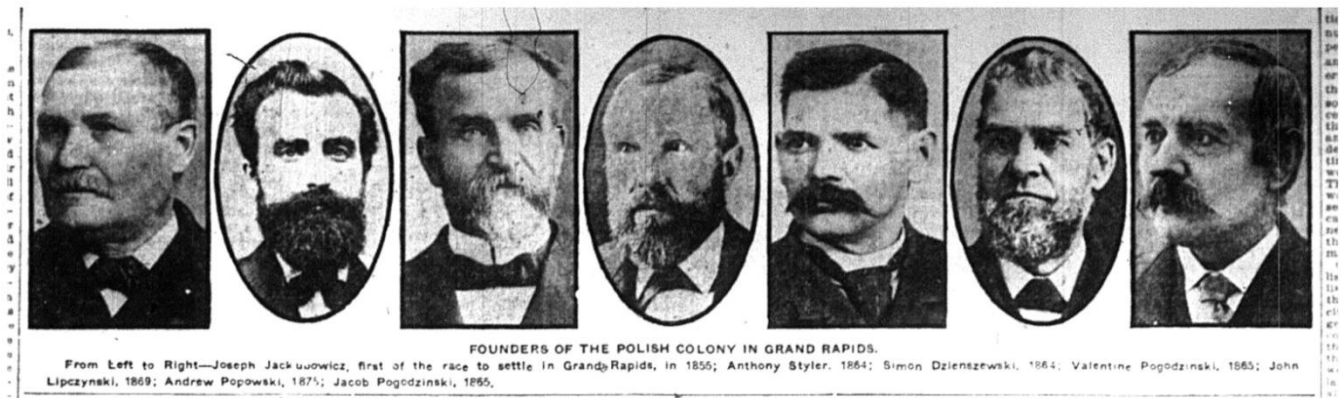
**Comment #5:** The *Herald* article of 1909 features photos of the “Founders of the Polish Colony in Grand Rapids” with a caption listing names and *dates of settlement*. A careful reading of the caption reveals conclusive

information: "From left to right – Joseph Jackubowicz, first of the race to settle in Grand Rapids, in 1855; Anthony Styler, 1864; Simon Dzienszewski, 1864; Valentine Pogodzinski, 1865; John Lipczynski, 1869; Andrew Popowski, 1875; Jacob Pogodzinski, 1865."

The *Herald* article reported that Jacob and Andrew were living and working in Grand Rapids in 1869. Jacob had already settled (1865), and Andrew was yet to settle (1875).

We see that another Pole settled 10 years prior to Jacob, and 20 years prior to Andrew.

And we see that up to the year 1909, journalists and others considered Joseph Jackoboice to be the first Polish immigrant to settle in the city of Grand Rapids.



### **JOSEPH'S FIRST JOB: at O'BRIEN'S FARM (just west of GRAND RAPIDS)**

Where did Joseph first find work in the Grand Rapids area? Again, Joseph's only surviving daughter Clara recorded that he "often spoke of his first job was working on O'Brien's farm." Joseph probably worked on this hay and wheat farm during the fall harvest of 1854 and into 1855. In the fall he likely drove teams of horses to harvest the fields. During winter, as a machinist, he could have repaired mowing and threshing machines – for farmer O'Brien and other area farmers.

Where was, or where is, O'Brien's farm? Seeking direction, the first clue was in the 1922 book, *The Yesterdays of Grand Rapids*, which mentions early farmers of the area and an "O'Brien Lake." On pages 51-52, author Charles Belknap wrote: "There was a [*Indian*] trail from the [*Grand River riverbank*] Council Tree leading southwest along what is now part of Butterworth-st. It wound about between the hills to Finnesy [*Fennessy*] and O'Brien lakes and some ponds... Some of the best men that came out of the east settled along this trail and cleared farms...." One *would think* that O'Brien Lake was on the property of O'Brien's farm. Find the lake, find the farm. Checking Internet maps for O'Brien Lake, one instead discovers O'Brien Road. Like the old Indian trail, it runs off of Butterworth and west about four miles to Fennessy Lake. Modern maps show two nearby, smaller, unnamed lakes. But ask longtime locals of an O'Brien Lake, and no one has heard of it. Maybe it's back in the woods somewhere, known only to long gone pioneers.

Fortunately, we have discovered O'Brien Road – which surely leads to O'Brien's farm.

In M.A. Leeson's *History of Kent County Michigan* (1881), we learn that Stephen O'Brien of Ireland was one of the first settlers of Walker Township (purchased property in 1837). An 1855 Kent County Plat Map of Walker Township shows Stephen O'Brien's large properties. His farm is described in the 1870 book, *History and Directory of Kent County, Michigan, containing a History of each Township, and the City of Grand Rapids*, published by Dillenback & Leavitt. The book states that "the westerly and northwesterly part" of Walker Township, "is devoted principally to farming purposes. In that locality are to be seen some quite large, as well as fine, farms. Stephen O'Brien owns two hundred and eighty acres, situated south of Bridge Street, two miles west of the plaster quarries, two hundred acres of which is in a good state of cultivation. Mr. O'Brien informed us that he raises from nine hundred to one thousand bushels of wheat per year, besides other general crops; and that he has sold as high as one hundred tons of hay as the result of one year's yield." "But he lost everything in 1873, including his farm. He died April 13, 1894," according to the book *Grand Rapids and Kent County Michigan*, editor E.B. Fisher (1918).

Considering the size of Stephen O'Brien's farm, and as several O'Brien relatives owned land in the area through the 1800s and into the 1900s, it is not surprising that the city-to-country access road is named O'Brien Road. On May 22, 2012, Mike Jackoboice drove this rural road about two miles in search of O'Brien's farm. The 1855 Plat Map shows the farm straddling both sides of O'Brien Road. On the north side are corners of township sections 28 and 29, and on the south side are upper portions of section 32. On a modern road map, on the north side of O'Brien Road, this farm property stretches from Collindale Avenue to Maynard Avenue to Sunset Hills Avenue... and on the south side of the road from Maynard Avenue just past Sunset Hills Avenue.

Driving slowly into the midst of O'Brien's farm properties, Mike was happy to see the land where our immigrant ancestor had his first job in Michigan. And he began looking to see if there might be an old farmhouse - with tell-tale tall trees. Just past Maynard he discovered a good candidate - an old, large, white farmhouse - hidden in tall trees. Cultivated farmland and orchards stretch to the south. There are two old silos. Outbuildings include a large, stone-walled building just west of the farmhouse (an old chicken coop). On that day the farmyard was very quiet... and no one was home. The overgrown, two-track driveway has no mailbox. But directly *across the road* there *is* a mailbox: 3433 O'Brien Road. Mike knocked on the house door and met the very nice, very helpful Kim Burke. She confirmed that this farmland was originally O'Brien's farm, and said that the farmhouse across the road also served as a stagecoach stop.

Interestingly, the 1855 Plat Map showing O'Brien's properties does not show a building at this location. It is possible that the map-maker neglected to include this building site on the map. The map does show two buildings in two other locations. It is possible that in the early days, in 1854/55, Joseph Jackoboice lived at another O'Brien farmhouse or bunkhouse - and from there worked the farmland. Regarding this still-standing farmhouse, which locals refer to as O'Brien's farm, O'Brien could have built its foundation and maybe its core.

A local who grew up in this farmhouse (1940s, 50s) dates it to the 1800s. However, public records state that the house was built in 1910. (The stagecoach era rolled into the 1920s in some places.) As the site is perfectly centered in the middle of the 1855 properties, it is possible that Stephen O'Brien built an "original" house there (by 1872). Size, deterioration, or fire, by 1910, may have inspired expansion, renovation or replacement.

Neighbor Kim briefly described the interior of the current farmhouse. She said there's a lot of "oak," including a "grand staircase" (now closed off at the top, likely for heating).

Mike then went to the City of Walker Library and learned that the address of the old farmhouse is 3450 O'Brien Road. A City Hall employee (a local history buff) confirmed this address as the site of O'Brien's farm.

Today, the old farmhouse sits on just five acres. The farmland has been sold to others. A separate house for farm workers, and the big old barn, are long gone.

To see O'Brien's farmland and the old farmhouse, first drive to the John Ball Park Zoo. Just southwest of the zoo, along Butterworth Drive, you will see the foot of O'Brien Road (on right). Drive uphill and west, straight out forested O'Brien Road about two miles to O'Brien's farmland. Watch for Maynard Ave. on the right. Pass Maynard, continue along O'Brien Road, and shortly, on the right, you will see the Burkes' mailbox marked 3433. When you see that mailbox, look left to the other side of the road - and you will see, hidden in the trees, the old, white farmhouse.

## **JOSEPH's first two JOB SITES in GRAND RAPIDS (east side), 1856-60**

While working at O'Brien's farm in 1854 and/or 1855, Joseph may have visited Grand Rapids to check for job openings with iron foundries, machine shops and lumber dealers. Joseph "... came to Grand Rapids in 1855" (as recorded by historian M.A. Leeson in his book, *History of Kent County, Michigan*, published by Chas. C. Chapman & Co., Chicago, 1881; pp. 1050-51).

**Job site #1** - Timing, and history books published in 1881 and 1891, indicate that it was in the year 1855 or 1856 (at the latest) that Joseph landed a job in the city. His employer, Elihu Smith, was a lumber dealer and a machinist – with machine shop. Considering our family's longtime business slogan, *Quality Machinery Since 1856*, it would be great to know the *exact* location of Joseph's first job. Research clues and results follow, but first a *related* sketch of the city from *Williams' Grand Rapids Directory, City Guide and Business Mirror for 1859-60*:

***"The city was organized as such in the year 1850.... Grand Rapids is situated on both sides of the Grand River, about 40 miles from its mouth.... The place derives its name from the rapids in the river, which here makes a nearly uniform descent of eighteen feet in a mile and a-half, furnishing an immense water-power... A dam crosses the river midway on the rapids, turning the water into a large canal on the east side."***

1. Joseph's employer advertised in the 1856 city business directory: "ELIHU SMITH, DEALER IN ALL KINDS OF LUMBER. PLANED LUMBER Kept constantly on hand. Lumber planed to order and on short notice. NEWBURY STREET, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN." This city business directory includes this listing: "SMITH, ELIHU, Machinist, Newberry st."

2. "Newbury" or "Newberry" Street? The GRPL Local History Department informed that spelling errors occurred in the 1850s too. The proper spelling, as seen on an 1853 city map and in the 1856 city business directory, was "Newberry." Today, the spelling is the same. Newberry is four blocks north of the downtown area (north of Michigan Street and I-96). Newberry Street runs off of the 1886-vintage Sixth Street Bridge, onto the *east side* of the Grand River.

3. Exactly where was Elihu Smith's lumber/machine shop business on Newberry Street? According to the 1891 book, *History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan* (Chapter XL on Foundries and Machine Shops), "Elihu Smith, in 1856, had a machine shop driven by steam power on the east side of Canal Street, opposite the dam, and by it in that year Samuel Tower erected a foundry and shop." Canal Street was the first street parallel to the river. So, now we can picture Elihu's business at the junction of Newberry and Canal streets, "on the east side of Canal Street, opposite the dam."

4. To determine whether Elihu's business at Newberry and Canal was on the northeast corner or the southeast corner, we need an era map showing the old, curved dam on the Grand River (built in 1849 and in place at least until 1868). The GRPL Local History Department, in July, 2012, e-mailed a pertinent portion of an 1853 map. It shows the dam located *north* of Newberry Street, curving downstream. The dam's eastern end was just *opposite the northeast corner* of Newberry and Canal streets. The map also shows an L-shaped building on

that corner, and its lot is numbered “454.” So now... we know *exactly* where Joseph began working in the city of Grand Rapids.

Additional confirmation of Elihu Smith’s business location comes from the 1856 reference above (#3) to Samuel Tower: “... by it [*Elihu’s machine shop*] in that year Samuel Tower erected a foundry and shop.” Tower’s business address was listed as, “machine shop and foundry, n e c [*north east corner*] Canal and Newberry” (in 1859-60 city directory).

To find this historically significant corner, note that Canal Street has been renamed Monroe Avenue. So, from the downtown area, from Michigan Street, simply take Monroe north for the equivalent of four blocks - to the Sixth Street Bridge/Newberry Street. At Canal/Monroe and Newberry, on the northeast corner, you will see the site where it all began for the Jackoboice family in Grand Rapids.

Shown below is the 1853 map showing the curved dam (built 1849) and the northeast corner of Canal and Newberry streets (with building). It is recorded that Elihu Smith came to Grand Rapids sometime between 1842 and 1849. He was sufficiently established financially to build a large, octagon house in 1853. So, it is quite possible that the building on this 1853 map was Elihu's lumber company and machine shop. If so, it would be the very building in which Joseph Jakobowics (Jackoboice) started his first job in 1855 or 1856. And it could be the original core of an old building which stands today (see first photo on following page).



The old building at Canal/Monroe and Newberry (as of 2014) appears to be shown on the city’s 1868 “aerial” picture map, so it *may* date back as far as 1855. Its *east end* matches an old, undated photo of a building *and* the 1849-“1868” curved dam (first photo on following page, from the book *Old Grand Rapids*, by G. Fitch, 1925; pg. 53). The owner of the building in 2014, Ed DeVries, did not know when it was built, but had the impression that at one time it was used for the production of furniture. Note the northerly extension of the building of 1853, a portion of which may survive today - as an office building (one can step inside the lobby and see *very old* brick walls).



"Looking from the hill top above Sixth Street bridge, you can see the old curved dam in the river – built in 1849. In 1866 the present dam was built farther south." Caption from Old Grand Rapids by George Fitch, 1925. Reprinted by GRHS in 1986; photo (pg. 53) date unknown. Dam was opposite NE corner of Canal (later Monroe) and Newberry streets - site of Joseph's first job in the city circa 1856. If you visit, see east end of building.

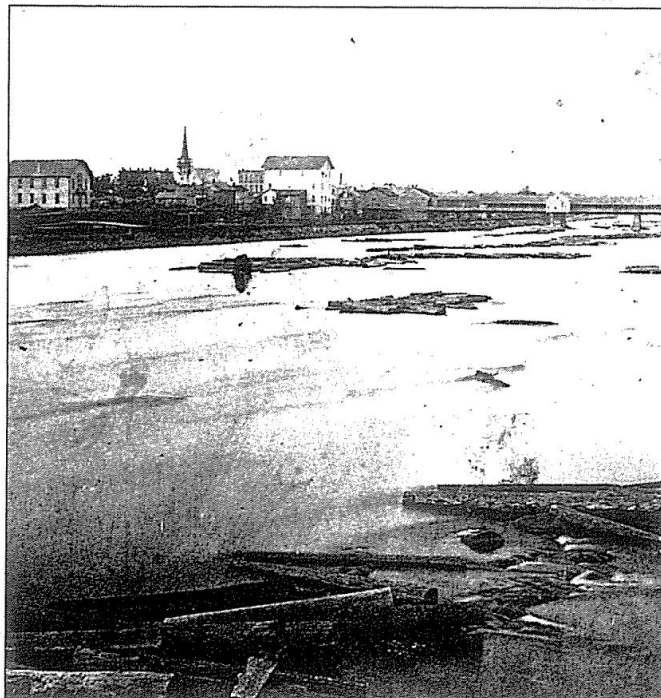


This photo of the Rasch Hotel, renamed Clarendon Hotel, is from the book The Story of Grand Rapids by Z.Z. Lydens, Kregel Publications, 1966 (page 232). Prior to the year 1872 this lodging business was known as the "Rasch House" - sketched on an 1868 picture map of the city as a large house.



*The Clarendon was opened as the Rasch at Bridge and Canal Streets in 1872. It became the Charlevoix in 1912 and was replaced by the Rowe in the early 1920's.*

This is the only known photo of the West Side Iron Works in 1880 - the year it opened (upper left). Formerly a schoolhouse, the building became a busy foundry and machine shop. The owner, Joseph Jackoboice, manufactured a variety of machines here. He was best known for his steam engines, bandsaws and ornate fire escapes. Ironically, this historic building burned in 1979 and in 1981 (was then razed). Photo from the book Grand Rapids in Stereographs 1860-1900 by T. Dilley, 2007 (pg. 94).



The Grand River is seen here, with enough cut logs snagged on its banks to suggest the use of the river as a transport highway for logging operation farther north and east. The view here is from the eastern side of the Bridge Street bridge, looking across the river to the mills and factories then developing on the west side. The date of the photograph is 1880. (Baldwin/Dilley.)

Finally, there is an old color painting of Elihu Smith and family, circa 1861, on the Internet. Find it on a website featuring old “octagon” houses ([www.octagon.bobana.com/MI.html](http://www.octagon.bobana.com/MI.html)) under “Kent County.” One also sees the abovementioned information regarding Elihu Smith’s machine shop. Successful Elihu built his octagon-shaped house in 1853 atop a nearby, east side hill overlooking the city. The house was demolished in 1961 for construction of the I-96 freeway.

The following map of 1868 shows the Grand River dam extending *farther* downstream. The intersection of Canal and Newberry streets is located between Fairbanks and Mason streets. This map is superb, as it shows a number of streets and locations mentioned in this book.

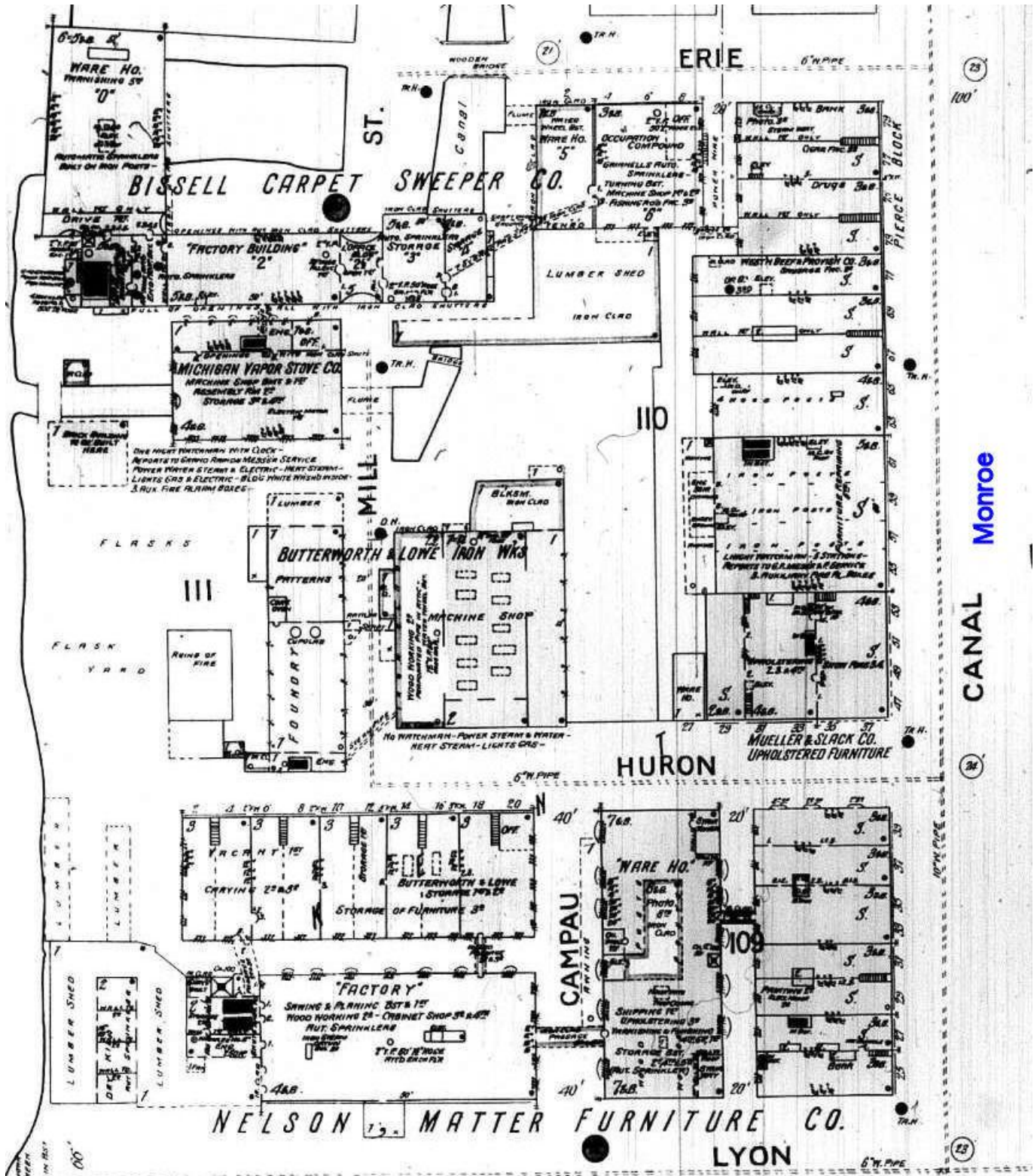
The bridge which one sees in its entirety is the old, covered Bridge Street Bridge. On the west side of the river, one block south of the Bridge Street Bridge on Water (later Front) Street, is the 1866 schoolhouse which became the West Side Iron Works (1880-1921).

Three blocks west of the bridge, Joseph’s two known homes were on Broadway between Bridge and Second streets (on the east side of Broadway).

Another significant area of family/business activity was northwest of Bridge and Canal streets. (City picture map of 1868 drawn and published by A. Ruger, Chicago Lith. Company.)







Sanborn Fire Insurance map (courtesy of MyCityofGrandRapids.info). This was the industrial heart of downtown Grand Rapids in 1895. And it was the site of Joseph's second job in the city, circa 1858-59 (originally Ball & Butterworth/Grand Rapids Iron Works, then Butterworth & Lowe). Note the Butterworth & Lowe Machine Shop.

**Job site #2** - Joseph's next job was downtown, at a foundry/machinery business established in 1845 by James McCray and Daniel Ball – and renamed Ball & Butterworth from 1856-58. An 1881 history book appears to quote Joseph's wife, reporting that Joseph, "came to Grand Rapids (in 1855), and was employed by Elihu Smith and Ball & Butterworth till 1860." We do not know how long Joseph worked at Elihu Smith's lumber/machine shop business (possibly in 1855, 1856, 1857). From the reference to his work at "Ball & Butterworth," we can deduce that he worked under that business name in 1857 and/or 1858. That business name actually changed in October, 1858 when R.E. Butterworth became sole proprietor. In the 1859-60 city directory, Joseph was listed as working at "R.E. Butterworth's." This foundry/machine shop was located at the junction of north-south Mill Street and Huron Street – a short, east-west street just north of Lyon Street. Mill, Huron, Campau (north end) and nearby Erie and Bank streets were eventually covered over by the Civic Auditorium (built 1933), DeVos (Performance) Hall and DeVos Place (1980-2005). The 1859-1860 city directory includes an advertisement (on page 40) describing R.E. Butterworth's *newly renamed* business at Mill and Huron streets:

***"GRAND RAPIDS IRON WORKS... Richard E. Butterworth, Proprietor.... Manufacturer of Land and Marine Steam Engines, Flour Mill Machinery, Building Castings, Furnace and Blacksmith Work of all descriptions. Also, Saw Mill Machinery, with Portable Steam Engines. Also Circular and Siding Mills with all the latest improvements."***

This business was in the same location 35 years later, but in 1869 its name had changed to "Butterworth & Lowe Iron Works." An 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the business' buildings. The building on the west side of Mill St. housed sections marked, "Foundry," "Patterns" and "Lumber." The building on the east side of Mill St. housed sections marked "Machine Shop" and "Wood Working." The 1891 book, *History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan*, by Albert Baxter, also describes this business, "now among the largest and oldest foundries and machine shops in the state. The working plant and buildings cover about an acre of ground. The foundry and shops, and rooms in Mineral Block, afford working room in which some fifty men are kept busy the year round. The invested capital is \$110,000, and the annual product of about \$80,000 comprises all sorts of heavy castings, engines, general machinery and logging cars."

Joseph's move to Ball & Butterworth was his first move to the downtown area, where he would spend the remaining four decades of his career.

## **JOSEPH's seven MACHINE SHOPS in downtown GRAND RAPIDS**

According to historian M.A. Leeson, Joseph "went into business for himself" in 1860 (city population 8,085). From 1860 through 1880 he operated seven *succeeding* machine shops on both sides of the Grand River, from the Bridge Street Bridge area downstream to the Pearl Street Bridge area (the original Bridge Street Bridge was built in 1845, and the Pearl Street Bridge in 1858). In the 1865-1866 city directory, Joseph advertised his business as "Machine Shop." He listed his shops as "machine shop" until 1880. While making machinery for riverside sawmills, Joseph invented a lumber-recording device (measured board feet cut from logs).

In 1880, on the west side of the Grand River, Joseph founded the West Side Iron Works. He acquired a large, permanent home for his machinery business: the former German-English Schoolhouse (built in the year 1866) at 31 S. Front Street NW, on the southwest corner at Tremont/Bowery/Douglas Street. Joseph converted the two-story schoolhouse to a machine shop. He and son Edward Joseph manufactured products advertised in city directories of the 1880s and 1890s: Steam Engines... Mill Work [*sawmill machinery*] and General Wood Working Machinery... Band Saws [*also Table, Rip and Cut-off saws*]... Saw Arbors... Sand Papering, Boring and Shaping Machines... Shingle Machinery... Shafting and Pulleys... and Excelsior Machines [*Upright model. Historically,*

these upright, rotary and wheel machines (one wheel of 20 knives) cut fine wood shavings (“excelsior”) used as stuffing for mattresses and furniture cushions, and as packing for shipping boxes and crates, etc.]. They also built “Jackoboice’s Fire Escape - More than one hundred in use in Grand Rapids.” (Some of these fire escapes can still be seen aside old buildings, including the 1883 Lemon & Wheeler Building at Ionia and Weston. One can see a large, vintage, West Side Iron Works bandsaw at the Grand Rapids Public Museum in the Furniture City section.)

Joseph and son sold their products in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and Wisconsin.

In time, Edward Joseph co-patented two woodworking machines: a Glue-jointing machine (1898) and a Sand-belt machine (1909).

Joseph’s seven machine shop locations follow, as best determined from various sources:

**Machine Shop #1** – In 1860, Joseph opened and operated “a small foundry and machine shop of his own, which grew in size...” (*Evening Press*, February 11, 1899). Somewhere on Mill Street, Joseph opened this first machine shop “in a small room on the second floor of a sash, door and blind factory” (A. Baxter, *History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan*, 1891). Baxter recorded the year as 1860, as did historian M.A. Leeson in his book, *History of Kent County, Michigan*, 1881. Joseph’s shop was the first of his two shops on Mill Street - just east of the Grand River. “Mill” is short for sawmill; mills lined the east bank of the log-laden river for years. To better picture the location of old, long-gone Mill Street, first picture *today’s* east end of the Bridge Street Bridge, on the bank of the Grand River. Then picture, east about half to two-thirds of a block, the old, long-gone, power canal waterway (coursing “parallel” to the river, flowing north to south). Mill Street ran along the west edge of the power canal for about 3.5 long blocks, from Huron Street north to E. Bridge Street and beyond, ending just past Trowbridge Street (at start of power canal). The address of Joseph’s first shop on Mill Street? Consider two possibilities:

1. An exhibit at the Grand Rapids Public Museum features the business advertisement of “Reuben Wheeler, Manufacturer of Doors, Sash and Blinds” at “42 and 44 Mill Street on the Canal.” Mill Street’s “40 block” was *north of* E. Bridge Street (today’s Michigan Street). There were many Germans in this area of the city – immigrants speaking German, cooking German food, enjoying German culture. (FYI, a “sash” is a window frame; a “blind” is a window screen.)

2. Another “sash, door and blind factory” on Mill Street was located one block north of E. Bridge Street, opposite Hastings Street. This factory was established in 1859 by dynamic entrepreneur William A. Berkey – an important connection for Joseph’s future. Why? In 1860, Mr. Berkey established a foundry/machine shop too (likely larger). This “iron works” was located on Canal Street (on the *east side* of the Grand River). Berkey moved this iron works in 1870 (into one of Wm. T. Powers’ shops). And he sold it by 1880 – to Joseph Jackoboice. Joseph installed Berkey’s equipment in his seventh and final machine shop: the newly founded West Side Iron Works.

Back to the early days of Joseph’s career, and descriptions of his growing machine shops....

**Machine Shop #2** – In 1862, near Mill Street, Joseph moved his machine shop business “into a building near the east end of Bridge Street Bridge.” Where was the east end of the bridge? In that era, as shown on an 1870 city map (see next page), the bridge extended east *beyond* the riverbank and east over the power canal waterway – extending east a block to Canal Street (later renamed Monroe Avenue). In the 1865-1866 city directory, a Joseph *Jacoboice* “Machine Shop” advertisement described his location: “On the Canal, near Bridge-st Bridge”....





An 1870 map of the city showing the Bridge Street Bridge... extending across the canal to Canal Street.

J. S. CROSBY & SON, Fire, Marine and

John J. Way, Proprietor.

J

Jacobs Mrs. Julia, 14 State  
Jacobs Joseph, shoemaker, 30 Clinton

JACOBOICE JOSEPH,

# Machine Shop,

On the Canal, near Bridge-st Bridge.

I hold myself in readiness to make and repair  
**Steam Engines and all kinds of Mill and Iron  
Work, also Repairing Mowing and  
Threshing Machines.**

If you want a good and cheap job give me a call.

res 22 Broadway, w s

Jarett Thomas, gardener, 19 Spring  
Jarvis A. H., 34 Jefferson Avenue  
Jarvis H. B., hatter, 72 Greenwich  
Jennings P., laborer, 12 Grandville  
Jennings Geo., wagon maker, 14 Grandville  
Jennings J., baker, 6 McConnell  
Jennings Patrick, tailor, 74 Jefferson w s

JENSEN P. A.,

Distiller, 120 Ottawa

Jewett H., 2d East Park Place

JOHNSON H. M.,

Groceries & Provisions, 25 Monroe, boards Rathbun House

## KINGSLEY & Co.--New Millinery, Cloak &

He made "Steam Engines and all kinds of Mill and Iron Work, also Repairing Mowing and Threshing Machines." The 1867-68 city directory listed this "machine shop and general repairing of all kinds of machinery" at "w.s. Canal nr. Bridge" [*translated "west side of Canal Street near Bridge Street"*]. Here, the power canal waterway was about two-thirds of a block east of today's bridge. Joseph's daughter Clara wrote (in old age, circa 1935-40, in notes that displayed *some* confusion as to dates and places) that Joseph's shop building was located "... on the East Side Canal Bank [*bank*] where the north portion of the Rowe Hotel now stands" [*i.e., on east side of the old canal waterway, on west side of Canal Street*]. One source states that Joseph worked at this machine shop site for three years, but the city directory officially located him here for about five years - until 1867/68. The 1868 "picture map" of the city shows the building where Joseph had his machine shop. The IRS taxed him here in December, 1865 and in June, 1866 on income for Machinist Work, Repairs and Machine Work (*U.S. IRS Tax Assessment Lists, 1862-1918; Collection District No. 4*). The tax man spelled his surname as "Jacoboise" in 1865, and the same or poorly handwritten as "Jacoboice" in 1866.

Joseph's only surviving daughter Clara, known to 1900s family members as "Aunt Clara," remained single and was known for her colorful travels. She lived from 1872 to 1957 and was the last survivor of the original Jakóbowicz/Jackoboice family in Grand Rapids (she died just one year prior to the arrival of her father's first great-great grandson). Clara is seen in the following photo (center) with relatives and friends in the early 1900s. Left to right: Gusstie Hake (cousin), Pauline Rasch (cousin), Clara Jackoboice, Venie Allen and Carrie Hanson.

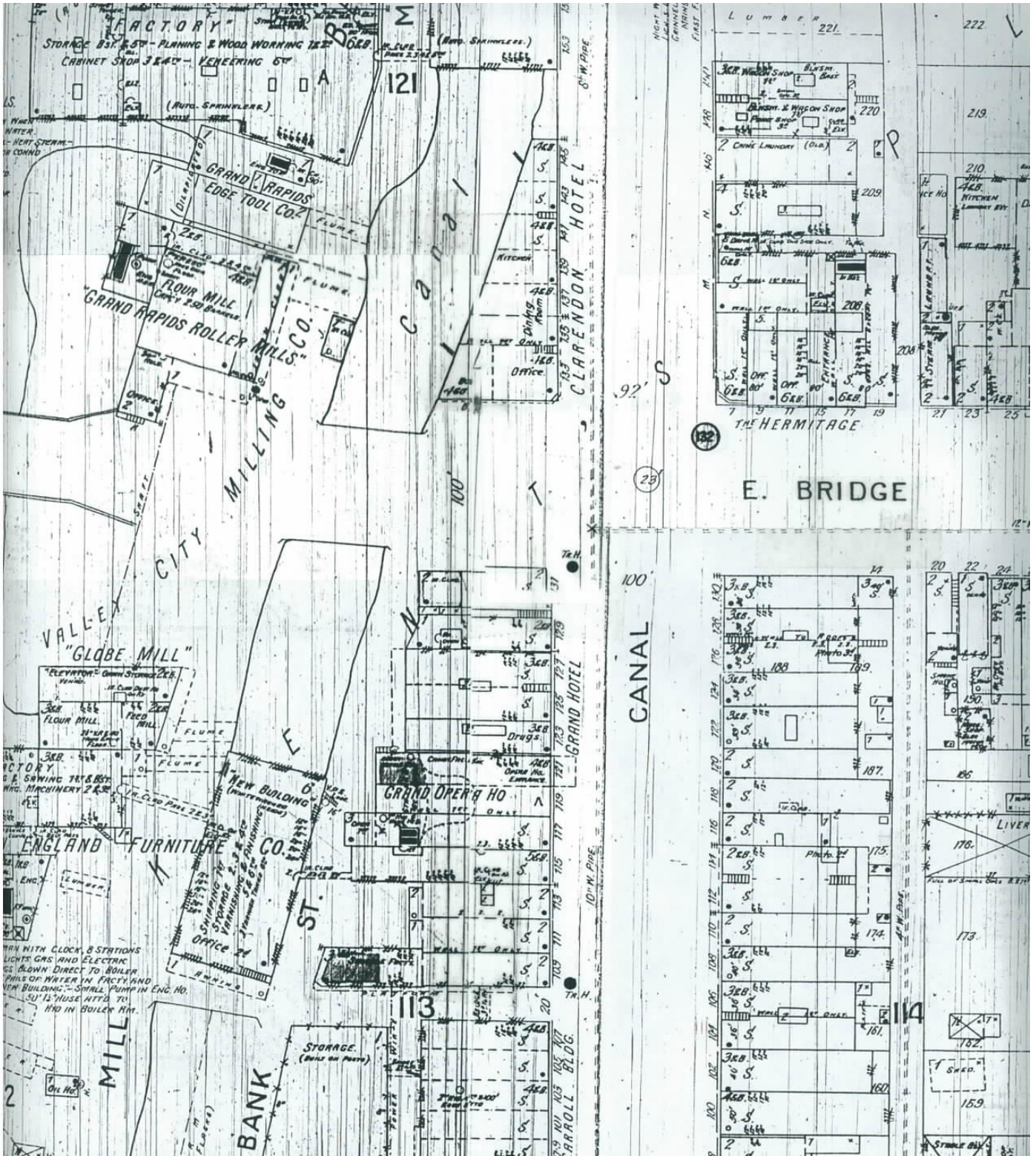


**Machine Shop #3** – In 1868, Joseph Jacoboice purchased a lot to build a shop on the other side of the power canal and a bit downstream. The lot was just west of the northwest corner of E. Bridge Street (later Michigan Street) and Canal Street (later Monroe Avenue). It was on the east side of Mill Street near the corner with E. Bridge Street. Historian Albert Baxter stated that Joseph put up a building and worked at this Mill/Bridge site for “about two years.” The 1868-69 city directory located Joseph’s shop at “Mill-st. cor [corner] Bridge,” and the 1870-71 city directory showed him at “Mill” too. That 1868-69 city directory listed at least one employee: “White James, machinist, Joseph Jacoboice, r. [residence] e s [east side] Canal bet [between] Bridge and Hastings.” An 1895 Sanborn Fire Insurance map (see next page) featured a lone building on Mill Street on the west edge of the power canal, just north of E. Bridge Street (likely Joseph’s shop). On this map, directly east on the other side of the power canal, one sees the Clarendon Hotel (later renamed as the Charlevoix Hotel and replaced by the Rowe Hotel/Olds Manor). This hotel site dates back to the 1850s-1870s as a Rasch property.

A colorful description of this property and district, from the 1850s forward, was provided in the 1922 book, *The Yesterdays of Grand Rapids* (pages 81-83). This section of the book is entitled, “The Site of Hotel Rowe.” Author Charles Belknap grew up in the mid-1800s and eventually became city mayor. His eyewitness description follows. “Next to Campau Square, the Monroe and Michigan-av. crossing has witnessed more changes than any other district in the city.... On the river bank in the 50s [1850s] was David Caswell’s woodenware factory, Hathaway’s edge tool works, several sawmills and sash, door and blind factories.... This was a factory center with water power. The canal and river were full of floating logs.... About the corners sprang up a colony of blacksmith shops where everything from horseshoe nails to heavy mill forgings, and from wheelbarrows to farm wagons, sleds, cutters and carriages were turned out, mainly by hand labor.... Germantown might have been a good name for the corners about this time. There were Rasch, Heintzleman, Friebig, Rathman, Osterle, Schaake, Emmer.... In the winter evenings the blacksmith shops were open until 9 o’clock.... Canal-st., now Monroe-av., north of the bridge, was a piling ground for pail and barrel staves and the east canal bank a line of dry kilns.... In time the smith shops were crowded out... The Rasch shop gave way to the Rasch hotel (later the Clarendon, and then the Charlevoix) which catered to the log runner and mill element. Spike-soled boots made pulp wood of the floors; sawdust and sand answered for rugs and carpets.... Fires destroyed the better part of the mills and factories and things looked rookery-like and dark, even to the tunnel of the old wood-covered bridge.... But through the years there has been a steady pulling upgrade and now the Hotel Rowe, honoring the memory of a grand old citizen, is a monument as well to the efforts of the pioneers of the district.”

Pioneer Robert Rasch of Prussia came to America in 1852 and worked as a wagon maker and blacksmith in Grand Rapids. There are indications that Robert established the “Rasch House” hostelry after 1862 - with his sister Frances Rasch “Jacoboice.” The 1868 picture map of the city shows a large house at the northwest corner of E. Bridge and Canal streets. On 2/27/2014, Mary Rasch Alt wrote, “Frances was a partner in the Rasch House





An 1895 map of downtown GR by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Co. (and courtesy of MyCityofGrandRapids.info). Note the large, "triangular" Rasch/Clarendon Hotel with notations showing the Office, Dining Room and Kitchen. Just to the west, across the canal, see the small building which may have been Joseph's third machine shop.



*This German-speaking, Prussian immigrant, Frances Josephine (Rasch) Jackoboice (1833-1912), came to America in 1854 and moved to Grand Rapids in 1857. She married German-speaking Polish immigrant Józef Jakóbowicz (a.k.a. Joseph Jakobowics, Jacoboice, Jackoboice) in 1858. Frances looked stern, with a big right fist, which likely intimidated rowdy sawmill workers and river "log runners" who lodged in the Rasch House (an early "hotel"). Frances grew up as the only sister amongst five brothers: Robert, August, Adolph, Alois and Julius Rasch. One wonders to what degree Frances resembled her battle-hardened father, Florian Franz Rasch I....*

*A Prussian born in present-day Poland, Florian Franz Rasch I, "according to family tradition, was a member of Napoleon's Army who survived the retreat from Moscow in 1812." Lending authenticity, he was described "as being a Quartermaster Captain in Napoleon's Army, and was able to retreat from Russia without losing a single member of his unit" (for history, read Tolstoy's War and Peace). After military service, records show that Florian worked from 1825 to 1842 as a farmer in Olbersdorf (near present-day Zabkowice Slaskie, Poland). In 1852 he emigrated to America, and he died in 1855. So, one of Napoleon's soldiers is buried near Detroit in Center Line, Michigan.*



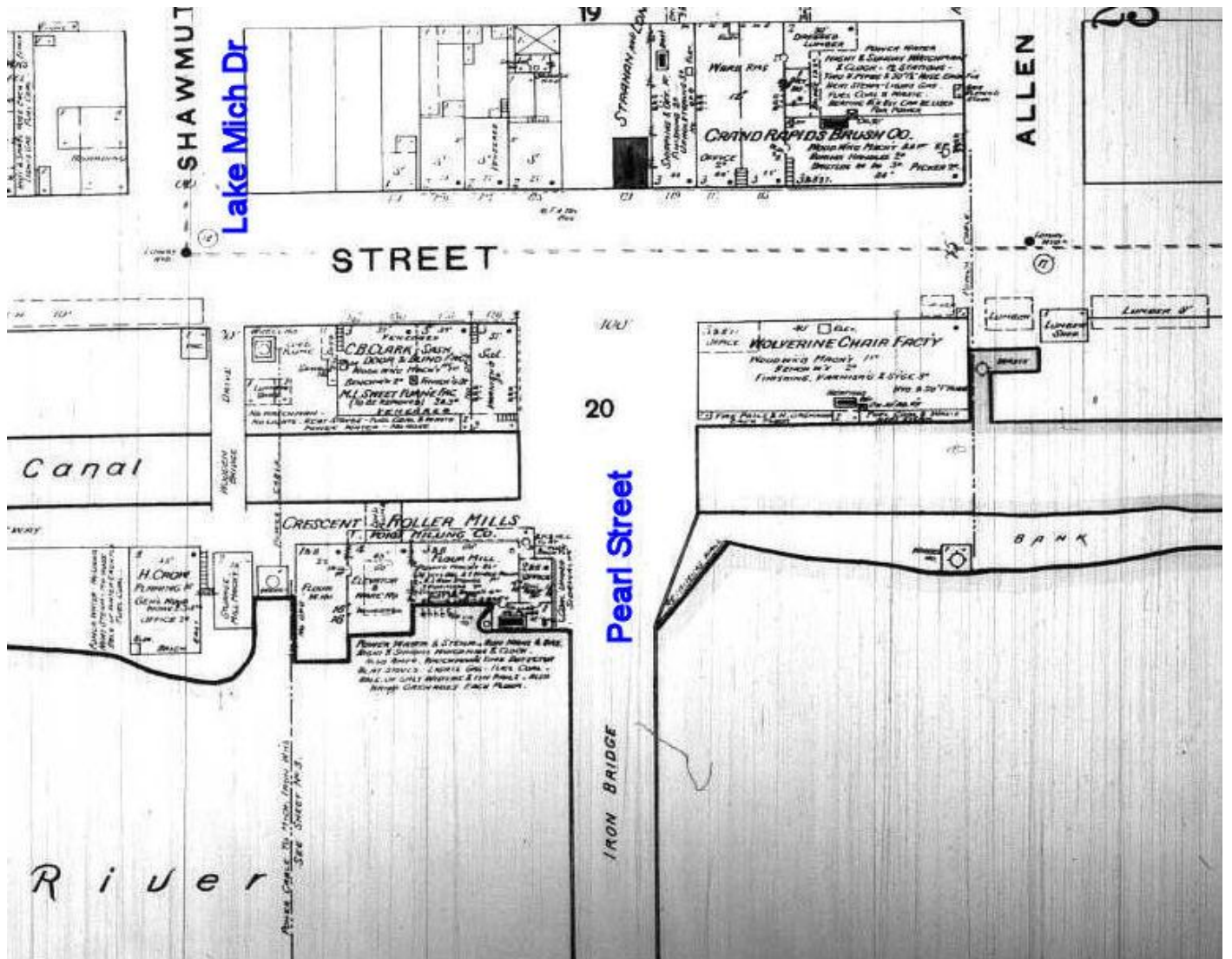
with Robert... good siblings!" She added, "We have been told that Robert and Frances (with Joseph) financed many new businesses..." In the 1966 book, *The Story of Grand Rapids*, a page 232 photo/caption indicates the Rasch House was replaced by the Rasch Hotel in 1872. This hotel was described as "... a neat four-story brick structure fronting 154 feet on Canal and about 85 feet on Bridge street, roomy, well ventilated and popular" (historian Dwight Goss, 1906). In 1880 Edward Killean gained an interest in the hotel, which was renamed the "Clarendon." As of 1880 or later, Joseph Jackoboice "had a half interest in the Clarendon Hotel" (per an obituary). This hotel could lodge 200 convention guests and was "first-class" with elevators, steam heat and "electrical bells, both call and fire" (from the book, *Grand Rapids As It Is*, 1888). Two other men became proprietors, in 1893 and 1895. Joseph died in 1899. In 1903, the Clarendon suffered a serious fire. In 1912, the year that Frances Rasch Jackoboice died, the Clarendon (sold?) was renamed as the "Charlevoix." This Rasch/Clarendon/Charlevoix Hotel was razed and replaced by the eight-story Hotel Rowe, a.k.a. the Rowe Hotel, which opened in January, 1923. In 1963 it was ultimately renamed Olds Manor - as a senior citizens retirement residence (vacated in 2001). In poor condition in 2012, with a faded sign on the roof, the Olds Manor building awaited renovation.

**Machine Shop #4** - The 1872 city directory shows Joseph's first move to a building on the west side of the Grand River ("the West Side"). He moved to Water Street - the first street up from, and parallel to, the river (renamed Front Street on 7/12/1873). The 1872 city directory shows "Jacoboice Joseph, machine shop, w s Water w s" [i.e., west side of Water Street, west side of the Grand River]. Unfortunately, this address does not provide a cross street - so we only know that Joseph moved somewhere along the west side of Water/Front Street. The 1873 *Michigan State Gazetteer and Business Directory* lists an address for Joseph that could refer to the site of Machine Shop #4: "foundry and machine shop, Water, west side [West Side]." Or it could refer to Joseph's next machine shop on the other side of the street - on the east side of Water Street.

**Machine Shop #5** - In 1873 Joseph moved his machine shop into a factory building owned by an industrial dynamo named William T. Powers. *The Grand Rapids Herald* newspaper once wrote that Powers "introduced the use of machinery in the making of furniture..." [a reference to the local scene]. Also of significance, in 1865 and 1866 he purchased extensive West Side riverbank property and then commenced building the West Side (power) Canal. In time he built a factory large enough to rent space for other businesses....

The 1873-74 city directory (pg. 253) lists Joseph's new shop site with specific address info: "Jackoboice, Joseph, machine shop, e s Water n Pearl W S" [i.e., "east side of Water Street north of Pearl Street, West Side"]. To visualize this location, look to the Pearl Street Bridge and its north side over the Grand River... then picture, immediately to the west, the old, parallel, West Side (power) Canal... then on the canal's west bank a factory building... and then parallel Water/Front Street. This factory building was the shop site described by Joseph's daughter Clara in her recollections over 60 years later: "... he moved to the West Canal Bank [bank; west side of canal, east side of Water Street] in a frame building owned by Wm. T. Powers where he [Joseph] operated a small machine shop and foundry and doing odd jobs and 'Millwork and General Jobbing.'" In the same city directory (1873-74), Wm. T. Powers' business address was listed as "Powers, W.T. & Son (William T. Powers, William H. Powers), lumber, shingles, lath [wall boards]. etc.. S Water n of Pearl, W S [i.e., South Water north of Pearl, West Side]." Powers' address and Joseph's address were one and the same (more later \*). William T. Powers started his career making cabinets and furniture, then built sawmills and became a lumber dealer (and produced sash and door, lath and shingles, etc.). Naturally, he would rent space to Joseph Jackoboice - who built and repaired sawmill machinery, shingle-making machines and other machines. *The Grand Rapids Herald* wrote that William T. Powers was "long identified with the machinery and metal interests of the city."

\* Regarding the abovementioned address listings, city directory writers often described an address site with slight or significant differences. At the time, Pearl Street crossed the river bridge and stopped at Water (renamed Front) Street. So, the only building just north of Pearl was on the east side of Water Street (e s Water n Pearl W S = S Water n of Pearl, W S). And there were significantly different descriptions of this address site.... In 1872, William T. Powers was listed at "Water St., West Side" and as "Proprietor, West Side Canal." We've seen that the



Map by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, 1888 (courtesy of MyCityofGrandRapids.info). Note the Grand River, the Pearl Street Bridge, and the Power Canal. The main, central intersection shows the northeast corner of Pearl and Water/Front streets. The building on that corner was owned by William T. Powers (as of 1880 known as the Wolverine Chair Factory).

next listing, for 1873-74, was more specific: "S Water n of Pearl, W S." Next, the 1875-76 city directory lists "Wm T. Powers & Son" at 87 S. Front [*formerly S. Water*], W. S." (same address site according to the Local History Department of the Grand Rapids Public Library). This address site also came to be known as "the corner of Pearl and Front streets."

"Wm. T. Powers & Son" eventually changed the name of this business site – in 1880. In the 1881 book *History of Kent County, Michigan* (pg. 915) we read: "The Wolverine Chair and Furniture Company, located on Front street, near the west end of Pearl street bridge, was organized March 10, 1880. At the present time this company [*is*] engaged wholly in the manufacture of fine cane seat chairs and frames for upholstering.... Their facilities for manufacturing are excellent, being located in a large and commodious building, 50 x 150 feet on the ground, and three stories and basement high, propelled by water power, equipped with a complete outfit of new machinery of the most approved kind, and employing none but skilled workmen. They are manufacturing a supply of goods in their line, which find ready sale in all parts of the country. The officers of the company are: Wm. H. Power[s], President.... Directors: Wm. H. Powers... Wm. T. Powres [*Powers*] and D. H. Powers.... This is destined to be one of the largest manufacturing concerns in the city...."

This building site generated history during William T. Powers' pioneering development of hydroelectric power for industrial use. As later reported by David Mayo of *The Grand Rapids Press* (7/11/2010), "The first documented industrial use of electricity from hydropower occurred in 1880, in Grand Rapids, when a series of lamps, powered by a water turbine at Wolverine Chair Factory, at the corner of Pearl and Front streets, lit a small corridor of downtown businesses." In 1880, Powers organized the Grand Rapids Electric Light and Power Co.

The Powers family's chair factory continued conducting business with a modified formal name as the "Wolverine Chair Company" from 1887 to 1891. The building is shown on a Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of 1888 as the "Wolverine Chair Factory" – near the west end of the Pearl Street Bridge, at the corner of Pearl and Front streets - with dimensions appearing as 50 x 150'.

In Grand Rapids in 1885, William T. Powers acquired the Michigan Iron Works. And he was busy at numerous other business sites. The years passed... and in time Mr. Powers passed away. Mourners knew him in many capacities, even as city mayor in 1857. And they appreciated him for building a downtown theater (the Powers Opera House) with seating for 1,300 people (in 1873). When Powers died, the June 18, 1909 edition of *The Grand Rapids Herald* newspaper headlined him as: "PIONEER FURNITURE MAN; BUILDER OF INDUSTRIES."

And of note, "The factory buildings he erected were the early homes of many of the city's best industries."

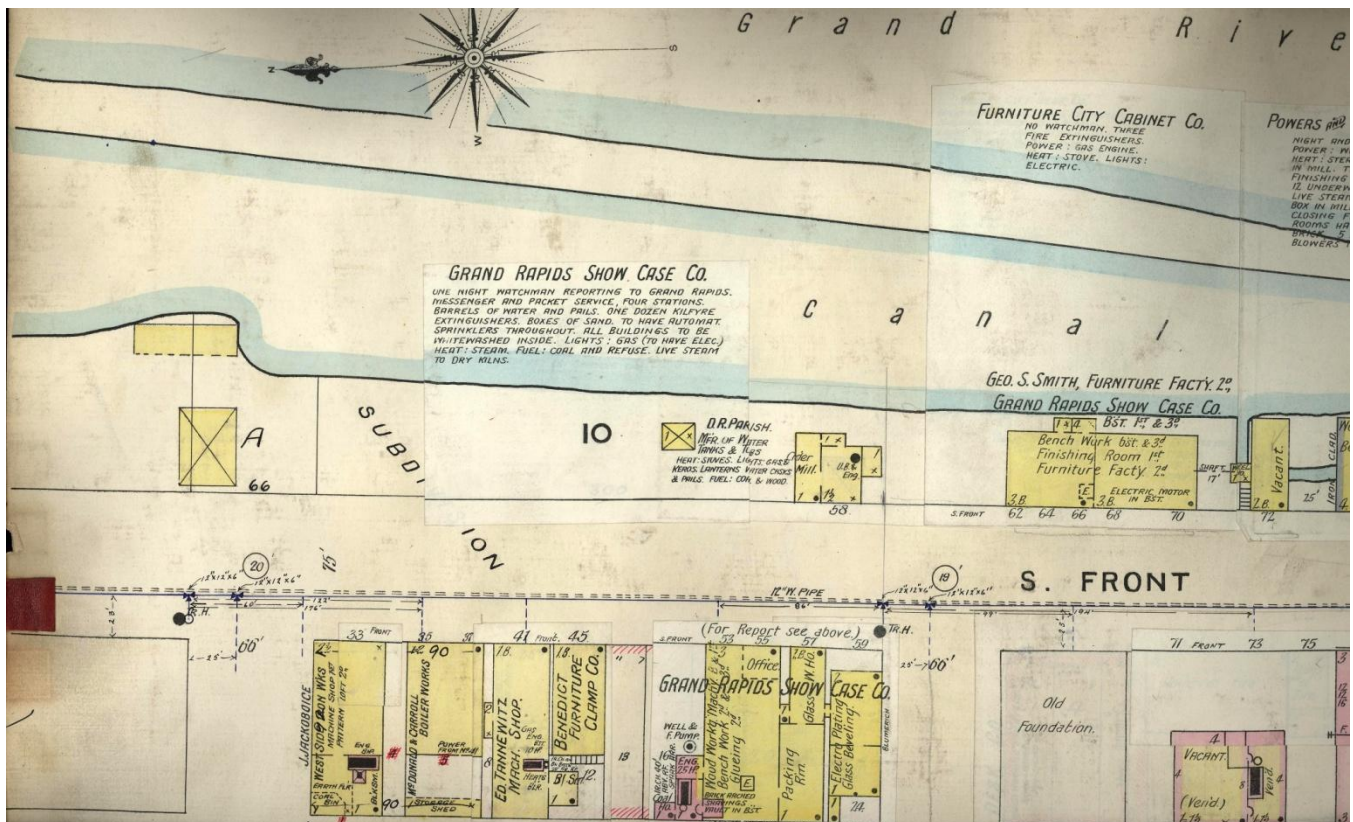
Joseph "Jacoboice" was listed in *Wiley's American Iron Trade Manual Of The Leading Iron Industries Of The United States* (evidently compiled 1872-73; published in 1874 (in NY). In its "Directory of the Steam Engine and Machine Works, Iron Foundries and General Iron Works Of The United States" (under Michigan and "Grand Rapids, Kent County"), one sees: "JOS. JACOBOICE. - Iron foundry and machinery." His iron likely came from the Upper Peninsula. In 1873, Michigan's iron mining output was 1,195,234 tons (*Grand Rapids As It Is*, 1888).

**Machine Shop #6** - In city directories from 1874-75 to 1880-81, we see Joseph with a new machine shop site about a block to the north, variously addressed as: "machine shop, e s [*east side of*] South Front Street, bet [*between*] Allen and Valley." The east-west Allen Street was north of Pearl. The east-west Valley Street was a block north of Allen (Valley Street "went through" today's Ford Museum). The 1868 picture map of this area shows a large, 3-story building about half-way between Allen and Valley streets – on the east side of Water (later renamed Front) Street, on the new power canal. A record indicates that Joseph's son, Edward Joseph Jackoboice, began his apprenticeship at this shop circa 1879, at about age 15. He appears in the 1879-80 city directory as "Jackoboice Edward, machinist, bds [*boards/resides at home of*] Joseph Jackoboice."

**Machine Shop #7** - Finally, in 1880, a permanent site for Joseph's work. First, a review of background info....

In 1859, business entrepreneur William A. Berkey opened a "sash, door and blind factory" on Mill Street. Joseph may have opened his first machine shop in *that* factory in 1860. By then or later, Joseph met Mr. Berkey. An 1881 book, *History of Kent County, Michigan*, states, "The West Side Iron Works, with Joseph Jackoboice proprietor, were established in 1860, by William A. Berkey, on Canal Street." As Canal Street was on the east side of the Grand River, Mr. Berkey would not have named his iron works "West Side Iron Works" (Berkey's original name for the iron works is not known). In 1870, Berkey moved his iron works into one of William T. Powers' shops (site unknown; various possible shop sites). By 1880 Joseph purchased Berkey's iron works (business, equipment) and installed it in his seventh and final shop. Joseph "opened the West Side Iron Works" (*History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan*, A. Baxter, 1891). It is clear that Joseph created this business name because the 1884-85 and 1885-86 city directories list him as the *Founder*.

Where exactly did Joseph open the West Side Iron Works? On the west side of the Grand River, he moved into a vacant, large, two-story schoolhouse – and converted it to a machine shop. The 1868 picture map shows this hand-sketched, German-English Schoolhouse (built in 1866) standing alone – one block south of Bridge Street on Water Street (renamed Front St. in 1873). The exact location of the West Side Iron Works: the southwest corner of "South Front and Bowery Streets" (Tremont St. became Bowery St., and after 1896 Bowery became Douglas St.). The 1881-82 city directory is the first to show Joseph, machinist, at "31 S Front, w s". An 1881 newspaper notice (next paragraph) was first to show the address "31 and 33 Front street" (a.k.a. "31-33", references to two lots beneath the building). The business address was later renumbered (in the year 1912) to 327-329 S. Front St., NW. Joseph's business was best known for its steam engines, ornate fire escapes, and sawmill and woodworking machinery.





Joseph had a health scare that nearly ended the family business (possibly kidney-related, possibly with painful kidney stones). Its severity moved him to write a business sale notice which happens to be his only extant communication of a personal nature. The notice appeared in the *Grand Rapids Evening Leader* newspaper, in the "Business Locals" section, on July 27, 1881: "MACHINE SHOP FOR SALE... Having been 20 years in the manufacture of machinery of all kinds in Grand Rapids, I have established a first-class business, but owing to ill health, am compelled to sell. I therefore wish to dispose of my machine shop, building and lot, together with all the lathes, tools, fixtures and patterns. Located at 31 and 33 Front street. Call or address, JOS. JACKOBOICE, Grand Rapids, Mich." Fortunately, the health scare passed and the family business continued through the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, through the 20<sup>th</sup> and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The 1895 city directory of Grand Rapids lists Joseph *only* at his home address, "h 52 Broadway," absent an annual reference as the proprietor of the West Side Iron Works (the original shop shown below, with Monarch sign in 1972; photo courtesy of the Grand Rapids City Archives). In the same city directory, his son was listed this way: "Jackoboice Edward J (West Side Iron Works), rms [rooms] 52 Broadway." We can deduce that Joseph, a machinist for 55 years, retired circa 1895 (around age 70). We know that he died at age 74 (just short of 75).



The 1899 city directory states, "Jackoboice Joseph, died Feb 8, 1899." This date is confirmed on a death certificate, its image found on Ancestry.com, as recorded by the 1899 Michigan Department of State – Division of Vital Statistics (Transcript of Certificate of Death). The certificate states, among other things, that Joseph Jackoboice died [Wednesday] Feb. 8, 1899 at about 3:30 p.m. [at his home] at 52 Broadway. The funeral was scheduled for Feb. 11. Cause of death: Bright's Disease [a generic term for hereditary kidney failure] with the following "Contributory causes or complications": Cystitis [inflammation of the urinary bladder] with Enlarged



Prostate [*a gland surrounding the neck of the bladder*]. Joseph was first buried at St. Andrew's Cemetery and later transferred to Mt. Calvary Cemetery (on the West Side atop the Leonard Street hill, the first of three family plots). The death certificate stated his birthplace as "Polland"... his parents' names as unknown... his occupation as "Machinist"... and that he was married and the parent of 10 children, 2 surviving [*Clara and Edward Joseph Jackoboice*]. Source of preceding information: The Library of Michigan; Michigan Death Records, 1897-1920; Rolls: 1-302; Archive Barcode/Item #30000008345955; Roll #17; Certificate #166. Also see the following website: <http://seekingmichigan.org>

As for genetic heritage, in our DNA to this day, kidney issues run in the family (particularly kidney stones).

The founder of the West Side Iron Works is gone... and due to 1979 and 1981 fires the West Side Iron Works schoolhouse/machine shop is gone too. But woodworkers still use the company's bandsaws... and its other machines must be out there somewhere too.

For anyone trying to date a product from the early days, the following business names, addresses and dates might be helpful (from recent research and 1800s city directories):

Under "Machine Shop, J. Jacoboice": on "Mill Street" from 1860-1862... at "w.s. Canal nr. [*near*] Bridge" from 1862-1867... at "Mill-st. cor [*corner*] Bridge" from 1868-1871... at "w s Water w s [*West Side*]" in 1872 (Water St. renamed Front St. in 1873).

Under "Machine Shop, J. Jackoboice": at "e s Water n Pearl WS" in 1873 (Water St. renamed Front St. on 7/12/1873)... at "e s South Front St., bet [*between*] Allen and Valley" from 1874-1880.

Under "West Side Iron Works, J. Jackoboice" (and/or Edward Joseph Jackoboice): at "31 S Front, w s" (as written in 1881-1882 city directory) from 1880 to 1911. The address was also written as "31-33" and as "31 and 33" S. Front St., references to two lots beneath the building. The address was renumbered as 327-329 S. Front St. NW in 1912 (same address through sale of the business in 1921).

A related note: The family name developed from the original Jakób-owicz (hyphens added) to Jakob-owics (1844-1858)... Jacob-owicz (1858)... Jacob-o-ice (1859-1872)... and Jackob-oice (1873 forward, eventually pronounced "Jacko-boyce").

One can see a vintage, West Side Iron Works bandsaw in the "Furniture City" section of the Grand Rapids Public Museum – and several others on the Vintage Machinery website ([www.VintageMachinery.org](http://www.VintageMachinery.org)).

Bandsaws and other machines may exhibit clues as to the general date of manufacture....

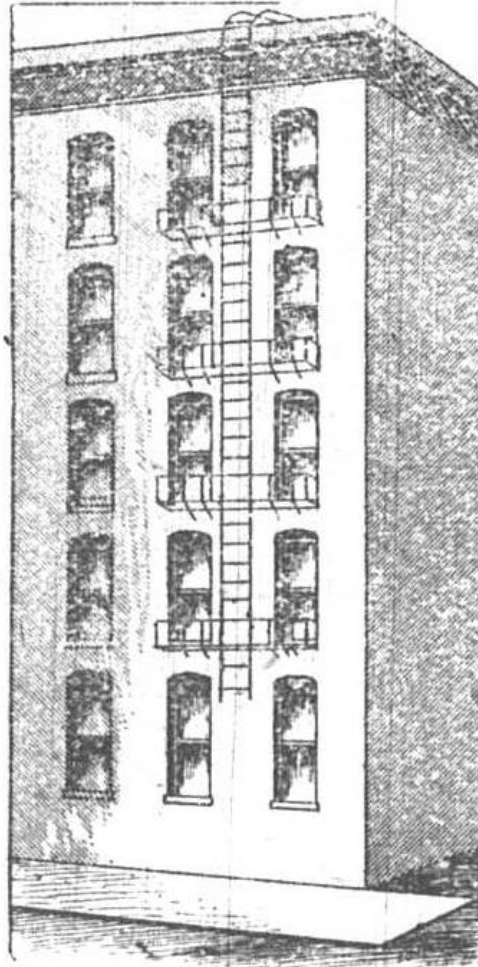
For example, a metal tag with a number likely indicates the 1<sup>st</sup> bandsaw produced, or the 205<sup>th</sup> produced (as tag number 205 on the bandsaw in the Grand Rapids Public Museum). This bandsaw was probably manufactured in 1898 or later, as indicated by a triangular label marked "J & G." This label likely represents the Jackoboice & Robert M. Gleason partnership – which was first listed in the 1898 city directory and lasted until at least 1908 (maybe until sale of the West Side Iron Works business in 1921).

Unfortunately, we do not know when the first bandsaw was produced, when the last bandsaw was produced, nor the total number of bandsaws produced. Some conjecture? One could estimate that production started circa 1868 (when Joseph *built* a machine shop) and ended 50 years later circa 1918 (Vintage Machinery reports, "So far as we can tell, they had stopped making their woodworking machinery line by the end of World War I."). With production of about five bandsaws per year, about 50 per decade, the shop would have produced a total of about 250 bandsaws. Based on conjecture, bandsaw #205 would have been produced circa 1909.

Joseph Jackoboice and son were also known for their iron fire escapes – ladder systems with balcony platforms placed at building windows. Little did they imagine that many of these fire escapes would continue to adorn buildings in downtown Grand Rapids through the year 2016.

# JACKOBOICE'S FIRE ESCAPE.

Safe and  
Simple.



MORE THAN ONE HUNDRED  
IN USE IN GRAND RAPIDS.

MANUFACTURED BY

## J. JACKOBOICE,

31-33 S. Front Street,

Grand Rapids, Mich.

## JACKOBOICE's FIRE ESCAPES and PAST, PRESENT LOCATIONS

Joseph's contemporaries, in 1889, described his work in the book, *The City of Grand Rapids: Sketches of the Principal Industries and Business Houses* (published by B.F. Conrad & Co.): "WEST SIDE IRON WORKS - Joseph Jackoboice, proprietor, manufacturer of band saws, saw arbors, shafting, pulleys and general mill work, and of the Jackoboice fire escape and balcony; office and works 31 and 33 South Front street. Nearly a score and a half years ago Mr. Jackoboice laid the foundation of his present profitable and conspicuous enterprise, whose trade extends throughout Michigan, Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana. The manufactory occupies a two story building, 50 x 92 feet, the plant being complete in all mechanical accessories and an adequate force of competent workmen being employed. The productions of the works are as above noted, and all lines manufactured are recognized for their invariable excellence. A specialty is made of the Jackoboice fire escapes and balconies, which are substantial and ornamental in design, and not excelled by any other device answering a similar purpose. ***These escapes and balconies have been adjusted to Sweet's Hotel, The Livingston, Leonard's refrigerator factory, the Blodgett Block, the Houseman building, Clarendon and St. Denis Hotels, and many other of the finest architectural structures in the city,*** always giving perfect satisfaction, and proving useful in any emergency. Mr. Jackoboice is a native of Poland, is a pioneer of the Valley City, having located here in 1855, and he is a practical machinist of fifty years' experience. The gentleman, in the conduct of his business, is honorable and reliable, and enjoys a high standing in the respect and esteem of the community."

**Sweet's Hotel** (built 1868, replaced by Pantlind Hotel circa 1913-16)... the **Livingston Hotel** (built 1887, burned 1924)... the **Houseman building** (razed in 1966)... and the **Clarendon Hotel** (renamed Charlevoix in 1912, razed by 1923) have vanished into history. Also gone: the pre-1923, Morton House Hotel with its fire escapes - clearly seen in a photo in the book, *Grand Rapids – Community and Industry*, by T.R. Dille, 2006, pg. 102. See another fire escape on pg. 17, directly across the river from the West Side Iron Works. Other photo highlights include the West Side Canal, pg. 97... and the roof of the West Side Iron Works, pg. 117.

Via e-mail in early 2012, the Grand Rapids Public Library's Local History Department suggested that the only abovementioned buildings still standing might be the following:

1. **Leonard's refrigerator factory** consisted of two adjoining buildings built in the late 1800s. According to the public library, the factory was at "Ferry and Ottawa," a corner "right across Fulton from the Arena," which now "appears to be new buildings, parking ramps for Arena patrons." The abovementioned book, *Grand Rapids – Community and Industry*, provides more description and direction to the original location of Leonard's refrigerator factory. These Leonard "buildings were located on Ottawa Avenue, between Louis and Fulton Streets, and remain today, though completely renovated and refaced, as office space" [*apparently now "combined" as the Huntington Building*]. In the book's 1911 photo, on page 32, one can barely see a fire escape on the left side of the lower building (this fire escape is gone today).

2. As for the circa 1880s **St. Denis Hotel**, its address post-1912 would have been 41-45 Monroe, but it is "likely no longer standing" [*replaced by (or renamed?) the Gilbert Building in 1891*]. From personal inspection along old Monroe Street – renamed Monroe Center - the site now appears to be entirely covered by a Grand Rapids Police Department building. Next door, address numbers start at 47.

3. The **Blodgett Block** at "South Ionia, near depot, 13-23 Ionia SW (1912 address numbers); the buildings that are there look pretty old, may be the same."

Upon personal inspection during a visit to Grand Rapids in 2012, it was easy to see and confirm that the buildings of the Blodgett Block are the originals – and there are two fire escapes. See the south end of this city block in the following photo....

**The Blodgett Block (photo and caption by Cornerstone Architects, 2012)**



Originally constructed in 1883 as a Grocer’s Warehouse along the freight train line, the exterior utilized ornate trim, attractive window proportions and a handsome cornice, while the interior remained suited strictly for warehousing. This building, renovated in 1999, now houses a restaurant on the first floor and office spaces on the four upper levels.

Invited to this corner “Hopcat” restaurant for dinner on the night of August 14, 2012 (at the intersection of Ionia and Weston), Mike Jackoboice returned a few days later to inspect the pictured fire escape (manufactured by the West Side Iron Works). He watched a maintenance worker lower its perfectly functional, bottom ladder. A plaque on this corner building states that it is in the National Register of Historic Places. It is the “Lemon & Wheeler Building. Erected 1883. Architect William G. Robinson.”

From the Hopcat’s corner door, look to the right and up to the roof. Note the convergence of two separate buildings, one higher. The higher one is the actual Blodgett building; near its roof one sees large, raised lettering: “BLODGETT A.D. 1886”. To its right, on the north end of the “Blodgett Block,” is another building described by raised lettering: “THE GUNN COMPANY 1885”. This building is at 7 Ionia and there is a fire escape on the back, west side. Stepping inside during renovation work, and enjoying a tour, Mike noticed old “garage doors” on the west side operated by *large pulleys* possibly manufactured by the West Side Iron Works.

Finally, back to the Hopcat restaurant, and directly across Ionia Avenue, there is a small parking lot. On its north side, there is a very old building with variously colored bricks giving the definite impression of 1800s vintage. On the back of this building there is a small fire escape in the style of West Side Iron Works (WSIW) fire escapes.

Also on Ionia Avenue, another WSIW-style fire escape was installed on the Union Railroad Depot/Station - built in 1900 and razed circa 1958-61 for a highway ramp.

Walking Ionia Avenue in May and August, 2012, Mike Jackoboice (Joseph's 53 year-old, g-g grandson) found another old fire escape on the Cornerstone Building at 89 Ionia (at intersection with Fountain Street). This fire escape, built in WSIW style, is a spiral staircase with balconies at the windows (in photo below, at left side of center building). The fire escape's thick iron was painted black, but one can see the rust of the years. Steketee's Department Store built the building in 1906. The vintage photo (circa 1930s) is from the website: MyCityofGrandRapids.info



A larger fire escape graces a building at Ionia and Pearl streets (following photo, by Nathan Umstead during "GRflickr photowalk, downtown Grand Rapids, 05-18-09," on [www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)). The YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) built this building and dedicated it in 1893 – when West Side Iron Works fire escapes were readily available. A 1907 photo of the front of this building is featured in the book, *Grand Rapids – Community and Industry*, pg. 99. The YMCA moved out in 1914. The interior was converted for office use and the building was renamed as the Federal Square Building. Naturally, when the YMCA built the building, it would have chosen



a comprehensive fire escape system to save its kids and teens from fire. Note the spiral and staircase ladders - connected to signature WSIW balconies at the smokeless windows.

Over a century later, West Side Iron Works products continue to serve.

And one might say: *Quality Machinery from 1840 through 2007 - by Jakóbowicz*



## MORE about the FAMILY'S FIRST HOMES on "the WEST SIDE"

Where was Joseph residing from 1855 to 1859? Possibly on the *east side* of the Grand River. He *worked* on the east side of the river until 1871. We know of only three residence addresses during Joseph's lifetime in downtown Grand Rapids. The first "address" is *invalid*...

1. A reference to "200" Broadway as a Jackoboice address could only apply to the period of 1855-1859. This would have been just north of the northeast corner of Broadway and Sixth Street. However, according to the Local History Department of the Grand Rapids Public Library, historical street records do not show the existence of a "200" Broadway: "The address is not listed in the 1912 [*city*] directory (which provides a cross-reference to the [*street number*] changes). It gives the following addresses (post-1912 addresses in parentheses): 194 (730), 196 (740), **198** (744), **206** (746), 208 (752)." There is a likely explanation behind this "mystery address" of "200" Broadway. Someone apparently misread a 1941 Sanborn Fire Insurance map that shows a streetside measurement of 200 (feet) – which happened to be between Joseph's former house sites at 22 Broadway and 52 Broadway.

We know that Joseph lived at 22 and at 52 Broadway on "the West Side" from 1860 to 1899....

2. Joseph "was one of the oldest settlers upon the West Side" and *might* have moved into the house at 22 Broadway (platted since 1843) when he settled in the city (by 1855). Or he might have taken up residence there prior to his wedding in 1858 (renting or buying; unfortunately, there are no known property deed records for that era). Fortunately, the 1860 Federal Census *and* surviving city directories place him at 22 Broadway from 1860 to 1873/74. The 1873-74 city directory is the last to list and locate the family at 22 Broadway. This city directory also shows the *permanent* surname change from "Jacoboice" to "Jackoboice." One can see a hand-drawn sketch of the 22 Broadway house in the 1868 picture map of the city of Grand Rapids. The 2-story house stretched along the east side of Broadway, half-way between Bridge Street and First Street (the house apparently stood *across* lots 6 and 9 of "Block 21" inside the city block). In the year 1912, the 22 Broadway address was renumbered as 420 Broadway Avenue. One hundred years later, on May 20, 2012, former Grand Rapids residents Sandra (Sandy) Jackoboice (75) of Florida, and son Edward Michael (53) of New Mexico, found the old site silent – a vacant lot.

3. Driving about a block to the north, one wonders if Joseph chose to live on Broadway as a nostalgic reminder of his 2.5 years in New York City. The next home address at 52 Broadway was the one most often associated with Joseph's family. The house was between First and Second streets, a bit more than half-way along the east side of Broadway. The house was on Lot 6 of "Block 16" as recorded in Joseph's 1899 estate/probate papers... and as seen online at [www.dleg.state.mi.us/platmaps/sr subs.asp](http://www.dleg.state.mi.us/platmaps/sr subs.asp) On this website, type "Scribner" into the Search box for the Village Plat map of 1843/1847. Facing the street, this house was first listed as the family residence in the 1874-75 city directory. Joseph lived here the remaining 25 years of his life. He died here at age 74 in 1899. City directories show that his widow Frances Rasch Jackoboice and surviving children Edward Joseph and Clara stayed at this address until 1904. In 1905 the family moved closer to the West Side Iron Works shop - to a large, stately house at Mt. Vernon & Allen.

The old house at 52 Broadway was evidently demolished by 1912, as this address was non-existent when the city changed street address numbers in 1912. We know that 53 Broadway, across the street, became 517. One map indicates that 52 Broadway became 516 - when Joseph's lot became part of the site of a 1900s church convent (eventually demolished). The GRPL Local History Department confirmed that the convent was at 516 Broadway and said it covered former house addresses 46-52. On May 20, 2012, a neighbor pointed to the exact site of the old convent – now a flower garden south of/adjacent to the church parish hall/gym/activities center, and



a bit north of the rectory. The former address 46 would have covered the south-towards-middle portion of the flower garden. Address 52 would have covered the north-towards-middle portion of the garden (near current gym, see photo below). Photo by longtime Grand Rapids resident, Sandy Jackoboice, in 2012:



Another historical note: the current rectory is on the site of the original, wood frame church (1857-73) where Joseph and Frances married in 1858.

Their son Edward Joseph married Helen Hake in 1906. They started a family of six children at the previously mentioned house at 106 Mt. Vernon and Allen (SE corner). Oral tradition has it that Edward Joseph purchased this house from pioneer John Ball (as in John Ball Park). The 1907 church census listed address numbers 47 (for widow Frances) and 49 (for Edward Joseph and Helen) on the Allen Street side of the house. As the city renumbered addresses in 1912, the 1916 and 1920 city directories listed the address of this house as "136 Mt. Vernon av NW." Edward Joseph was once described as one of "the best known mechanical men and expert machinists in the city" (*Grand Rapids Press*, Cadillac car ad, 10/10/1903). He died in May, 1935. His widow Helen maintained ownership of their house until she died in 1952. Daughters Frances and Ruth Jackoboice continued living at Mt. Vernon & Allen. The house was demolished for downtown construction of the US-131

freeway in 1962. For the rest of their lives, Frances (1911-1998) and Ruth (1909-1995) fondly remembered the home where they grew up with sisters Helen (1909-1936) and Rita (1914-1920), and brothers Edward William and George Adolphe Jackoboice.

A variety of historical city maps are available at the Internet website: [mygrandrapids.info](http://mygrandrapids.info) As well, the Grand Rapids Public Library's Local History Department is always available for research inquiries... and their helpful staff will scan and e-mail documents and maps or segments of maps. For their expertise, phone (616) 988-5400 or e-mail: [localhis@grpl.org](mailto:localhis@grpl.org). For more family information (Jakóbowicz, Jakubowicz, Jacoboice, Jackoboice) see Ancestry.com and Genealogybank.com. For example, the latter has a 1/11/1912, *Grand Rapids Press* article on a "spirited discussion" about Grand River flood protection. It reported, "Edward J. Jackoboice did not like the flood protection plans which provide for a wall on the dockline twenty feet or more outside of the west side canal embankment. He thought the river should not be narrowed and suggested that the wall should be along the west bank of the canal, which would leave the river at its present width." This photograph, from the Grand Rapids City Archives, was taken from the east bank of the Grand River in 1935 (the year Edward Joseph died and the year Edward James was born - during the Great Depression). At right, on the West Side, one sees the West Side Iron Works schoolhouse/machine shop - which in 1931 became known as the Monarch Road Machinery Company. So the story continues - in another PDF entitled, "Monarch Hydraulics History and Jackoboice Surname History."





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## HONEST AND INDUSTRIOUS.

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### Joseph Jackaboice, a Wealthy Polish Citizen Is Dead.

Joseph Jackaboice, seventy-five years old, one of the representative Polish citizens of the city, died at his home at 52 Broadway street Wednesday night. Mr. Jackaboice was born at Kaliz, Poland, on March 16, 1824. He came to America in 1852, and to this city in 1854. He was married to Miss Frances Rasch in 1858. Ten children were born to them, of whom only two, Edward and Clara survive. Both of these live at the family home, 52 Broadway. Mr. Jackaboice was the sole owner of the West Side Iron Works, had a half interest in the Clarendon hotel, and owned considerable real estate. He was widely known among the business men of the city and had an enviable reputation for business honor, honesty and reliability.

INVENTORY.

COUNTY OF KENT--SS.

A True and Perfect Inventory, of all the Real Estate, Goods and Chattels, Rights and Credits of Joseph Jackoboice late of Franklin in the County of Kent deceased, which are by law to be administered, made by Edward J. Jackoboice Administrator ~~of said deceased~~, That is to say:

Brick Building <sup>and Lot</sup> 137 - 145 Canal St  
 being part of Clarendon Hotel  
 Machine 63 including 2d lot 31-33 So. Front St.  
 Machinery as per inventories of Jan 1st 1875  
 Dwelling House 2d lot 52 Broadway  
 Household goods

Brick Building and Lot 137-145 Canal St  
 described as follows: Piece of land com. on  
 N. line of Canal St 46 ft N. of S. line of top  
 the N. along N. line of Canal St 104 ft th.  
 N. 14 ft. to Canal St. along E. Bank  
 of Canal to a point 46 ft N. of S. line  
 of Sd. lot 1 th. E. to beg. being the N. 14 ft  
 of lot 2 and S. 90 ft of E. ft part of Sec  
 24 - Town 7 - Range 11  
 Kent Plat.

12.00 \$18000.00

Frame Buildings and Lots 31-33 S. Front St.  
 described as follows: Com. at S. West corner  
 of Front and Bowers Sts. th. running N.  
 on Bowers St. 92 ft to an alley, th. S.  
 on said alley 48 ft. th. E. 92 ft to  
 Front St. thence N. on Front St to beg.  
 Being on Block 9. Known as Vacated  
 Lot 1 & N. 15 ft Vacated Lot 4 Commerce Plat  
 Commerce Plat Block 9 Vacated Lots

500.00 5000.00

Machinery as per inventories of Jan 1st 1875

1874.31

Dwelling house and Lot 82 Broadway  
 described as follows: Lot 6 Block 16  
 described as follows: Lot 6 Block 16

250.00 2500.00

## **ABOUT the AUTHOR (info for obit): Edward Michael (Mike) Jackoboice**

Mike Jackoboice (Jakóbowicz) dedicated his life to sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ, inspired by His words recorded at Luke 24:45-47. A longtime fisherman, Mike fished for trout, salmon and marlin – and for souls. Blessed to see “God’s country,” he enjoyed mountain majesty in the Alps, the Rockies, the Alaska Range, the Andes Range and the Himalayas.

Born in 1958 and raised in Grand Rapids, Michigan, in high school Mike played football on a championship team, and always enjoyed his old friends from Forest Hills Central (Class of 1977). During college years (in Wisconsin), he worked one summer in Washington, D.C.... and another summer rafting and wrangling for the White Grass Ranch in Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

Graduating in 1981 with a Journalism degree, Mike drove the Alaska Highway to adventure. During North Slope oil exploration on the frozen Arctic Ocean, a stalking polar bear inspired a career change. Mike worked as a radio news director covering western Alaska, often by bush plane (mid-1980s). He interviewed governors, celebrities (James Michener, Lynn Swann, Norman Vaughan)... and dog mushers along the Iditarod Trail and in the Brooks Range. He returned to the oil industry as chef and skipper of a VIP cabin cruiser in the Exxon Valdez oil spill cleanup.

Enjoying six months of prison ministry in Asia (1988-89), Mike ranged from Kathmandu, Nepal to Kashmir, India. He then served at a Christian radio station in Bethel, Alaska. Continuing in radio ministry and missions, he moved to South America in 1990. In Ecuador he served as interim, international news director at HCJB World Radio. Then to Chile as a mission journalist, he was based in Santiago with SIM (Serving In Mission) for seven years. Between assignments to Peru, Bolivia and Argentina, he served in radio, rehab and jail ministries. Living in the rural town of Los Andes (1992-97), Mike opened “Biblioteca Cristiana” - a library/video/music outreach.

Moving to Las Cruces, NM (1997-2015...), Mike worked for the federal government and at the Grand Canyon. He enjoyed jail ministries in New Mexico, Texas and old Mexico. He distributed Christian literature (and Spanish gospel tracts, booklets) via Bible correspondence ministry too. Mike shared the message of repentance, faith and salvation seen in Acts 20:21. And he always encouraged reading the New Testament: “Read a page a day – and enjoy living it.”

Affiliations included Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF)... the International Miners Mission (IMM)... the Pacific Garden Mission (for the homeless) in Chicago... the Polish Heritage Society of Grand Rapids... the Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry (FOI)... the El Paso (Texas) Holocaust Museum... and the American Society for Yad Vashem (supporting Israel’s Holocaust facility).

With 1850s roots in Grand Rapids, Mike compiled a 280-page, Jackoboice/Jakóbowicz family history book highlighting the West Side Iron Works and the Monarch Road Machinery Company (a.k.a. Monarch Hydraulics, Inc.). During seven years of surname research, he discovered hundreds of Jewish and other victims of the World War II Holocaust named Jakóbowicz, Jakobowicz and Jakubowicz. Mike prepared various summaries for the Polish Genealogical Society of Michigan... for family websites and for [www.VintageMachinery.org](http://www.VintageMachinery.org)... and for the Grand Rapids Public Library’s Local History Department (Special Collections archives).

Studying the Bible from 1984-87, Mike was the first in five generations to leave Roman Catholicism for biblical Christianity (moved by the verses at John 14:6 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-21). While enjoying personal ministries, he attended Bible-centered, non-denominational churches and Baptist churches. Please consider sending memorial contributions to Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) - an international Christian ministry. Supporting MAF, you can fly food, clothing, medicine, Bibles, missionaries and disaster relief supplies into remote villages... and fly villagers out for medical care. See photos and more information at [www.maf.org](http://www.maf.org), or phone 1-800-359-7623. Thank you!



**Mike catching trout in the Talkeetna River, Alaska (1989). Photo by brother Tim Jackoboice.**



