

**Above: The O.J. Burnham Building at 187 East Court St.
Below: Oliver J. Burnham. Richland County History Room photos.**

O.J. Burnham Building 182 East Court Street - 1889

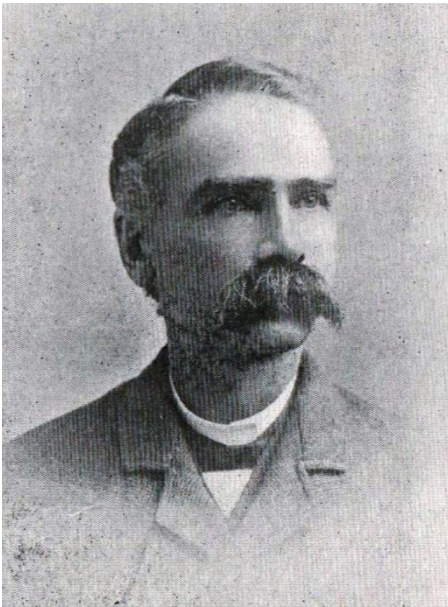
Characterized by a projecting metal cornice ornamented by large and small brackets, medal medallions and a rectangular shaped pediment, this Italianate brick (now painted) three-bay former produce store is further characterized by ornamental iron pilasters flanking the four long, narrow windows placed in a recessed panel on the upper story of the façade. A plain cornice with end brackets extend across the remodeled storefront.

As dairying gained importance in Richland County agriculture after 1890, the creamery and the related produce and poultry business acquired considerable importance in a local trade center such as Richland Center. John Scott, a produce merchant, and O.J. Burnham, a general merchant, both participated in the business during much of their careers. Scott and Tanberg from 1884 to 1886, Scott from 1886 to sometime between 1889 and 1892, Burnham and Logan from 1887 to sometime between 1889 and 1892, and Burnham and Scott from at least 1892 purchased, reworked and resold farm butter and produce. In 1903, John Scott became the owner of the business in 1913 when Burnham retired and

remained until 1918. O.J. Burnham erected the O.J. Burnham Building during his partnership with Logan in 1889 as part of a creamery and produce company that included a cold storage building attached to the rear of the building. This building contained a butter packing and cold storage section for produce, butter and eggs. The office and retail store were located at the front of the building. Burnham used his former building, which had stood north of Tom's Furniture Store on Church Street for his poultry business.

Burnham and Scott both retailed and wholesaled their products. By the late nineteenth century, the business shipped poultry to large markets including Chicago and New York. In 1902, Burnham and Scott acquired a creamery and five skimming stations. In 1910, they moved their creamery to the rear of the O.J. Burnham Building. They added churns, wizard cogitators, and a pasteurizer as well as a Babcock testing area. The brick creamery/cold storage building was demolished along with the building on Church Street and now serves as a parking lot.

Oliver J. Burnham was a member of the well-known firm of Burnham & Scott, creamery, and butter and egg dealers of Richland Center. He was born in Addison County, Vt., Oct. 20, 1842, and died Sept. 22, 1918, at the age of 76 and was the eldest son of Wolcott H. and Lydia (Johnson) Burnham, the former of whom was a native of Vermont and the latter



of New Hampshire. The names of the other siblings were William A., who relocated in South Dakota; Lola, a resident of the same state, and Pearlle, who was killed in a runaway at the age of six years. The father followed the occupation of an iron worker during his residence in Vermont, but after coming to Wisconsin he gave his entire attention to farming. In 1849, he joined the crowd of gold seekers and spent two years in the California fields. Returning then to Vermont, in 1855, he migrated with his family to Wisconsin and settled in Sauk County, where he followed farming until 1873 when he returned to California, dying there in 1886. The mother then resided in South Dakota with her son, William A., where she died, July, 1906. O.J. Burnham was educated in the public schools of his native state, and was thirteen years old when the family migrated to Wisconsin. Two years later he began teaching in Sauk County, and pursued that occupation in that county and also Richland County, farming during the summer seasons, until the outbreak of the Civil War. Then, on September 23, 1861, he enlisted at Lone Rock in the sixth battery, Wisconsin Light Artillery, and

served with that command until discharged in 1864, at the expiration of his term of enlistment. After the surrender of Island No. 10, the battery was occupied in Garrison duty until May 17, 1862, when it was ordered to and took position in the advance of the forces attacking Corinth, Miss. At the battle of Corinth, Oct. 4, 1862, the men were exposed on open ground without protection of any kind, and the casualties in the battery on that occasion were reported as five killed and twenty-one wounded. It took part in the sharp skirmish at Fort Gibson, also in the battle at Willow Springs, Raymond and Jackson and at Champion's Hill. It then took position at Vicksburg, where it was constantly engaged in the siege until the surrender. It was then stationed at Memphis, Tenn., for a time, after which it was transferred to Chattanooga and in the movement on Missionary Ridge it had two guns in an important position. It also participated to some extent in the Atlanta campaign and on Oct. 10, 1864, Burnham was mustered out of the service.



Oliver J. Burnham - second from left, back row. Sixth Wisconsin Battery reunion 1897 at the Burnham Home 361 North Park Street. Richland County History Room photo.

He then returned to his home in Sauk County and resumed farming, which he followed until the fall of 1871, when, on account of ill health he again took up the occupation of a teacher. He served as principal of the high school at Lone Rock two years, and then changed his location to Richland Center, where he served in the same capacity in the schools there for three years. He then engaged in the drug business at Richland Center, following that line of the mercantile trade until 1887. The firm of Burnham & Scott bought and shipped butter, eggs, poultry and cheese. Burnham was also involved in fruit growing and farming and had a farm of 450 acres adjoining the city limits of Richland Center, possessing among other attractive features one of the finest apple orchards in the county.

Burnham was married on Sept. 20, 1870, to Mary A. Strickland, a daughter of Judge Strickland, pioneer resident of Richland County, who settled there in in 1852. Judge Strickland was born in Massachusetts, and resided in Ohio, and in 1852 was appointed judge for the judicial circuit. The maiden name of the mother of Mrs. Burnham was Martha Emma Brigden, a native of Ohio, and she was a niece of Senator Benjamin F. Wade. In politics Burnham was affiliated with the Republican Party and served as mayor of Richland Center.



O.J. Burnham House, 361 North Park Street, 1894. The popularity of the Queen Anne style in the nineteenth century coincided with Richland Center's economic boom period that began in the late 1870s and continued through the 1880s into the 1890s. This brick two story house is characterized by a three story conical roofed tower and a wrap-around spindle porch with turned post topped by bracket capitals and gabled entrance. Stained glass and elaborate interior woodwork further ornament the house. Featuring a stone lintel above the door inscribed "1894," this exceptional house was built of local brick by contractor Thomas Cholerton for the prominent local merchant, O.J. Burnham