

1720 N. Sedgwick's storefront served as the Chicago branch of the Steckman Studio of Music. St. Michael's Church steeple stands in the background. (Courtesy of the Chicago History Museum, photographer John McCarthy, 1988)

The Jacob Kaufmann Storefront 1720 (Formerly 524) N. Sedgwick Street – circa 1867

By Diane Gonzalez, Chicago House Histories

September 11, 2020

THE BEGINNING

The handsome, frame storefront at 1720 (formerly 524) Sedgwick has housed many Chicagoans and numerous businesses since 1867. But the area's history starts even earlier. A few years after the September 1833 signing of the Treaty of Chicago, immigrants began settling on the near-north side, then called **North Town**. Many were Germans who set up shops or operated small farms.

Chicago was incorporated in 1837, and the area north of North Avenue and west from Sedgwick was annexed to

the City in 1853. The year prior, **St. Michael's Church** had opened to serve Chicago's German Catholics. Located two blocks from 524 Sedgwick, St. Michael's became the heart of North Town. In 1869, the frame church was replaced by a handsome brick edifice. Two years later, the **1871 Great Chicago Fire** tore through North Town leaving only some exterior walls of St. Michael's standing. Not only did neighbors rebuild their church, but they also constructed new living quarters for themselves as the fire spared little of North Town.



The Kaufmann Family — 1867-1902

JACOB KAUFMANN, FIRST OWNER

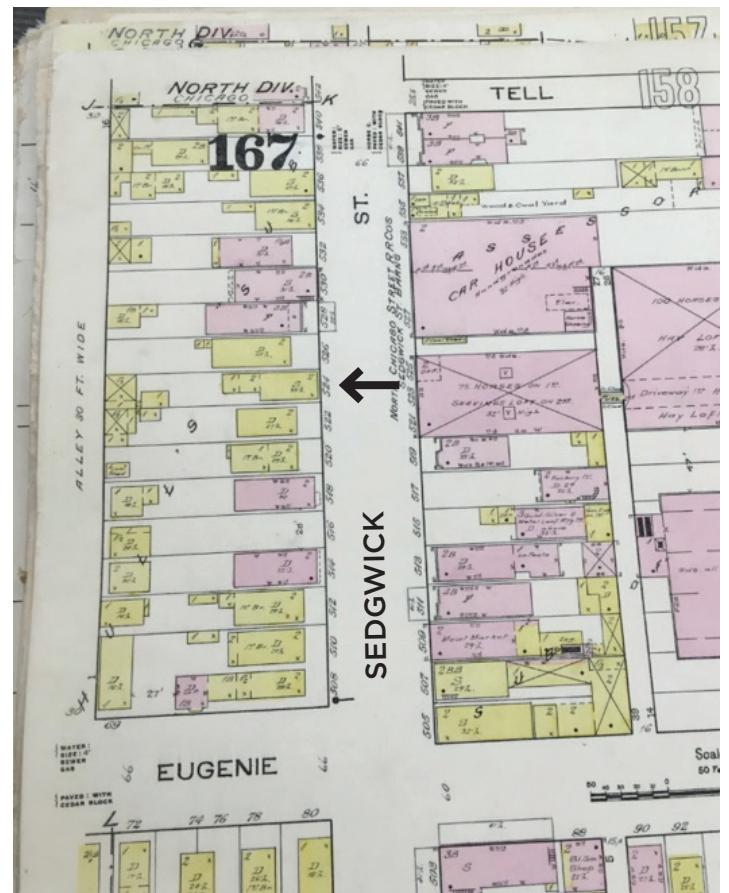
Jacob Kaufmann arrived in Chicago about 1854. Born in Prussia in 1829, Kaufmann immigrated when he was 25 years old with his wife Anna, also Prussia-born, age 28. He was the first identified occupant of 524 Sedgwick and appeared in the 1867 Chicago City Directory as a teamster. By the 1870 Directory, he was listed as an “expressman” (an expressman refers to anyone who has the duty of packing, managing, and ensuring the delivery of any cargo) or carter at 524 Sedgwick.

According to census records, Jacob & Anna had two children, both born after their arrival to Chicago. Peter was born in 1859 and his sister, Anna, was born in 1861. In 1871, the **Chicago Fire** destroyed their home. They must have rebuilt immediately, perhaps with the free materials the **Chicago Relief and Aid Society** provided. Likely they helped with the rebuilding of St. Michael's, where they were parishioners. In the 1880 U.S. Census, Jacob's profession was listed as coal dealer. Across the alley (later named Eugenie Court and then Fern Court) from 524 Sedgwick sat a coal yard. Possibly Jacob worked there or he may have owned or leased the lot. The same census revealed Jacob's son was employed as a constable and his daughter worked as a servant.

The House: What the house looked like in 1880 is unknown. It is questionable whether the storefront existed then, but in the 1886 Robinson Atlas, the frame house abutted the street with no front yard. Absence of a front yard is typical of a commercial building where operating space is a premium. But in North Town, some residences also lacked a front yard. In 1886, a small frame rear building also stood on the lot. By 1892, the Atlas revealed two rear buildings: one was a stable, the other was a smaller, unlabeled frame outbuilding or shed.

The Family: Jacob naturalized in 1858. In the 1888 voter registration it was noted that son Peter was residing next door at 522 Sedgwick (today's 1718 N. Sedgwick). Peter, perhaps searching for a perfect occupation or being a man of many talents, had a variety of occupations over the years: constable (1880 Census), furniture store owner in 524 Sedgwick (1885-1893), cigar shop owner (1890), and police officer (1891).

In the 1900 U.S. Census, Jacob & Anna had been joined in their Sedgwick home by their daughter Anna and her husband, Henry Hoever, who was a presser in a tailor shop. Jacob passed away in 1902, two years after his Anna.



The envelope of 524 Sedgwick was shown in the 1892 Rascher Fire Insurance Atlas. The yellow color designated “frame construction” while the x mark at the rear of the property indicated a stable. Pink = Brick Structures.

OWNER ANNA KAUFMANN HOEVER, 1902-1903

The Kaufmann house changed owners then, but it remained in the family. According to the Recorder of Deeds Index, daughter Anna and her husband, Henry, purchased it in 1902. Likely, Anna bought out her brother Peter who would have been the other heir.

OWNER ANDREW GLEIXNER, 1903-1906

Anna sold the house almost immediately in 1903, to Andrew Gleixner. The price was \$2,500. On September 9, 1903, Gleixner pulled a permit for a one and a half-story brick barn on the lot. His family owned a construction company, so the project was hopefully well-done and timely. Gleixner was a tailor at 524 Sedgwick. Perhaps the new building was rental income and or storage. Although Gleixner sold the property in 1906, in the 1907 City Directory, he still operated his shop in the Sedgwick storefront.

Another 524 occupant was Essay Wilson, a Republican election judge and a barber. Perhaps it was a shared shop serving North Town folks needing alterations as well as a shave and a haircut?



OWNER NOT IDENTIFIED, 1906-1911

More research is needed as the next owner was not identified. **In 1909, Chicago's street numbering system changed, and 524 Sedgwick became 1720 North Sedgwick, its address today.** The Sedgwick building was first identified as a store in the 1910 Atlas.

The Daniggelis Family — 1911-2006

OWNER NICK DANIGGELIS

In 1911, long-time Old Town resident Richard Daniggelis' grandfather, Nick Daniggelis, bought 1720 Sedgwick for an unknown amount. In the U.S. 1920 Census, the occupants of 1720 included Nick, his wife Adina (Athena), sons John (Richard's father) and Sam, and daughter Tuli (Esther). Nick was employed as an expressman at a commission house.

Richard recalled that Greek produce-men worked for his grandfather. They drove the horses and carts from the stable behind the house. **In 1929, the stock market crashed, and the St. Valentine's Day massacre occurred about five blocks north of 1720.**

In the 1930 U.S. Census, the Daniggelis Family household consisted of Nick, age 50, and wife Athena, age 39, and their three children John, Esther, and Sam. Nick was a proprietor of a grocery store while Athena worked as a saleslady. The children, ages 23, 16, and 14, were unemployed.

Richard recalled his mother's story of arriving at 1720 Sedgwick with baby Richard in her arms in 1938. She found the rear stable ablaze. The *Tribune* wrote that six families headed to the street, and the fire soon spread to 1718 and 1722 Sedgwick. No injuries were reported and six horses were also led to safety. Two years later in the 1940 U.S. Census were Nick, Athena, Esther, and Sam. Esther was a salesgirl in a department store, and Sam's job was civil engineer.

Richard lived in the house awhile as a child. Years later, Richard and his mother returned to reside on the first floor.

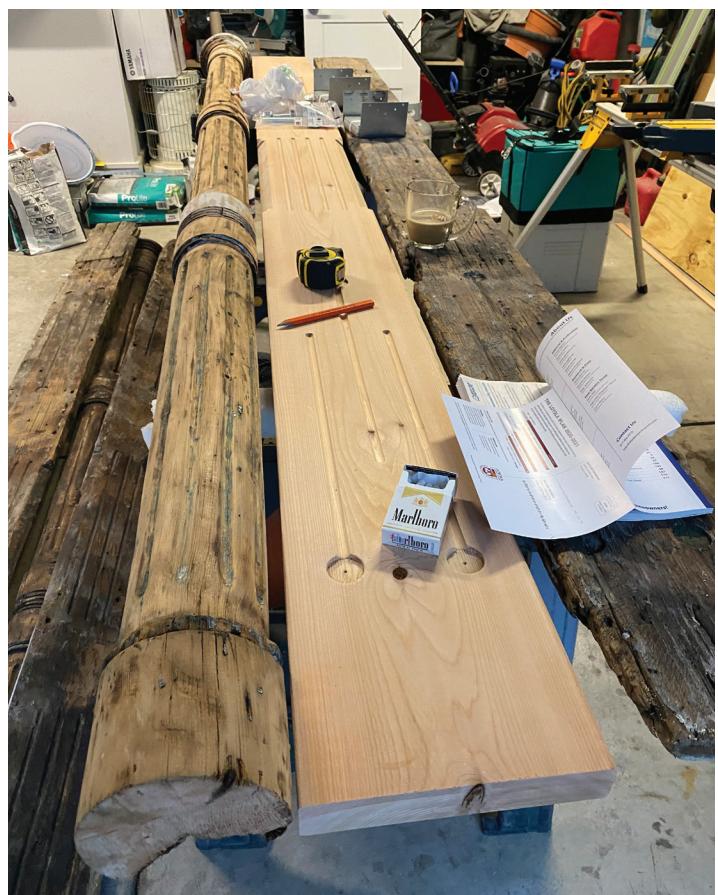
In 1977, the Old Town Triangle was designated a Chicago Landmark District and in 1984 the neighborhood was placed on the National Register of Historic Places. 1720 Sedgwick was given contributing status, the second highest category – meaning that a building adds to the District's architectural or historical importance. It cannot be demolished.

The Steckman Studio of Music made its Chicago home in the first-floor storefront from about 1980-1987 or longer. Richard admitted failing to make needed repairs to the studio, which then relocated (see cover photo).

Richard's family held the house until a few years ago, or for about a century! Richard, who had helped with the care of the house for years, became owner in the 1970's. Richard was in the toy business, but he built and invested in a suburban house after mortgaging his Sedgwick home. This proved unsuccessful, and Richard became behind with repairs at 1720 Sedgwick. In the early 1990s, he sold the stable portion of the lot fronting on Fern Court, but he kept the Sedgwick storefront.

OWNER JOSEPH YOUNES, 2006-Present

In 2006, attorney Joseph Younes purchased 1720 Sedgwick for \$833,000 in what Richard felt was an unfair transaction. As restoration of the property began in earnest in 2016, court hearings ensued when more of the structure was demolished than permitted in an historic district. Today, Younes has magnificently completed a renovation/restoration with the help of architect Burt Richmond, who resides next door at 1722 Sedgwick. After discovering pieces of earlier façade trim, Richmond commissioned a Russian craftsman to reproduce the original ornamentation. Today, 1720 Sedgwick's storefront has been carefully restored, and its interior renovated into a lovely three-story, single-family home with 4 bedrooms, 4 ½ baths and a full, finished basement!



Façade columns of 1720 N Sedgwick being replicated (photo by Burt Richmond, 2020)





1720 N. Sedgwick is striking today after its total renovation and restoration, from a first-floor storefront with second-floor apartment to a three-story, single-family home with a full, finished basement. St. Michael's Church bells toll every day reminding us all why we live in the Old Town Triangle. (photo by Diane Fitzgerald, 2020)

