



## History of the Building

### The American Shredder Corporation, 1903-1906

The American Shredder Corporation organized in March 1903. In May 1903, the American Shredder Corporation, which manufactured and sold “corn self-feeders, corn huskers and other machinery and supplies,” (1) signed a contract to purchase the property at 149 Waubesa Street.

### The Steinle Turret Machine Company, 1906-1934

The American Shredder Corporation, however, appears not to have been very successful. By July 1906, the firm had granted George A. Steinle an option to lease the plant for his new enterprise, the Steinle Turret Machine Company.(2) Steinle (1865-1939). Circa 1920, a narrow addition was constructed connecting the 1917-18 office building with the main block. The Steinle Turret Machine Company prospered through the 1920s, maintaining a workforce of 400. During the early 1930s, the firm faltered, and was conducting only limited business by 1934.(3) From at least 1939 until 1948, the Kleenaire Corporation, which sold air conditioning equipment, occupied the 1911 section of the Steinle Building (135 Waubesa Street).(4)

### The Kupfer Foundry, 1940-1985

On 12 October 1940, the Theodore Kupfer Iron Works acquired the property at 149 Waubesa Street. The next year they erected the 320-foot-long steel gantry behind it adjacent to the railroad tracks. That firm was established by Theodore Kupfer, Sr., in November 1894 at 629-31 East Mifflin Street. The Kupfer Iron Works originally produced feed cookers and steamers, sugar kettles, cauldrons, and ornamental ironwork, including the decorative iron details of the Mount Horeb Opera House (Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, extant, NRHP).(5) In the early twentieth century, the firm became a machine shop, and then gradually converted to fabricating structural steel after World War I.(6)

During its time at the Ironworks site, the Kupfer foundry was used to manufacture steel fabrications weighing up to five tons, including, in 1943, 30-foot long submarine engine mounting bases. During the 1960s Kupfer Ironworks fabricated and erected steel throughout the Midwest for bridges and overpasses for the United States Interstate system. It also fabricated steel for the Dane County Coliseum, the United Bank Building, the Concourse Hotel, the Wisconsin Telephone Building on West Washington Street (now Network 222), many University of Wisconsin buildings, and the award-winning Tenney Park footbridge.

By the early 1980s, the widespread use of prefabricated steel had reduced the demand for custom steel fabrication such as Kupfer produced. In 1983, the company’s workforce was cut from 200 to 40. Kupfer Iron Works closed in 1985.



### **Durline Scales and Manufacturing, 1990-2001**

The Steinle Building remained vacant until Durline Scales and Manufacturing purchased the property in 1990. This firm produced large truck scales in the building until November 2003, when the operation relocated to Rockford, Illinois.

### **From Industry to community**

### **Ironworks Development, LLC, 2001-2005**

In 2001, Ironworks Development, LLC acquired the building with a vision of creating commercial condominiums, but when the Atwood Community Center expressed interest in the site, they offered to sell it to the Center. We purchased the site at the end of 2005, thanks to an anonymous donation.