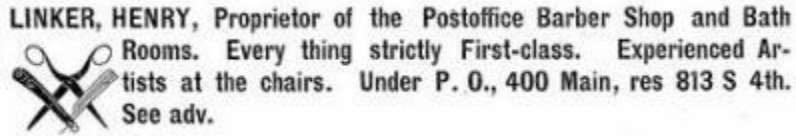


Victorian Turkish Baths Picture of the Month for October 2007

La Crosse, Wisconsin, USA:

Linker Brothers' Turkish baths



< Image: courtesy of the La Crosse Public Library Archives

Henry Linker, a German immigrant and one of a family of barbers, seems originally to have bought the Postoffice Barber Shop and Bath Rooms from a Mr J W Birney soon after arriving in La Crosse in 1881. An advertorial in the 1885-6 edition of *Philippi's directory of the City of La Crosse* (La Crosse, Wis.: Philippi, 1885), notes that at his shop, situated below the post office at 400 Main Street,

His Bath Rooms are the largest and best appointed in La Crosse, and are kept, as indeed is his whole establishment, most scrupulously neat and clean.

By 1890, Henry had been joined by brothers Charles and George and had moved to 329 Main Street on the corner with Fourth Street. Henry seems to have died shortly afterwards and by 1895 Charles and George had added Turkish baths to their establishment and were trading as Linker Bros (C & G Linker)

Barber shop and Turkish Bath Rooms. None but skilled artists employed and all work guaranteed to please the most fastidious. Plain and Turkish Baths.

Turkish baths had become popular in La Crosse by this time and there were already others in town. La Crosse Turkish Bath Institute had opened in 1885 and was still in existence; there was another new establishment just opened by J C Perkins a little further down Main Street at No.204; and the Turkish baths which were to open in an extension to St Francis Hospital ¹ in 1896 must have been well into the planning stage at this time.

The Linkers' Turkish baths must have been a success; by the turn of the century they had moved into a new building, the Linker Building, on the opposite side of Main Street at number 328.

LINKER BROS.

TURKISH BATH PARLORS

COMMODIOUS, STEAM HEATED, ELECTRICALLY
LIGHTED AND PERFECTLY VENTILATED
OPEN DAY AND NIGHT



TURKO-RUSSIAN, MEDICATED VAPOR, ELECTRIC,
SALT AND PLAIN BATHS AND MASSAGE.

ALL WATER USED IS FILTERED
MOST MODERN AND UP-TO-DATE

BARBER SHOP

IN THE NORTHWEST

NEW PHONES

Linker Bldg., Cor. Main and Fourth St. LA CROSSE, WIS.

< Image: courtesy of the La Crosse Public Library Archives

This advertisement (above) for Linker's Turkish Bath Parlors appeared in the 1905-1906 edition of *Philippi's directory*, and shows the new building as it must have appeared when it opened. Fourth Street is on the left of the image, and Main Street on the right.

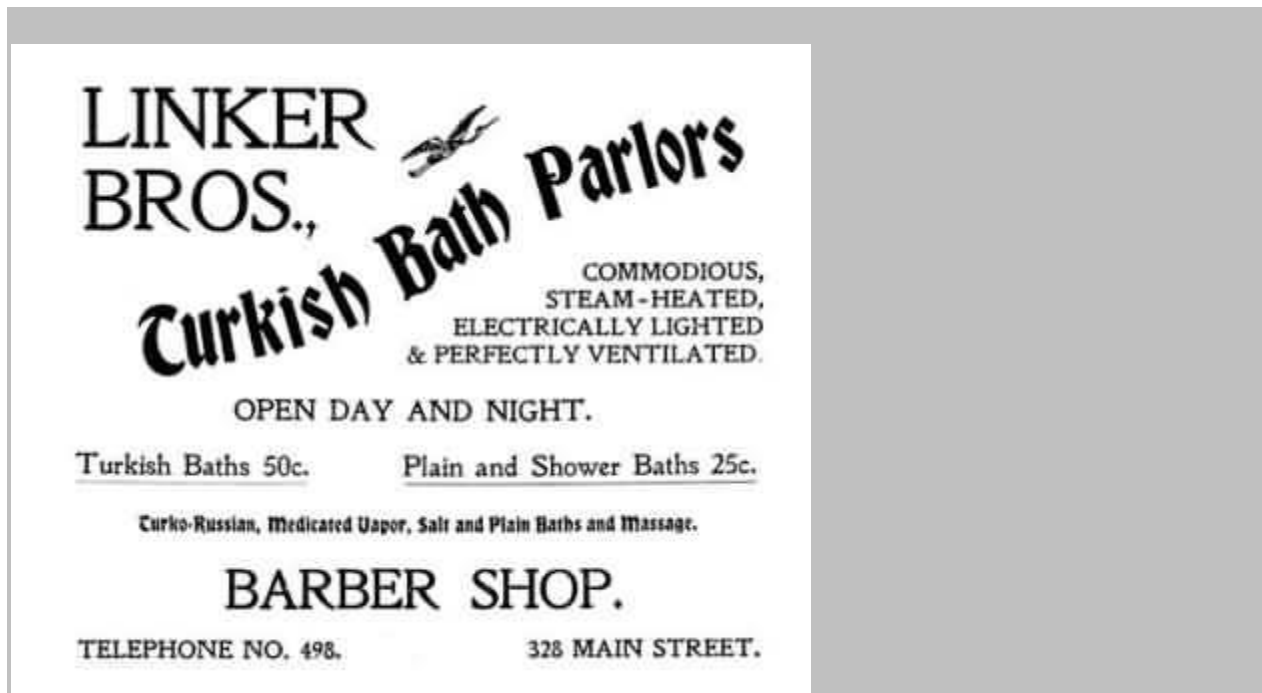


< Image: postcard detail of the Linker Building at 329 Main Street

In this image, the new building can be seen on the corner, this side of Fourth Street and just beyond the Lyric Theatre, looking down Main Street. Above the drink advertisement on the side of the building can be seen a rather smaller one for 'Linker Bros Turkish Baths'.

Interestingly, when Linkers moved to the new building, another Turkish bath was opened in their old premises by Messrs Weidner & Taggart. The brothers must have been confident that, as the newest facility in town, they had little to worry about.

Their prices were low compared with those in, for example, New York or London, and their advertisement in the 1900 edition of *Philippi's directory* (below), soon after they moved, made a point of mentioning the electric lighting and ventilation, and this probably gave them good reason to be confident.



< Image: courtesy of the La Crosse Public Library Archives

In 1916 the Linkers built another new building, The Linker Hotel, Barber Shop and Turkish Bath, further down Main Street at Nos.318-320. [2](#)



< The second Linker Building 1916—

Here they remained until the hotel came under a new management in 1937 and the lower floor and lobby were completely remodeled. By this time the Linkers had become more interested in property and industrial development and Turkish baths were now of little interest to them.

The postcard above is from the collection of the Victorian Turkish Baths Project

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