

John Bressmer Co.

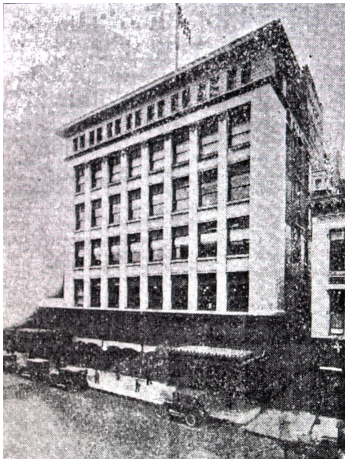
Posted on [October 31, 2013](#) by [editor](#)

The John W. Bressmer Co. was founded as a dry goods store in 1861 and later expanded into a full-fledged department store, selling men's and women's clothing, furniture and household items. With Myers Brothers, it was one of downtown Springfield's best-known retailers.

The founder, John Bressmer (1833-1914), came to Springfield in 1848, according to the [Portrait and Biographical Album of Sangamon County](#) (1891), "poor, unacquainted with the language and customs of America, but ready to do any honest work and keen to take the advantage of an opportunity to advance." Bressmer became a dry goods clerk in the mid-1850s, and after partnering with others for a decade, became sole owner of his own store in 1868.



John Bressmer



Bressmer building, 1937 (Springfield city directory, 1937)

For most of its existence, Bressmer's was at ~~613~~ 612 E. Adams St., although the store had to move into temporary quarters for 18 months following [a spectacular fire](#) on May 2, 1948. Among amenities in the rebuilt Bressmer's was the first escalator in a downstate department store.

Bressmer's was purchased by the Ayers Corp. in 1958 and then by Stix, Baer & Fuller in 1976, but continued to operate under its own name until 1979. The downtown store closed in 1980.

Bressmer-Baker House

The home John Bressmer built at 913 S. Sixth St. is on the [National Register of Historic Places](#). The Queen Anne-style home, now known as the [Bressmer-Baker](#)

[House](#), recently has been used as law offices.



Hat tip: To Doug Mayol of The Cardologist for pointing out SangamonLink's error regarding Bressmer's address.

More information: Department store summary, Sangamon Valley Collection at Lincoln Library. See also the Bressmer's entry in [The Department Store Museum](#).

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12 Responses to *John Bressmer Co.*



Lola says:

March 13, 2017 at 12:39 am

I have acquired a flow blue “Lincoln Home Springfield ILL. 1860” dinner plate marked Made in England for the John Bressmer Co. It has Etruria England Wedgwood also marked on it with the artist number and other markings that I cannot read. I am wondering what value can be placed on it. I have no way to attach pics.

[Reply](#)



Lola says:

March 13, 2017 at 12:43 am

This plate is dated 1910 and measures 9-1/8in.

[Reply](#)

Douglas Mayol says:

February 9, 2019 at 1:12 pm

How could it have spent most of its existence at 613 E Adams when it was almost always, except during the post-fire redo in 1948, on the south side of Adams Street...which is the even numbered side of the street? Did the address numbering flip?

[Reply](#)

editor says:

February 9, 2019 at 1:52 pm

Because I have fat fingers, Doug. Two of the great things about online publishing are (1) that readers can point out the editor's stupid errors and (2) that the editor, blushing, can then correct them. Thanks for pointing this out, and thanks for being a careful reader. My apologies to all.

[Reply](#)

Gary Kreppert says:

October 1, 2020 at 1:04 pm

I would really like to know the address or location of the Bressmer store after their fire. I have been told it was on Sixth Street in the same block as Rolands and Tobin Jewelry.

[Reply](#)

Douglas Mayol *says:*

May 9, 2021 at 4:11 pm

To the best of my knowledge, Bressmers was originally where the Lincoln Law Office is now, I think I confirmed that with Sangamon Valley Collection. The next location was directly across the street, where the Delano Law Office is now, and formerly Rolands. They moved to their big building mid-block after that, I think 1905...it is still on the cornerstone. Then, post fire, they were across the street at 629 E. Adams on the corner, until the restoration was completed. They operated from there until closing. I was a new Bressmer employee in early December 1978, just weeks before they changed the name to Stix, Baer & Fuller. I was one of the last, if not the last, employee hired under the Bressmer name. I worked there December 1978 – 1982.

[Reply](#)

Douglas Mayol *says:*

August 30, 2021 at 6:24 pm

Clarifying a point above... Bressmer's left the corner of 7th & Adams (629 E Adams) in 1949, and returned to the building at 612 E Adams after its restoration from the fire. It is from the 612 E Adams address they resumed operating until the store ultimately closed for good.

[Reply](#)

Elizabeth Rutherford *says:*

October 1, 2020 at 4:38 pm

Bressmer's moved across the street to 629 E. Adams in July 1948 and remained there until the renovated and remodeled building at 612 E. Adams opened on November 29, 1949.

[Reply](#)

editor *says:*

October 1, 2020 at 4:56 pm

Thanks, Elizabeth.

[Reply](#)

Douglas Mayol *says:*

May 9, 2021 at 4:13 pm

Correct!

[Reply](#)

Celine *says:*

August 30, 2021 at 4:54 pm

I went to a home furnishing auction on Williams Blvd. That at the time I believed it to be home of the family that owned Bressmers but it was around 1966 or '67

[Reply](#)

Douglas Mayol *says:*

August 30, 2021 at 6:08 pm

Bressmer's was actually owned by LS Ayres Department Store out of Indianapolis, IN since the late 1950s. It had been a long time since a Bressmer actually owned Bressmer's. LS Ayres operated it as a separate entity, still under the Bressmer name, and with its own buyers still. They all ended up being owned by ADG, Associated Dry Goods, and that is when Bressmers became Stix, Baer & Fuller. SB&F, out of St. Louis, was also owned by ADG. That Williams Blvd home may have belonged to one of the presidents of the Bressmer branch of Ayres, a few of whom went on to high positions in both Ayres and ADG.

[Reply](#)

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