

Calumet County Historical Society Museum

**Open Sundays June-September 1:00 to 4:00
or by appointment**



WM Bechlem Tailor

by Debbie Barany

Pictured here is a business that has pretty much disappeared from our modern society. However, at the turn of the century and up to mid-1950's, Tailoring was a prominent business in most well-established communities. Even after ready to wear clothing appeared in the fashion world, the local Tailor would still be called upon to make alterations, and keep the local citizens furnished with the latest fashions. Just look at old newspapers and you will see them full of fashion advertisements from local Tailor shops. A time when good quality, and long-lasting clothing was a necessity of life.

William Bechlem apprenticed as a tailor in Germany. Arriving in this country in 1879, opening his own business in 1886. Building a store located at 23 N. Madison St (the building in the upper picture), which is now the Chilton Upholstery shop. Then in 1909 moved his shop to 26 W. Main St. Chilton. (lower picture)

Bechlem Clothing Store became the premier clothing store in the county, selling a wide variety of clothing and custom-made outfits. William operated the store along with his sons, Otto and Edward. Bechlem Clothing finally closed its doors in 1968.

In the picture you will see Mr. William Bechlem dressed in his Odd Fellow Regalia. The Odd Fellows was a community Fraternal organization to promote social development and charitable contributions to the local community. Also pictured is lamp and a piece of advertisement from the Bechlem clothing store.

