PORTAGE.

No city in the State of Wisconsin possesses such a remarkable combination of natural advantages as Portage, the flourishing capital of Columbia County. Situated on the canal which is the connecting link between the two most important systems of inland navigation in the world, she is the junction of the three great divisions of the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, with a magnificent tributary territory that renders her an important trade centre, while for manufacturing pursuits no place offers more substantial inducements.

Portage City is situated on the Government canal connecting the Fox and Wisconsin rivers, and at the head waters of the latter, thirty-two miles north of Madison and eighty-five west-northwest of Milwaukee.

The early history of this section is of a romantic character, and dates back over two hundred years, to the time of the French fur traders and the Jesuit missionaries who sought to Christianize the numerous tribes of Indians that preferred Wisconsin's fertile plains and forests for a home. In 1640 Nicolet ascended the Fox River, crossed the Portage to the Wisconsin, down which he floated nearly to the Mississippi. Louis Joliet with Father Marquette passed over the Portage in 1673 on a voyage of exploration, and in June discovered the Mississippi. After Pontiac's war, one of the noted events in this region was the journey of Jonathan Carver, who in 1766, passed up Fox River to the Portage, and descended the Wisconsin to the Mississippi. The above references will serve to show at what an early date this beautiful section of the State came into prominence, and the prosperity of the city of Portage dates its foundation back to the time when the first pioneers settled here and so successfully embarked in trade and agricultural pursuits. Portage early became a grant of land for railroad enterprises, and in the spring of 1856 Congress made a grant of land to the State to aid in the building of a railroad from Madison or Columbus via Portage City to the St. Croix River, and from thence to the west end of Lake Superior and to Bayfield.

Though charges of corruption were afterward made concerning the disposal of this grant, the La Crosse & Milwaukee Railroad Co. completed its line through Portage to La Crosse in 1857. Connecting lines were subsequently built and consolidated under the new familiar title of the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Co. The following year a branch was built to Columbus. In 1866 a company was organized to build a road from Portage City by way of Berlin to Stevens Point, and which in its extended development is familiarly known as the Wisconsin Central. The straight line between Portage City and Stevens Point, authorized by an act of the Legislature of 1875 was finished by October, 1876, opening up an immense region of heavily timbered land to settlement and lumbering operations, and contributing greatly to the growth and prosperity of the city. Mention should also be made here of the old Sugar River Valley Railroad Co., chartered in 1855 to build to Portage from Madison, and subsequently known as the Madison & Portage. The road was completed in 1871, and is now operated by the Milwaukee & St. Paul. The splendid railway facilities enjoyed by Portage have been generally recognized, and coupled with the fine water-power supplied by the canal, render her the most attractive point in all this section for the location of new industries. Her manufactories include foundries, tanneries, carriage factories, flouring mills, boot and shoe factories, etc. As a great railway terminus, there are extensive round-houses and repair shops here, and hundreds of skilled mechanics find steady employment. The last State census shows marked evidence of vigorous prosperity. Twenty-eight thousand dollars' worth of woolen fabrics were manufactured in 1885; 4375 barrels of beer brewed, worth $55,000; earthenware made to the value of $20,000, and woodenware worth $30,000. The real estate and machinery utilized in the above lines was valued at $65,500, and stock and fixtures at $23,500; 188 men were employed, earning $47,700 annually. There were likewise manufactured here in 1885 upwards of 234,000 cigars, worth $7020; and 1000 barrels of flour worth $5500; these two branches of industry employing seventeen hands, who earned $4112. Portage is a handsome city, with many fine buildings, including a spacious and imposing court-house and jail; one of the finest high-school buildings in the State, ten churches, several prominent specimens of architecture, seven hotels, etc. The excellent system of common schools has received many merited compliments; also the thorough
municipal organization that has rendered many public improvements possible. There are first-class banking facilities, ably edited newspapers, and splendid stores, equal to any in Milwaukee or Chicago, and whose enormous annual trade is a sure indication of the city's substantial prosperity. The population of Portage in 1870 was 3945. In 1888, the official census gives it as follows: First Ward, 1063; Fourth Ward, 1305; and Fifth Ward, 1530; a total of 5501 inhabitants; a careful estimate places the population of the city in 1887 at over 6,000, with bright prospects of further increase in the near future. Below will be found accurate articles descriptive of the rise and progress of the principal mercantile and industrial establishments of the city.

E. W. Moran, Fancy Goods and Groceries.—So numerous are the reputable and well-managed stores of this town that we are obliged to select for this record those which are best in every sense of the word. Prominent among those coming under this last heading is the grocery and fancy goods emporium of Mr. E. W. Moran, which is well known and widely patronized by the best class of our leading residents. The premises are easily equipped with all modern trade conveniences, and are well adapted for the business, being easy of access from all sections of the town. The provisions are judiciously selected, and comprise all the necessaries and many of the luxuries of the table. The fancy-goods department embraces different articles for toilet and home use and is constantly renewed, always presenting a new and desirable assortment of wares. Mr. Moran is an active and intelligent merchant who appreciates the importance of perseverance and strictly honest dealing in all departments of industry. His father, Mr. Dominick Moran, was one of the first settlers of Portage City.

V. E. Brewer, successor to W. B. Stevens, Jeweler.—Some years ago the subject of this sketch established a jewelry undertaking in this town, and the instant recognition and patronage which was accorded its inception was a fair indication of the unbounded success which has attended it since. The eligibly situated and finely fitted store, stocked with a most valuable array of ornamental and useful wares, is one of the chief ornaments of our thriving town. The stock on hand includes an array of Swiss and American movement watches, in heavily chased and plain gold and silver cases, together with new and beautiful designs in jewelry and precious-stone settings; also a full line of sterling silver and plated-ware, judiciously chosen from the productions of the most noted manufacturers in the country. The repairing department is conducted under the personal supervision of the energetic proprietor, who is an experienced watchmaker and jeweler. Mr. Brewer is a representative dealer in this line and enjoys an extensive trade throughout this section.

F. Schulze & Co., General Merchandise.—An establishment presenting an aggregation of useful goods, staple productions, and superior manufactures, all classed under the head of general merchandize, is certainly a desirable acquisition to any community, and such is the establishment conducted under the proprietorship and control of Messrs. Schulze & Co., who for a number of years have been closely identified with the com-

mercial interests of Portage. Three large and spacious floors are devoted to the accommodation of a magnificent stock, which is methodically arranged in such a manner as to insure prompt attention to the wants of patrons. The goods are judiciously selected, and a perfect assortment held in each department. Reasonable charges are made, commensurate with the excellent quality of the goods, and satisfaction guaranteed in all cases. Mr. Schulze deserves all the unqualified praise which he receives on all sides from both patrons and trade contemporaries.

H. Sexton, Flour and Feed.—Few dealers in the flour and feed trade have attained the widespread popularity which has been accorded to Mr. H. Sexton, who occupies spacious premises fitted as warehouse and store for the accommodation of a complete stock in this line. The best quality of grains, bran, and family and bakers' flour can be obtained here at regular market prices. These are procured from the best producing sections of the country and are received in large shipments to meet the great demand which exists for them throughout Portage and vicinity. The enterprising proprietor also carries a line of the celebrated Maryland grease, manufactured by the American Lubricating Oil Company, of Cleveland, Ohio. Mr. Sexton is a native of Vermont, and like all New England men is well qualified for the management of a large enterprise, possessing pluck and energy, which is bound to secure for him a permanent continuance of his already extensive patronage.

W. G. Bunker, Saddlery, East Cook Street.—A manufacturer and dealer of this town, who needs no introduction to the people of Portage, as his merits as a townsman and a merchant have made him popular in all sections, is Mr. W. G. Bunker, whose extensive establishment is on East Cook Street, where a thriving and prosperous trade is conducted, which shows every evidence of meritorious continuance. The spacious premises contain a well-arranged stock of single and double harness, saddles, bridles, collars, robes, whips, and horse-clothing of all kinds. These goods are durably manufactured from the best and strongest material, and are guaranteed to stand more than ordinary wear. Repairing in this line is promptly and efficiently attended to by competent workmen employed. Mr. Bunker is a native of Indiana, and is a vigorous exponent of the soundest theories and most conscientious principles governing commercial life. He is well known throughout this town, and enjoys a large trade.
W. H. C. Abell, Dentist.—A gentleman of wide experience in all departments of dental surgery, and who has a practice which extends over thirty-five years of active professional service, is Mr. W. H. C. Abell, the well-known dental surgeon of this town. Mr. Abell occupies spacious premises, elegantly and conveniently appointed for professional purposes. New and improved apparatus is possessed for facilitating the painless extraction and filling of teeth. These branches are attended to in a careful and pain-taking manner, satisfaction being invariably guaranteed. A large connection is held throughout Portage and vicinity, among a good class of customers, who testify to the first-class work, honest dealing and courtesy to be met with at the hands of this proficient dentist-surgeon. Mr. Abell possesses a thorough and scientific knowledge of this important profession, for which he is highly qualified. His methods are new and easy of accomplishment, and an unsuccessful operation from his hands is yet to be heard of.

E. S. Purdy, Druggist.—The physical well-being of a community affects indirectly its commercial interests; and as the health of the people depends, to a great extent, on the medicines and preventives of disease which we use, it is essential that our drug stores be conducted on conscientious principles of fair dealing and integrity. An establishment enjoying a high reputation for excellence in this branch of industry is that of E. S. Purdy, who for twenty-eight years has been actively identified with the drug business. His neatly and appropriately-fitted store bears ample evidence of his thorough knowledge of the chemist's profession and contains a complete and systematically arranged stock of fresh drugs, medicines, and chemical compounds, and standard remedies. The prescription department is efficiently looked after, all preparations being compounded under the personal supervision of the able proprietor. In addition to the usual stock a fine line of stationery is carried, which adds to the conveniences of this popular establishment. Mr. Purdy is a first-class dealer, with a keen appreciation of the good patronage he has so meritoriously acquired.

German Exchange Bank.—One of the most important financial institutions of this town is the German Exchange Bank, which, organized some years ago, has enjoyed a career of phenomenal success, standing now among the leading mercantile enterprises of the State. A general banking business is conducted; drafts are issued available in all parts of the world. Bonds negotiated and special attention paid to collections of all kinds. An ocean passage ticket agency is held for all first-class steamship lines; also the agency for the largest and best-known fire-insurance companies is conducted here, the whole being ably and efficiently managed. The president of this corporation is Mr. F. W. Schulze, a gentleman of undoubted integrity and high standing in business circles. He is far-seeing and judicious, and his careful management has been the means of furthering the importance of this large mercantile enterprise. The cashier, Mr. Sprecher, is a gentleman who possesses all the qualifications and abilities which fit him for his responsible and honorable position, with which he has been connected since its beginning.

T. W. Drew, Groceries and General Merchandise.—A business enterprise enjoying the record of being the oldest house in the city is that of T. W. Drew, a firm which has been honorably connected with the grocery trade of Portage for over thirty years, the present proprietor having bought the business of J. D. Pugh & Co. The extensively-stored store occupies a central position on De Witt street and is appropriately fitted for trade purposes. The stock is complete in every particular, and comprises a full assortment of staple and fancy groceries, flour; also, teas, coffees, and spices of good quality and flavor, together with all the numerous equipments of a well-furnished and handsomely-decorated table, in the way of imported delicacies, condiments and relishes of all descriptions. The enterprising proprietors have also originated a crotchet department where all kinds of delf, china and queensware can be obtained, as well as glassware and fine cutlery. Mr. T. W. Drew, the head of the firm, is a smart business man and efficient manager, who has gained unlimited success in his chosen enterprise. Mr. Drew also makes large consignments to New York.

August Bartz, Cigar Dealer.—The advance and progress of this town are marked by the wonderful growth of enterprises started as long as forty-five years ago. Such is the cigar manufactory of Mr. August Bartz, a well-known dealer of Portage, who enjoys an immense trade extending through this State, the local city connection being specially wide-spread and profitable. The tobacco used is obtained from the best producing regions of the South, and is prepared by competent men of long experience in the trade. The principal brands made by this manufacturer are the "Flighi" and "Satn Slipper," which are justly celebrated for their manifest qualities of strength and fine flavor. The neatly-fitted store contains a complete stock of choice imported and domestic cigars at prices which compare favorably with those of any other dealer. Mr. Bartz is, like many of his thriving neighbors, a native of Germany. He is a practical tradesman and dealer, and gives his personal supervision to all work done at his establishment. The success which he has gained is but a just reward for his well-directed industry and perseverance.
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Ph. Goodman, Merchant Tailor.—The two elegantly-equipped stores at Nos. 33 and 33 W. Cook street combined, form the mammoth establishment of Mr. Philip Goodman, merchant tailor and men's furnisher, a dealer enjoying a more extended patronage and carrying a larger stock than any other in this section. The commodious premises at the above address are appropriately equipped for the trade, the ware rooms being in the upper part of the building, where fifty experienced journeymen tailors and assistants are kept busy in fulfilling the requirements of a widespread business connection, which extends throughout the State. All work passing from this establishment is noticeable for its fine finish and artistic cut, as well as neat and accurate fit. The store displays a fine assortment of foreign and domestic woolsens and Faults—materials, which can be made up on short notice. The assortment of furnishing goods is complete in every particular, while the prices charged are low. Mr. Goodman has resided here for a number of years where he has gained an enviable reputation for strict integrity and fair dealing.

Wm. Bard & Co., Jewellers.—One of our most popular and promising young merchants, who by means of perseverance and well directed industry has gained a rank in the lines of our representative men, is Mr. Wm. Bard of the firm of Bard & Co., whose magnificent and attractive emporium shows evidence of the artistic taste and good management of the well-known proprietor. The store contains six elegant plate-glass show-cases, which display a valuable assortment of watches, clocks and jewelry. Swiss and American movements can here be obtained in heavy-chased gold and silver cases. The celebrated Illinois, Hampden, Elgin and Wallham watches are also shown, together with exquisite designs in jewelry and sterling silverware. Special attention is given to the repairing of fine watches and jewelry, all work being guaranteed. Mr. Bard is a native of New York State. His honorable dealing and courteous attention to the wants of his patrons have secured him a large and profitable trade.

F. A. Rhyme, Druggist and Stationer, Cook street. No more energetic or popular merchant can be found within the confines of this hospitable city, than Mr. F. A. Rhyme, druggist and stationer, a graduate of the Wisconsin University, and one of our most promising young business men. His well-conducted establishment is comfortably and conveniently equipped for trade purposes, and is completely stocked with an assortment of fresh drugs, medical compounds and standard remedies. These are carefully distributed in jars and air-tight compartments, clearly labelled to avoid the possibility of mistakes. This active dealer carries a line of fine stationery, including Irish linen and fancy note-paper, cards, writing materials of all kinds, and blank books. Mr. Rhyme manages this enterprise in an admirable manner. Courtesy and attention are the rule to all, and this fact, taken in conjunction with the superior wares carried, places the establishment among the first.

Emder's Hotel, Wisconsin Street.—A well-conducted hotel is a desirable acquisition to any community, and such is the old-established house of Mr. H. Ender, which is eligible situated on Wisconsin Street, not far from the depot. This popular establishment, which is known as "Emder's Hotel," contains about forty light, airy, and well-ventilated sleeping-rooms, neatly and comfortably furnished and fitted with all modern appliances. The parlor and offices are spacious and elegantly fitted, while the hall is bounteously furnished with all the delicacies of the season. The sample-rooms are well stocked with choice wines, brandies, liquors, and cigars. The house is characterized with a homelike air in all arrangements, which places the guest at once at his ease. The management is first-class in every respect, nothing being neglected which would tend to the convenience and comfort of guests. Mr. Ender is a pioneer in the hotel business, and is genial, courteous, and painstaking to all with whom he comes in contact.

John B. Dassi, Dealer in Toys, etc., No. 138 Cook Street.—In giving deserved prominence to the many well-managed business concerns of this place, we take pleasure in calling the attention of our readers to the large and well-stocked emporium of John B. Dassi, dealer in wall-paper, toys, picture-frames, and musical instruments. The spacious premises at No. 138 Cook Street are conveniently equipped for the comfort of customers and patrons, and contain a comprehensive assortment of wares such as cannot be found elsewhere in this section. The display of wall-papers is especially fine, showing many new and unique patterns, heavily gilt and fancily colored, and well-adapted for the fitting up of the most elegant drawing-rooms. Picture-frames of every conceivable style and size are shown; these articles being made to order on short notice. The prices are consistently low, and every effort is made on the part of the proprietor to insure perfect satisfaction for all customers and patrons. Mr. Dassi was born in Italy, and possesses all the artistic tastes of his countrymen, which qualify him for the management of his important enterprise.

Arthur Bros., Hides, Furs.—A business undertaking worthy of great credit, by reason of its long standing and good management, is that carried on under the proprietorship and control of the firm of Arthur Brothers, dealers in hides, furs, and wool. This merchandise is received from the West in large shipments and promptly disposed of among the numerous patrons of the firm at most advantageous rates, profitable alike to purchaser and dealer. The warehouse contains all modern trade conveniences and spacious storage facilities for the goods, which are of the best quality and finest grade. The office is located corner of Cook and DeWitt Streets. The firm members, Mr. John and Charles Arthur, are natives of England, who came to this country in 1850, and organizing their hide and fur business some ten years later. They thoroughly understand all details of this important trade, and are industrious and energetic in all departments.