

## WALLMAN &amp; STEINKE

There was a time in the village of Waterford when the merry buzz of the saw was heard as it cut into the great logs of walnut, oak and hickory which had been hauled in from the surrounding country or floated down the river to be made into lumber. There was also a time when the music of the saw was heard as this lumber, cut from the native timber, was carefully fashioned into tables, beds, cupboards and other useful and substantial articles of furniture. Even the coffins in which the dead were buried were made here—and made to order as needed.

Sixty-four years ago, F. C. Wallman laid the foundation for the large and lucrative business operated today under the firm name of Wallman & Steinke, furniture and undertaking—the oldest business house in the village—still owned and operated by a descendent of the founder.

In the fall of 1858 F. C. Wallman, who four years before, when twenty-two years of age, had come to this country from Germany, purchased of Fred Weage a small frame building, 16x24 feet, (a part of what is now Graf's garage), on the north side of Main street.

This small building was of historical importance in Waterford as in it had been housed the first store and the first postoffice of this pioneer community. It was in this building that Mr. Wallman, who was a cabinet maker but who had since coming to Waterford worked as a carpenter, because people had had no money with which to buy furniture, opened a shop and began the manufacturing of furniture, as it was ordered. Previous to this there had been no undertaker in Waterford and coffins, so called at that time, were made only as needed. Five years later, in 1863, Mr. Wallman purchased of Mrs. Eli M. Jones the property directly across the street, consisting of the brick house, now the home of George F. Wallman, and the land extending to the alley.

During the winter of '64 and '65 he built a store, 18x60, on this lot just east of the house. He also enlarged the factory on the north side of the street.

His original building, dignified by the name of factory, was after this used solely for manufacturing. A one-horse tread mill was the motive power first used. This was soon replaced by a steam engine. The manufactured articles were displayed and

sold on the opposite side of the street in the new store.

It was in 1867—three years after the close of the civil war—that F. C. Wallman with the help of Iverson & Crabb, iron workers, and Solon Cook and Joe Harter, wood workers, built the first hearse used in Racine county. A light wagon or sleigh, if in winter, had been used to carry the dead to the "last narrow home." This hearse, which was drawn by a single black horse, which about two years later was replaced by two, was frequently called for by Burlington, Rochester and other neighboring towns as it was the only

Immediately opposite the sales room is located the manufactory, where may be seen all the tools and appliances for the manufacturing of furniture. The manufactory is run by steam power, and is presided over by Mr. Joseph Harter, who has been in the employ of Mr. Wallman for nearly eleven years.

A son of the proprietor, George F. Wallman, is also employed in the works, who attends to the carving and fancy work. Specimens of carving were exhibited to our notice which displayed unusual taste and natural adaptation to that branch. Mr. Wall-



one in the community for a number of years. It was first used at the funeral of Mr. Patrick, father of Joseph and John Patrick. This was replaced by a more modern hearse in 1885.

The business grew rapidly and in 1878 Mr. Wallman wholesaled his output for the entire year, employing nine men in the factory where all kinds of furniture, with the exception of chairs, were made.

From the files of the Waterford Post of December 13, 1877, we quote the following:

"During the last week we had occasion to visit the extensive furniture establishment of Mr. F. C. Wallman, on the west side of the river. Mr. Wallman occupies two large buildings one of which is used as a sales room and the other a manufactory. In the sales room we found a large and elegant assortment of furniture ready for the market which Mr. Wallman is offering at astonishingly low prices.

man commands a very extensive trade and from his long residence here, we should say he is justly entitled to it."

A fourteen foot addition was built to the furniture store in 1882 and a year later George F. Wallman, the son above referred to, purchased the business of his father, F. C. Wallman, the latter going to Clinton where he built a store and conducted it for about two years before retiring and moving to Milwaukee. He died at Mukwonago, November 5, 1911.

G. F. Wallman formed a partnership with his brother, Carl, and brother-in-law, N. Lotz, in 1884. This firm operated two stores, one in Waterford with G. F. Wallman as manager, assisted by his brother, and one in Mukwonago, with N. Lotz as manager. In '89 the partnership was dissolved but after the death of Mr. Lotz, about 1902 G. F. Wallman re-purchased the N. Lotz stock at Mukwonago and ran it in connection with the Waterford business for about five years when he again sold it.



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STORIES OF WATERFORD AND ITS BUSY LIFE

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It was in the fall of 1884 that Geo. F. Wallman was graduated from the Clark School of Embalming at Cincinnati, Ohio—one of the first four embalmers in the state of Wisconsin. The other three were George L. Thomas and S. Peacock, of Milwaukee, and T. Hanson, of Kenosha. Desiring to give the very best service to his community, Mr. Wallman in 1905 took a postgraduate course in the Barnes School of Embalming in Chicago.

John Steinke, a former Caldwell boy and son-in-law of Mr. Wallman, was taken into partnership in 1909 and to the furniture and undertaking business, plumbing and heating were added. Several years previous to this the factory building which was no longer needed was sold to James Quinn, and all furniture handled, including caskets, were purchased from large wholesale factories. It is interesting to note in this connection that while manufacturing furniture in Waterford the lumber was purchased

at home, sawed in the home mills, and only the very choicest used. It was so plentiful that much of what would be valuable today was then cast aside as useless, stacked in piles and burned. Cord wood was used as an exchange for furniture, etc., and brought only \$2.50 per cord in trade.

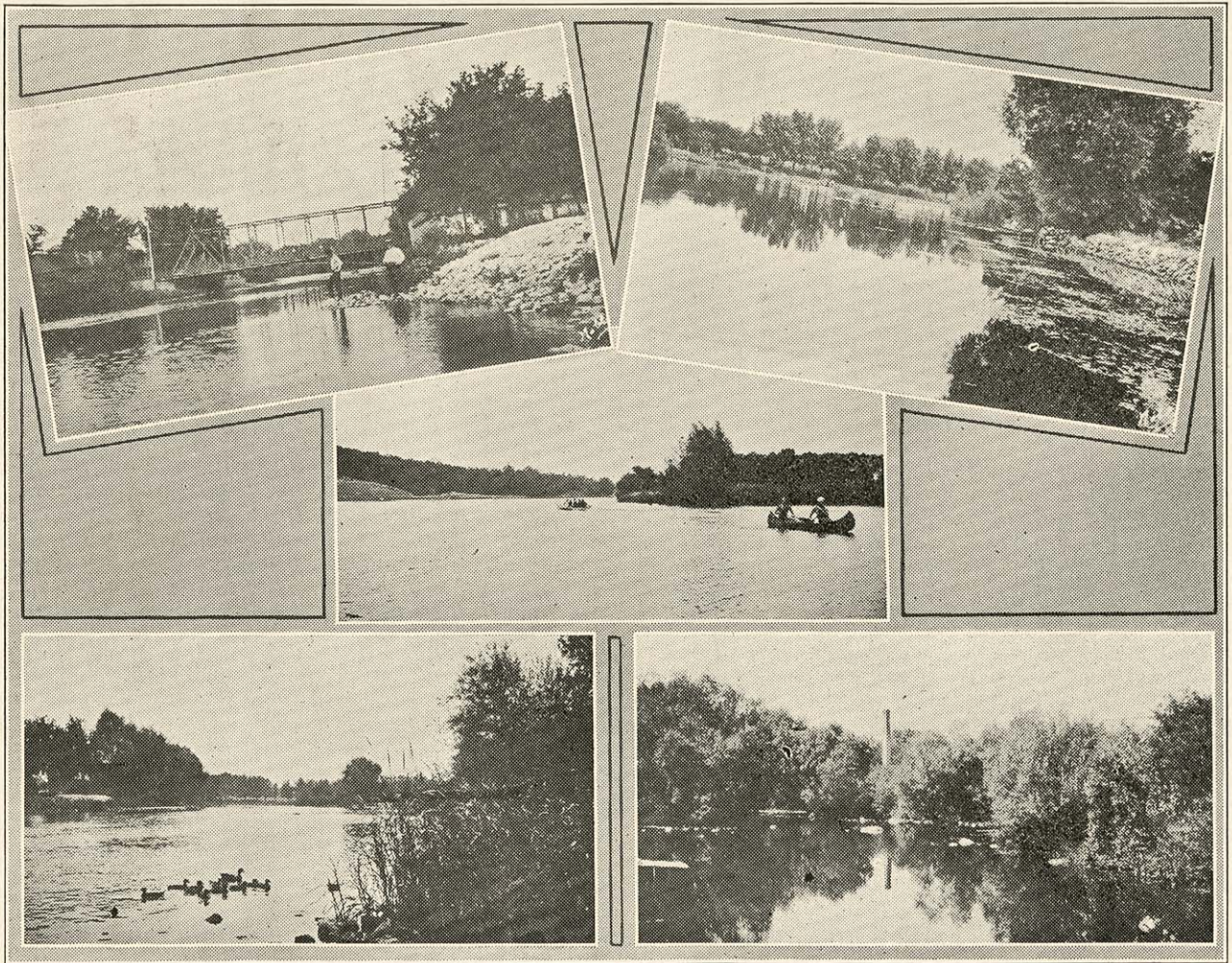
Mr. Steinke, just previous to his entrance as a partner in the business had graduated from the Coyne Trade School, of Chicago, as a master plumber.

When the senior partner retires from the firm there will be no one by the name of Wallman to carry on his part of the business but judging by the specimens of wood work made by his grandson, Carlyle Steinke, in the manual training department of the graded school, one is led to believe that the lad is a "chip of the old block," and though he does not bear the sur-name of Wallman, will prove to be a worthy successor to his grandfather and great-grand-

father.

The building, as shown in the picture, was enlarged to its present size, 53x113 feet, in 1900. The entire second floor is now used exclusively for the undertaking parlors. About six years ago a handsome auto-funeral car replaced the third hearse used by the firm since 1867. These four hearses having seen service about twenty-four hundred times.

The lower floor of the building is used for the sales room. There one sees a full and complete line of house furnishings of the latest and most modern styles—furniture, rugs—and other floor coverings, window shades, kitchen hardware, stoves, plumbing and heating fixtures, gut-tering and metal roofing, and Hoover suction sweepers,—no less interesting today than was the factory of forty-five years ago. We might add as did the writer of long ago, the present firm "commands a very extensive trade" and from its long "residence in our midst is justly entitled to it."



Snapshots Of Beauty Spots Along The Fox River