STORIES OF WATERFORD AND ITS BUSY LIFE

WILBUR LUMBER CO.

The Wilbur Lumber Co., one of the most important business interests in Waterford, is the subject of today's historical sketch and the fourth in the Post's series covering the history of the various industries of the village.

The first industry to be established in what is now Waterford was a saw mill where timber which was found here in abundance was converted into logs and lumber for the construction of homes for the early inhabitants. Among the earliest settlers was a Mr. Beebe, who made a claim to the mill-power but soon after Mr. Chapman and Mr. Barnes purchased this of Mr. Beebe paying him $700 for it. Soon after this Chapman & Barnes erected the saw mill which was the first one in the village. It was used for a number of years in making lumber from logs which were drawn in by the farmers in the neighborhood or floated down the river. This saw mill was located near the end of "Run-A-By-Dam" nearly opposite the property known as the Irving Post property. Another saw mill erected at a later time was located on the west side and was known as the Russ saw mill.

Another saw mill which was the forerunner of the first lumber yard to be located in Waterford was one established by Daniel Thompson about 1869. Mr. Thompson, who had come from the east and had located on the shore of Eagle Lake, came to Waterford with his steamer—"The Daisy"—at the request of Mr. Chapman for the purpose of mowing the weeds out of the river in an effort to settle a dispute in regard to the overflow of lands north of the village. The "Daisy" was the first boat to float on the waters of the Fox. It was used to carry excursion parties in the summer and in the winter time it served for hauling cord wood, for which Mr. Thompson had a large sale. In a few years the boat was dismantled and the engine used as the motive power for the saw mill which had been built near the mill pond. This mill, together with a lumber yard, the first in the village, Mr. Thompson conducted until his death about 1900.

Following the death of Mr. Thompson his sons took charge of the business, at first on the old site on the west side of the Fox, but later moving the yard to the site near T. M. E. R. & L. Co.'s station on the east side. Offices were built as well as lumber sheds and the business conducted there until it was sold to the Wilbur Lumber Co., of which George H. Wilbur, of Waukesha, was president. This transfer was made, May 28, 1917, and the Wilbur Lumber Co. with headquarters in Milwaukee, formally took possession of the Thompson Lumber Company with Charles E. Confer as local manager.

The following fall, on October 23, 1917, the Wilbur Lumber Company also took over the August Bucholtz Lumber Company. This was done soon after the death of Mr. Bucholtz, who just previous to his death, on account of his ill health had negotiat-ed for the sale of his yard to this company. The Bucholtz yard, which stood where the Hoevet bungalow now stands, was moved to the opposite side of the street.

The Waterford branch is one of eighteen branch yards operated by the Wilbur Lumber Company in Wisconsin, Illinois and Indiana. The company also has a large milling plant at Waukesha. This extensive business is the outgrowth of a retail lumber company organized by George H. Wilbur in the year 1876 at Burlington, where he opened a yard and building and by so doing laid the foundation for the large and well organized business institution, which is held in the highest regard and confidence of all business establishments in the northwest and by all the communities in which branches have been established. R. H. Wilbur, of Waukesha, was recently elected president of the Wilbur Company to succeed his father, George H. Wilbur, whose death oc-curred on May 29, 1922, at the age of eighty-three.

About a year after the Wilbur Lumber Company became one of Waterford's institutions M. H. Hoevet became the manager of the local branch succeeding C. E. Confer. While Mr. Hoevet was a stranger when the came to Waterford in the spring of 1918 he was not a stranger to the management of the company as he had been connected with the Wilbur Lumber Company as Ass't Mgr. of a branch at Lowell, Ind., for several years before he came to take up the work at this place. Mr. Hoevet has not only proven to be an efficient manager of the Waterford branch of the Wilbur Lumber Company but he is a loyal member of the community assuming his share of the duties of citizenship, serving on the school board and village council and taking an active interest in the things that are being done for the betterment of the village and community life. About a year ago the attractive bungalow was completed, almost opposite the office of the lumber yards, which is the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hoevet and two sons—two future lumbermen.

The Wilbur Lumber Company has enlarged this plant during the last five years, the track has been extend-ed by T. M. E. R. & L. Co., more coal bins and lumber sheds added and other improvements made. Mr. Hoe- vet is ably assisted in the local work by Ed. Best and Ben A. Mehring. Gradually the business has been built up until at present the company is enjoying a very satisfactory trade. The aim of the company is to carry all supplies used for building pur-poses and its policy at all times is to supply the community in which the branch is located with all neces-sary wants in its line.