STORIES OF WATERFORD AND ITS BUSY LIFE

WM. A. MAAS & SON

The William A. Maas and Son's horseshoeing and general repair shop and manufacturing establishment is one of the important and growing industries of the village of Waterford. In it is combined the old and the new—the past and the future. The old time forge and hammer alongside of the modern electric forge and roaring bellows, the brawny armed smith swinging his heavy sledge or fitting the red hot shoe to the restless horse's hoof, with the manufacturing of oil heaters reaches into the future for its perfection, as it revolutionizes the heating problem, which is rapidly becoming a problem of no small proportion.

The building shown in the accompanying picture, was purchased by William A. Maas and Son of William Craft, on November 15, 1919. The first floor of the building is used by Maas and Son as a horseshoeing and general repair shop and office. The second floor is now a manufactury.

Since coming to Waterford, three years ago, Mr. Maas and Son have been working on the perfection of a wagon tire heater, which was finished and placed on the market in the spring of 1922. This is something new. The old way of heating tires for setting or re-setting was costly and troublesome. The Maas heater uses kerosene oil, the cheapest fuel known, and will heat from one to four sets of tires at a time, heating the tire evenly all around. Clearliness is one of its appealing qualities and the amount of room space spared is another. The Maas heater is taking readily among the blacksmiths of the middle west, Maas and Son are now putting on an advertising campaign which will in a short time cover the entire United States.

The firm is also working on the perfection of an oil heater to be used in furnaces and stoves. While these heaters are not perfect they are now found to be about equal in cost and in time spent in keeping a fire. These are meeting with splendid success locally.

The building purchased by Mr. Maas and Son was built by Henry Plucker, now of Sacramento, Calif., for a livery barn. Every village boasted at least one livery barn in the old days. Waterford had several. Plucker and Olson, after running the livery for two years, rented it to Foot and Patrick, who enlarged the business. Foot and Patrick remained there twelve years. When their lease expired they moved to their own barn which they erected on the lot property on Milwaukee street.

Those were the gala days in the livery business. Foot and Patrick were the leading men in the town to provide "hacks" or closed carriages which were used for funerals, weddings and other special occasions. From twelve to sixteen horses were kept busy practically all the time. Ed. Lesky, now with the Halbach Bros. Company store, and the late George Ensinger, who ran the hotel, were on duty day and night. People were taken to weddings and funerals; drummers and travelling men were carried on their long trips around the country; strangers and visitors had to be met at the station seven miles distant; and the young fellows had to take their best girls out for a Sunday afternoon ride or to an evening dance or other social functions.

The coming of the electric railroad, and the automobile changed all this and the "livery stable" which was something of a community center twenty years ago is extinct here as elsewhere. Its place is taken by the garage, the filling station and the repair shop.

After Foot and Patrick moved to their own barn, Plucker and Olson sold their building to Will Craft, who, having learned the blacksmith trade of four years Mr. Maas ran a shop which he was finally compelled to give up on account of his health. He moved his family to a farm south of Lake Geneva, where he lived until 1911 when he again took up blacksmithing at Hebron, Ill., entering into partnership with his oldest son, F. W. Maas. This business was sold and soon after Mr. Maas came to Waterford.

Thomas J. Maas, junior member of the firm, started working in his father's shop at Hebron, Ill., while still in school, working before and after school and on Saturdays. After completing the eighth grade he graduated from the commercial department of the Brown's Business College at Rockford, Ill. From that time until the fall of 1917 he worked in the shop at Hebron. That fall he entered in the army. He served for two years, half of that time over seas as a mechanic in the air service.

After his discharge from the army in July, 1919 Mr. Maas spent considerable time in the west looking over homestead land. After his return he located at Waterford where he became his father's partner.

Maas and Son employ three men and a bookkeeper at the present time. The bookkeeper is Miss Florence Maas, daughter of William Maas, a graduate of the Waterford high school with the class of 1922.

Although driving horses are seldom seen now, farmers are still using horses on their farms for all farm purposes. Comparatively few farmers are using power machinery so horseshoes and blacksmiths are needed, and the newer lines of work as assembling machinery busy. The larger future for the business, beyond a doubt lies in the two inventions, which, as stated, are becoming known and are giving satisfaction. They are destined to bring success to the inventors and a knowledge of the little village of Waterford to the outside world.

Quinn and English on the west side, had been conducting a smithy in the small building just south of the livery barn now used as a tin-shop. He moved to the larger building using it for his blacksmith shop until he sold to Maas and Son three years ago.

The smaller building above referred to and another small unpainted building which stood where the Maas building now stands had served as blacksmith and wagon shops for fifty years or more. William Vos, a blacksmith, whose home was on the corner north of the shop where the Beilfus home now stands, used one of the buildings for his blacksmith shop and John Hefer had his wagon shop in the other. Mr. Vos sold his business to John Alby who conducted a blacksmith shop there for several years before Plucker and Olson erected their large livery barn on the site of the old smithy.

William Maas, the senior member of the firm of Maas and Son, was born at Slade's Corners, Wis., in 1862. At the age of fourteen he began working in his father's blacksmith shop, and like his father before him made blacksmithing his life work. In 1900 he moved his family to Vinemount, Alabama. After two years they returned to Walworth, Wis., where for fall of 1917 he worked in the shop at Hebron. That fall he enlisted in the army. He served for two years, half of that time over seas as a mechanic in the air service.

After his discharge from the army in July, 1919 Mr. Maas spent considerable time in the west looking over homestead land. After his return he located at Waterford where he became his father's partner.

Maas and Son employ three men and a bookkeeper at the present time. The bookkeeper is Miss Florence Maas, daughter of William Maas, a graduate of the Waterford high school with the class of 1922.

Although driving horses are seldom seen now, farmers are still using horses on their farms for all farm purposes. Comparatively few farmers are using power machinery so horseshoes and blacksmiths are needed, and the newer lines of work as assembling machinery busy. The larger future for the business, beyond a doubt lies in the two inventions, which, as stated, are becoming known and are giving satisfaction. They are destined to bring success to the inventors and a knowledge of the little village of Waterford to the outside world.