GRAF’S GARAGE

With the completion of the new Graf Garage Waterford has one of the best and most up-to-date business blocks to be found in villages its size or much larger, in the state of Wisconsin.

Faith in his own work and faith in the future of the village are shown when a man such as Graf builds in these days of business uncertainty and high cost of materials. Credit for such confidence is due O. R. Graf, born, reared and educated in Milwaukee. Though city bred and city trained it was in this smaller community that Mr. Graf saw the opportunity to work out business problems. Here in Waterford he saw possibilities for himself, for his business and for the village in the erection of such a building as is shown in the accompanying picture.

Mr. Graf’s first work after leaving school was with the Milwaukee Gas & Electric Light Co. where he held a responsible position in the office of the complaint department. His interests lay along an entirely different line, however, and when he fully realized this, he decided to give up the position he held and to take up the work for a which he had a natural trend—that of a mechanic. Having reached that decision he determined to learn his trade thoroughly, accordingly he began at the foot of the ladder and climbed upward round by round. Four years were spent in this special training. Working in several different shops in Milwaukee followed and the experience was gained which was necessary for the successful carrying out of his plans.

In the year 1915 Mr. Graf and his brother erected a garage in Milwaukee, where they worked up a very successful trade.

Two years later Mr. Graf, who was personally qualified to work in any line of machinery, decided to go into business for himself. It was just at this time that he learned that Waterford was in need of a good mechanic, one who knew how to repair farm machinery as well as automobiles. Confident that he was qualified to meet these requirements he made up his mind to establish his business in this village and to make Waterford his home.

The building, now the home of the Kinney, Hanson and Noll garage, then called the Hamm building, though known to older generations as the Moo store, was rented by Mr. Graf. The first floor was used for his garage and machine shop and the second floor was the home of Mr. and Mrs. Graf and son, Bobbie, then four years of age.

Later when Mr. Hamm, owner of the building, decided to enter the grocery business Mr. Graf was forced to seek new quarters. He found a temporary home for his business, then possible side of the street in the H. B. Morse shop and for his family in the Mrs. Hugh Cooper house on Jefferson street. The move was made August 1, 1920. Soon after Mr. Graf purchased a lot and began to plan the building which has just been completed.

The new Graf block is situated on Main Street, two doors west of Fox River bridge and immediately west of the John Rein blacksmith shop. The building, which is practically fire proof, is of steel and flat concrete blocks with face brick front of buff. It is a three story building, 48’x72’ feet, with basement walls of concrete.

The west half of the basement, as the first floor is called, will be used for storing cars and as a battery repair shop where storage batteries of all makes will be repaired and recharged. The front part of the east street, will be used for repair work and storage. The office, on the same floor is a pleasant room 18x20. It also faces Main street. Just back of the office is a hall from which one enters the stock room, 8x20, the men’s lavatory, the ladies’ rest room and the ladies’ lavatory.

For the first time in the history of Waterford, the ladies have a rest room. Herefore there has been no place for the wives and daughters of farmers when shopping in the village to rest or wait for the men folks. The rest room in the Graf building meets a long felt need. It is in the southwest corner, a room 8x23 with several large windows overlooking the Fox River and Ten Club park. The views to be seen through the windows are such pretty ones that women will avail themselves of the opportunity of visiting the rest room for these alone. This room is reached through the office.

A large modern apartment, now the home of the Graf family, occupies the second floor. This consists of a kitchen, 9x12, a dining room 12 x18, a living room of the same size, a large sun parlor, two good sized bed rooms and a bath. Entrance to the apartment is from the east side of the building.

Graf’s new building stands on “Mill Site No. 1,” as shown in the early plats of the village. There were five in all. Eliphalet Cramer, of Milwaukee, was the first owner. In March 1860, a few days after Cramer’s claim was entered, this lot, with others was sold to Samuel Chapman and Levi Barnes, and later, by them, sold to Samuel Russ. Stillman, Tru- man and Nathaniel Moulton purchased it of Russ. From the Moultons it was passed to James Gibson in 1890.

Two years later Nelson Darling bought it. To him belongs the credit for erecting the first building on the lot. This was a two story building
which was used as a wagon and paint shop until it was destroyed by fire in 1873, when in the possession of Barnard Holenbake, who had purchased it of James Iverson and Silas Erickson, two well known business men of this village for many years.

Among others who owned the property after the wagon shop was built to the time of the fire were F. A. Weage, James Iverson, Noah and Odle Crabb, James Iverson, Amassa Harden and Sillius Erickson.

At one time Wenzel Raymond used part of the first floor of the wagon shop for his harness shop. It was there that William Shenkenberg, the present postmaster of Waterford, learned the harness makers trade. He was with Mr. Raymond at that site for three years.

Following the fire of 1873, Mr. Holenbake sold the lot to Nelson Palmer, who according to the records, sold to Henry Naber, father of H. J. Naber.

of this village. At the same time, John Rein, then a young man of twenty, came from Burlington and bought the lot where the blacksmith shop now stands. The two lots were bought for $150 apiece. “Mr. Naber furnished the money,” says Mr. Rein, “as well as the money for the two buildings we erected the same year—his wagon and paint shop and my blacksmith shop. These two buildings, the wagon shop, a two story building, cost in the neighborhood of $150 each.

For six years Mr. Naber operated his wagon shop after which he sold it to William Auterman. Eighteen years later Henry Hegeman became the owner. He enlarged and remodeled the building and used it for a livery barn. Kinney & Best operated a livery barn there for a while and later Joseph DeGillete ran a garage until called to the Colors during the late war. Michael Deneen bought it of Mr. Hegeman. Edward F. Kortendick purchased it in 1916, tore down the building and used the material in the construction of a barn on his farm. The same year he sold the lot to Charles Apple. Mr. Graf bought the property of Mr. Apple.

Time moves on, the new replaces the old. The automobile takes the place of the wagon and the modern garage has made of the livery barn only a memory. The old frame building is succeeded by one more substantial as well as more beautiful and more artistic. With this new, modern garage Waterford is coming into its own. No better, no more up-to-date automobile establishment is to be found in this vicinity. The equipment is the latest and most complete to be procured. Mr. Graf handles the Hupmobile and Paige automobiles.

Honest and straightforward in his business policies Mr. Graf is recognized as one of the substantial business men of the community. He is now serving as president of the village and takes an active part in those things which promote the best interest of the life of the community. Waterford is proud of its newest building. May the confidence Mr. Graf has shown in this village in the erection of such a building be justified as the years come and go.
River Scenes—Ten Club Park—Bathing Beach

TEN CLUB PARK

Donated to the village of Waterford by the Ten Club in 1920


CAPT. JOHN T. RICE

Captain John T. Rice, now living at Burlington, was the first white male child born in the town of Waterford. He is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ira Rice. His birth occurred on May 24, 1839.

MRS. NANCY BUTTLES

Mrs. Nancy Beardsley Buttles, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Elam Beardsley, was born in what is now the town of Caledonia, on December 11, 1836, the first white child born in Racine county. She came to Waterford when eight years of age and lived here continuously to the time of her death, June 17, 1922.

CAPT. JOHN T. RICE

MRS. NANCY BUTTLES