

THE INDEPENDENT

Volume I.

WAUSAUKEE, WISCONSIN, SATURDAY, JANUARY 25, 1896.

WAUSAUKEE,

A Hustling Village With a Population of Fifteen Hundred

Among the bustling lumber towns of northern Wisconsin, one of the most prominent is Wausaukee, in Marinette County. When the Milwaukee & Northern, 10 years ago, pushed its iron track through the northern wilds to the iron range, lumbermen were not slow in perceiving the natural advantages offered by the Big Wausaukee stream as a location for the manufacture of lumber. A large region west of the Menominee river being untouched by other railroad, the timber resources were almost intact and where, the Milwaukee & Northern crossed the Wausaukee a small saw mill was soon humming – surrounded by the inevitable array of shanties. Attracted by the prosperity and resources of the place, mill men merchants and farmers flocked in, the woods receded out of sight and the little collection of log shanties expanded, in half a dozen years, into a thriving village of 1500 inhabitants, with excellent schools, churches, good hotels, a weekly paper and everything that goes to make up an up-to-date, wide-a-wake manufacturing town.

The old one-horse saw mill has evolved into a modern institution with all the appliances and appurtenances of a first-class mill, capable of turning out anything in the lumber line from a sixty foot bridge timber to a delicate piece of molding, and hauling logs winter and summer with its own locomotives and cars. On a spur of the C.M. & St. P. road at the other end of the village, stands another large and well appointed saw mill and between the two of them the hills and dales are being rapidly denuded of their timber covering and turned over to the horny handed farmer.

The soil of the surrounding country is well adapted to farming, as is attested by the abundant crops that are raised and each succeeding year the pursuit of agriculture is extended. Stock raising is a great resource of this locality, as has been observed by westerners, who declared that the grazing here was superior to that found in most sections of the west. The proximity of the granite quarries and the great iron range with its teeming population provides an

IT'S A MODEL PLANT

THE BIRD & WELLS LUMBER COMPANY'S MILLS.

AN IMPORTANT INDUSTRY

In Operation Twelve Months in the Year, Giving Steady Employment to a Large Number of Men.--First Lumber Sawed In 1888.

The most important industry of Wausaukee is that of the Bird & Wells Lumber Co. For completeness in its general arrangements, as well as in all details, this concern is excelled by very few, while in manufacturing capacity it ranks well up among the big concerns, even in this land of mammoth lumber institutions. But before describing the plant as it exists to day,

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

of its development will interest every one who appreciates enterprise and progress.

In December of 1887, J.W. Wells and H.P. Bird visited Wausaukee, examined the small mill that had been partially built the year before on the west side of the railroad track: also a small tract of pine land tributary there to. The mill was leased and land bought at once, but before any move could be made, a deep snow had fallen and a long and hard winter followed. In spite of this, however, camps were built, teams, supplies, and all the necessary outfit for logging was soon on the ground, the mill was completed, and early in January 1888, the first lumber was sawed. On account of the unusually severe cold, the deep snow and lack of time for preparation, the work during this first winter was attended with much difficulty and hardship. But by much effort and energy, all hindrances were overcome, and when the stock was sold off in the spring the ledger showed the balance on the right side. Encouraged by the success of the winter, a larger venture was made in the spring. The mill and about two thousand acres of pine lands were purchased and in June of 1888 was organized

THE PRESENT CORPORATION

The mill was immediately rebuilt, a logging railroad constructed and equipped with rolling stock, and the whole property placed in first class condition for permanent business. Logging by rail was a new thing

And then on to the lower pond with logs for the lumber mill, which are dumped into open water, winter as well as summer, and floated to the foot of the slide. Having thus taken, hurriedly, a general glance of the whole property, the reader is better prepared to examine it more in detail.

THE LUMBER MILL

is 40x60 feet, symmetrical in shape and neat in appearance. A steel roof, glossy black, with red paint outside and white wash throughout on the inside not only reserve the property and make it attractive, but are important considerations where fire risk is considered. A combination band and circular mill in connection with a gang edger("Jumbo"), produce the lumber. An automatic trimmer for ordinary lumber, a special trimmer for timber, a very long slab slasher, picket and lath mills and and wood saw, complete the machinery on the saw floor. The average capacity is 50 thousand feet per day and aside from the lath and picket crew, nine men place the lumber outside of the mill.

THE BOILER HOUSE

The walls of the boiler house are built of granite, the roof and supports entirely of iron and steel. Four steel ten-flue boilers and a Corliss engine furnish the power.

THE PLANING MILL

is 24x72 feet with overhanging roof, and both roof and sides are covered with steel. The machinery consists of 4 planers and flooring machines, moulder, re-saw, rip saw, cut-off saws and picket header. The capacity of the planing mill is about all the lumber that can be hauled to it.

THE POWER HOUSE

contains the water wheel and utilizes the water power. This is attached to the planing mill and also to two large pumps located in the power house. Underground pipes also take steam to both planing mill and pumps, so that all are run by steam power, or by water, or by both steam and water as is desired.

A large steel roofed shed 52x80 feet, give storage for finished stock, moldings, hardwood flooring, etc.

Two spur tracks enter the yard—one on the west side of the mill and along the timber dock, for loading large timber and all material shipped direct from the saw, the other passing through the yard and to the planing mill. This gives the finest possible

<p>excellent market for all kinds of farm produce, and induced by the unfailing market and the cheapness of land, many farmers have started in, and following the receding line of timber, keep close to the heels of the woodman. All varieties of soil may be found in this region, the strong clay of the hardwood ridges, the black muck of the low grounds and the warm sand loam of the pine lands. Wheat, oats, timothy hay and potatoes attain a growth un-equalled, and the season seldom fails to mature a good crop of garden vegetables.</p> <p>This section has become famous as a resort for sportsmen. The Wausaukee creek rising on the divide between the Peshtigo and Wausaukee rivers, pursues its tortuous and hurried way in a southeasterly direction to the Menominee. It is fed by numerous spring creeks, and the trout fisher can pursue his avocation to his hearts content. Beautiful little lakes are interspersed through the woods, and many of them are literally swarming with bass, pickerel, pike and muskelunge. Deer are plentiful here yet and the woods abound in small game. If the hunter wants excitement he need not travel far to find signs of bear, wolf or wild cat.</p> <p>There is a great future in store for northern Wisconsin. For beauty of topography no section of the union can equal it. Its thousand lakes nestling among its forest clad hills, its thousand brooks sparkling and chasing through its fertile vales give it a charm that is lacking in the dreary treeless prairie or the barren mountains of the far west. Being outside the reach of tornadoes and periodic drought, there is no place on the dominion that man has a better chance to attain a great old age and succeed in the pursuit of health, happiness and the almighty dollar.</p>	<p>then, in this region, and the operations of this company therefore attracted much attention. The same may be said of making an enclosure for a log pocket, as nearly water tight as possible, and running the exhaust from the mill into it, for the purpose of floating logs and also removing frost before sawing. Both of these experiments proved successful.</p> <p>The business of the concern moved on successfully until the night of Sept 28, 1891, when fire swept away the mill, planing mill, and six million feet of lumber.</p> <p>THE ADJOINING PLANT of the Beach & Bishop Company was immediately bought. This consisted of mill, timber lands and personal property. The mill was repaired and in October lumber was again being produced.</p> <p>During the summer of 1892, a very complete shingle mill was built on the site of the burned mill, with a capacity of 100,000 shingles per day, and large amount of posts, ties and paving blocks. During the summer of 1893, the present planing mill was built, also the stone boiler house, both as now in use.</p> <p>FIRE AGAIN attacked the lumber mill bought of the Beach & Bishop Co. in the night of December 20th, 1893, but was so far controlled by the local department that much of the machinery was saved and none of the surrounding property was damaged. A much finer mill was built early in the spring of 1891, on the same ground as the one last burned. This brings us to the condition of the property as we find it today.</p> <p>THE MILL SITE consists of 80 acres on the east and forty Acres on the west side of the C.M. & St. P. R'y track, which here runs nearly north and south. The Wausaukee Creek, flowing eastward, divides the property into two nearly equal parts. A dam with sixteen feet head is located a short distance east of the railroad track, and at this point is the lumber mill, the stone boiler house, detached from the mill on the east side, and still farther east is the planing mill. Spreading off south and east from these buildings is the lumber yard. Immediately below the dam is the "power house," in which the water power is utilized by means of a turbine wheel. A machine shop is attached to the planing mill, while farther to the north and east are well appointed blacksmith and carpenter shops and a commodious barn. About 80 rods west of the railroad track is another dam with eight feet head, and here is the shingle mill, with sheds and necessary buildings near it. The railroad, which hauls the logs comes in from the west passing the shingle mill where cedar logs are unloaded</p>	<p>conveniences for shipping.</p> <p>FIRE PROTECTION Water Pipes extend through the yard with hydrants at advantageous points near buildings, and at short intervals through the yard. Water is supplied by the pumps in the power house in abundance. At least a thousand feet of hose is always on the hose cart ready for instant use. At the first alarm the "local department" snatch the hose cart to the nearest hydrant and squelch a fire in a manner that would do honor to trained men. On each mill floor an automatic hose reel is placed with hose sufficient to reach all parts of the floor.</p> <p>Pine lands have been purchased from year to year so that the supply of standing timber is fully as much now as at any former time since the organization of the company.</p> <p>While doing a large general trade in lumber, lath, pickets and cedar products, the principle business of the company is in cutting dimension stuff to order. Framing and bridge timber, car material and all kinds of long lengths and odd sizes are furnished on short notice, the logs being cut to suit each order, hauled by rail direct to the mill, sawed and loaded, often times within 24 hours from the time the order is received.</p> <p>Owning, as it does, its own pine lands, doing its own logging and hauling, with the advantage of its own railroad, owning and operating its own mills and planing machinery, and with the facilities for shipping at its command, it will be seen that this concern is unexceptionally well situated for furnishing lumber products at the minimum of cost and of such variety as will meet the demands of the trade. The motto of the concern used in its advertisements is, "We can furnish about all the wood material required for an ordinary residence;" and very many of the yard dealers in Wisconsin, Iowa, and northern Illinois will verify this statement. Following in the wake of the trade, a considerable amount of lumber has been shipped east, to New York City and vicinity, during the last two or three years.</p> <p>As here to fore conducted, and is still generally the condition of lumbering operations, the business is divided into three general departments, viz: The logging; the sawing and shipping in bulk: the dressing, grading and shipping to yards. But as conducted by this concern, all comes under</p> <p>ONE MANAGEMENT, thus adding largely to the details of the work, and largely increasing the number of men employed at the initial points; but bringing the lumber to the yards direct from the manufacturers, and without the addition of the immediate profits; nor of the necessary expense incurred in so much handling, rents and expenses of city yards,</p>
--	---	--

etc.

The great increase of late years in the hauling of both logs and lumber by rail instead of "driving" and water shipment, shows the economy of establishing "interior mills"--mills near the timber, instead of on the navigable waters. In this movement, now becoming so common, the Bird & Wells Lumber Co. was among the first, and one of the most successful.

A MERCHANDISE DEPARTMENT has always been conducted by the company in connection with its lumber operations—not so much for the profit in it, as for the convenience to the general business. But this has proved to be convenience to the employees as well as to people in general and a source of profit to the proprietors.

A large part of the employees of the company own their own houses and in many cases, a few acres of land. The advantages of home life are thus secured, while the production of vegetables and keeping of domestic animals affords employment to those too old, or too young, for harder labor, and lessens, to a great extent, the family expense account.

THE OFFICERS

of the company are: J.W. Wells, president; J.W. Bird, vice -president; H.P. Bird, secretary and treasurer. Mr. H.P. Bird has been the manager of the concern for the first, and still remains in charge.