

# Mills of the Past.

WRITTEN BY C. V. DONALDSON.

At first thought one would not say that Menasha has had six flouring mills, but when they are enumerated one can see that it is so. I will name them in the order of their erection.

First, the Clinton mill built by Cornelius Northrup. Second, the old White mill near the lock, built by Fargo & Thombs. Third, the Star mill, built by Wm. Ellis. Fourth, the Coral mill; built by H. A. Burts. Fifth, the Syme mill, built by C. May, Alex Syme, W. P. Rounds and others, and lastly the Banner mill, which replaced the Star mill, built by J. H. Jones.

We have today but the last-named and only one saw mill, (Smith's) where we have had a dozen. Early in the fifties we had half a dozen. Neenah at one time had nearly a dozen flouring mills and two or three saw mills and was at that time the greatest milling point in the west. In those days Rochester, N. Y., was

the greatest milling point in the country; and Neenah and Menasha stood second, but little places like Minneapolis, Duluth and even Milwaukee have passed us by, and we are left far in the rear.

It is interesting to run over in one's mind the various manufacturing enterprises that have had their home here. The dam was built by Reed & Doty in 1848. The town began then and was a cluster of log houses near the north end of the

dam. The library occupies the site of the first store and postoffice, and the first hotel was just south of it. The canal was begun that year. The first canal was a small affair, perhaps thirty feet wide and was the south part of the present canal, and ran from the dam to the site of the MacKinnon pulley works, a little west of Tayco street.

The first mill was the combined saw and grist mill built by C. Northrup and soon after sold to



OLD HIGH SCHOOL BUILDING.—RAZED IN 1896.

the Clintons. Its site was the north end of the dam, where the Syme mill so long stood. It was running in 1849, and in the early days one would find S. S. Roby and Wm. Graves in the saw mill and N. C. Bronson in the grist mill part.

I cannot give the order of the building of the mills, but as early as 1850 or 1851 I should say the mills of Potter & Duchman, Porter & Slocum, Armstrong Bros. and the Keyes mill, together with

the Northrup mill were running. To begin at the dam, at the south end where the Howard paper mills stand, was the sawmill of Potter & Duchman. They had two mills on this site (one after the other) and both were burned. Next came the straw paper mill, which was owned by Scott & Hewitt at the time it was destroyed by fire. This was our first paper mill. I think a Fond du Lac man built it. H. A. Frambach was once connected with it. After it came the Howard mill, today a large institution. Half way across the river on the dam was the Coral mill. It was built by C. Northrup and for some years was occupied by him and others in small manufacturing, as rakes, ax handles, spokes, and finally was built over into a flouring mill and was run by various parties, perhaps longest by McCabe & Jones, or possibly McGinty & Wahle. It was last owned by Alex Syme and was torn down when his larger mill was taken down to build the new dam. The Syme mill, before mentioned, at the north end of the dam was the largest of our flouring mills and its removal was a great loss.

At the next flume west of this was built the Excelsior works of Noyes &

Davis. This building passed into the hands of Bemis & Co., who built the chair works on the same site, which passed into the hands of the Menasha Chair Co. The buildings were occupied by Lawson's Pulley works, when they were destroyed by fire in 1891 and the site has been vacant since. Then comes the Banner mill, occupying the site of the Star mill, which was built in 1857 and burned in 1891, long the property of R. M. Scott and occupied by many different firms. The next to the westward is the Schneider sash, door and blind factory. The early mill of Porter & Slocum occupied this site first. Next in order is the MacKinnon Excelsior factory. This occupies the site of the Williams building, remarkable in

that it was raised and built by one man. It was a well built building, some 40 by 90 and four stories and a basement and intended for a cotton mill, was built about 1855 and was occupied by various factories—spokes and hubs, bent ware, a woolen mill, and a shoddy mill. It was used for the manufacture of sash, doors and blinds and when under the management of Wm. Dykes and Mowry Clinton & Co. was a large concern. It finally passed into the hands of Colborne Bros. and was a machine shop at the time it was destroyed by fire some twenty years ago.

The same fire destroyed the Smith saw mill, which occupied the present site of C. R. Smith's barrel factory, which was also the site of the original Armstrong mill. The cooper shop and



THE KOCH BLOCK.—BUILT IN 1880.

wooden ware office occupy the ground long used in connection with that mill as a lumber yard. The next power west of this and about where the wooden ware paint shop now stands was built upon about 1855 by Oscar Bowman. The shop was used for various purposes a sash factory, etc., and here Daniel Priest put in a woolen mill. This passed into the hands of Chapman & Hewitt and was

the beginning of the works of W. P. Hewitt & Co., now occupying another location. On this site, or the one next west was built a factory by Fred Lamb and others which, before completion was carried out into the river by a break in the canal and was wholly wrecked. About where the wooden ware saw mill now stands was a factory built by James Loomis and was for a time occupied by Loomis, Frank, Davis & Co. as a spoke and hub factory. It became a part of the wooden ware works and was known as "Price's Shop," and was used for the manufacture of broom handles, clothes pins, horse pails, fish kits, etc. From here down to the Strange paper mill the changes have been so many and so frequent that it is hard

to tell what has been. Most of the ground has been occupied by the Wooden Ware company, the east part of it by their old saw mill, the central part was the site of a chair factory built in 1849 or 1850 by a Mr. Temple, and owned and occupied by various firms. The western part of the tract now covered by the main factory building is the site of the original "pail factory" erected in 1849. It was a little wooden building about thirty feet square, of two stories and contained but one or two lathes. It soon passed into the hands of E. D. Smith and was enlarged to about 40 by 80 feet, three stories high. This was destroyed by fire in 1863 and the western part of the present building was then built and has since remained. Next west where the Strange paper mill stands, was the saw mill of Capt. Keyes, which passed into the hands of E. Haskins, H. Hewitt, Lawson & Webster and later Lawson & Strange and was sold finally to John Strange, who changed it first into a pail factory and lastly into a paper mill.

Next below and east of Tayco street on ground now vacant stood a factory built by L. Fargo, and occupied first as a foundry and later as a sash and door factory, and was once a wash board factory. The southern part of the building now used by W. P. Hewitt & Co. for a woolen mill was built for a flouring mill by James Loomis, but the machinery was never put in and it was used for years as a Wooden Ware ware house. North of it was a building built by S. Tasse for a blacksmith shop, which became a furniture factory and was occupied by various firms, Fairfield & Collins, Keyes & Mathewson, Geo. Blum, S. B. Nelson, etc.

Next west where MacKinnon's pulley works are was the factory of T. Price for the manufacture of furniture, built about 1851. It passed into the hands of Keyes & Doty who made barrel staves and later was used for the manufacture of chil-

dren's cabs and sleds and finally gave place to the iron works of James Little & Son in 1876. Next to the westward are the Iron works of P. Jennings, first built about 1860 by S. L. Hart and occupied by various firms in that line. Next west are the works of the S. A. Cook Manufacturing Co. The eastern part of this site was formerly occupied by Fisher & Jones as a spoke and hub factory, built in 1861. The western part was the site of the spoke and hub works of Webster & Lawson, once the second largest manufacturing concern here. These both passed into the hands



RESIDENCE OF JOHN MARX.

of the Webster Manufacturing Co. and became the chair works of the corporation. Upon the removal of the came to Superior the Paul Paper Co. put in a paper mill and this passed into the hands of the present owners. At the lower end of the canal was the old white mill. It was owned by various parties, for some years by E. Ward. There are now away from the water power two factories—the pulley works of P. V. Lawson and the boat factory.

There have been several others, the principle ones being the barrel factory of May & Syme (later Syme & Jones) just east of Appleton street on the south side of Broad. West of this was the sash and door factory of Mitchell & Watke and at the corner of Manitowoc and Third was the factory of C. B. Fay.

Where the Landgraf hotel barn stands was the machine shop of Hart & Kelly (which was transferred to the office building of W. P. Hewitt & Co. Just east of that were the plow works and wagon shop of Stridde & Fieweger.

I have made no mention of the paper mills of the Gilbert company or Geo. A. Whiting as they occupy original sites, except that the latter is where the dry dock was located.

Also I find that I have not mentioned the pottery of C. Bachelder, which occupied a consider-

able part of block 5 and was quite an industry for many years.

I presume I may have made other omissions.

It is interesting to note that of the buildings along the water power shown in the Laemmrich painting not one of them now remains. This picture was made some time from 1857 to 1859.

Among the buildings shown are the Clinton mill, the Star mills, the Williams building, the pail factory that was burned in 1863, the paint shop or warehouse of the wooden ware company on the banks of the canal, the factory built by Mr. Temple and the factory built by L. Fargo and so long occupied by J. A. Sanford. Also the Tasse building, and perhaps others. The picture is quite accurate and gives a good idea of Menasha as it used to be.

C. V. DONALDSON.

### The Press' Home.

ON this page is printed a half tone of the substantial brick building on the public square both floors of which are occupied by The Daily Press. The location is in the very heart of the business district and consequently one of the very best in the city. For many years the office was in the Augustin building on Lower Main street, but last winter the management decided that the best was none too good for The Press and the more centrally located quarters were accordingly secured. The first floor of the present Press building is occupied by the business office, job, press and stock rooms. On the second floor are located the sanctum and composing rooms, where the paper is written up, set up and made up, the forms being lowered to the press room by means of a small elevator. A speaking tube connects the business department with the editorial room, while water for the steam plant is secured by pressure from a tank on the second floor connected with a force pump below. No better equipped office can be found anywhere in eastern Wisconsin, not only as to press facilities, type and the like, but also in point of general convenience. A large Hoe press, and three up-to-date jobbers give the office a total capacity of some 50,000 impressions per day. Power is furnished by a 4-horse power Comstock engine.

In the business department a well-selected stock of stationery, paper bound books, news goods and musical sundries is kept.

On the big press, a cut of which is printed, elsewhere, a total of about a quarter of a million

Presses are printed per year. A large and prosperous jobbing business is conducted in the building by the firm of Augustin & Butterworth.

The Press was established in 1863 as a weekly by Capt. J. N. Stone, of Neenah, and in 1896 as a daily by C. J. Augustin, the present proprietor and manager.

The force at present employed consists of C. J. Augustin, Fred Butterworth, G. E. Augustin, T. J. Augustin, R. A. Augustin, Louis Larson, Miss



THE DAILY-PRESS BLOCK.—PUBLIC SQUARE.

Mericle, Bert Mericle, and six carriers—James Marx, Otto Hagedorn, Willie Trilling, Eddie Gabel, Emil Paver and Ernst Thalke.

### A Menasha Product.

This souvenir number of The Menasha Press is in an especial sense a Menasha product. Not only has all the literary, typographical and press work been done in this city, but the beautiful supercalendared paper upon which it is printed was manufactured by the Gilbert Paper Co., whose products take rank with the very best in the United States. This same grade of paper is used on some of the highest-grade publications in America, and its beautiful soft finish and substantial texture recommends its use for editions of this kind the world over.