

W. H. BOHNENKAMP CO. OBSERVES 30TH BIRTHDAY

FIRM FOUNDED IN 1896 GROWS WITH EACH NEW SEASON

Small Start Leads to 4-Story Headquarters, Other Buildings

FATHER, 3 SONS MAKE UP COMPANY

Sound Business Policy and Keeping Faith with Patrons Bring Firm Success.

Some 20 years ago, in the fall of 1896, W. H. Bohnenkamp, who came to Oregon 10 years before from Carroll, Iowa, and who was employed by the railroad after his arrival, purchased a stock of hardware and opened a small store in the building which now houses the Hooverized grocery. His location, in the eastern part of the building, served him through a gradual opening Nov. 26, 1896, and for four more months but then getting an opportunity to secure what he considered a better location, he moved across the street to the corner of Elm street and Adams avenue—the same location the firm of W. H. Bohnenkamp company now occupies.

In the earlier days the store was known as W. H. Bohnenkamp's. The first big step in advancement came in 1900 when W. H. Bohnenkamp erected a three-story structure on the Elm-Adams site, occupying the basement, the first and a part of the second floor until 1910, when growth of the business necessitated using the entire building.

Partitions providing for office rooms were torn out at that time in the second and third floor.

Suffered One Loss.

The only loss suffered by the firm since its founding—and it is the oldest business concern of its kind in Union county—came in September, 1913, when fire gutted the two upper stories, pretty well destroying their contents.

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STORE'S POLICY TO CARRY NATIONALLY ADVERTISED GOODS

It has always been the policy of the W. H. Bohnenkamp company to carry goods that are nationally advertised.

"Not only does it mean that the lines are already introduced for us, but it enables us to offer the public two guarantees: our own, and that of the advertiser," explains Lynne Bohnenkamp a member of the firm.

That the plan has worked out satisfactorily can best be judged from the fact that most of their buying contracts have been continuous ones, and that some of the firms they patronized in the first years of their business are still replenishing their stocks.

For instance, there is Hibbard, Spencer & Bartlett, of Chicago, one of the largest wholesale hardware companies in the country. The first purchase of hardware W. H. Bohnenkamp ever made, he bought from them. And he has never seen any reason to transfer his patronage. Their O. V. H. products—the trademark abbreviating "Our Very Best"—in cutlery and tools are considered the best that money can buy.

Frank Macomber, the vice-president, is personally known to the senior member of the local firm. Mr. Bohnenkamp remembers how as a boy he used to play around the Macomber barn at Carroll, Iowa, while the now vice-president was milking his father's cows and putting up the horses. When the Bohnenkamps' store was partially destroyed by fire in 1913, Mr. Macomber was one of the first to wire his regrets and offer any financial assistance that might be needed.

Monarch ranges they have sold since the line came into existence. Three years ago they added the Monarch electric type.

They both wholesale and retail Western ammunition.

In the electric line, they carry Hoover sweepers, Universal outlet devices and Hotpoint toasters. The well known Wearover aluminum has its place on their shelves.

Ostermoor mattresses they ship here all the way from New York

LYNNE BOHNENKAMP



Lynne Bohnenkamp, member of the W. H. Bohnenkamp company, who is now in charge of the furniture department.

city, convinced that the hand-built products of this century-old company are superior to any other mattresses on the market. With Simmons beds and with springs made under that brand or by Kinney-Rome, manufacturers of the De Luxe line, Bohnenkamps feel they are offering their customers the best to be had in sleep inducements.

Dinnerroom furniture they got from Rockford, Ill., and from Gregory, of Teoma. Gregory began business about 13 years ago. One of his first shipments came to the Bohnen-

kamps, and the salesman that took the order accompanied it in to see that it was properly assembled. Gregory service has always been so satisfactory that the line has been carried continuously ever since.

"We have always featured Pacific coast products wherever possible," said Lynne Bohnenkamp, whose chief concern is the furniture department.

"In livingroom furniture, we carry the luxury products, put out by the Washington Furniture Manufacturing company, in Seattle—a Schoenfeld industry."

Rugs Attractive.

The attractive rugs that hang from the walls of the furniture display rooms are mainly Heratis, made by A. and M. Karagheusian, Armenians who rank among the largest rug importers in the United States. From creations they select and bring to America, they design and manufacture their domestic lines. Bohnenkamps have handled their rugs for more than 12 years.

From Marshall Field's in Chicago, they get the Homcrest stocks.

Higelow Hartford, another 100-year-old company, furnish them with both carpets and rugs.

They buy also from Alexander Smith & Sons—the people who hold the annual auctions that determine the forthcoming prices of rugs.

In linoleum, they feature the

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CHASE BOHNENKAMP



Chase Bohnenkamp member of the W. H. Bohnenkamp company, was the first of three brothers to enter the business. At present he owns one-quarter share of the firm.

BOHNENKAMP STORE BUILDING



The W. H. Bohnenkamp company store building, four stories in height, on the corner of Adams avenue and Elm street, houses headquarters of the firm, which also occupies part of the building to the east, a garage and implement building on Jefferson avenue and Elm street, and the Bohnenkamp chapel. These four buildings give the company eight stories of working space.

Daybook Reveals Interesting Items Of Early Days of Bohnenkamp Firm

One cake pan .....\$0.15  
One washbasin ..... .10  
One No. 2 lamp chimney ..... .25

Total .....\$0.50

In the serene little old daybook with which Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Bohnenkamp refresh their memories of the first year they were in the hardware business here, the first entry records the sale of three articles to Frank Pike, with a charge of 50 cents, 30 years ago this week.

Frank Pike was and still is an engineer, and a friend from the hardware dealer's railroad days.

D. M. Clark, now deceased, in the second name entered and J. H. Romie's is listed third.

Among the earliest, too, was Hird Lewis. Andy Anderson has been a steady customer for 30 years.

Reveals Old Prices.

Signs of the changing times can be read in the prices recorded there. Dr. N. Moller bought a mop stick, and the dealer charged him 25 cents.

Charge and cash customers averaged approximately half and half—about the same as they do now, Mr. Bohnenkamp remembers.

There were other mediums of exchange than money, though, he adds. In those days it was not unusual for a farmer to leave a case of eggs or a bushel of potatoes in exchange for nails and a handled dipper.

Merritt Reynolds—father of J. E. Reynolds—is on one page given 25 cents in credit for a chicken; 35 cents for a sack of potatoes, and 35 cents for a roll of butter. Another customer, the yellowed book records, was credited with delivery of four dozen eggs at 20 cents a dozen.

A Ready Market.

Such produce found a ready market, Mr. Bohnenkamp recalls, and the exchange was a real service to the country patrons. He has even accepted a load of cordwood to accommodate a rancher long in fuel and short a stove.

In those days, no three great trucks speeded deliveries to city customers' doors.

When there was a purchase to be delivered, Mr. Bohnenkamp would hang out a flag. And in

SERVICE GIVEN BY BOHNENKAMPS IS DIVERSIFIED

Local Company Is Now Divided into Four Big Departments

WHOLESALE TRADE IS ALSO HANDLED

Union and Willowa Counties Well Served by Firm—Staff of Employees Large.

A company that gives a diversified yet satisfactory service is the W. H. Bohnenkamp company, now observing its thirtieth anniversary in La Grande.

Whether it be supplies for a sewing machine or repairs for a threshing machine—a beautiful piece of period furniture or a length of fencing, this firm fills the desires of its patrons conscientiously.

The company's scope is wide, ranging through hardware and implements, exchange, furniture and furnishings, automobile accessories and tires, and undertaking.

Wholesale Trade.

In addition the firm supplies many dealers in this territory with wholesale ammunition, pipes, nails, fencing, explosives, iron, blacksmith coal, hardwoods and other articles.

Its trade territory, as is natural for so large and well established a concern, covered a considerable area—both Union and Willowa counties with occasional sales in other districts.

Few days go but that merchandise of some character is shipped into Willowa county, although the company draws the greater share of its trade from La Grande and other Union county communities.

With the exception of the undertaking parlor, located on Spring avenue, and the building that houses the products of International Harvester company, on Jefferson avenue, the departments of the company are under one roof—the four-story structure on

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HAL BOHNENKAMP



Hal Bohnenkamp, member of the W. H. Bohnenkamp company, who is in charge of the undertaking branch of the firm.

a little while, Jackson and Jones would come along with their horse-drawn dray and load it on.

First Motor Truck.

The first motor truck ever used in La Grande was in 1913, a conversion of Bohnenkamp's 1911 model Cadillac touring car. Speaking of which reminds the owner that he had the first car in town that was larger than a single cylinder; that in 1915 he brought in the first automobile with an electric starter and electric headlights, and that when he bought the first eight-cylinder car in 1918, he was laughed at for getting a car with "too much engine". That old chassis now operates the hearse, he adds.

FOR SLEEP'S SAKE!

—FOR ECONOMY'S SAKE—FOR BEAUTY'S SAKE—FOR SATISFACTION'S SAKE!

GET YOUR BEDS EQUIPPED WITH

Ostermoor Mattresses

"Built, not stuffed"—and that slogan explains the lasting value, the superior quality in every Ostermoor. They cost more than ordinary mattresses because they are extraordinary, extra in wear by many dollars, extra in comfort, extra in beauty.



We wish to congratulate the W. H. Bohnenkamp Co. on this their 30th Anniversary—ending three decades of superior service with superior merchandise, their standard of excellence is in thorough keeping with the standard of the Ostermoor mattress—highest quality.

GIVE YOURSELF MANY YEARS OF COMFORT THIS CHRISTMAS—BUY AN OSTERMOOR!

For Sale by W. H. Bohnenkamp Co.

OSTERMOOR & CO.

NEW YORK