

# PETERMAN'S ONE OF CITY'S LARGEST STORES AFTER FORTY YEARS GROWTH

Over forty years ago Albert F. Peterman and the late William F. Peterman took an interest in their employer's store, sold out the interest and started for themselves, and repurchased the old business, all within little more than a year, to found Peterman Bros. department store, one of the largest and oldest in the city today.

Al and Bill got their first jobs at about the same time, William working for T. B. Scott and Albert for Frank F. Hixon. Through running errands in connection with this work they became acquainted with R. E. Wiley, proprietor of a grocery store located where Peterman's men's clothing department now is, and finally William got a job delivering for Wiley. A year later he was promoted to clerk and Al took over the delivery job.

They worked thus for several years, until Mr. Wiley retired because of failing health and William went in with Hanover & Son to take over the business. After a year he sold out to Hanover & Son and, with Albert as his partner, started Peterman Brothers in 1893, 41 years ago.

They handled only groceries at first, dealing from the location where Fowler's drug store now stands; but when the Hanover firm went out of business a few years later they moved back into their old quarters and started a crockery line. That was their first expansion into the large institution that exists now.

In ensuing years the brothers added lines of boots and shoes and small dry goods, until 1900. In that year the building and stock was entirely destroyed by fire. On the very next day the Petermans got busy on arrangements for a new stock; the groceries arrived the same afternoon, and on the next morning they started up again with a full line of groceries and resumed deliveries.

The site of the burned building remained vacant until the Masons erected the present Masonic building there. The place now occupied by Peterman's dry goods department was then held by Byington's dry goods store. When Peterman's started business again after the fire they were in the location just east of Byington's where the shoe department is now handled.

Soon after that they took in new stocks of shoes, dry goods, crockery, and finally clothing, until they had a full stock for a department store. They were then ready to begin expanding their quarters.

Immediately to the rear of Peterman's store in other days Skunk Creek, with a meat store and Searles' jewelry store on the street and, farther in, a store and post-office and other businesses. The location changed hands after that, at one time containing Kallenborn's Paint and Oil Store, whence Hans V. Kallenborn went out into the world, and at another time housing the Kubasta abstract office. Peterman's bought this location from Ross and Kingsley, broke the wall, and installed their meat department there. Later, when the Elk's club, which had rented the upstairs, acquired its present clubhouse, Peterman's installed their ready-to-wear and other lines where they now are.

Then Byington's went out of business and Peterman's pierced their western wall, filling all the space in the Masonic building. Later, when the east section of the Masonic building was vacant, Peterman's arranged to pierce the wall between the two buildings, take on a more complete line of men's clothing, and devote the rented space entirely to a men's store.

In the meantime the third brother, Robert Peterman, had come into the store as a delivery boy and was given work in various departments until he had learned the business well. In 1911 the store was incorporated and Robert was taken into the firm as its secretary and treasurer, while William was named president and Albert vice-president.

The final step in the expansion of Peterman Brothers came when the bank, then located where Pet-

## THE PETERMAN BROTHERS



The three original Peterman Brothers. Albert, left, and William, center, founded the firm, and Robert, right, was taken in later. Robert died in February, 1933, while William died in August of this year.

erman's grocery is now handled, decided to put up its new building and the store as it now is was finally filled out. Since then lines of radios, refrigerators, and rugs have been added to make the Peterman stock one of the fullest in the city.

The store now has four doors on East Main street and one on Poplar. The Peterman building alone covers 120 feet on Poplar by 83 and a half on Main. The additional 26 feet rented from the Masonic building brings the total Main street frontage occupied to 106 feet.

The last bit of expansion by the Petermans came when they added the half of the block behind their store for warehouse purposes. This property contains a large barn and other sheds as well as the warehouse.

Within their store in all departments the Petermans have made it a policy to carry nationally-known makes, tested by nationwide competition and use and backed by responsible and extensive advertising. By this means the store at once assures its patrons of a definitely known standard of quality when they buy, and a large and responsible backing for recompense against defects or disappointments.

In the men's clothing department the store handles Curlee, Grief, and Smithsonian suits and coats, all of them lines known wherever, men pay attention to name in purchasing clothing. It also has Freeman and W. L.

Douglas, shoes, Wales - Goodyear rubbers and Ball-Band rubber and canvas footwear. Middleton hats, Van Heusen shirts, and a full line of good accessories and smaller items complete the stock.

In the dry goods department, such names as Belding, Corticelli and Skinner are well known for piece goods quality. The hosiery lines carried are Strutwear, Nomen, and Gordon. Other famous Peterman lines are Forest Mills underwear and Butterick patterns.

Up on the balcony one will find the store's stock of infant's wear, draperies, blankets, and ready-made curtains. The office is also located on the balcony.

The ladies' ready-to-wear, electrical, and rug departments are upstairs. In the ladies' clothing department are carried the famous Prinzess and Conde coats, known to Merrill women for many years. William H. Miller fur coats, handled there exclusively, are an old, well-established line, while the Wisconsin-made Chippewa sports wear is probably the best-known brand in Merrill.

The firm also offers LeVine and Welmade dresses, Formfit and La-Camille corsets, and Hickory girdles and like accessories. The Tom Sawyer wash wear for boys and girls, also carried in this department, is another approved brand.

Peterman's carry the famous Bigelow-Sanford wool rugs in a broad variety of patterns and sizes. They also offer Armstrong-

Quaker and Congoleum felt-base rugs, both of them products backed by years of intensive national advertising in all media. These rugs are kept on the second-floor balcony, along with window shades, polish, and other similar goods.

The electrical department, which completes the second-floor stock, features Grunow electric refrigerators and radios, and Stewart-Warner and Stromberg-Carlson radios. The three radio lines enable this store to meet virtually any conceivable wish in radio receivers in all price classes or technical varieties. With them, the store sells Cunningham radio tubes.

Peterman's also handle two electric washers, the One-Minute and Voss makes, and Hoover electric sweepers.

The first line added when Peterman's began expanding from a grocery store to a department store was the crockery department, which still remains a full one with all forms of glassware and dishes, as well as a complete stock of tinware, enameled ware, and aluminum utensils.

The store presents an attractive selection of gift items and toiletries in connection with its dry goods and ladies' accessories.

Another group of famous names is found in the ladies' and children's shoe department, where the store carries Virginia Lee, Star Brand, Tom Boy, Simplex, and W. D. Coon shoes, the Natural Bridge arch shoe, and a full line of Dr. Scholl's foot appliances and remedies.

Peterman's grocery department is its oldest. At present it contains a full line of fruits and fancy staple goods, with all branded goods carrying names known favorably for many years to Merrill housewives. It has featured the Varsity brand of packaged groceries ever since it took them on, and completes the family line with dozens of other well-known brand names. Its meat department has its own sausage kitchen, and the huge refrigerators enable the store to handle a full line of all kinds of produce.

In its large warehouse behind the store Peterman's handle their flour, feed, and hay business. The featured line here is the Ralston Purina brand. Peterman's Ceresota flour, its standard line, has been handled by this store practically since it was founded forty years ago.

### STURDEVANTS WERE PROMINENT HERE

Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Sturdevant were early and long settlers of Merrill. Mr. Sturdevant was a surveyor, and at one time acted as county clerk. They lived here now Aug. Luck and family live.

## CHAMPAGNE AND SCOTT HELPED BUILD MERRILL

Merrill lost two valuable citizens in the deaths of Thomas B. Scott and B. B. Champagne.

These two gentlemen came to Merrill to make a town. Thomas B. Scott built the mansion now used by the sisters of the Holy Cross as chapel and residence.

For several years Mr. Champagne operated a station for the accommodation of teams and travelers at Grandfather. He of course continued in the logging business at the same time. In 1879, he built what is now known as the Boston store, which he opened as a department store in 1880, and which he continued until his death.

Mr. Champagne served one term in the legislature, but came home disgusted with the proceedings of the Madison law makers. He was a very energetic and ambitious man and if he had lived until the end of the Biblical allotment of life, "three score and ten," he most likely would have become a multi-millionaire. As a young man he was a handsome fellow and resembled very much the pictures one sees in books of Napoleon Bonaparte.

## Stopping Places Aided Travel In Early Team Days

Frank Andrenos had the contract to build a road to Dudley. His brother, Thomas, had charge of the work. The road was first built to near Gleason, when the money ran out. It was later cut out to Pelican, now Rhineland. Loggers operating on the upper Wisconsin hauled their supplies over this road, because it was a more level road than the road by way of Kings, now Tomahawk, and over the Porcupine Mountains. Dudley's was the stopping place for tote teamsters and lumberjacks going back and forth.

Later another road was cut out on the other side of the river from Tomahawk, or as it was called then—the forks—where the Tomahawk river empties into the Wisconsin river. Texas forded the river at Kings. A Frenchman, by the name of Kiag, who was married to an Indian woman, conducted a stopping place there and ferried lumberjacks across the river.

John McQuillan and his wife conducted a stopping place at what was known as "Skunk Station." The road had been cut out to the Rapid near where is now Eagle River. McQuillan's station was located about 20 miles north of Kings. The McQuillans for several years enjoyed a good business caring for lumberjacks and other travelers. The station was conducted by Jack and George Gunser, loggers at Rainbow Rapids, for the same purpose.

Later McQuillan moved to Merrill, and served as register of deeds for many years. The late Joe Downie and John McQuillan organized the McQuillan-Downie Insurance company, which is still doing business here.

Frank Andrenos moved to Iowa, where he engaged in farming.

## Pine River's Pine Taken Off In Late Seventies

Out on Pine River stood a magnificent stand of white pine. This was logged for the first time in the late seventies by Huntington & Beebe. The firm consisted of Henry B. Huntington of Dubuque, Iowa, Matt Beebe was an early settler in Wausau.

Huntington & Beebe took only the very choicest trees. Their logs were manufactured by Millies Swope in his mill, and the lumber floated down to the lumber market on the Mississippi river.

Mr. Huntington located in Wausau, where he practiced law for many years.

Mr. O. B. Smith and E. T. Bosworth were the first settlers in what is now Lincoln county, who became permanent residents here.

## PETERMAN BUILDING



This building originally housed two stores, a bank, lodge club-rooms, the Merrill post-office, and a number of other businesses. During the forty years of growth of Peterman Bros. company, it has absorbed the whole building, added to the rear, acquired warehouse property immediately adjacent to the north, and overflowed into the Masonic building to the west.