

HACKBARTH AND THOLL START ELECTRIC FIRM

A. O. Tholl and L. C. Hackbarth owners of the Merrill Electric company, have been in the electric wiring and appliance business since 1913.

They set up in business for themselves in July, 1932, when the Merrill Electric company was founded. For the first seven months of its existence the company occupied quarters on Grand avenue. When these proved too small, the firm moved to its present location in the Chauvin building on First street next to Western Union.

The concern handles Edison Mazda lamps, Monarch electric water heaters, Hot-Point electric ranges and Gaiatrons, Speed Queen washers, G. E. Radios, Royal vacuum cleaners, and small electric appliances of all kinds.

Besides this, the company is equipped and prepared to do any kind of electrical wiring or installation or other service work.

Electrical devices can add much to the convenience, comfort, and improvement of a home. Proper lighting alone can provide much beauty, while the use of cooking and household labor-saving devices permits better, quicker work at lower costs with less trouble. The Merrill Electric company will be glad to demonstrate any of its appliances at its store or in your home.

Howland Went Into Hardware Store in 1903

The history of the Howland Hardware business had its inception with the purchase by E. E. Howland and Olof Norland in 1903, of the veteran Weiss Hardware company, which at the time was located on a portion of the site now occupied by the Montgomery Ward company.

In 1905 Harry Hurd purchased the Norland interest, and the firm became Howland & Hurd, which continued until 1910, when Mr. Howland became sole proprietor through purchase of the Hurd interest, under whose direction the business has continued until the present time, with evidence that it will so continue for years to come.

However, Mr. Howland is now and will continue to be assisted in the business endeavors by his two sons, Gerald and Giles, who doubtless will eventually succeed the father as time goes on—at least such is the expressed desire of the present head.

In 1912, the building occupied by Howland Hardware was rented to Chas. Staehle for theatre purposes, which later gave way to the present magnificent commercial building.

Mr. Howland then purchased the real property at 1006 East Main street, the present location, and erected a modern building with ample display and sales room, also a shop in the rear. The second story is devoted to professional offices. This was ready for occupancy in the spring of 1913.

Mr. Howland, in addition to conducting his hardware business, has proven himself to be "a man among men," and has given freely of his time and his means toward the development and welfare of his home city and its individual and public benefits, and thereby has profited, not only in worldly success, but in the estimation of his fellow townsmen.

The Howland Hardware today, is a model of merchandising endeavor, with a satisfied clientele and a modernized stock.

Mr. Howland is not only a business man, but a musician as well, and his talents have been most acceptable, particularly as an active member of the Merrill City Band and orchestra. In this capacity, however, Mrs. Howland and their son, Gerald, are also blessed with a musical desire and ability of which they have freely given to an appreciative Merrill public.

J. N. COTTER WAS EARLY CITIZEN, CIVIC BUILDER

John N. Cotter, who for a half a century played an important role in the organization of Lincoln County and its development, was born in Franklin County, New York, April 11, 1848, of Irish American stock. When yet in his teens young Cotter acted upon the advice of Horace Greeley and came west, and in November 1867, he landed at Big Bull Falls—Wausau now. The first winter he worked for B. G. Plumer, then a leading lumber manufacturer at Wausau, in a logging camp a few miles south of Merrill.

The next year, 1868, he came to Jenny, and remained here up until his death, one of the leading citizens of Merrill. The first ten years Mr. Cotter spent in the woods, logging in company with James O'Connor, also an old-time citizen. They operated together until Mr. O'Connor died, when Mr. Cotter continued the operation of logging alone.

Later the Cotter-Close Lumber Company was organized. This company built a saw mill at Black Alder Lake on U. S. Highway 51. The company continued in the manufacture of lumber until all the timber around there was cut.

In public office Mr. Cotter served as Mayor of Merrill, member of the city council, member of board of education, member of the county board of supervisors, and was the county board chairman on several occasions. He served as chairman of the building committee of the present court house, was a member of the county board when the county home was built, was a member of the board of education when the Fifth ward school building was erected.

In short, in everything that pertained to the building up of Merrill and the county, Mr. Cotter had something to do, all through his life.

Politically, Mr. Cotter was a Democratic state leader for many years. He could have had the democratic nomination for governor in 1890, if he had wanted it. He told the committee which proposed the proposition to him, that he could not afford to be governor, and would not accept the office if a certificate of election was handed to him on a gold platter.

The only time Mr. Cotter deserted the Democratic party was in 1896; he refused to support Bryan. He supported Palmer and Buckner.

Mittag Came Here to Help on School Work

C. F. Mittag, proprietor of the plumbing and heating business located at 408 West Main street, met with misfortune when he first entered in business in this city. His first venture was launched in 1923, at 500 West Main street, on New Year's day of 1924, but caused serious losses, but with determination to succeed he stayed on, and a couple of years later, moved his business into his present location, where good fortune has been more considerate and the people of Merrill have recognized his ability.

Mr. Mittag came to Merrill at the time of the construction of the present High School building, and also the Lincoln School building, to act in the capacity of master foreman of heating and plumbing. At the same time he was acting in a similar capacity in the construction of school buildings in the City of Kaukauna.

Eventually the double activities became so far advanced and so widely separated, that it was practically impossible to give proper attention to both, and it became necessary for Mr. Mittag to choose between the two. In speaking of this problem, Mr. Mittag said: "On account of the fine cooperation of the general builders, and the public at large, of Merrill, I decided to remain here. Again, after the completion of these public buildings here, I was ordered to Ironwood, where a High School was in process of construction; but having become attached to Merrill, and having a family with three daughters of school age, and noting the ideal set-up of both Parochial and Public schools, we decided to stay in Merrill, and give our children the opportunity of a good Christian and efficient education."

Mr. Mittag reported as having done a good business prior to the depression during which time he expended a considerable sum in pay rolls, and hopes and expects with a recovery of business, to strengthen his activities among people who have evidenced a "live and let live" policy and share with them their good fortune.

Mrs. Roche First White Child Born In Lincoln County

Mrs. Lydia Roche, daughter of E. T. Bowworth Sr., another first citizen of Merrill, is the first white child born in Lincoln County.

Mrs. Roche has spent her life in Merrill. Here she loved and married John Roche, who was killed many years ago. Here she got her education. For many years she was engaged as a public school teacher in Merrill. Mrs. Roche is still in good health and happy.

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