

# Sig Heineman, Immigrant, Became Merrill Leader

This writer deems it worth while at times to call attention to what America has gained from immigrants coming to this country. We have in mind, three brothers who came to this region from Germany about sixty years ago. They were: Benjamin, Nathan and Sigmund Heineman. The two former located at Wausau in 1870 or 1876. They became merchants, land-owners, bankers and mill owners. They were builders.

The subject of the following sketch, Sigmund Heineman, came to Merrill a few years later, and followed in the footsteps of his brothers, who were located at Wausau.

Sigmund Heineman opened a small store in Merrill. Under his personal attention this store grew to be a large establishment, and at that time the new settlers needed financial help; Mr. Heineman recognized in these new settlers men of the same energy as he pos-

sed. In 1912, the charter of the National Bank expired and the bank was reorganized as the Citizens National Bank, with Mr. Heineman president. He held that office until his death, Nov. 28, 1913.

During his active business career Mr. Heineman organized the Heineman Lumber Co. in 1908, and built up an up-to-date lumber manufacturing plant at Heineman. When the plant was destroyed by fire in 1910, the lumber manufacturing business was transferred to Merrill with the completion of the present Heineman plant in this city.

In 1903 Mr. Heineman formed a partnership with Geo. E. Foster to engage in logging and the manufacture of lumber.

### Was Colorizer

Among other corporations organized by Mr. Heineman were: the Hemlock Lumber Co., the Hardwood Lumber Co. and the Evansville Sash and Door Co. He organized and was the president of the Wisconsin Dairy Co. This company maintained offices in Chicago and Merrill. The business of the company was to deal in timbered and agricultural land. Another corporation was the Land & Loan Co.

We have here briefly sketched more than fifty years of intense business activity of an honored citizen of Merrill. His capital to start with was a clear head and two willing hands to work with. Mr. Heineman was so engrossed in his various business enterprises that he found little time for social activities, though he was a most charming conversationalist and delightful companion.

This writer once upon a time induced Mr. Heineman to go trout fishing upon the Prairie river. Mr. Heineman was placed at a pool here he might catch trout. After a couple of hours when we came back to him, and found him in a swarm of millions of mosquitoes, he exclaimed, "This is great, one forgets all his troubles."

On June 1, 1878, Mr. Heineman was joined in marriage to Miss Tena Strasser of Appleton. To this happy union four children were born: Harry H., Estella, now wife of Ralph Hetzel, president of Penn State University; Edgar E., and Mae, now Mrs. Arthur Hoffheimer, Chicago.

Mrs. S. Heineman, in her life in Merrill, won for herself the esteem and love of all who knew her.

Her charitable work was most noble. She did her work of relieving the sick and assisting the poor in her own modest manner, never seeking publicity. Her death brought a pang of grief to hundreds of poor people.

Messrs. Harry H. and Edgar E. have settled down in Merrill and are ably carrying on the various business activities of their noble father.

"The two young men have grown up in the lumber and banking business, having been associated with their father since their school days up to his death.

It is a fortunate thing for this community that young men like the Heinemans, Messrs. George L. Gilkey and Geo. Anson continue in the affairs of their fathers.



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seemed, and he was ready to extend help. We have in mind one man who became a successful farmer, who went to Mr. Heineman to get his help in buying a yoke of oxen. He got the oxen, through Mr. Heineman's help. That was when he was engaged in the merchandising business.

Mention is made of this, because this was not a solitary case, where Mr. Heineman helped some newcomer to get a foothold in life.

Though Mr. Heineman's mind was concerned with the development of many business enterprises, he had a deep philosophical bent. He told this writer once, that if the time ever came when the people needed more land, and he had more than he actually needed, it would be only fair if the government took it away from him at a fair compensation and sold it or gave it to those who needed it.

Mr. Sigmund Heineman was born in Germany, Oct. 1852. When he was 18 years old, he left the fatherland to come to the land of opportunities, as the young man had reasoned it out for himself, landing in New York in 1870. He did not tarry long in the east but started at once for the west, and came to Appleton in this state.

Dreaming of success in the west, and witnessing the development going on around Appleton, he gave the following reason for coming to Merrill. He said: "While a resident of Appleton I witnessed the progress made in industrial development, and decided to come to Jenny, where I could see a great future for further development."

Came To Jenny  
In 1880, Mr. Heineman took the second step in life and came to Jenny, now Merrill. The next year the railroad was built into Merrill, and Mr. Heineman saw before him an era of great business and industrial development. Having saved up a little money while at Appleton, Mr. Heineman started a little store in the city. This grew to be a large establishment.

The railroad coming to Merrill did start a real boom. Five sawmills were built or under way in the next two or three years.

In 1890, his business had broadened out so that he felt he better get out of the retail business, so in that year he sold his store to David Livingston.

In 1892, with A. H. Stange, L. W. Anson, R. G. Kingsley and others the National Bank was organized, with Mr. Heineman pres-



H. H. HEINEMAN

## THIS MAY BE ABOUT YOU.....

... being a few observations that are memories.

Let us tell you about a lady, for ladies should always lead the list. Nowadays the ladies are first in line at the barber shop, and this isn't the first time someone has said that. But this is the story of how Miss Helen Britt was first in a ferry boat during the big flood in the summer of 1912 and made the voyage from near the corner of Folk street to the West Side across Main street, which was inundated, without getting the tips of her toes wet. The ferryman was Jack Cotey and he did a land office business that day. Remember?

Robert Trautow also remembers the flood and how box cars bobbed up and down in the water like corks but the day he got wet was back in '79 when he first visited this city (called Jenny on the railroad map). He was about ten then, living out in the town of Maine. After much talk he finally convinced his mother that the only thing that would make him happy was a rain coat. About dawn the next day when it was raining (it used to rain nearly every day, remember) he set out for Jenny with money to buy a raincoat. Walked the nine miles through the rain. As soon as he bought the coat at Strasser's store, the rain stopped and the sun shone and it was hot. He put on the rain coat and started back home. All the way back, nine miles, he wore the coat, and prayed for rain, but in vain. This must have been the day that the drought began, says Mr. Trautow. Remember?

Do you remember that line of straggling old buildings which faced East Main street along the present site of the county court house in Merrill? The Chinese laundry right smack on the corner of Center avenue? And all of the rest of those early day structures?

One day in the spring of 1886 when the snow was still on the ground, George A. Schroeder, then employed by the late August Rex, rode by on a sled loaded with hay and ice in the back of the sled. He had to look down to look into the second-story windows of those buildings. Rex was in the dray business and that day he and Schroeder were hauling hay from the old residence in back of the LaChance saloon on Champaigne's street. Instead of moving a carload in three loads, Rex and Schroeder thought they would be able to move it in two. The second load consisted of 100 bales, each weighing about 160 pounds, a record load in those days. When George, who was 17, climbed up on top of that load, he became the first citizen to ascend to the stratosphere.

As many people as you might meet will tell you as many legends as to what event is really outstanding in the life of Merrill, Wis. In the opinion of Attorney Frederick J. Smith, however, the big event took place on a certain day in 1882 when Roosevelt was swept into office by a nation-wide landslide. "It was the first time anything like this had happened for more than forty years," says Mr. Smith.

J. A. Nusbaum accepted the erection of the so-called Scott Mansion, now home of nuns attached to the Holy Cross hospital, as a Merrill development. In order to forever keep it within his memory and where he could always see it and admire it, Mr. Nusbaum, laboring in his leisure, constructed an accurate replica of the mansion, following each detail down to the last window frame. The replica, which you probably have studied on many occasions, reposes in front of the store. Look for it sometime when you stop in.

A picnic held by a group of our lady citizens (were you one of them?) in Riverside park one day in the summertime about twenty-eight years ago was a big success except that it ended in a funny way. The ladies were busy with the gossip of the day when the sound of distant shooting reached them and a moment later men armed with pistols and rifles, hunting knives, and cap guns invaded the sequen-

ced picnic grounds and yelled in a blood-curdling tone at the top of their voices. "Where are they?" The ladies jumped on top of the tables, climbed trees, fled in disorder in the belief that someone had seen a mouse and called out the vigilantes. But it developed that it wasn't a mouse, but rather that four heavily armed men who had just stuck up the American State bank were on the loose with their pockets crammed with currency of every description.

Frank Chartier and Arthur Talbot, two of the possemen met four suspicious characters and challenged them. But these were no other than Rex Hanig, whose mother calls him Hugo; Otto Riebe, and a couple of other youngsters. After the boys convinced Chartier they had not robbed the bank they confided that they had, however, in their trip down to the park, passed four men, evidently the robbers and heading for the bank. The fact that they might have seen the men before the robbery didn't help much.

"Well, where are they now?" says Chartier. More shots in the distance indicated the robbers had been found. And sure enough two of them were captured and collared after they had been shot at by the late Thomas Calder, chief of police; Bill Nielow, now street commissioner, and Louis Truax, who left here many years ago. One of the robbers was shot, but there has always been a good argument as to which posseman wounded the robber. All three took a shot and all three were modest enough to claim they had scored bulls-eyes.

All of the money taken from the bank was recovered—B. C. Ballstadt, the cashier, the fact is, claimed that the recovered loot consisted of \$5 more than that which was taken in the stickup. The robbers who were captured stood trial and got long terms in prison. One of them committed suicide. The other two who escaped have never been seen since. Remember?

Otto Jahmke is possessor of recollections that carry him back to '92 when he cut his hand on a piece of crockery that he was throwing about the kitchen of his home down on First street. For a boy of four he was quite careful with his toys and only had to throw the pot twice before he busted it. One day when he was five, he says, he took a bite of the old man's plug of tobacco and therefore has no recollection of what took place until his eighth birthday while he was in the second grade at St. John's school. But chewing tobacco immunized little Otto and he has grown up to smoke cigars which, for pure strength, would suffice to put to rout the combined northern and southern armies of the Chinese republic. In spite of many setbacks our youth have managed to grow up with the city. This is what we call progress.

By Mr. X.

## EARLY BUILDER



J. N. COTTER, one of the early pioneers and prominent in the early life of Merrill up to the time of his death on July 9th, 1932.

## Geo. L. Gilkey Leading Republican



GEORGE L. GILKEY, directing head of the Anson, Gilkey, Hurd manufacturing business in this city, has been a resident of Merrill for many years, during all of which time he has been interested in this company, as well as other varied interests. Mr. Gilkey has also been honored by the Republican party of the state, having been called to serve as state chairman for six years, a position in which he won approval. Mr. Gilkey is president of the Citizens American bank and director in many other local companies.

## John Leland, Expert Sawyer, Here 57 Years

Trout fishers, who have fished for trout along the Prairie river, at the lower Prairie river delta, may have taken note of the big white pine stumps standing along the river at that place.

Fifty-nine years ago, Scott and Andrews had built a logging camp near the river, and a crew of men were getting ready to cut down the magnificent pine trees that grew there.

The Merrill Daily Herald today prints the name and picture of the man who cut these trees, John Leland, who has been a resident of Merrill, all these years, and who is still living here and active.

Young Leland, who was then twenty-two years old, had left his home near Green Bay, and had secured a job as a "chopper" at Scott & Andrews camp.

When being hired as a "chopper" by Tom Andrews, foreman of the camp, he was asked if he had ever chopped before. As the young man had not done so, but felt competent to chop with the best of 'em, he told them a "white lie" and said he had.

Time proved, however, that the young man was a competent "chopper." The "chopper" in those days was the most important man in the logging camp.

Then he went back to his home town, worked one year on the Peshtigo river for the Oconto Lumber company, and in the spring of 1880, got married, and moved to Merrill, built himself a home on Cottage street, and in 1884, secured a job as head sawyer in the H. W. Wright Lumber Co.'s sawmill. He was employed by that company in the lumber Co.'s mill in 26 summers held the position of head sawyer. Mr. Leland was regarded by his fellow workmen as an expert at handling the lever which started the saw-carriage back into the office once a day, and McClurg being drowned while skating the next winter.

The Wright Lumber Co. went out of business in 1912. Mr. Leland was called to Phillips, to saw for Kneeland & McClurg, until their mill burned, and both the proprietors died—Kneeland dropping dead in the office one day, and McClurg being drowned while skating the next winter.

Then Mr. Leland operated the sawing machinery in a mill at Fond du Lac for three summers. Then followed sawing seasons at the Oconto Lumber Co.'s mill in Merrill, until Mr. Leland retired from sawing lumber, some years ago. After that Mr. Leland was employed by the A. H. Stange Lumber Co. to 1924, when he retired to the county home, having provided funds to keep him as long as he lives.