

Revolving Illinois

by LESTER COLBY

In the beginning there was nothing at all to suggest that Kewanee might ever be a city. Apparently it was destined to be a village, to which farmers might come to trade. In matters of transport, location, water or other advantages there was little to set it apart from thousands of other American towns.

Kewanee in the beginning was merely a place on the Burlington railroad, 131 miles from Chicago, slightly south of due west, where trains stopped. It was surrounded by a prosperous farming country. Yet today Kewanee is a city of 20,000 persons.

In Kewanee are three of the best known manufacturing organizations in the country, companies making widely advertised goods, making them in enormous quantities. More than half of the low-pressure steel heating boilers manufactured in the United States are made in Kewanee.

The Answer Is Men

How and why have these things grown up in this particular spot? The answer is—men.

The reason for Kewanee's growth can be nothing else. There is no other. Everything that has gone to make Kewanee what it is grew up there, developed from the inside.

The story begins in 1862, sixty-five years ago, when the Anderson Heater Co., was started there in a bit of a shack. It was a simple thing. Just a plain little stove-like heater whose destiny was to warm stock food and stock water and make a city of Kewanee.

The originators puttered along for a few years and reorganization came. The company became known as the Haxton Steam Heater Co. Years and evolution followed and the Western Tube Co. succeeded the Haxton company.

So the seed of manufacturing was sown in Kewanee. It brought mechanics here. Boys grew up and learned the trade. Men began to have vision. The little plant making stock food heaters is the parent of every plant in this city.

Comfort for Humanity

Something else, all the plants in Kewanee are devoted in large measure to giving comfort to humanity. In all these larger ventures here we find the element of comfort applied through the medium of warmth.

The Walworth Mfg. Co., employing 2,000 persons in Kewanee, 28 acres in plant, makes a complete line of valves and fittings used primarily in steam and hot-water heating. This company manufactures about 30,000 tons of fittings here per year. Steam heating is about fifty-five years old and this Kewanee plant has grown up with it, from the embryo, so to speak.

Its expansion is such that other allied plants are now operated in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Alabama. General sales offices are maintained in the east, five sales divisions manage the trade in the United States and a sixth division, Walworth International, handles the export business which reaches to all parts of the civilized world. That's quite a step forward from the simple little stock food heater.

Known World Over

Kewanee boilers are known the world over. The Kewanee Boiler Co., has on its payroll in Kewanee more than 1,300 persons. The plant covers thirty-three acres and eleven acres are under roof. The company fabricates approximately 25,000 tons of steel plates annually. Fifteen to thirty carloads of riveted steel boilers are shipped out every day.

More than \$1,000,000 worth of Kewanee boilers were sold in New York City in 1926. What was its origin? Bless you, it started right in the same little shack that gave birth to the stock food heater and he Walworth plant. Only in the years it became an individual company and pursued a slightly different course.

The Kewanee Boiler Co. was organized as a separate institution in 1892 with E. E. Baker, president, and B. F. Baker, treasurer. Both are still active and both retain those same titles. But while the company was capitalized at \$100,000 in the beginning and employed only a handful of men it is now capitalized at \$3,500,000.

B. F. Baker was chairman of that valiant committee of aggressive, organized business men who a few years ago fought the battle against "Pittsburgh Plus" to a finish and put the steel industry in the central west on a sound, profitable basis.

Fine Park System

E. E. Baker, known as the wealthiest and most public-spirited citizen in Kewanee, six years ago organized a park system for his city and to date has given that same park system in cash \$110,000.

A third firm, the Boss Manufacturing Co., the largest maker of work gloves in the world, also grew up in Kewanee.

The men who started it got their industrial schooling directly out of the original stock food heater plant. Finally they went into business for themselves. Their first product was the Boss husking pin. Now Boss isn't a name derived from that of the manufacturer. They named it that because they felt they had a good

pin, one that would be boss of its field.

The answer is that this plant today makes more husking pins than all the other husking pin makers in the United States. From husking pins they turned to other things. A cheap work glove was developed—made of cotton flannel. Shortly other numbers, of higher cost and better quality were made.

Today Kewanee is the home office and central plant of an organization operating fourteen plants making low-priced gloves for workers of all kinds. The Boss company has an output of 50,000,000 pairs of gloves a year, almost 1,000,000 every week.

Gloves go out regularly to the Argentine, Australia, the Orient, Europe and other far places.

Big Power Line

Because these great industries have grown up here and have developed a city of 20,000 inhabitants, something else now comes. A 66,000 volt power line has just been completed from the Keokuk dam, on the Mississippi river, 106 miles away. Another line, 132,000 volts, is being built in from Joliet. Plans are completed for a third line, 132,000 volts, from Pekin, and a fourth, also 132,000 volts, from Rock Island, to be built next year.

Here at Kewanee, a central point in northern Illinois, will be the great central station to become a clearing house for electric power by the mere matter of shifting a switch or two; that will link up all neighboring cities using electric power in all the country 'round.

The cost of this great project which is to be completed before the end of 1928? No one can say just now. Estimates have placed the cost of the "high lines" and necessary equipment all the way from \$12,000,000 to \$22,000,000.

Rapid Growth

An eighty acre site has been acquired just out of Kewanee for the central sub-station. The growth of electrical development can be judged from the fact that three years ago Kewanee had only one small, inadequate power plant. It could not supply the larger industries with power and they had to make their own.

Today these larger plants, steadily expanding, are putting in electrical

equipment with the full knowledge that never again will purchasable power fail them. The organizations behind this vast electric system are the allied North American Power & Light Corp., and the Illinois Power & Light Corp.

Nor are the above all that has grown up in Kewanee. Some smaller companies are getting under way. Not so small either. The Kewanee Implement Co., which began modestly, is building a new plant, 250x280 feet, for the manufacture of farm machinery. The Kewanee Manufacturing Co., maker of steel basement chutes, claims to be the largest manufacturer in this particular item in the world.

As I have gone about Illinois finding material for these stories, many persons have asked me, in many towns, this question: "What chance has a town like this?"

Kewanee seems to give the answer. Kewanee in the beginning had nothing that these other towns did not have. It seemed destined to be only a farm village by the side of a railroad. But Kewanee developed men of vision, energy, ability to organize—men with tenacity enough to ride the storms that came. Yes, the answer is in one word—men!

COTTON CHARMEUSE AND SATIN RELATED

Bureau of Home Economics in Bulletin Explains Value and Uses

One of the most attractive new materials shown this spring is cotton charmeuse. It is not actually a new material but an improved quality of a very old and familiar fabric—sateen. According to the Bureau of Home Economics charmeuse usually is lighter in weight than sateen, more highly mercerized, and the warp forms the surface instead of the filling, as in sateen.

Printed patterns have been applied to sateens for many years. These were designed primarily for coat linings, and were large, scrolly designs unsuitable for dresses. This spring cotton charmeuse has appeared in small neat patterns much like those used in English prints. Because of its

lustrous surface and lovely texture it has become increasingly popular for house dresses, sports dresses, smocks and children's dresses. Many mothers like it for the baby's first rompers because it is one of the smoothest and softest of the cotton fabrics.

Cotton charmeuse is also woven in striped and checked patterns in plain pastel colors. In this form it is used largely for underwear and night wear, such as bloomers, chemises, slips, pajamas, and nightgowns.

Ordinary sateen is still used a great deal because of its durability and wide range of plain colors. In blue, tan and green sateen makes excellent play suits for the small boy and girl. Sateen has long been used as a lining for draperies, but it is now being used as a drapery fabric itself. It comes in fast colors and is an economical and serviceable fabric to use for pillow covers, bedspreads, and covers for comforters. It combines well with cretonne as valance or trimming bands. In a heavier weight, warp surface fabric commonly known as Venetian satin, it is used for upholstery purposes.

Japan has the right idea. When a financial panic occurs they just close the banks, stop paying off, the excitement dies down, confidence is restored and more deposits come in. That's what we'd call a good financial policy.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

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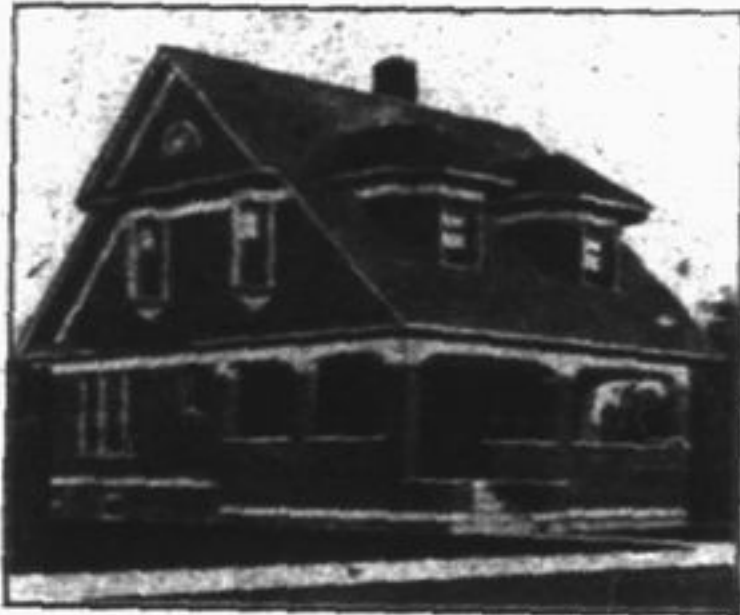
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