

Ancient Wheels ... Still Whirling

A GROUP of industrialists, reviewing Madison history, arrived recently at an off-hand computation which placed the average life of the city's early manufacturing establishments at seven years.

Madison now musters upwards of 100 factories, of varying sizes and diversified products. Several concerns, exceptions to the "seven-year average" of survival, date their origins back 50 to 90 years, but the informal reviewers recalled an impressive list of firms that have passed out of the picture. Admittedly incomplete, it included the following:

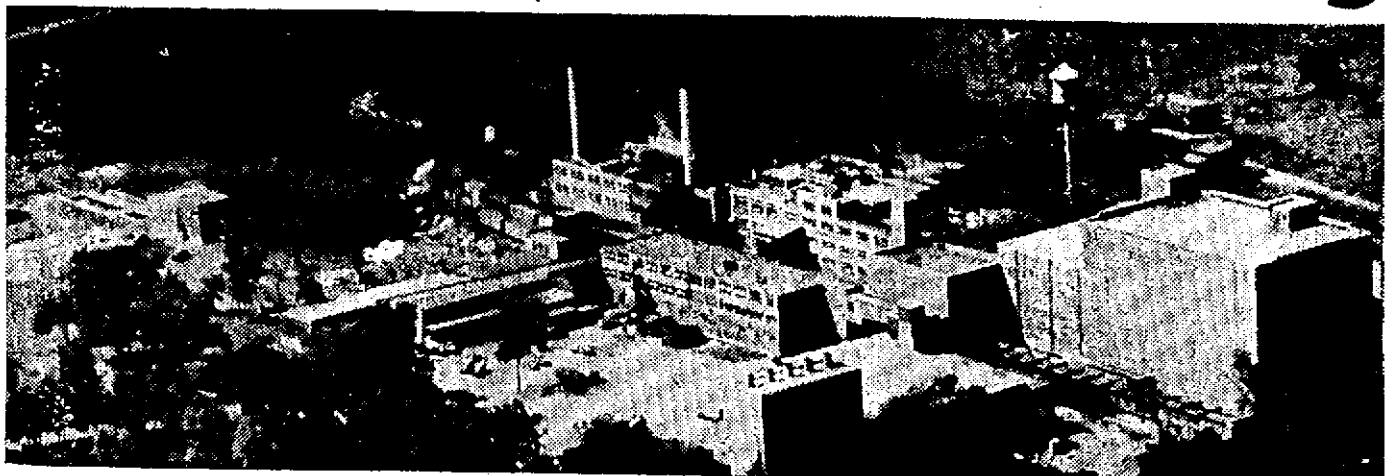
Badger State Shoe co.
Ball Foundry co.
Billings Plow co.
C. F. Brockheimer Brewing co.
Burgess Laboratories.
Comet Motors co.
Cruiser Motor Car co.
Duplex Wind Engine co.
Excelsior Skate co.
Four Lakes Ordnance co.
Fort Wayne Electric co.
J. H. Garnhart Reaper Works.
Fort Wayne Electric (Northwestern Electrical) co.
General Laboratories (B-K) co.
Hart-Parr Tractor co.
Hausmann Brewing co.
Jackson and Conradson.
King and Walker.
Lake City Tool co.
Lindstrom Bottling co.
Madison Knitting Mills.
Madison Manufacturing co.
Payton Foundry co.
Robbins and Baltzell flour mills.
S. L. Sheldon co.
U. S. Sugar co.
Warner Cycle co.
Warner Corset co.
Winckley Oil Cup co.
Zwicky Soap co.
Teckemeyer Candy co.
Madison Candy co.
Ledwith Carriage co.
Bird Brothers.
Humane Restraint co.
Standard Telephone and Electric co.

Several other companies still retain their corporate existence but are operating on a limited basis, such as the Fuller and Johnson Manufacturing co., Steidle Turret Lathe co. and the Dexter Curtis co.

EARLIEST of Madison's industries were flour mills, sawmills, foundries, and wood-working shops, and the territorial press reported ambitious hopes for a newly established vinegar factory. Simeon Mills established a steam sawmill at Main and Blair sts. in 1848, and L. J. Farwell built his first flouring mill at the outlet of Lake Mendota in 1849.

Histories also list, in 1852, a brewery operated by J. Keyes; an oil mill by Dean, Ruggles and co.; a machine shop and foundry by Barnes and co.; bedsteads and chairs made by Conger, Green and co.; printing presses by Brown, Carpenter and co.; and hominy manufacturing by Noland and co.

In 1857 marble factories were main-



Taking over a struggling farmers' cooperative packing plant at the end of North st. in 1919, Oscar Mayer and Co. added to it and added to it until today it has attained the proportions of a major industry as shown above.

tained by Abijah Abbott, A. S. Wood and John Heeran.

Antedating these was an industry that survives into the present day. Butterfield's History of Dane County places its origin in 1846. Jackson Reuter, president of the Madison Plow co., dates it even farther back—to 1840.

It was founded by Charles H. Billings, who with George A. Cary started a blacksmithing and plow shop at Morris (Main) and Webster sts. Billings, in 1849, formed a new partnership with S. H. Carman, and in 1854 the Billings and Carman firm built a factory on King st. which burned in 1856. They rebuilt on the King st. site which later became that of the Brockheimer brewery. Carman went to Pike's peak in 1860 and Billings moved the plant to Blair and Williamson sts. Frank H. Firmin, in 1866, joined Billings in the firm of Firmin and Billings and in July, 1869, the plant was moved back to Webster st.

In subsequent years Walter C. Noe and John B. Norton became partners and the four men, in 1880, formed a joint stock enterprise known as the Madison Plow co. They purchased the J. H. Garnhart reaper works erected at E. Washington ave. and Baldwin st. in 1871, and entered upon the manufacture of a large line of steel plows, with heavy grub-breakers as a specialty. Their product became known as "the plow that made Madison famous." Cultivators, corn planters, hay rakes, transplanters also were made.

Another reorganization occurred in 1882 and the firm's stock was acquired by M. E. Fuller, John A. Johnson, Edward M. Fuller and Samuel Higham, all but Higham having been officers of the previously organized Fuller and Johnson co. The name was changed to the Fuller and Johnson Manufacturing co. and gasoline pumps and motors be-

Some factories outlive an early 7-year average

came one of its most important products.

The farm implement end of the business was taken over in 1910 by Jackson Reuter, who revived the name of the Madison Plow co. and acquired the plant of the American Plow co. which had been organized in 1902. Reuter still heads the business at 131 Fair Oaks ave.

The major part of the Fuller and Johnson plant is now occupied by the Crown Can co.

ANOTHER of Madison's industries that dates its existence to early times is Fauerbach's brewery, founded in 1848 by Fred Sprecher. Hausmann's brewery, which went out of business about 25 years ago, originated as the Capital brewery, founded by William Voght in 1854. Tibbits and Gordon constituted another pioneer brewery and Brockheimer's, and Rodermund's, now also defunct, came into existence at a later date.

The Wisconsin Foundry and Machine co. on E. Main st. is a descendant of the Ball Brothers' foundry, established by Hiram Brown in about 1870, and succeeded by King and Walker, who were rated among Madison's substantial manufacturing concerns at the turn of the century, building printing presses, well drilling machinery, pulleys, punches and heating apparatus. Road construction machinery is a leading product of the present firm.

Another early industry that underwent several changes was the Madison Manufacturing co., at one time considered the most substantial of the city's production enterprises. Its location on what is now Mendota ct., near Lake Mendota, originally was the site of a steam sawmill, erected in 1853 by a pioneer designated in the Butterfield and Durrie histories as Daniel Gorum, but referred to also by Butterfield as "Deacon Gorum." A few years later Gorum (or "Gorham") sold the mill to I. E. (or J. E.) Brown, who converted it into a machine shop and foundry.

In 1859 P. H. Turner bought out Brown and in 1860 the business passed into the hands of E. W. Skinner, who erected additional buildings. A thriving

business was done in building reapers and mowers. Subsequently O. S. Willey and S. D. Hastings came into the firm and it went into the manufacture of sorghum mills and evaporators on a large scale. The Madison Manufacturing co. was formed in 1869 and entered upon an extensive general manufacturing business, rebuilding immediately after the principal shops burned Dec. 23 of that year. Among the well known citizens identified with the firm at various times were J. M. Bowman, Timothy Brown, J. L. Hill, F. J. Lamb, Philo Dunning, J. W. Hudson, William Dudley, C. L. Dudley, N. W. Dean, W. Waddle, Wayne Ramsay and Halle Steensland. The business was discontinued in about 1900 and the premises were divided into building lots now occupied largely by fraternity houses.

FOR many years, after 1855, Madison was proud of the handsome carriages manufactured, especially after hard rubber tires came into vogue, by Bird brothers (Truman E. and Ira W.), and James Ledwith.

Dexter Curtis, in 1872, patented a zinc collar pad for horses which became the foundation of an industry that continued for many years in the 800 block on E. Washington ave. under later direction of his son, the late William Dexter Curtis.

Another manufacturing business that continued until comparatively recent years was the Humane Restraint co., conducted by M. W. Lynch and later his son, M. E. Lynch. It was founded in 1875. Among Lynch's many inventions were a buckle lock widely used by insane hospitals, and an adjustable device of hemp webbing to keep patients in beds.

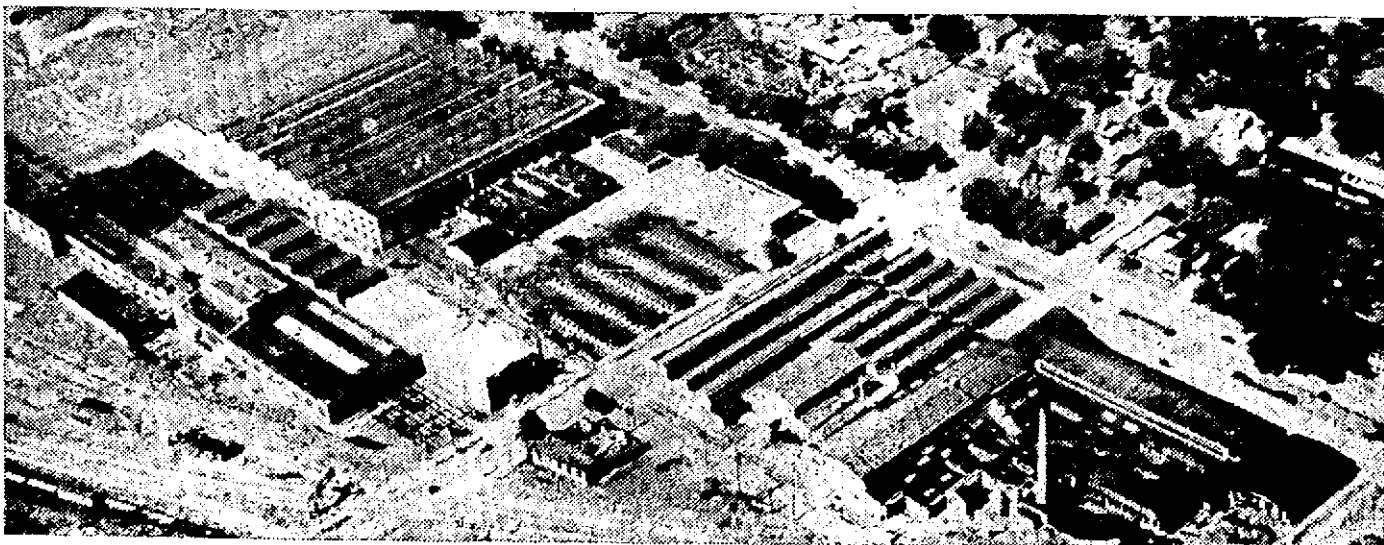
In 1901 Keeley, Neckerman and Kessenich, department store proprietors, established a muslin underwear factory at 615 Williamson st., selling their product throughout the northwest for several years.

In 1902 the city boasted nine cigar factories, employing 50 to 60 cigar makers at \$12 to \$20 a week and turning out 2,000,000 cigars yearly. Among the concerns were H. Grove's Sons, Edward Baus, G. W. Nienaber, J. Snell and Hess brothers.

CONTEMPORARY with the Fuller and Johnson co. and still one of Madison's most substantial manufactories was the Gisholt Machine co., organized in 1885 by John A. Johnson. Machine tools, particularly the turret lathe in which the firm specialized, encountered resistance in early years, because they entailed radical changes in shop methods, but they entered upon a quantity output basis and world wide distribution after they were exhibited in Chicago at the Columbia exposition of 1893. Outgrowing its original plant, now occupied by the Hanksraft electrical appliances factory at E. Main and S. Dickinson sts., the company moved to its present extensive site on E. Washington ave.

Rivaling Gisholt and Fuller and Johnson in the first decade of the pres-

(Continued on Page 6)



The architectural attractions of a manufacturing plant are seldom reflected in an aerial view of its roof, but the picture shown here graphically reveals the expanse covered by one of Madison's oldest and largest industries—the Gisholt Machine co.