

Charles F. Schafer Business Leader Over Half Century

Opened Tinshop
Here In 1864
During Civil War

(June 22, 1939)

Charles Frederick Schafer, founder of the C. F. Schafer Hardware Co., one of the largest concerns of its kind in central Illinois, was one of Mount Pulaski's most prominent business men for over a half century and his success in life was due to his own efforts and far-sightedness.

Born In Germany

Mr. Schafer was born Feb. 22, 1847, in Kirschber, Wuertemberg, Germany, son of Adam and Christine Koch Schafer. The year 1851 witnessed the emigration of the family to the United States and upon reaching this country, located in Mount Pulaski, where the father, who was a blacksmith by trade, opened a shop and engaged in business.

Arrived Here At Age of 6

Mr. Schafer was only 6 years old when he arrived in Mount Pulaski, and this city was still the county seat of Logan county, and Abraham Lincoln was riding the old 8th judicial circuit, and was making frequent trips here from Springfield to attend court.

At the age of 15 years Charles F. Schafer began learning the tinner's trade with Robert Goram, with whom he served his apprenticeship, and was subsequently in the employ of Frank Frorer in Lincoln, for two and one-half years.

Opened Tin Shop in 1864

In 1864 he returned to Mount Pulaski and started a tin shop of his own, with money borrowed from his mother and brother, and Frank Frorer furnished him his first stock. And at this time the Civil War was still in progress. The tinshop was located on the east side of the square on the same site of the present large establishment.

Erected Building in 1877

Dealing in tinware, hardware, and agricultural implements, Mr. Schafer had marked success in his business enterprise, and on account of business expansion found it necessary in 1877 to erect a brick business block on the same location, the dimensions being 42 feet wide, 80 feet long, two stories high, with basement. Subsequently he sold the north half of the building to the Masons, but in 1907 bought it back. In 1900, he built another addition, and the main store room was lengthened to 140 feet.

Married In 1867

On Oct. 17, 1867, Mr. Schafer married Miss Anna R. Vonderlieth, who was born in Mount Pulaski, March 26, 1850. The children born to them are as follows: Henry W., John Frederick, and Walter A. Schafer; Miss Anna Schafer; Clara, wife of William B. Jenner; Bertha, wife of George J. Smith; and, Grace, wife of Ottmar E. Wagner — all of Mount Pulaski. One son, John Frederick, died in 1938.

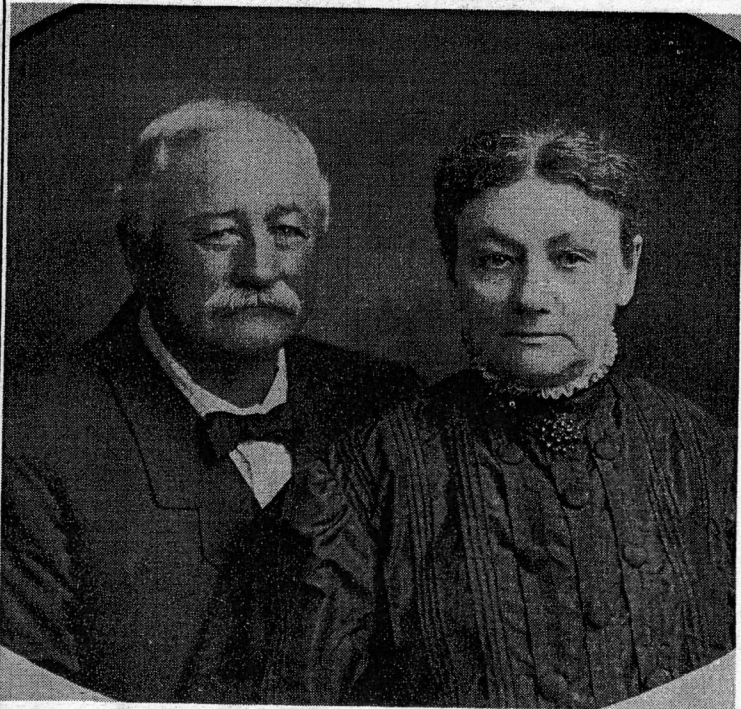
For a few years after enlarging his store, Mr. Schafer had as a partner, his brother-in-law, George W. Vonderlieth. At that time both gentlemen were also operating the Mt. Pulaski Wind Mill Company, and in the early 1890's Mr. Schafer again assumed sole ownership of the hardware business, while Mr. Vonderlieth took over the wind mill factory. As the years progressed and the sons received their schooling, they one by one entered the store to assist their father in his declining years.

Died in 1918

Following the death of Mr. Schafer on Feb. 19, 1918, the sons took control of the store's management, and included in the company's ownership are the four daughters of the company's founder.

Started at \$40 a Year

It is interesting to know what



MR. AND MRS. C. F. SCHAFER, EARLY PIONEERS



WAY, WAY BACK WHEN. This scene taken in front of the C. F. Schafer & Co. hardware store on the east side of the square, pictures several well-remembered pioneers. Left to right: W. F. Schafer, Otto Christmann, C. F. Schafer, the founder of this well-known store; George W. Vonderlieth, Chas. Snyder, E. G. Phinney, H. W. Schafer, Charles Epting. A board sidewalk is shown as is an awning that runs down the street several store fronts, being replaced later with a galvanized awning. Today, that is also gone.

boys of his youth received for their labors. Mr. Schafer once said that he worked for \$40 per year and board, for the first year he was learning the tinner trade; the second year he got \$60, and the third year, \$100. Then he was paid \$14 per week.

INTERIOR OF C. F. SCHAFER HARDWARE STORE BACK WHEN



Shown in the above picture taken many, many years ago, are C. F. Schafer, pioneer merchant here, Ottmar Wagner and Henry Schafer.

SCHAFER HARDWARE CELEBRATED 75th ANNIVERSARY IN 1939

(June 22, 1939)

An honor which falls seldom to any one in community's many times larger than Mount Pulaski, comes to a business institution here this weekend when members of the firm of C. F. Schafer Hardware Co., and the employees celebrate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the store, on Friday and Saturday, June 23 and 24.

A two-day open house celebration is to be held in commemorating the date of the store's 75th year of business in Mount Pulaski on the same identical location that the founder, the late C. F. Schafer, started his little tinshop in 1864.

The store will be open for business as usual but a gala appearance will be added with suitable decorations to emphasize the momentousness of the occasion. Refreshments will be served Friday and Saturday, and also on Saturday evening, in the north room of the store, by the ladies.

Souvenirs

A souvenir of the occasion which will be a welcome addition to anyone's home, will be given to those who visit the store on these special days.

While nothing elaborate has been planned in the way of celebrating an occasion of this kind, the event nevertheless carries with it the thought of the far-sightedness and the struggle which the originator of the firm must have had in those early days when Mount Pulaski was in its infancy.

Fine Store Building

The business which is housed in a large two-story brick building, is spread over two store-rooms. The main store building on the south (as shown in the view at the bottom of this page) carries the most complete line of smaller hardware items in this section, as well as the office which is located near the rear of the long building. The room on the north which is connected with

an inside doorway carries one of the largest and most complete line of stoves and washers in this section. A line of pumps and linoleum as well as smaller items are also on display in this room.

Members of Firm

The sons of the late C. F. Schafer, who are still living and active in the business are, Henry W., and Walter F. (Fred, who was in charge of machinery sales, having passed away Dec. 30, 1937); the daughters, who are not active in its operation, are: Mrs. George J. Smith, Mrs. Will Jenner, Mrs. Ottmar Wagner, and Miss Anna Schafer.

(June 29, 1939)

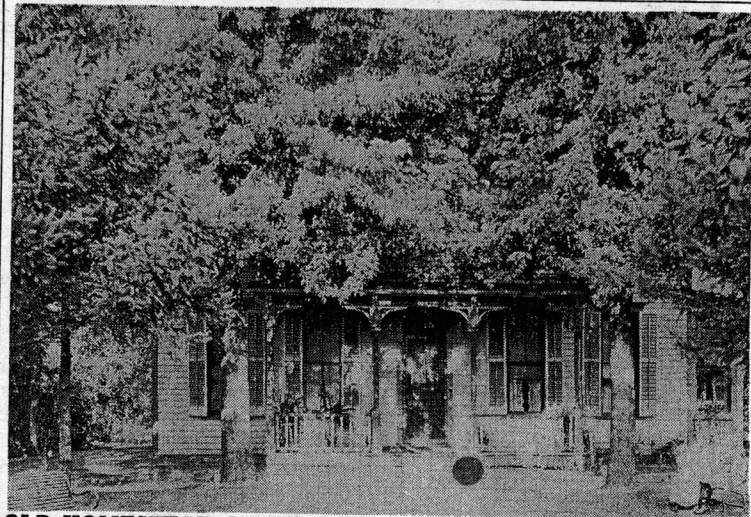
It is unnecessary to state that the 75th anniversary celebration of the C. F. Schafer Hardware Co., was a big success when one knows that approximately 1200 persons visited the store during these two days. Of this large number more than 900 registered on Friday and Saturday.

ACTIVE IN AFFAIRS OF HIS COMMUNITY

C. F. Schafer did not devote all his time to business cares, and was always interested in things pertaining to the civic betterment of the community.

He held membership in St. John's Lutheran church, served as a trustee for about 50 years, and was a liberal contributor toward its support. He was also prominent in the Masonic Order, was a member of Mount Pulaski Lodge No. 87, A.F. & A.M., being a past master, and was also a past commander of Mount Pulaski Commandery No. 39, Knights Templar. He was affiliated with Mount Pulaski Lodge No. 454, IOOF, and was a charter member of the local Modern Woodmen Camp.

Mr. Schafer served as president of the People's Loan and Savings Association of Mount Pulaski of which he was one of the organizers.



OLD HOMESTEAD OF MR. AND MRS. C. F. SCHAFER on East Belmont Street, is on the site of the Mrs. Grace Wagner residence.

Schafer Hardware Store Sold To Stahl Brothers

(Sept. 18, 1947)

The C. F. Schafer Hardware Co. store on the east side of the square, the oldest business enterprise in Mount Pulaski, founded 83 years ago, and remaining in the family this long period of time, has been sold.

The purchasers are Fred and Edward Stahl, of Dunlap, near Peoria. The brothers are both veterans of World War II, serving in the Army. They came into possession of one of the best-known, longest-established, and largest hardware stores in central Illinois. The store closed on Monday for inventory, and it will take several days to complete the big job, and will be reopened under the new management on Monday, Sept. 22.

MIDDLETOWN CENTENNIAL (Sept. 22, 1932)

Middletown did itself proud last Thursday, Sept. 15, when the first Centennial to be staged in Logan county, was attended by thousands of people from all over central Illinois.