

THE AMERICAN HAMILTON INDUSTRIES
of Two Rivers, Wisconsin
1880 — 1980
featuring the life of its founder
J.E. Hamilton

by Dan Juchniewich, Manitowoc, WI

Editor's note:

The American Hamilton Industries of Two Rivers is one of the most important industries in this part of Wisconsin. To write a history of the company in its centennial year would require a volume of several hundred pages. An Occupational Monograph must limit its length to a booklet of about twelve pages. Since the objective of an Historical Society is to "preserve and publish historical records," in a monograph it is necessary that the work of the founder be featured. In this area there is no better source than the biography of J.E. Hamilton as written by Mark H. Byers which was published in 1932. The early pages of the monograph have been taken almost word for word from this book. The account indicates a man who had an idea, an idea which took hold almost at once, and out of which grew a major industry. It is the story of a man who was a judge of talent, one who could fit that talent into a growing industry, and to make it prosper and become a great community asset. We are greatly indebted to the present executive staff of the American Hamilton Company for their cooperation and help in the writing of our Monograph number 42 in the 1980 series.

**EARLY LIFE OF
J.E. HAMILTON**

James Edward Hamilton came into the world on May 19, 1852, in a little frame cottage that was still standing on the main street of Two Rivers in 1932. It was an amusing environment for a small boy. The home is not far from the river bank, just above the harbor, and when "J.E." first became aware of his surroundings the river was a fascinating attraction. It was full of logs that had come down the river from the lumber camps, and were awaiting the attention of the screaming saws of the mill which stood on the bank. Picturesque lumbermen filled the streets and plied their trade with cant-hook, chain and axe along the banks or in precarious footing on the rafts that came down the river. As Deacon Smith's grandson, the young Hamilton was a privileged character among the rough men, and he early learned to "run logs" with the best of the village boys. It was a rather risky sport that gave his mother a good deal of worry, the point of which was to run along and across the logs floating inside the booms at the mill. It took a quick eye and a nimble foot to dance from log to log, without a wetting. One had to learn to take light fast steps on the smaller logs, and how to survey and choose the most feasible route in a split second in full career. Then there were rides on the puffing little tug "Black Maria" which bunted the rafts down the rivers, and the crews of the lunge schooners to watch as they came and went along the busy, timber-plied wharfs.

It was a country full of game, and young Ed, as he was then called, developed his skill with rod and gun at

an early age, learning then a love of the outdoors that lasted all his life. His muzzle-loading shotgun brought down hundreds of ducks from the great flocks that lay upon the rivers in fall and spring migrations, and there was rich hunting among the pines when the great passenger pigeon flights came along. On what is now the populous east side of Two Rivers was a stand of timber, not yet axed, which was a nesting place for the pigeons in the thousands, and squabs were a familiar article of local diet.

But, interested as he was in the usual sports of a small boy, the chief interest that the young Hamilton found in his native village was concentrated about the puffing engines and screaming saws of the sawmill. There had also been established by this time two other woodworking industries in Two Rivers, which claimed the budding mechanical interest of the youngster.

A PAIL FACTORY ORGANIZED

In 1856, the firm of Aldrich, Smith & Co., seeking added outlets for its products, induced some New England men — William Honey, Thomas Burns and Charles Jennison, to come to the village and set up a chair factory. This was the beginning of the New England Manufacturing Company, which for many years remained a leading industry of the town. A year later a pail factory was organized and built by a concern known as the H.C. Hamilton & Co. Aldrich, Smith & Co. (the Deacon and his partner) were the major stockholders, and the Deacon's son-in-law and William H. Metcalf, a brother-in-law of Mr. Hamilton who came from Lockport, New York, were the other members of the concern.

H.C. Hamilton had by this time

dropped out of his father-in-law's drug store, and had been for some time operating a general store in a partnership known as Henderson & Hamilton. This venture was not a success, and was discontinued upon the formation of the pail factory.

The elder Hamilton's connection with the pail factory was also to prove not permanent. He had become interested in politics, and about the time that the pail factory was completed in 1857 he was elected to the state legislature. This was not in line with the wishes of Deacon Smith, who held that a businessman had no time for politics, and shortly thereafter Mr. Hamilton's connection with the factory was severed.

**FAMILY MOVES TO
WAUCOUSTA**

This rupture in the Hamilton business relationships in Two Rivers led to the removal of the family, when "J.E." was eight years old, to the little town of Waucousta (now known as Greenbush) 14 miles southeast of Fond du Lac. Here Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Metcalf, his brother-in-law, started a combination gristmill and sawmill, together with a general store, a brother furnished the capital and this was called — J.U. Hamilton & Co. — but the venture had only been under way two years when the Civil War broke out, and H.C. Hamilton became First Lieutenant and Quartermaster of the 21st Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry, and the family moved back to Two Rivers.

Fifty years after this brief interlude J.E. Hamilton drove back to Waucousta, and brought back from the ruins of his father's mill a rusted stencil-plate with the legend "High Grade Flour manufactured by J.U. Hamilton & Co.", which still remains among his souvenirs. And on that same return he was able to find and show his wife the souvenir of a vividly remembered spanking administered by his father when the youngster had tried out a new Christmas axe on the corner of the house — the mark of the axe was still there to remind him of the only whipping he ever received from his father.

While the father was in the Union

Army, Mrs. Hamilton returned to Two Rivers, to be near her parents, and it was to Two Rivers that word came of Lieutenant Hamilton's death. He died at Nashville, Tennessee, on April 4, 1864, leaving his young widow with four small children, the oldest J.E. Hamilton, a boy of twelve.

It was decided, in the family conclaves which followed word of H.C. Hamilton's death, that it would be wiser to remove the family back east to Lockport, where Mr. Hamilton's two brothers were living and where the opportunities for schooling for the children would be better than could be found in the lumber village in the woods.

It was a rather downcast family group that traveled back to New York State that fall of '64, through a country worried and intent upon the closing months of the war between the states. Its breadwinner was gone, its possessions of the slenderest, and the oldest boy was yet too small to be of much assistance to his mother, while the demands upon her time and strength of the two-year-old Henry Hamilton made it impossible for her to add much to the family resources. Nevertheless, Mrs. Hamilton saw to it that young Edward should continue his education, and for two years she found means to keep him in the Lockport Union High School.

Those two years were the last of Mr. Hamilton's formal education: At the end of the second school year it had become imperative, if the family were to get along, that he should begin to earn what he could. Yet by the time he had reached fourteen there had been planted in Mr. Hamilton's character the desire and ambition for knowledge. Though never later to enter school or class, he became an eager student under his mother's direction, acquiring habits which remained throughout his life. Few businessmen become better informed or conversant with a wider range of subjects, than J.E. Hamilton.

The duties of a breadwinner for his mother and the three smaller children fell upon the shoulders of J.E. Hamilton at the age of 14. The two Hamilton uncles in Lockport found that the support of their brother's widow and her family was a burden which would be appreciably lightened by the earnings of the young Edward, and he entered the workaday world in 1866, at first as a carrier-boy for the Lockport Daily Journal. The wage of a newsboy, however, was insufficient, and in a short time the youngster got a full-time job — at fifty cents a day — as water-boy serving the crew of a stone quarry. This job shortly was succeeded by one that if no more lucrative, was at least less arduous — that of cash-boy in a dry goods store. Young Hamilton remained a cash-boy, at three dollars a week, for the next two years.

In the meantime Mrs. Hamilton had been growing anxious for her own people, and for a life more congenial than that of a pensioner in the family of her late husband's brothers. Lockport seemed to offer no great prospects for her eldest son, and back in Wisconsin there would be opportunities to which his grandfather's position as a substantial citizen and businessman could open the door. So, in 1868, the widow retraced her journey with her brood, and Edward again entered into the frontier environment of Two Rivers.

J.E.'S FIRST JOB

He was then just turning seventeen, a vigorous and wiry youth, somewhat less than middle-sized, but compact and well-knit. His fondness for mechanics, it might be noted, had already demonstrated itself. He was "handy" with tools, and a notable whittler. The younger children were kept supplied with kites, windmills, and water-wheels which actually "went" by his industrious jackknife, and Mr. Hamilton, half a century later, was still able to recall his pleasure at securing as his first job in the old hometown, a post as tender of a clothes-pin lathe. The job was given him at the insistence of his grandfather, Deacon Smith, who was a considerable stockholder in the pail and tub factory of Mann Brothers, active Jewish businessmen who had come to the city and taken over control of the factory which Deacon Smith and others, including young Hamilton's father, had started.

The clothes-pin lathe was a delight to the youngster. It was a semi-automatic machine, operated at a rather high rate of production when one had acquired the motion-routine. In conversation with the writer fifty-two years later, Mr. Hamilton illustrated the routine with easy facility. It was his first intimate contact with machinery, and he was delighted. He rapidly became an efficient lathe-hand, and even at the low price rate of 20 cents a barrel, made what was considered pretty good wages for the time. Eight barrels a day was regarded as a good day's work on the lathe, Mr. Hamilton recalled.

The youth continued as a lathe-hand for some two years, turning in his earnings to the family purse, but his interests were by no means confined to his routine job. His interest in machinery, to remain a vital hobby for the rest of his days, made him a volunteer helper around the engine room of the pail factory, and he acquired a good working knowledge of steam engines and their care and operation which lay at the root of much of his subsequent development.

There is still extant in Two Rivers a tale of this period which may have some bearing upon the subsequent history of J.E. Hamilton. It is the story

of a mammoth kite, the largest anybody ever heard of, which the young mill-hand constructed. It was very much of a kite, this masterpiece. It stood twelve feet high, built of sticks an inch and a half wide and three-quarters of an inch thick. It carried a tail fifty feet long or more, and it was flown with small clothesline, on the lake beach. It was an event in Two Rivers when that kite took the air, taxing the strength of a man to hold it, and when Ed Hamilton topped it off by attaching a lantern in the kite and sending it aloft at night, admiration reached its peak. It was large scale fun, the fun of a boy seventeen who was doing a man's work; hindsight fifty-odd years later can perhaps discover in the kite the working of a mind that naturally tended to do things in the biggest way possible.

HAMILTON'S EARLY CAREER

After two years at the clothes-pin lathe — and of keen observation around the power plant of the pail and tub factory — young Hamilton became a full-fledged engineer. One of the Lockport uncles, Horace W. Hamilton, came to Two Rivers and believed he saw a field in the growing village for a brickyard, which he accordingly started upon a site near the lake front, now occupied by a coal dock. That was in 1872, and the proprietor's nephew was invited to use his mechanical knowledge in the operation of the stationary steam engine which motivated the brick-making machinery. For two years or thereabouts the brickyard continued, but in a languishing way, and finally it was discontinued, leaving its engineer jobless, but unwilling to return to the pail factory if some other livelihood might be found. So it came about that J.E. Hamilton went into business for himself, using his brickyard engine as the power plant and the brickyard engine room as his business premises. The business was the manufacture of wall-brackets and other odds and ends of furniture that might be constructed or ornamented with the scroll saw work which was in vogue at the time. It proved to be something less than successful, there being small market for scroll sawed what-nots and bric-a-brac after the first few months had glutted the local consuming power. But it was not labor lost, for the woodworking knowledge so gained was more or less directly responsible for the Hamilton venture in to the manufacture of wood type in which his career was ultimately launched.

The scroll sawed furniture business was closed out after a few months, had exhausted its possibilities, and its owner's small capital, and he found work again as an engineer — a pile driver engineer on the government work on the Sturgeon Bay Canal. That was in 1873, and young Hamilton had

just reached his majority.

It appears that the young man was a pretty good pile driver engineer, for the summer following his work on the Sturgeon Bay Canal found him running the pile driver for the Twin River Point lighthouse, marking the dangerous shoals off that formerly much-feared point on the Wisconsin shore. And the following season young Hamilton was employed by Knapp & Gillen, Racine construction contractors, as pile driver for the breakwater of the school for girls at Kenosha, WI. Incidentally, some thirty years later, when the Hamilton Company was building a dock alongside its plant on the Two Rivers harbor front, and no pile driver engineer was immediately available, the president of the company recalled his youthful skill, rigged up the necessary apparatus from material available around the plant, and himself drove the piles for the dock.

There followed a return to the woodworking factories of Two Rivers, this time as piecework contractor in the chair factory. It was under a system now obsolete, but then in general use, in which the manufacture of various parts was farmed out to responsible contractors who employed their own workmen in the factory. Ed Hamilton had a crew of five or six men, making chair parts, and did well enough, according to local standards, at the job, his income averaging around \$60 a month.

BLACK HILLS GOLD RUSH FEVER STRIKES

The humdrum routine of the chair factory, however, palled after the more exciting adventurous life with the rough construction crews of the previous summers, and when the Black Hills gold rush fever struck Two Rivers in 1876 it found an easy victim in J.E. Hamilton. He was an eager listener to the tales of "gold from the grass roots down" which were spun by James Scott, a former Two Rivers resident who had been to the gold fields and had returned with nuggets to show and great tales to tell. All winter long little else but the quick and easy fortunes to be made by men able to face hardships and dangers in the Indian-infested west was discussed among the young men of the village, and when April, 1877, opened the roads for travel it found a party of twelve venturesome gold-seekers, including young Hamilton, packed and ready for the journey.

Mrs. Hamilton never opposed the venture. She had faith in the capacity of the son who had been her mainstay since his early teens, and when he declared his intention of going west her thought was of how to secure the necessary means rather than to keep him with her. Eventually the problem was solved by borrowing \$200 on the

home at Nineteenth and Washington Streets — still standing in 1932 — which Deacon Smith had built for his daughter's family. David Nottage, an English toolmaker in the pail factory, made the loan and took a mortgage on the place as security.

So Ed Hamilton was with the argonauts of '77 who set out for adventure and riches in the Black Hills. They travelled by rail to Milwaukee, Chicago and eventually to Cheyenne, Wyoming, where they were to take the stage coach into Deadwood. At Cheyenne they had their first taste of the rough life they were to encounter.

The group of tenderfoots were gathered in front of the rude hotel in Cheyenne the evening of their arrival, feeling "pretty brash" as Mr. Hamilton recalled a generation later, with the new freedom of the plains and their own daring and importance. A man came out of a gambling house across the street and began to walk away. Another came out of a similar establishment on the hotel side, spied the other across the street and drew a revolver. The other drew also, and in split second the guns were barking while the dismayed Two Riverites "scattered for cover", as Mr. Hamilton said.

One of the combatants crumpled into a heap in the middle of the street. His opponent put up his gun and walked away, while bystanders gathered up the dead man and carried him into the hotel and upstairs to his wife. The Wisconsin group reassembled, white-faced and shaken, a good deal less cocky than they had been a few minutes before.

So, packed like sardines in a Concord coach, each with a Sharps rifle across his knee for possible highwaymen or Indians, they made the 300 mile trip into Deadwood. It was the year after the Custer massacre on the Little Bighorn, and the Sioux war parties were abroad, the driver of the coach pointing out numerous fresh trails of Indian bands to his passengers as the six-horse teams galloped from station to station along the trail. They were unmolested, however, either by Indians or renegade whites, and reached Deadwood in scheduled time.

One of the passengers in the coach which bore young Hamilton, incidentally was the famous Calamity Jane, whom Mr. Hamilton recalled as a loud-swearing, smoking, and tobacco-chewing woman of hard and weathered features, who was almost incredible to the group of young men from the softer communities of the east.

The coach which followed them the day after their arrival in Deadwood was set upon by highwaymen, the driver and several passengers being killed. The Two Rivers contingent, still at a loose end in the brawling mining

camp, went down to the stage station and saw the bodies brought in, their clothing pierced with buckshot wounds.

The Two Rivers party quickly found that it was not as easy as it looked to become gold-miners. The diggings along the gulch where gold had been discovered were pre-empted for miles, and it was almost inevitable death, especially for the inexperienced, to venture into the hills back from the camp to look for virgin fields. The placermines in the creek bed were about panned out, and the quartz-mining in the original veins in the hills were just beginning. But that required capital and experience which the tenderfoot did not possess, and the Wisconsinites were forced to go to work with pick-and-shovel, at \$5 a day, digging a sluiceway for some placer operations that earlier comers were developing.

It was not long before the drudgery, the impossibility of actually engaging in the quest for gold, the hard life and the constant danger had cured the Two Rivers men of the gold fever. Those who had the money were not long in turning back toward civilization. Ed Hamilton was one of those who had first to earn his way out. So for four months he worked with pick-and-shovel for his getaway stake, living in the meanwhile in a cabin with others of his fellows up the gulch near Gayville. They slept on straw in pole bunks, and ate mostly beans — at 25 cents a pound — which they cooked themselves over an open fire. For amusement, after their days of digging, they wandered into the roaring single street of Deadwood, watching its gambling, drinking, shooting career. They learned to be wary of the ugly drunken bad man with his ever-ready guns low on the hip for a quick draw. They became experts in seeking cover when voices rose and guns barked. They saw sudden death in many violent guises, vice in the raw — and longed for the village on the lake.

Eventually those who were left had their stakes, and started out of the hills for Fort Pierre on the Missouri River. They had come in with bright hopes, riding a coach in style. They went out with a mule train, trudging the weary miles on foot and sleeping in their blankets under the wagons at night. On the way, Mr. Hamilton recalled, they passed mule trains coming in, accompanied by singing, shouting tenderfoot adventurers eager for the mining camp and the gold-hunt, who jeered them for quitters while the veterans smiled at their enthusiasm, so soon to be dashed.

At Fort Pierre there was a ten-day wait for the river steamboat, and a quiet journey around the bends of the Missouri to Yankton, where the party broke up. Those who could went

straight home. Young Hamilton, loth to return empty-handed, had written home before he left Deadwood, and had had 200 old-fashioned clothes-bars sent by the chair factory to Yankton, which he hoped to peddle and so defray his expenses en route.

The clothes-bars sold for \$2, but the trade was not brisk. After exhausting the market in Yankton, he packed up his remaining stock and took it to Dubuque on his way home. When the clothes-bars were gone, traveling and living expenses had eaten up the proceeds, and there was barely money left to see the adventure home. He came back, unannounced, empty-handed, on a steamboat from Milwaukee, and recalled years later that nothing he had seen on his travels looked so good to him as the long piers of Two Rivers jutting out into the lake with their piled lumber, and the raw little village in the pines in the early summer of 1877.

MARRIES ETTA SHOVE

Mr. Hamilton, in 1880, did "two things that caused the neighbors to shake their heads." He got married and quit his job in the factory to go into business for himself.

A rather remarkable woman, Mrs. Etta Shove Hamilton had the same Yankee origins as that of her husband, and like him she was a native of the Wisconsin lakeshore. She was born in Manitowoc, but in her girlhood her family moved to Appleton, and she did not meet Mr. Hamilton until a few days after his return from the Black Hills. Miss Shove was the "new teacher" and a personage in the little village. She was something of a curiosity in Two Rivers, as a college-bred woman. According to contemporary standards, Miss Shove was something of a bluestocking. She was a student at Lawrence College, in Appleton, and was preparing to make her own as a teacher. She did, in fact, teach for three years, one in Two Rivers and two in the public schools of Appleton. It is perhaps worth noting that she did not remain long a guest of Deacon Smith; the stiff, somewhat grim atmosphere of that rigid household proved too repressive, and she made an excuse to find other lodgings during the school term.

Miss Shove and Ed Hamilton were married at Appleton, August 5, 1880, at the home of her mother, Mrs. Lavancia Shove, and returned to Two Rivers to the home of Mr. Hamilton's mother, in one room of which he had the little workshop in which was hatched the germ of the idea which became the Hamilton Manufacturing Company. She was twenty-one; he was twenty-eight. The bridegroom was then still an employee of the chair factory as a "contracting foreman".

HOLLYWOOD TYPE FIRST WOOD TYPE

At this period in his life there came

one of those trivial incidents which make such good reading in the biographies of men of achievement, because of their seeming inconsequence in the face of the paramount importance which they assume in the perspective of later years. Mr. Hamilton's particular incident was the outgrowth, in a sense, of the wall bracket and what-not business which had languished and died in the little engine room of the defunct brickyard. That had not been a success, but it had informed all the village that young Hamilton was handy with his scroll saw, and could turn out almost any sort of woodwork that one had a mind to ask of him.

He was back at his old job in the chair factory, receiving with as much good nature as was reasonable the raillery of his friends who had not been to the Black Hills and were therefore in ideal position to comment upon those who had returned thence empty-handed, when opportunity presented herself in the guise of the local editor and job office proprietor, William F. Nash, publisher of the Two Rivers Chronicle, and a power in Wisconsin circles of the democratic party.

Mr. Nash had bitten off a job of printing which was a little more than his somewhat primitive country shop could chew. He had agreed to deliver some large posters for a dance to be held in the village, and found when he came to set up the job that he had not the display type necessary for work of this character. There was no time left in which to send an order through the slow channels of the printers' supply business of those days, when all type came from the East. As a last resort he turned to young Hamilton, who might be able to make some sort of makeshift type with his woodworking tools.

And so about November 1, 1880, came about J.E. Hamilton's introduction to the needs of the printing trade, and his debut in the field of wood type manufacture. When Mr. Nash had explained his needs, and they had together reasoned out by rule-

of-thumb what might passably satisfy them, Hamilton sketched out on paper a crude outline of the words "Grand Ball at Turner Hall", in more or less Gothic capitals, received the approval of his design from Mr. Nash, and went to work on the foot-power scroll saw which stood in a little workroom in his mother's cottage.

Transferring the design to a thin piece of hardwood, he sawed the outlines, mounted the result on a block of softer wood, sand-papered and polished the top to a printing finish, and planed the underside of the block to approximately "type high". The resultant piece of work was what is known as a logotype — a single block with the entire legend in one piece. It was in outline — the letter incised, to print as white in a black ground. The logotype was unearthed a generation later in the accumulated rubbish of the Chronicle office, incidentally, and entered Mr. Hamilton's collection of souvenirs . . . It was still a usable piece of printing material.

Mr. Nash, who was watching the experiments with interest, was so well pleased with the first logotype, and with other faces that Hamilton cut in the next week or two and submitted for his inspection, that he ordered four or five fonts of display type. Mr. Hamilton offered them at a figure much below the cost of type purchased through the regular channels of the trade, and they printed as effectively as any others Mr. Nash found.

When several fonts of these letters had been thus sawed out, mounted and finished, the experimenter dispatched one to his brother, George Dann Hamilton, who had but recently embarked upon a newspaper career at the little town of Detroit, Minnesota. With them went a letter describing the Nash incident, and requesting a verdict on the printing qualities of the type.

Henry Hamilton, who was then working for George at Detroit, returned a letter shortly containing a good report of his brother's type. More to the



The original piece of wood type, "Grand Ball", cut by J.E. Hamilton in his back room workshop.

point, he gave some information about the possible means of marketing it, and enclosed, as a gift in return for his brother's font of type, a package of labels reading "This is a sample of Hollywood Type. If you are interested, write J.E. Hamilton, Two Rivers, Wisconsin, for further particulars." He suggested that these labels be affixed to types cut by his brother, and sent to newspapers in Wisconsin and adjoining states, as a feeler to test out the market.

Hollywood Type, the trade name by which the Hamilton type was first introduced, referred to the wood which was the material Mr. Hamilton had found most suitable for his first experiments. It worked easily, without splitting, was clear and close-grained, and took a fine finish which gave a good printing surface. For some years it was hollywood which was used exclusively in the Hamilton type shop, and for years the process of sawing the letters out of thin pieces of this wood, for gluing to a solid base of cheaper wood, which Hamilton originated in his complete lack of knowledge of wood-type manufacture, was the process by which his product was turned out. Much later, Mr. Hamilton discovered that the standard method of routing the letters from a solid block of end-wood was a more efficient process, but much Hollywood Type turned out by his individual process was sold and still in use in print shops through the middle west, for it was durable and carefully made.

The first order received for Hollywood Type by the anxious manufacturer, after he had acted on his brother's suggestion, came from the Green Bay Gazette, located in a town some forty miles from Two Rivers. It amounted to \$2.50. A few days later there came an order from Chippewa Falls, where a Mr. Cunningham was running a paper and needed some display type. This was a magnificent piece of business, amounting to \$12.00 and young Hamilton immediately gave up his job in the chair factory. He was at last in business for himself.

STARTS HIS OWN BUSINESS

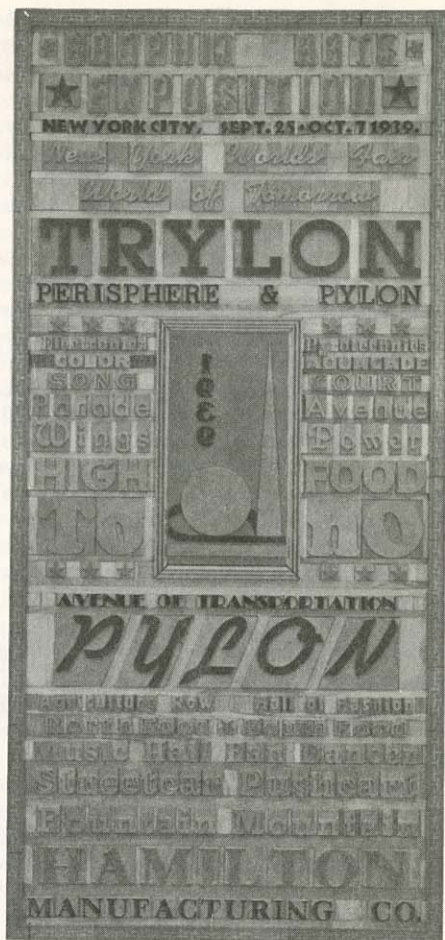
Ed Hamilton knew he could make type, for he had sawed and glued four or five fonts for W.F. Nash and they were in daily use in the print shop. The somewhat slim evidence of his first orders was, however, all that he had to go upon as "market information" when he gave up his job and went into business as a manufacturer of wood type. Today, such precipitation would be regarded as hazardous; it was so regarded by most of the young man's friends back in 1880. But there were certain conditions that made it less so than it seemed — conditions that were implicit in the situation of all the middle west at that time.

The middle western states were just then at the beginning of their substantial industrial growth. The stagnation of the depression which lasted from 1873 to 1877 had just begun to merge into a period of confidence and development. New enterprises were springing up everywhere, and the long American distances which separated the mid-western states from the more highly developed manufacturers of the eastern states presented alert and capable men with golden opportunities in a wide variety. All over Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin, small businesses were being fledged to minister to the needs of a community which was finding itself unwilling to wait for months while eastern manufacturers filled their orders in leisurely fashion and through the slow channels of contemporary communications.

The J.E. Hamilton Hollywood Type Company was one of these new and active businesses, with all the vigor of youth in its one-man management and operating force. Its share of the opportunity of the eighties was particularly good, for it happened that wood type in 1880 was made almost entirely in the east. Wisconsin was the leading state in the nation, at the time, in the production of wood and wood products, but not wood type. Wisconsin pine was fine for building, shingles, pails and tubs; its hardwoods were excellent for furniture and veneers. But type must have an extremely close-grained, hard surface, capable of taking a very fine natural finish. When the "hollywood type" was abandoned and the more durable end-wood type, cut from solid Wisconsin rock maple, was substituted, the field was open.

Not that J.E. Hamilton found it all plain sailing. There was plenty for him to learn. He could make his Hollywood Type to satisfy the most critical printer, and for a time the marketing system suggested by his brother, Henry, brought in business enough to keep the scroll saw humming. Indeed, it was shortly necessary to engage a boy to assist the proprietor. The difficulties were rather on the management side. He had only the most limited business experience.

For the first year or so Mrs. Hamilton was the bookkeeper and cashier of the company, as well as wife and mother. Little Grace Hamilton was born August 18, 1881, and the type shop became her nursery when, a month or so after her arrival, her mother returned to her bookkeeper's desk. The first record system of the new concern was a series of dates, names and figures scrawled on the wall alongside the bench in the shop. There, as he opened his orders, Mr. Hamilton set down the name of the customer, details of the order, and the date demanded for delivery. But he soon realized that this



This is an example of Hamilton wood type which was used for the Graphic Arts Exposition in New York in 1939. This type is still in production today.

system, or absence of system, would not do. So Hamilton and his young bride bought themselves a treatise on bookkeeping, and they studied the intricacies of double-entry, with laboratory practice in setting up and keeping in balance the books of their own concern.

Mr. Hamilton recalls that he hardly knew how to ship his first orders of type. He had to get the help of the railroad and express agent in filling out the necessary papers for a C.O.D. shipment.

PARTNERSHIP WITH HENRY KATZ

It was about a year after the sale of the first order of type that Mr. Hamilton, on one of his rather frequent trips to Milwaukee in search of orders and new ideas that would appeal to printers, ran across an acquaintance he had made in Two Rivers, one Henry Katz. Mr. Katz was a friend of the Mann Brothers, principal owners of the Two Rivers chair and pail factory where Hamilton had been employed. The suitcase the young man carried was full of wood type samples, and their maker was soon displaying its contents, with enthusiastic details of his methods and the prospects of his business. Mr. Katz listened with interest, said little, but a few weeks

later dropped into Two Rivers to visit the Manns, and to make inquiries about the Hamilton enterprise. He visited the little shop, met Mrs. Hamilton, asked questions discreetly about Mr. Hamilton, and before he left proposed that his son, Maximilian Katz, come into the concern as a partner.

Ed Hamilton was not keen on a partner, but it was obvious that more capital was a vital necessity if the opportunities for expansion were to be grasped. The upshot of the negotiations was that Max Katz purchased a half interest for \$1,600 and the firm name was changed to Hamilton & Katz, the new arrangement going into effect on November 1, 1881.

Mr. Hamilton felt that he had done fairly well in his first year as an independent businessman. He had done about \$1,200 in gross business, netting him enough for a living according to the modest standards of the day and place. And he had finished the year by the sale of half of what he had created for \$1,600.

The infusion of new capital into the business in 1881 proved to be the vitalizing factor that its founder had felt it would be. In 1882 the gross sales jumped a thousand per cent — from the first year \$1,200 to \$12,000. Hamilton & Katz was becoming familiar in the printing trade.

FIRST FACTORY

Immediately after the formation of the partnership, part of the additional capital was used in the construction of a small factory. It wasn't a pretentious establishment, by any standards, as may be judged by the cost — \$760. It was, in fact, a good, stout barn as far as details of its construction went, with one corner of the lower floor partitioned off for an office.

Into this plant the Hamilton concern was moved into from the one-room

shop in the Hamilton home, which was still the "factory" up to the time the new place was built. It is recorded in the legends of Two Rivers that the Hamilton plant was moved on this occasion on a goat-wagon, borrowed from a neighbor. The goat pulled the load, while Ed walked alongside and steadied the top-heavy pile of small items of foot-power machinery, patterns and stencils, the office books and what-not.

For the first two years in the new plant only wood type was made. Printing plants were springing up everywhere, as villages became small towns. There were plenty of orders for Hamilton & Katz in equipping these new shops, and in adding to the cases of fancy display type without which no print shop was complete in the eighties. Steadily the line was broadened with new faces. Mr. Hamilton was insatiable in his hunt for new styles of type; he always had something new to offer the trade. And he insisted on prompt service. When his handful of employees quit for the day, J.E. himself stayed to finish up the orders, pack them and get them to the express office.

Mr. Hamilton was not slow to realize that this type shop, which was simply a specialized woodworking plant, could at very little added expense produce other articles made of wood which found a place in every print shop. Reglet and what printers call "furniture", blocks of hardwood cut to printer's measure, for spacing out forms, were almost automatically added to the line. Then came a display chart with movable letters, for advertising purposes, which found a market among merchants in general, outside the printing industry.

In the meantime, the energetic and keen-visioned young man was hatching a new idea. This idea, reduced to its simplest terms, was that

printing shops were dirty, disorderly places which would be much better for being tidied up by means of well-built furniture, designed to meet the needs of their work.

This meant, however, a considerable addition to the facilities of Hamilton & Katz, now a well-established, sound concern. The first factory was by now fully occupied with the demand of wood type, reglet, form furniture, "shooting sticks" and kindred items. It was several years more before the opportunity presented itself by which Mr. Hamilton's idea could be tired out.

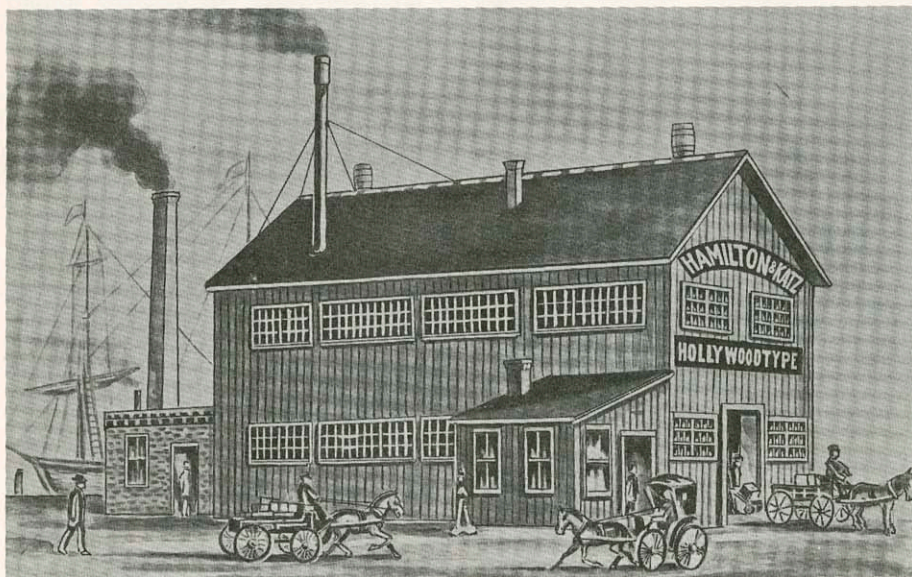
NEW PARTNER — MOVE TO PRESENT SITE

It came about indirectly, through the retirement of Mr. Katz from the firm in 1887. Having a business opportunity elsewhere, Mr. Katz sold his half interest to William Baker, of Springfield, Illinois. Mr. Baker was interested in Two Rivers through his membership in the firm of Hintze & Baker, who owned a sash-and-door factory in the town. It had not been a prosperous venture, and the factory was closed at the time that Mr. Baker purchased the Katz interest. Mr. Baker was never active in the Hamilton Company.

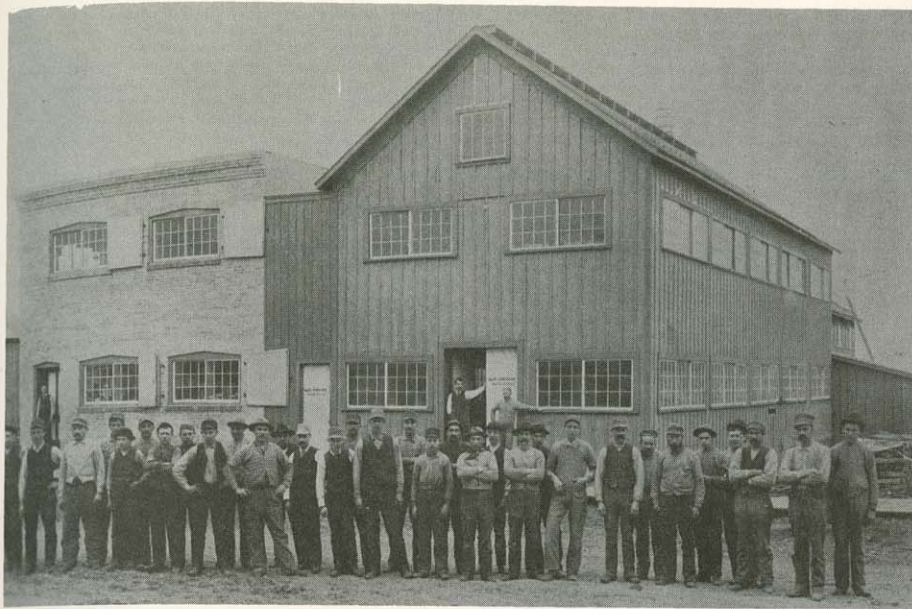
For sometime Mr. Hamilton had had his eye on the sash-and-door factory, as a plant which offered room and equipment to effect his ideas. As the factory was not a productive asset, Mr. Baker was glad to see it pass into the hands of the firm, and the Hamilton Company soon bought the sash-and-door plant, and so came to the site of its present large quarters.

The machinery of the sash-and-door plant was well-adapted to the first steps in the Hamilton program of expanding to include a line of printers' furniture, and soon the company was able to catalog a full line of such furniture as was in use in those days. By present standards it was limited and crude. It consisted principally of open case stands and square leg imposing tables. The former were skeleton racks with slanted tops above, on which the upper and lower cases of type were conveniently disposed under the compositor's hand, and with slides below on which type cases not in use were slid out of the way. The square-leg imposing table was the "stone", a heavy, level slab of marble or slate set into the top of a frame, on which to make up forms for the press. Both of these familiar pieces of every composing shop have given way to solid steel imposing tables with slides and compartments below and to dust-proof case-stands of wood or steel.

The Hamilton Company was not alone in manufacturing this simple line of furniture. It was a staple, and there were a number of manufacturers; type foundries and dealers in printers' supplies, in many cases, manufactured



Hamilton & Katz first factory. Purchased in 1881 for \$760.



The original building of the Hamilton Mfg. Co. in 1895 known as building "A" or the old "sash-and-door company." Standing in the doorway in the center of the picture is Mr. H.P. Hamilton and Arthur Lohman in the office doorway.

their own wood furniture as a necessary service to their customers. As it was, no manufacturer had enough business on such furniture to warrant specializing, and the stands and tables were turned out without much imagination as to design or fitness for the printers' use, and with no opportunity to cut costs by quantity manufacture.

Mr. Hamilton knew, by his own experience that it would be possible to design special machinery for producing these things in quantity, that sales costs could be reduced and savings made in many other ways should sufficient volume be attained. It meant a considerable investment in new equipment, and Mr. Baker was against the idea from the start. Mr. Baker, a man of means, held his interest in Hamilton Company as an investment from which he had been receiving very satisfactory returns. He did not want to plow back the profits into the expansion program and wait for future dividends. As the result of this difference in policy, Mr. Baker finally offered Mr. Hamilton his interest, under formal option to purchase.

HAMILTON COMPANY INCORPORATED — 1889

In Mr. Hamilton's own words: "I engaged Mr. L.J. Nash, attorney of the firm of Nash & Nash, of Manitowoc, to draw up the necessary incorporation papers. Mr. Nash became interested in the possibilities of the business, and took a substantial block of the stock. The Hamilton Manufacturing Company was incorporated January 1, 1889, as a Wisconsin corporation, with an authorized capital of \$50,000.00 and a paid-in capital of \$30,000.00. I turned in all my assets, together with the Baker interests which I had acquired,

for all of which I received substantially fifty per cent of the stock."

The original incorporators were James E. Hamilton, William D. Richards, Walter C. Luse and Henry P. Hamilton. The first stock-book of the company shows the following shareholders:

	shares
James E. Hamilton	131
Walter C. Luse	17
H.P. Hamilton	18½
W.C. Clarke	19½
William Richards	86½
L.J. Nash	27½

Shortly after the company was incorporated Charles E. Spindler and E.G. Nash, a brother of L.J. Nash, became stockholders, and there were no changes for many years.

EARLY EXPANSION

Backed by stockholders and directors who had confidence in his plans for the future growth, with a more adequate capitalization upon which to base his expansion plans, and with a business and reputation in the industry which was constantly increasing; Mr. Hamilton was not long in embarking upon the realization of his plans for assembling, by combination of small concerns in the field, one substantial company which could command a sufficient diversity of markets and volume of business to weather any predictable business storm and take full advantage of the economies of mass production. The Hamilton Manufacturing Company did well from the day of its incorporation in 1889, and by 1891 was financially in a position to launch the expansion program long in contemplation.

The first company purchased was the William H. Page Wood Type Co., of Norwich, Connecticut, one of the oldest

eastern houses in the industry, and one that brought a strongly established reputation and a large clientele to the new alliance. The business of several other smaller makers of printers' equipment passed into the hands of the Hamilton Company more or less informally in the next few years, as many of the type founders and dealers who had been making furniture, found it a profitless side line, discontinued it and replaced it with the rapidly growing line of Hamilton equipment. They found the Hamilton Company offered them a reliable source of supply, and a line of furniture in most cases more carefully designed and built than they could turn out themselves. In addition, mass production methods offered equipment at prices impossible using more laborious and antiquated methods.

A major change in the policy of the company, which up to this time had dealt with printers directly, came in 1893 with the organization of the American Type Founders Company, a veritable giant which united practically all the leading type founders and dealers in printing material. The Hamilton Company decided to abandon the direct sales policy and to handle its goods only through the American Type Founders and other dealers. This plan resulted in a greater volume of sales and substantial savings, both to the company and to the printers, as goods were stocked by dealers at strategic points, and orders could be filled much more promptly and at smaller freight charges.

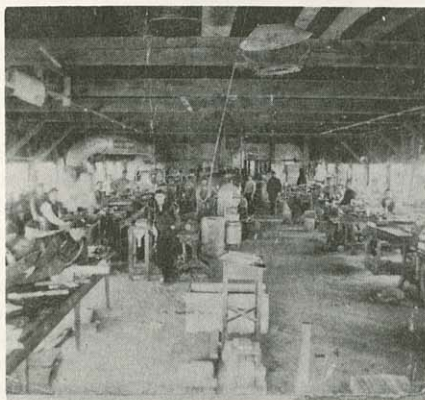
DENTAL EQUIPMENT

The period around the turn of the century was one of great activity and progress in the Hamilton Company. Its expanding business was continually pressing against the limits of production, and a constant series of building operations was in progress, which in turn opened the possibilities of new lines of manufacture. In 1901 the facilities, through the activities of H.C. Gowran, were turned to the manufacture of dental cabinets.

H.C. Gowran came to the Hamilton Company in 1896, during the period of rapid expansion, and he grew with the business. In a few months after his engagement, he had become cashier and office manager, and Mr. Hamilton soon found in him an eagerness for responsibility and a business acumen which fitted him for executive work. Mr. Hamilton turned over more and more responsibility to the ambitious young Vermonter he had met through a casual "bookkeeper wanted" advertisement.

DR. E.S. SOIK

A Two Rivers dentist and Mr. Gowran designed a bracket table for dentists which they undertook to sell under the label of The American



and large quantities of their cabinets are sold for export as well as dominating the American market.

STEEL FURNITURE

A major change in the Hamilton line was made in 1912. This was the launching of steel furniture. It was in connection with this development that Thomas W. Suddard was brought to Two Rivers. Dissatisfied with the first products turned out by imported "experts" trained in the manufacture of steel filing equipment, the company launched out upon its own developments, and met the special problems by creating its own sturdy designs. Eventually, steel printers' furniture took a long lead over the original wood lines, but by this time the dental and drafting lines had grown to the point where they kept the wood plant humming busily. Another development that added a new line was the rapid rise of radio. The Hamilton wood plant was turned to the manufacture of attractive cabinets for a dozen or more leading makes of radios. It might be added that, in 1931 and 1932, the Hamilton Company also shared in the development of another scientific product for the American market, when it began to make cabinets for home refrigeration machines.

In 1917 and 1918 the Hamilton Company took its place on the industrial firing line in the world war: the manufacture of airplane fuselages. Military officers and government inspectors swarmed into Two Rivers, and the great plant was launched into mass production; only to have the entire project brought to a halt by the abrupt ending of the war. At that time, the plant's capacity had been

stimulated to a production of 40 fuselages per day.

J.E. Hamilton retired from the company in 1919, after almost 40 years of active participation. He left behind a legacy of quality, pride and desire for newer and more efficient methods of production. American Hospital, as the company is called today, has not been derelect in following J.E.'s early lead. They have consistently opened new markets, developed new products and worked to improve production.

In the 1930's the company began to make "Child Craft" furniture. The high quality and innovative design of such items as playpens, cribs, and potty chairs soon made this a very successful line.

Hamilton Company had experience in laboratory equipment dating back to 1904, but in the early 1930's they worked out an agreement with the Invincible Company of Manitowoc for the production of steel lab equipment. However, after eight years, Hamilton Co. took over the entire operation and assumed leadership in both wood and steel laboratory equipment.

Being a leader in the production of dental furniture, it only seemed natural that Hamilton Co. should begin a medical furniture line. In 1931 production was begun and soon Hamilton Medical furniture was being bought for examining rooms throughout the country. Today this line includes examining tables, instrument and treatment cabinets, waste receivers, stools and medical laboratory furniture.

In 1938 Hamilton Company began production of a product that would become synonymous with their name; the Hamilton automatic clothes dryer.

Workers at Hamilton Manufacturing in the early 1900's.

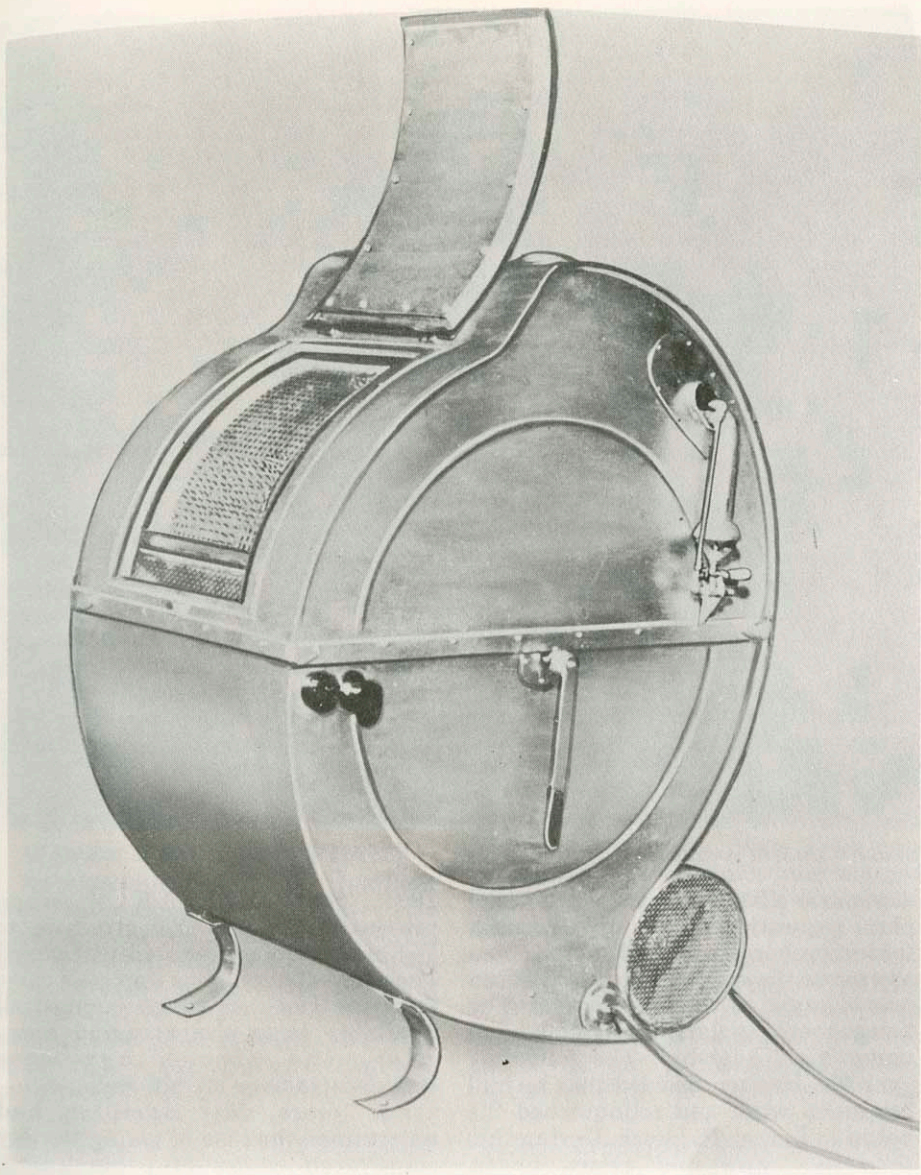
Cabinet Company. In 1901, the cabinets were made in the Hamilton plant, with the American Cabinet Co. acting only as the seller. This arrangement was continued for a little more than a year. In 1903 the American Cabinet Company was purchased as a subsidiary, payment being stock in Hamilton Co. The dental line continued to be the chief concern of Mr. Gowran

DRAFTING

In 1917 Mr. Gowran again sponsored a new line of development, drafting room equipment — drawing boards and tables, blue print files, etc. — which likewise proved to be a sound venture. Within ten years after the start of this new line, the Hamilton Co. had become the principal manufacturer of such goods in the U.S. In the dental and drafting lines together the company could claim world leadership,



The J.E. Hamilton family home, circa 1890. This building was later used as the Masonic Temple.



First Automatic Clothes dryer invented by Ross Moore.

J. Ross Moore had been working for years to perfect his new invention. After being turned down by many manufacturers, Hamilton Co. Had the foresight and skill to accept Moore's invention and to put it into production. The appliance line, including washer and dryer, was sold in 1968 to the Franklin Manufacturing Company, Minneapolis.

The Erickson Mobile Folding Table line was purchased from Haldeman-Homme Inc. of Minneapolis in 1959. This type of table was invented by a high school janitor who was tired of using conventional tables. His table could be folded up and rolled on casters for minimum use of storage space.

American Hamilton, a division of American Hospital Supply Corp. since 1968, has expanded its product lines over the last few years to include not only overbed tables and wire medical carts, but also medical devices ranging from the Lapidus Airfloat System for the prevention and treatment of bedsores to the Pulsatile Anti-Embolic System that aids in the

prevention of Deep Vein Thrombosis. Recent acquisitions have also made Hamilton a leader in the Thermal Products Medical field with products like blood warmers to aid in transfusions and devices to help raise or lower a patient's body temperature.

AMERICAN HAMILTON TODAY

American Hamilton consists of five different plants; three in Two Rivers, one in Cincinnati, Ohio, and one in Indianapolis, Ind. The largest of these plants is located in the downtown area of Two Rivers, an outgrowth of the Sash and Door Company purchased in 1887. This facility consists of over 40 inter-connected buildings that comprise 1.1 million square feet of production area. This plant houses the entire wood furniture production line, steel parts fabrication, and part of the steel furniture production for the drafting and medical/dental lines.

The second largest plant is the Columbus Street Plant. Built in 1962, it has nearly 300,000 square feet of production area and more than 3

million cubic feet of warehouse and shipping area. This includes a new addition completed just this year. Mobile and Designer furniture, Steel Lab Casework and two lines for steel drafting equipment are located here.

The third plant in Two Rivers is located on Roosevelt Street. Special tops for furniture are produced here. The plant was originally a warehouse for the discontinued Hamilton appliance line.

Most of the hospital, homecare and thermal products are produced in the Cincinnati plant. Founded in 1947 as Institutional Industries, this plant had been merged with Hamilton in 1973.

A small plant in Indianapolis was acquired in 1979 to operate in conjunction with the Cincinnati plant.

American Hamilton employs nearly 2,400 factory and office personnel.

It has 2,000,000 square feet of production and office space — that's 25 square blocks or 50 acres.

Enough lumber is used each year to replace the boardwalk at Atlantic City every 3 months or build 2,000 three bedroom homes.

35 million pounds of steel are cut each year.

The average term of employment is 18½ years, 80% longer than the average in the U.S.

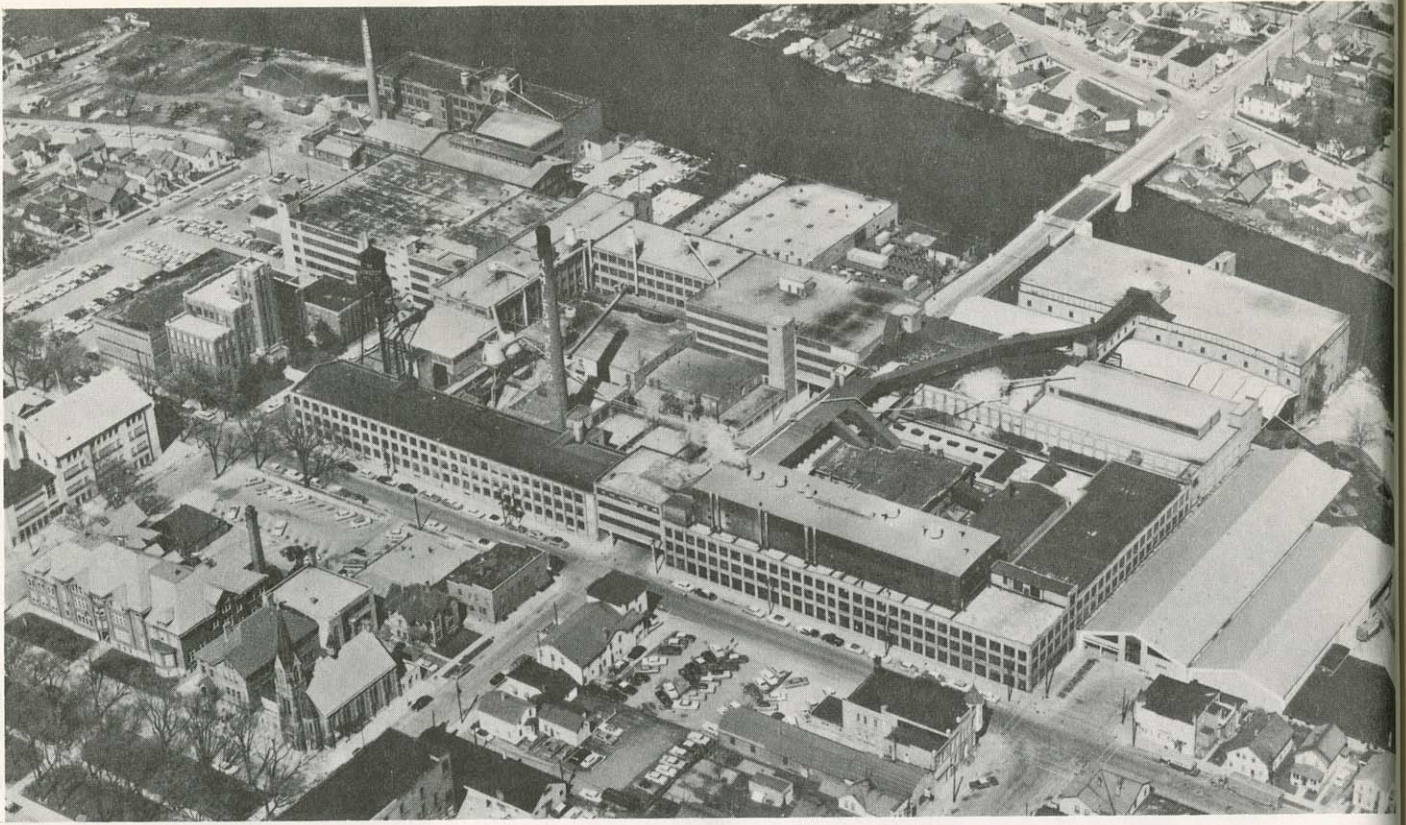
American Hamilton has installed a new fuel conservation system that burns 10,000 tons of wood chips and 4,000 tons of wood waste per year. Liquid waste is also burned. By this process, enough natural gas is saved each year to heat 1,200 homes.

The Hamilton Company and J.E. Hamilton, as an individual, have been concerned about the working conditions of their employees and the life-style of the community as a whole. Two Rivers was Mr. Hamilton's home; in a very real sense it was also his work, for the growth of the city beyond the limits possible to a fishing village with a vanishing lumber industry was for half a century dependent upon the development of his enterprises.

A scheme of insured workmen's compensation arranged by the company was so liberal that when the State Compensation Act went into effect the Hamilton Co. actually saved money under the state law. Insurance, largely carried by the company, was early adopted for all regular employees. A nursing service, reaching to the homes of workers as well as the shop, was set up with a trained nurse in charge. Shop committees were formed, by which the company consulted with its men on problems of administrative policy as well as shop conditions the men electing the committee members to represent them.

HAMILTON BAND

In August 1920 the officials of the Hamilton Company instituted the custom of having a Hamilton Day at



An aerial view of American Hamilton today.

the Manitowoc County Fair, which was an annual event until 1924. American Hamilton sponsored such a day at the 1980 Fair in celebration of their 100th anniversary. In 1920, however, the employees were naturally happy about an all expense paid day at the fair. The idea of an impromptu parade before the gala day was proposed. But what was a parade without music — and Two Rivers had been without a band for several years. There still were a few old timers left, veterans of the old City Band, and they were prevailed upon to form a “hobo band”.

Charles Krause and Frank Kracha did the rounding up, and by parade time the band was ready. This band was the hit of the parade, and the two classics of the ages, “Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight” and “Hail, Hail The Gangs All Here”, were wafted over the breezes of Lake Michigan. Several

days later a bulletin was posted in the plant requesting all men interested in forming a band to meet. Eighteen men answered the call and Anton Hansen was engaged as the first director. The band met regularly and improved under his leadership. The following year Mr. Hansen decided that he had too much work and relinquished the baton to Lorenz F. Lueck. During this time the band had grown to an organization of 50 men.

The Hamilton Co. supplied the band with the best of uniforms, paid the director, furnished quarters, and paid the regular members of the band for their weekly rehearsals.

HAMILTON COMMUNITY HOUSE

Mr. Hamilton’s greatest gift to Two Rivers, the widely known Community House was opened with an official presentation on the night of April 15,

1931. That night, J.E. Hamilton presented the \$250,000 structure to Willaim Kahlenberg, City Council President. Thunderous applause came from the audience which jammed all available seats and standing room. Also, the proceedings were broadcasted over WOMT radio.

For years, Mr. Hamilton had entertained the idea of giving the city some such center of public resort, around which the community life might focus. He had been quietly making inquiries in cities all over the country to satisfy himself as to the type of building that would be most useful. When he had completed his investigations, with the expert aid of national representatives of various recreation and playground associations, architects and others, he made his surprising announcement of his gift to the city. It was in the form of a communication to the City Council and Manager, in which he sketched his purpose and hopes for the building and requested the City to furnish a site.

The Community House was the largest and most conspicuous gift of Mr. Hamilton to the city. But it was by no means the only one. Other gifts to the community include a swimming pool at the Washington High School, half the cost of the Grace Congregational Church, the Grace Church organ, a large contribution to the building fund of the Two Rivers Municipal Hospital, contributions for St. Mark’s Catholic School, and annual support of the Wisconsin Y.M.C.A.



The first band sponsored by Hamilton Mfg. Co.

Other Ventures of J.E. Hamilton

ALUMINUM GOODS MFG. CO.

Mr. Koenig came to J.E. Hamilton in 1895 with ideas for the production of aluminum combs and other novelties. After listening, Hamilton offered the use of about 20 square feet of factory space to experiment. As the business began to prosper, the old Hamilton & Katz factory was sold to the Aluminum Mfg. Co. for \$3,000. In 1909 when the Aluminum Goods Mfg. Co. was formed from the Aluminum Mfg. Co., Aluminum Novelty Co., New Jersey Aluminum Co. and the Pittsburgh Reduction Co. Mr. Hamilton was still active in the concern and became its first chairman of the board of directors.

TWO RIVERS COAL CO.

To insure an adequate supply of fuel to the city and its industries, the Hamilton Co., Aluminum Co. and the Eggers Veneer Seating Co. joined their efforts to form the Two Rivers Coal Co. with J.E. Hamilton as its president. While the concern showed an annual profit and kept a constant supply of fuel to the area, because of other duties the company was sold to the Reiss Coal Co. of Sheboygan, WI.

WATER AND LIGHT PLANT

As a manufacturer, Mr. Hamilton was interested in adequate fire protection for his plant and sufficient supply of electricity. He was elected the first president of the water and light commission, early in 1901, remaining in office until 1908. This first board did the work of organizing and erecting a municipal plant, combing water-

service with the manufacture of electricity. A source for city water was to be a bitter battle for years to come. J.E. Hamilton advocated intakes from Lake Michigan with a chlorination system, while other leaders wanted a well system. A large fire at the Two Rivers Mfg. Co., years later, proved to be the end of the well system. Not enough water could be supplied by the wells to contain the fire. The City was forced to use river intakes connected to the water main system. The fire was put out, but the use of polluted water in the mains led to a typhoid epidemic leaving a dozen or more dead.

TELEPHONE SERVICE

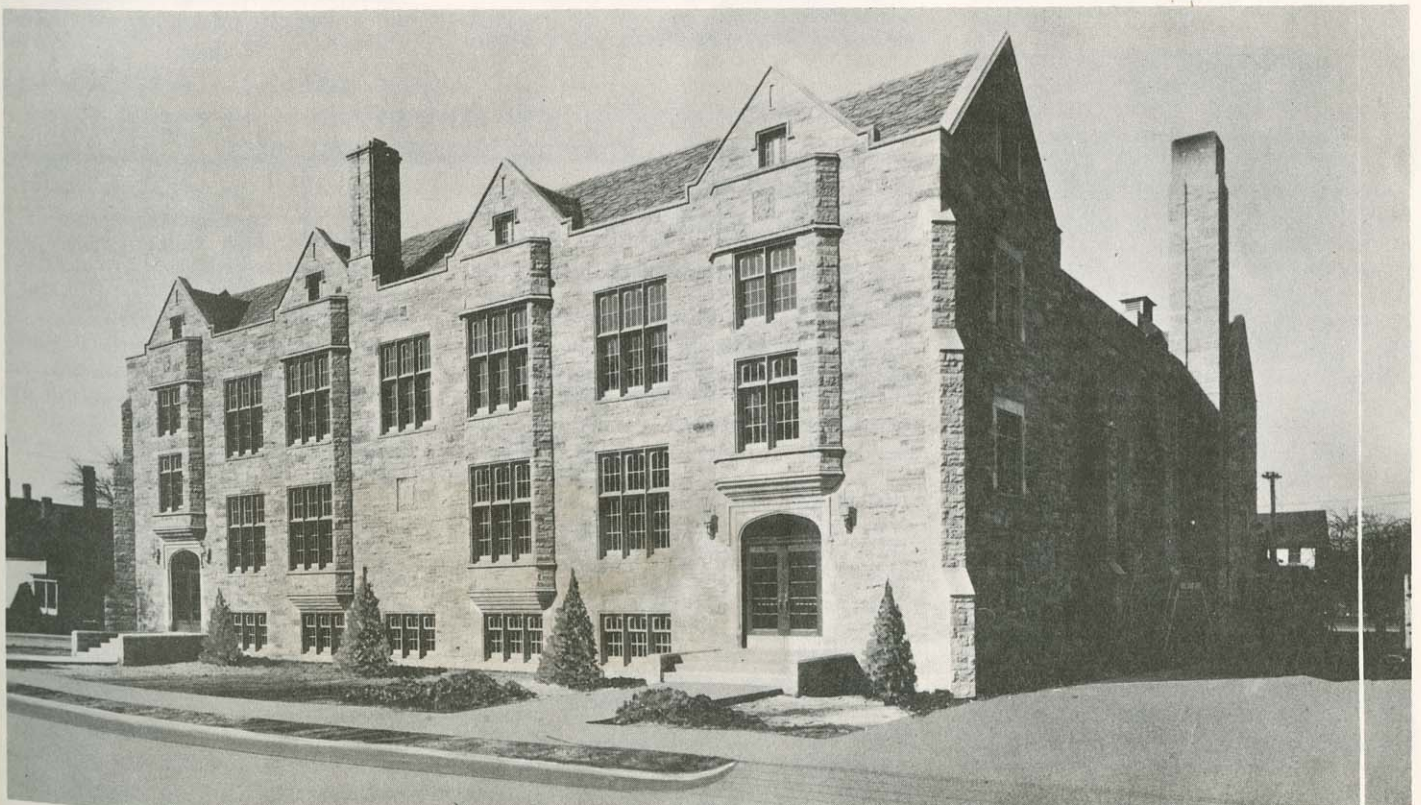
In 1895 Mr. Hamilton and H.M. Gebhard established a local telephone service. It had 19 subscribers at the start. On December 25, 1901, Mr. Gebhard having died, a partnership was formed between Mr. Hamilton and two brothers of the town, Gus. C. Kirst and Charles F. Kirst, to conduct the telephone business. This partnership was continued until May 1, 1906, when Mr. Hamilton sold out. The Kirsts ran the business until 1927, when they sold their interest to the State Telephone Co. of Wisconsin, which later merged with the Commonwealth Telephone Company.

THE HAMILTON'S OFTEN ANONYMOUS DONORS

It was in April 1958 that a committee of three men went to the office of Guido Rahr who had donated money to the Manitowoc Public Schools for the

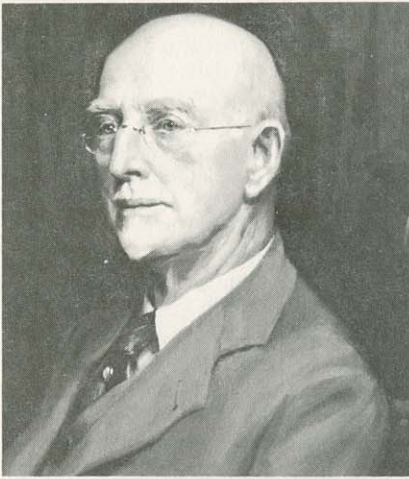
purpose of buying land for a school forest, a place where school children might learn about the wonders and mysteries of nature. In addition he had contributed a sum sufficient to begin the building of a lodge which would serve as a shelter for children when weather was inclement or stormy. The committee saw the need for about \$10,000 in addition to funds already received in order to complete the building of the lodge. The committee sought counsel and help from Guido Rahr who immediately offered "to underwrite the entire project." He ordered his secretary to write a check in the amount of one thousand dollars, and then he said, "While I would be willing to give more, I think that others ought to be involved too." He then telephoned Ed Hamilton, and he said, "Ed, I want \$1,000 from you this afternoon." He then told about the Rahr School Forest project and the need for money to complete the lodge. That was all that it took to have another \$1,000 check on the way. Others were on the list, and the result was an outpouring of funds so that it never became necessary to again ask Mr. Rahr for more money with which to complete the lodge.

This incident was typical of what the Hamilton's and the Rahr's often did. When they saw a need, they often became the anonymous contributors to community projects, expecting no honor or acclaim, only the joy of seeing people use the object of their benevolence.



The J.E. Hamilton Community House. Dedicated April 15, 1931. This photo was taken in 1933.

FOUNDER and PRESIDENTS 1880 — 1980



*The Founder
J.E. Hamilton*



E.P. Hamilton



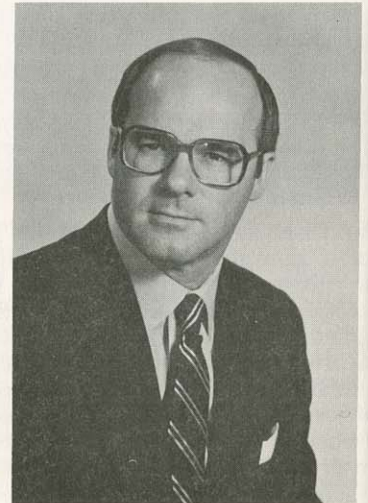
W.E. Van Dessel



G.S. Hamilton

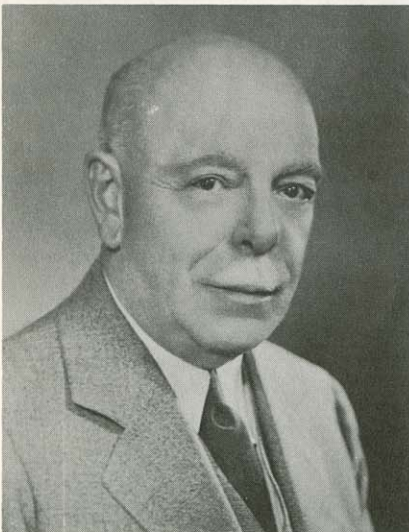


R.G. Halvorsen



*Current President
T.H. Quinn*

Photos courtesy of American Hamilton and Hubert R. Wentorf.



H.C. Gowran

MANITOWOC COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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