

Mr. Donald Smith was transferred from our Roxbury yard and assumed the management at Norwich on October, 1951. His previous experience at Norwich has made him a most valuable man to us.

In 1952 an addition was made to the office building which gave a needed showroom and storage space.



Donald Smith

The showroom is a real show place, with asphalt tile floor, various kinds of plywood on wall and insulating ceiling, and flush doors.

In 1952 Mr. Richard Dolan requested the privilege of making a case study of our Company for his work in Syracuse University. We, of course, agreed and he did a fine job using our Norwich yard as the subject.

We were complimented and are keeping a copy of the study with our history.

The third grade of a Norwich school requested the privilege of inspecting our lumber yard. This request was gladly granted. Below is a copy of a letter Don received.

"Dear Mr. Smith,

Sept. 22, 1953

We want to thank you for the nice time we had at your lumber yard. We learned many things. Thank you for the pads and wood samples.

The third grade

Marilyn Dolan
Birdsall St. School"

We suggest this for each yard.

A F T O N

On July 1, 1931 we purchased of Rufus K. Teller the stock and equipment of the Afton Coal & Lumber Company at Afton, N. Y. Mr. Roscoe C. Briggs purchased the real estate.



Robert N. Briggs

The stock was a poor assortment of only fair quality, and entirely different than the type materials we handle. The first months were devoted to cleaning up and selling odd items and on January 1st, when inventory was taken, we had broken even

Robert N. Briggs, who had become associated with us upon his graduation from the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania in 1926, left the Oneonta office to become manager of the Afton Yard.

The yard had a small office, a storage building, open shed and a good lumber shed. The coal pockets were impossible. This yard is located on Route 7 which passes directly through the village.

financially and had a good list of suitable and salable merchandise. Robert Briggs deserved a great deal of credit for this fine work.

Robert loved aviation and had a pilot's license. He crashed at Oneonta Airport November 15, 1931 and was killed. His standing in Afton, after only four and a half months' residence, was shown when all business places in town closed during the time of his funeral in Oneonta.



John S. Tobey

John S. Tobey, who had been our assistant at Norwich for five years, succeeded Robert as Manager of the Afton yard.

Our first major improvement was the construction of a four bin concrete coal pocket 26 feet in diameter and 52 feet high. It was made by slip form methods and poured continuously for five days and nights. This type of construction was relatively new in this territory so it was well watched and discussed. Bevier Brothers of Buffalo were the contractors. The cost was about \$9,600. The elevator was erected by Webster Manufacturing Company and installed by Bevier Brothers. This has been a most satisfactory coal pocket.

In 1932 the office was renovated and the toilet placed on the second floor. We built an open shed for dimension in 1936. This shed is 28' x 60', has a gable roof and holds about 125,000 feet.

Our next improvement was the erection of a cement and plaster warehouse on the switch. This building is 30' x 40'. Fortunately it is high enough for much long storage under the floor. This building has proven our judgement in its construction as it gives

adequate and easy handling of mason materials.

In 1945 we erected a roofing warehouse 36' x 60' using type 50 Rilco Rafters. This building is located on the sidetrack and the roof gives us an opportunity to show Rilco to good advantage. It has also proven itself.

We found ourselves crowded for office space and in 1950 built an addition 16' x 24' using knotty pine for the walls, acoustical ceiling tile, and two large plate glass display windows. We installed a 5' x 5' Carey vault to safeguard our records against loss of fire.

In 1951 we built an oak flooring room on the second floor of our small warehouse. This room is 24' x 30', well insulated with Homasote on sides, floor and ceiling. We purchased a Remington Moisture Magnet, Model K, and a Taylor Humidiguide at a cost of about a hundred dollars and places them in this room. In a series of tests we found we could keep the moisture content at a normal level even in the wet, humid weather of the spring, summer and fall months. The dehumidifier does not operate when temperature is below 40 degrees. This has given us a great selling argument and has produced additional business. (We are now getting some oak flooring business from contractors who buy little else from us.) In addition to oak flooring we store kiln dried pine in this room. That gives an additional selling advantage.

As far as we know, we are the first dealers of oak flooring to use an insulated room and a dehumidifier. The oak flooring manufacturers had never heard of its use and it was a new idea to the manufacturers of dehumidifiers. We enjoy being first with any worthwhile idea.

We now operate four trucks, have power saw, Converse coal conveyor, 20-ton scales that were installed in 1938 and, according to the Sealer of Weights and Measures, are one of the best and most accurate in the county. Part of the yard has been black-topped. We have shipped a great many cars of mine props to the Pennsylvania hard coal mines but have discontinued that the last three or four years.

The volume of business at our Afton yard has been greatly increased by our Binghamton and Sidney contractors. Our Binghamton business, for the most part, started during a period of scarcity when we had a good stock of some of the hard-to-get items. Contractors, and individuals too, scouted the country for scarce items and some that were over-priced in Binghamton. We continue to sell a few of the contractors. The individuals, who built during that period, are not in the market regularly but occasionally we hear from one to whom we sold during that period. We have quite a number of new consumer customers, some who came because we were recommended by their friends. This probably produces more business in all areas than any other source although we believe that seeing our trucks on the streets and delivering to jobs has been of great benefit. We have advertised in the classified column and our manager has made occasional trips to Binghamton to call on our contractor customers.

We have done some business in Sidney since the start of operations there. We have advertised quite consistently in their weekly paper and Mr. Tobey has called quite regularly on both contractors and consumers. While we don't have much contractor business we do a lot with the home owners in Sidney.

The usual line of promotion - being recommended by customers, seeing our trucks, advertising and calling on jobs - has built up our business there. Some contractors have told us that the 5% discount given by other dealers made a difference in their buying from us. While our prices may be low on some items, when doing a contract job they buy where they get the lowest net price. On cost plus jobs they make an extra 5% which they have no way of adding with our set-up as most customers know or find out our prices, which are the same for everyone.

1 9 5 4

A new 8 cylinder Ford Truck was purchased at \$2,332.00 for chassis and cab. The R-B Body was transferred from the old chassis. \$526.00 allowance was made. This Ford has a governor set at 55 miles an hour. Present report on this is satisfactory.

1 9 5 6



We purchased additional land and erected a building 27 x 57 with bins on either side. One side is sided and the street side is protected with roll doors. We hope to leave one side and one end open. Concrete floors with a shingle roof over half inch plywood.

A new truck this year is of the old cab-over-engine type.

COBLESKILL

In 1922 we expected that our son Robert would be graduated from Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania in four years, and Duncan in eight years. They were specializing in merchandising.

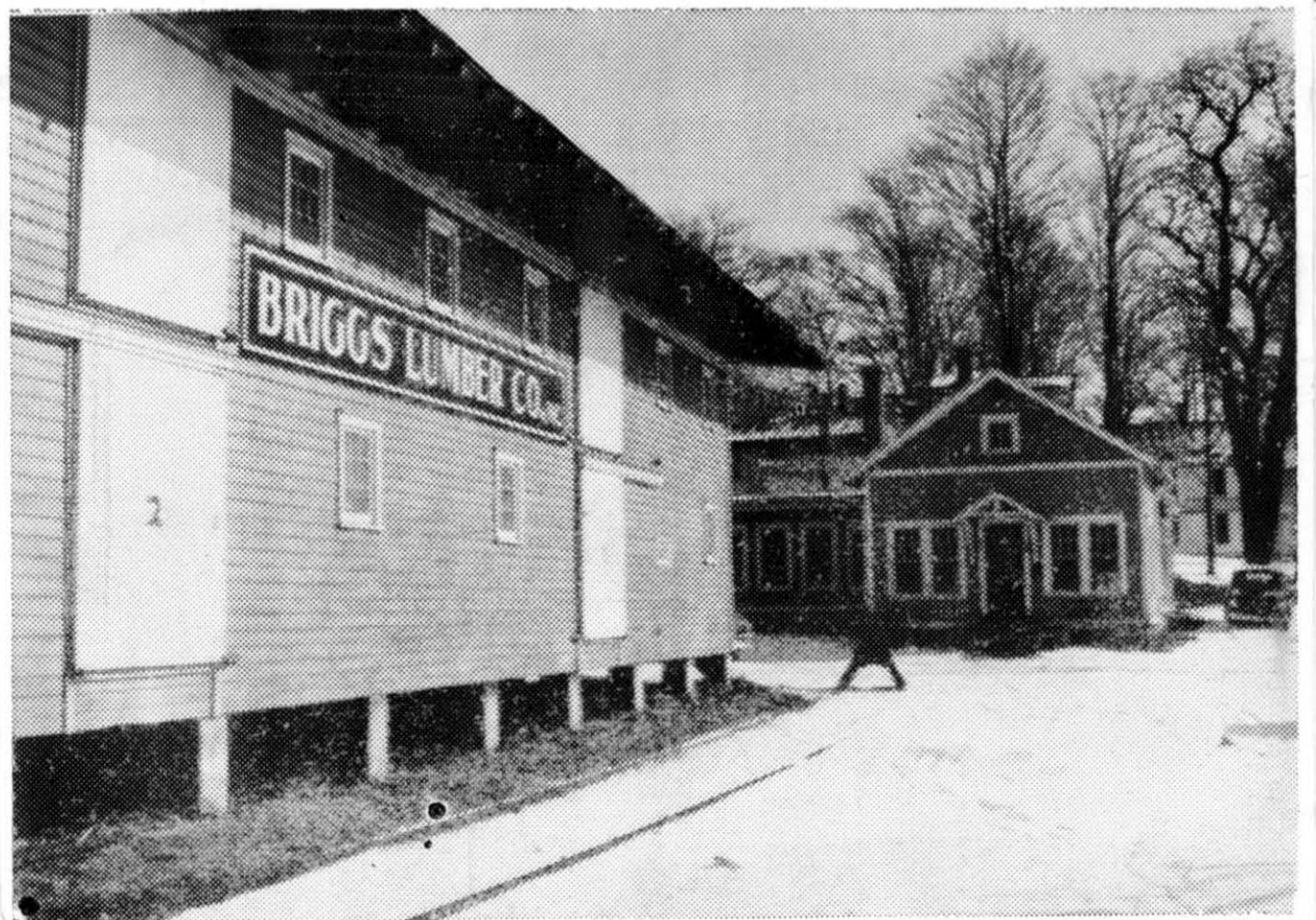
In order to meet the situation when the boys came home we began looking for an expansion opportunity in the lumber business.

Mr. Addison VanAuken of Cobleskill was, with the assistance of his son-in-law, Maynard VanDeusen, running a lumber yard with a small mill on Union Street in Cobleskill. Mr. VanAuken wished to retire and this seemed our opportunity. We purchased the real estate, merchandise and good will from Mr. VanAuken, incorporated the Van Auken Lumber Company with a capital stock of \$20,000.00, and divided the stock equally between us. The business was continued.

On January 1st, 1924, Mr. Roscoe Briggs purchased some vacant property from J. G. and Ella Cross for \$3,000.00. This was located on the D. & H. R. R. The deed included a right of way to Rose Street.

The VanAuken Company erected the following buildings for Mr. Briggs' account:

An office 20' x 24' with vault 4' x 4' inside, and including adequate plumbing and heating.



A shop 40' x 40' connecting with the office and heated from a central office plant.

A two-story shed 30' x 120' located on a D. & H. switch. This was used for lumber on the second floor, cement, plaster, nails and masons supplies on the first floor. A moulding bin, using the two stories, was included. Mouldings stored on end were a new development of the previous ten years.

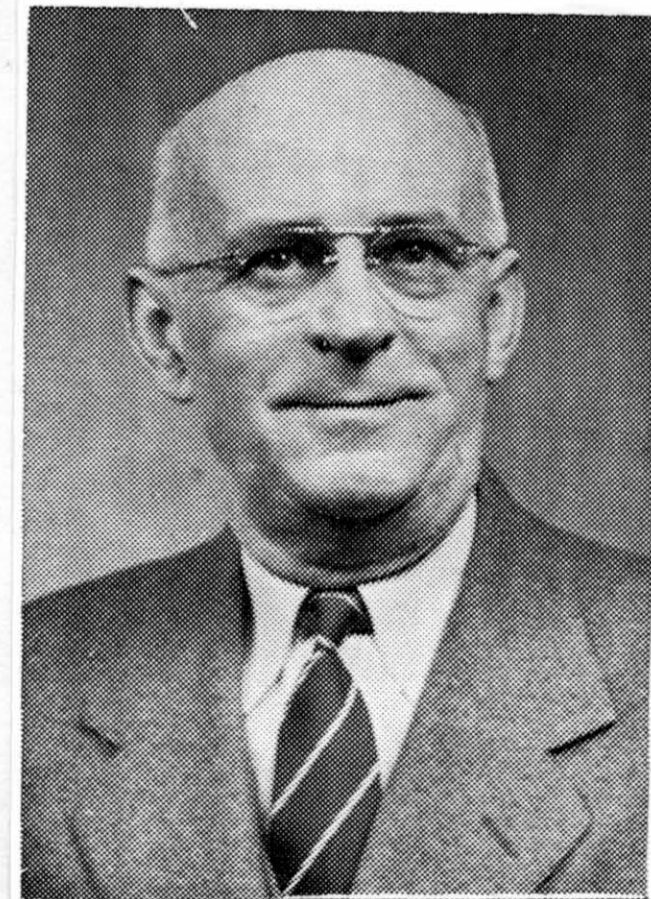
A one-story double shed 50' x 120' with a driveway through the center.

On April 28, 1924, Mr. Joseph Buckley came with us as Maynard's assistant. At that time Mr. Briggs purchased from Mrs. Mary Steptoe, a colored lady, her house and lot adjoining our property, for \$1400.00. The house, 20' x 24', was in poor repair. Included in this purchase was her right of way across our property to W. Main Street.

In 1935 we erected a dimension shed, 18' x 120'. Method of construction was interesting and has proven very practical.

On July 1st, 1932, Mr. Briggs purchased the VanDeusen interests in the VanAuken Lumber Company, Inc. and the name of the company was changed to Briggs Lumber Company, Inc. At this time the amount of capital investment became \$38,067.18.

Maynard VanDeusen's connections with the company ended, Mr. Buckley became Manager, with Orson Jump as an assistant. Orson remained with the company until illness forced him to retire on December 24, 1948, after more than sixteen years of faithful service.



Mr. Buckley

In 1936 Mr. Briggs purchased from Claude Beard a barn adjoining the Briggs property. This barn was two stories and basement and with some alterations provided much additional storage space and basement garage storage for two trucks.

In 1952 a one floor building for roofing, 28' x 28', was erected. This joins the barn property. This gives us much needed space for our growing roofing sales and releases space in lumber shed where roofing has been stored.

In 1952 the interior of the office has been renewed. The mill has been practically closed as millmen are not available. Present plans regarding use of mill space are in the formative stage.

The Cobleskill yard has been a profitable and pleasant business experience. Mr. Buckley has carried his responsibility successfully and is now ably assisted by Lawrence McFee as assistant, and a very capable crew in the yard.

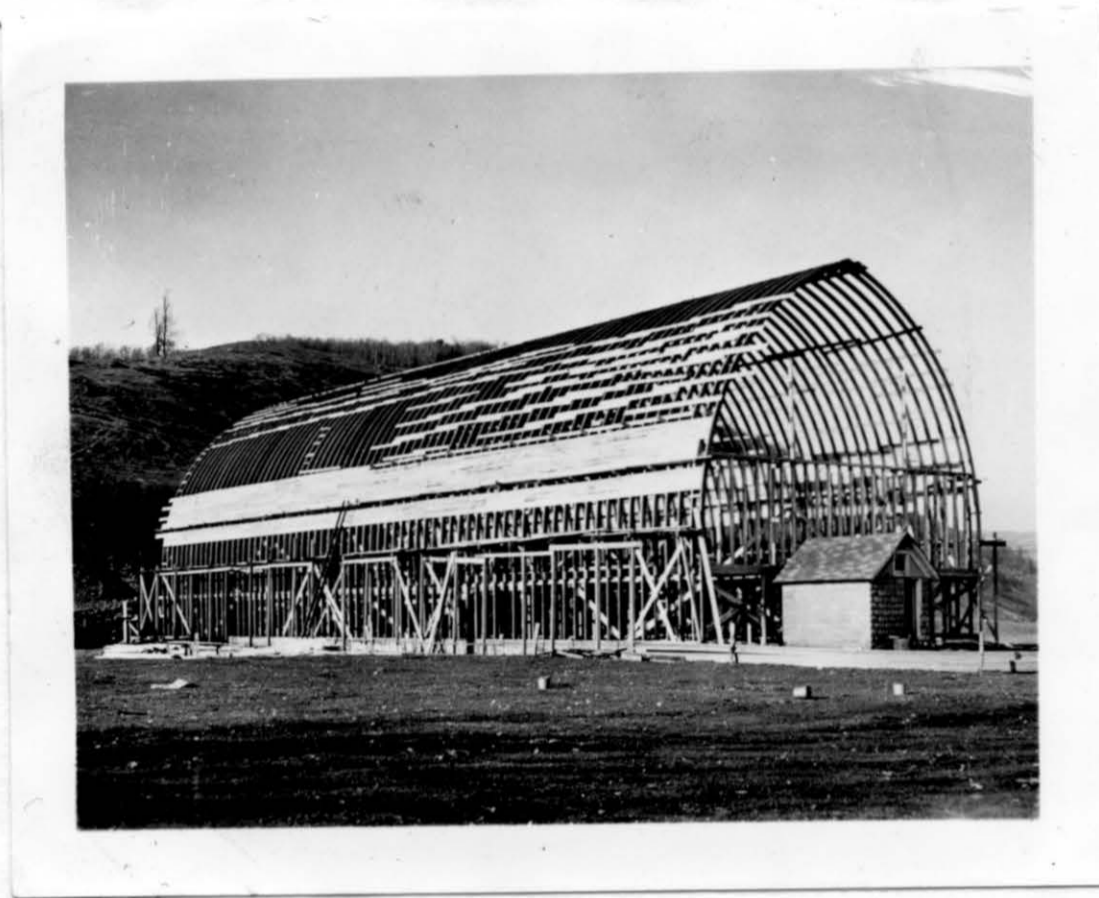
We are now operating one International 1-1/2 ton, one GMC 2 ton, and a GMC 1 ton pick-up truck.

We found that the Weyerhaeuser Company were promoting Rilco barn rafters in west central states. Believing in the future of this type of barn without post, we got in touch with their salesman, and with him and Mr. Buckley sold the first Rilso barn to Mr. Karker of Cobleskill, the president of Jewel Tea Company.

This was the first Rilco barn in the East and was erected in 13 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours with four men and foreman who had never seen a rafter before. Each of our yards took up this promotion and sold several hundred brooder houses, tool and implement sheds, garages and barns to our rural trade. Our Oneonta yard sold a Rilco

barn 50' x 140' to a customer at Frasers, N.Y.

This barn was visited by farmers for miles around and brought much business for us and Rilco.



1956

During the year 1955, our Cobleskill Yard gave considerable thought and planning toward remodeling the mill into a sales and display room, which would adjoin the office. Each year it became more difficult for us to operate a millwork shop satisfactorily and at a profit. The shop was abandoned, the machinery sold, and about half of the area converted to an office and showroom.



This new salesroom was a great assistance in our selling. It provides a fine means for displaying the many items we handle and encourages the "impulse buying" by the many customers who call on us for their needs. We notice there are more women shoppers for building materials than in "the old days", and we find our new display room very interesting to them.

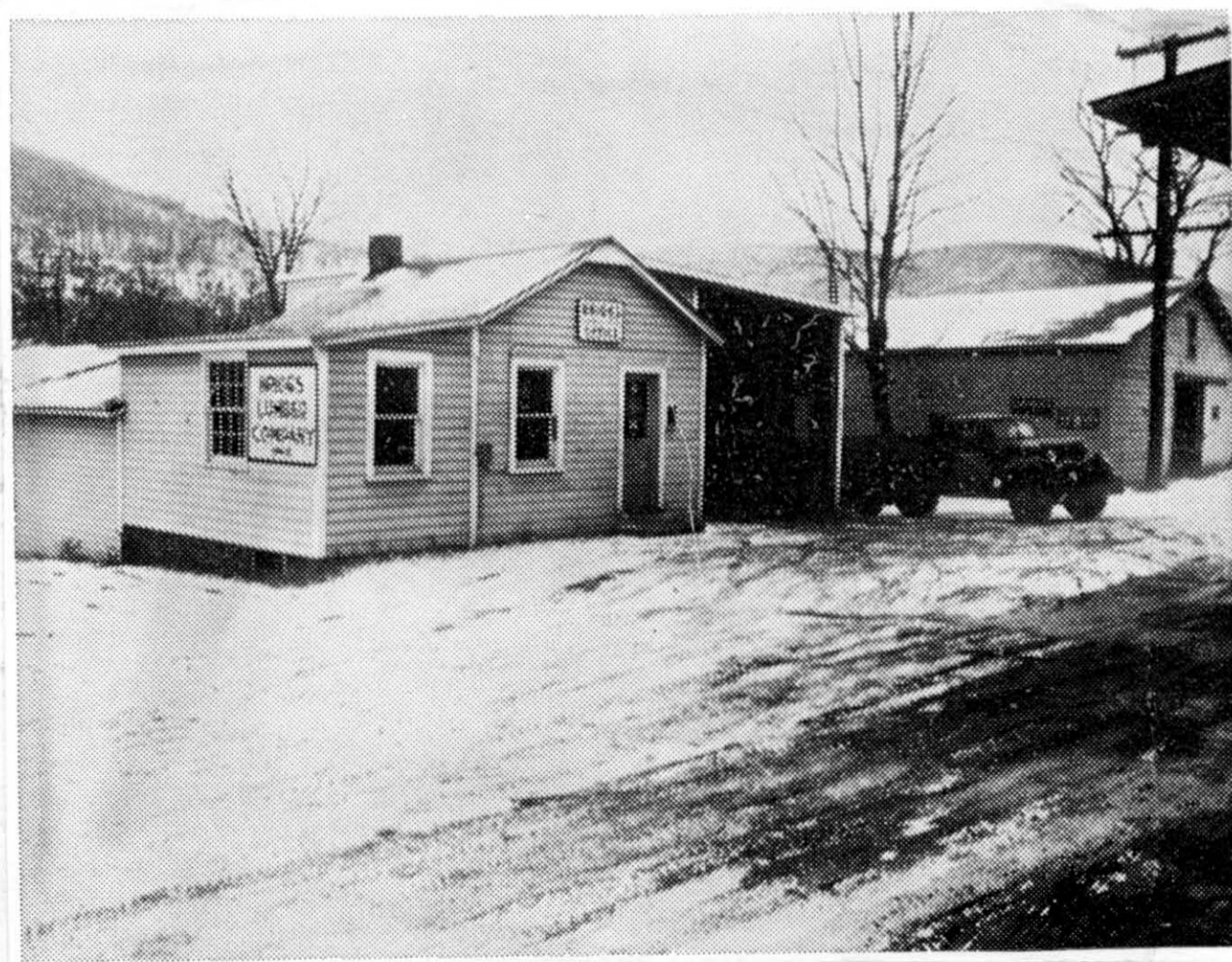
This change was accomplished during the year 1956, at a cost of \$3900.00, and with very satisfactory results.

ROXBURY

For many years A. K. Enderlin conducted a small 2-man yard at Roxbury, N.Y. Very often he bought less carload items from us when we had a car on track. Our business association with Mr. Enderlin was very enjoyable.

Mr. Enderlin passed away on March 23, 1941, and Mrs. Enderlin advised us she would like to dispose of the business, real estate, and good will. Mr. Duncan Briggs called on Mrs. Enderlin and made arrangements for the purchase of the real estate, consisting of a small office, 15' x 15', with a 20' x 32' shed behind it, a closed dry lumber shed, 50' x 56', and the building used by a milk company as a creamery and ice house. This 2 and 3 story building is located on N. Y. Central switch and is 30' x 40'. The purchase also included a coal pocket on N. Y. C. tracts for which the yard paid a rental of \$60.00 per year.

The merchandise was inventoried by Duncan Briggs and Mr. Harry Hubbell of Kelly Corners. This totaled \$15,113.43. We paid cash for real estate, \$4667.00, merchandise, \$15,113.43.



On August 25, 1941, Mr. Donald Smith, our assistant at Norwich went to Roxbury as manager.

Mrs. Enderlin stayed in the office and collected her accounts and gave us very valuable advice on credits.

We soon discovered the coal scales were very inaccurate and the sealer of weights and measures had not inspected them for five years. This was in war time and we had trouble getting shipment of scales. We finally purchased them from Jones Scale Co. for \$695.00. This price included a short and over deal.

We built a scale house connected to the office at an expense of \$584.24.

The scale experience was a great surprise to us, but nothing compared with the shock that was brought by a letter from New York Central advising us that our coal trestle was unsafe and had to be renewed before coal could be dumped.

We tried every storage yard in the territory to secure the Fir or Yellow Pine timbers needed. Found nothing. We reported this to New York Central and they sold us Long Leaf Yellow Pine Timbers that had been pressure treated and used in a bridge for only two years.

We rebuilt the concrete partitions and put in a concrete floor and completed the trestle for \$2250.00.

The above information just shows what may happen in a new yard venture.

This office was small and with no water or toilet facilities. Fortunately the New York Central station was across the street from us and they were kind enough to allow us to use the station.

Mr. Smith built an addition, 8' x 16', to the office, put in a cellar with furnace. We connected a well in the old creamery

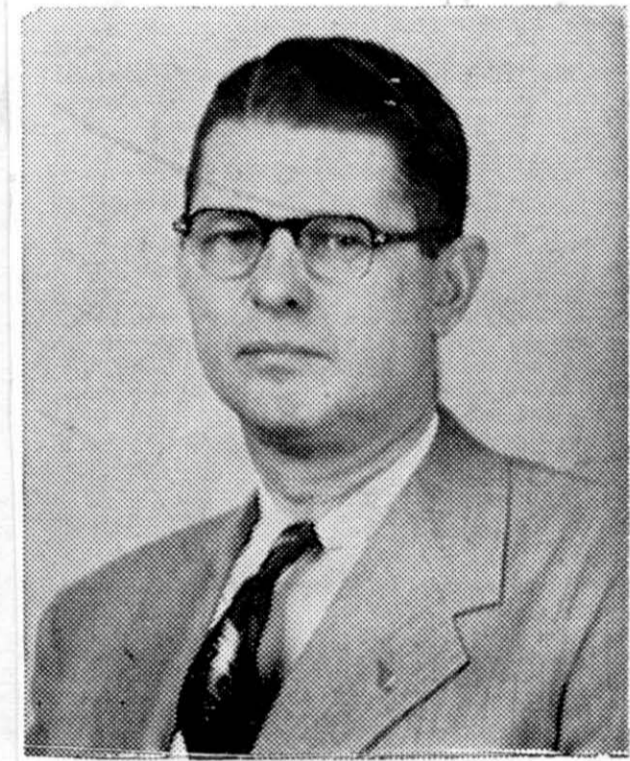
building with a pump and storage tank and piped water to the office. This gives us fine service.

In 1948 we decided to handle some cement, so built a plank floor at car door level in a portion of the creamery. This has been successful.

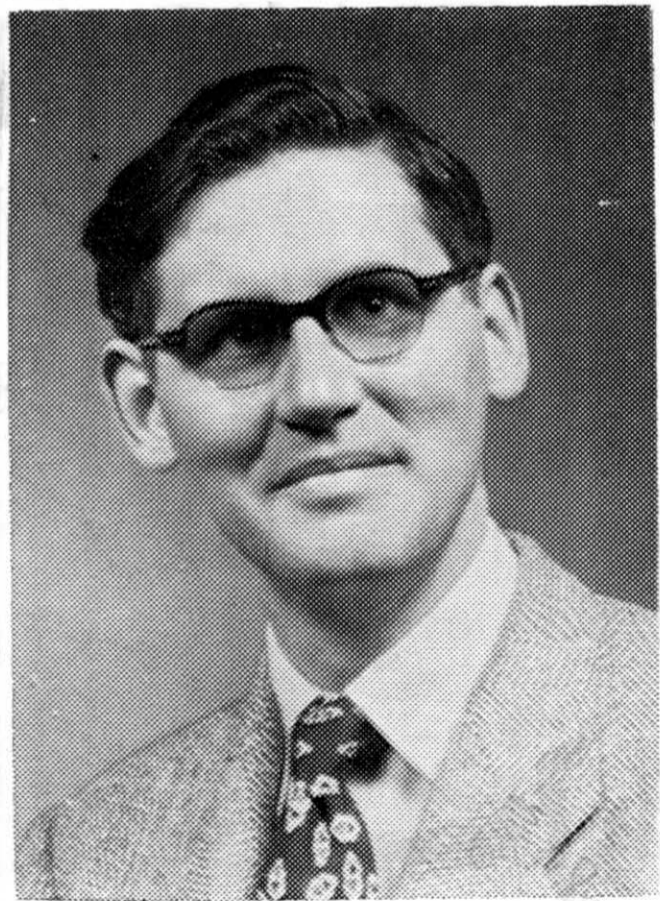
In 1950 our old dimension shed blew down and we erected a modern dimension shed 21' x 80'. This was sided with Homasote.

In October, 1951, Mr. Smith was moved to the management of our Norwich yard and Fred Walpole transferred from our Oneonta office to manage the Roxbury yard.

Mr. Walpole is a graduate of the Syracuse Forestry School with degrees of B. S. and M. S. He came with us at Oneonta in October, 1945, after 3 years as pilot in the Air Force, with experience from fields



Donald Smith



Fred Walpole

yard and increased its volume.

He has established selling routes to Margaretville and Phoenicia, and the Stamford-Grand Gore-Prattsville territory.

in Great Britian. He had 35 missions to his credit and finished his Air Force work as an instructor in Phoenix, Arizona.

Fred took over the accounting in our office and developed the Stamford, Hobart, Delhi and Walton selling route. Soon he took over the Cooperstown territory, originally developed by Duncan Briggs.

Fred has made a success of the Roxbury

ROXBURY 1960

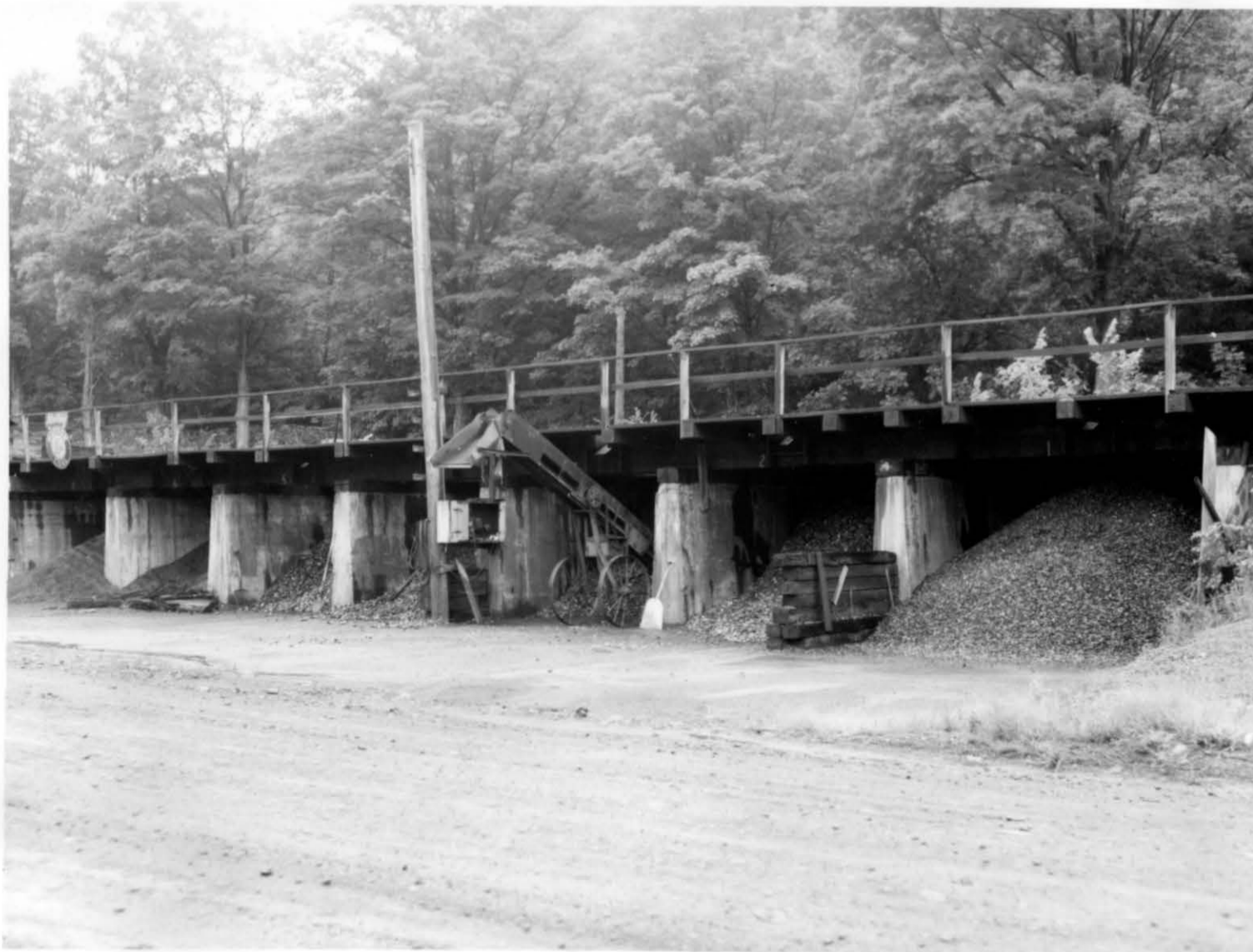
On January 1, 1960, Mr. Fred Walpole, who has been the manager of our Roxbury yard since 1951, was transferred to our new yard at Dimock, Pennsylvania.



(Mr. William Poole)

Mr. William Poole, who has been our assistant manager at Afton since 1951, was made manager at Roxbury. During 1960, the New York Central discontinued passenger service, and the station and land occupied by our coal pockets were offered for sale. We purchased the land on which our coal pockets were located for \$1,000.00. It is very questionable how long the New York Central will continue freight car service and we are making plans for building over

the coal pockets in such a manner that delivery to the pockets can be made by truck. We do not anticipate this will happen for several years.



NORWICH - 1956

During 1956 an 8' x 12' addition was made on our office to be used as a bookkeeping and accounting room. This has proved to be a very nice arrangement.

Our second change was a 16½' x 35' addition to our dimension shed. One section of this was left open and is used for dimension. The balance of the area was floored over and enclosed with a sliding door. This space is used for the storage of insulation.



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Due to families moving out of the area of the New York City reservoirs at Pepacton and building or renovating homes on other sites, 1954 was a good year businesswise.

Events of the year included rebuilding our coal trestle out of creosoted oak plank and timbers secured for us by our Afton manager, John S. Tobey.

Don Cook, our driver, was away from work for three months for an operation.

O X F O R D

Since we opened our Norwich yard we had worked very closely with Mr. Maurice Church who conducted the Church Lumber Company at Oxford. This company was formed in 1855 by Mr. Charles A. Church, its yard located on Taylor Street.

Mr. Church was not too strong physically, so, when on May 26th, 1949, his buildings and stock were destroyed by fire, he went to Mr. Moxley and began negotiations for its sale to us. Duncan Briggs went to Oxford and completed the arrangements whereby we paid \$4500.00 for the real estate and buildings that remained and for stock inventoried at

On August 1, 1949, we took over and placed Mr. Arthur H. Holden in charge. Mr. Holden had been Mr. Moxley's assistant in Norwich for 15 years. We hired Mr. Bernard Tracy, an Oxford contractor, to build a new 2-story and basement office, lumber shed and storage building.



This building was designed for convenience and compactness and could be described as follows. The main cinder block building approximately 75ft. x 75ft. houses the materials that should be kept under cover such as wallboards, plywood, millwork pine, etc., and is somewhat unique in arrangement. At street level in

the southeast corner of the building is the office, and area of 480 sq. ft. decorated in knotty pine paneling. This serves as the retail paint and hardware store as well as office and attached is a modern fireproof vault 6 ft. x 6 ft. for the keeping of records and valuables. Also on street level at the front of the building is a 14 ft. drive the entire depth of the building bordered on the one side of a double deck 16 ft. deep and on the other by a storage area 55 ft. x 45 ft. which is at truck deck level. This storage space is actually the covering of the original basement area which houses a modern oil heating plant, water heater and is also used for stock storage, being entered both from inside and outside. One of the very useful features of this deck is that the area between ground level and deck surface facing the drive can be used for the storage of several thousand feet of wallboards, as the deck construction allows a full eight foot depth of unobstructed space $3\frac{1}{2}$ ft. high. From this main deck which has a floor of 1 1/8 matched beech, a stairway leads upward to the space over the office. This space has been fitted for the storage of millwork such as doors, windows, frame parts, sash, etc.

Parallel to the new building and of the same depth is the original building left from the fire. This building is 22ft. x 75ft. and at a distance of 40 ft. to the southeast. Joining this building to the main structure is a double deck of open storage, covered, which meets a like storage space attached to the exterior of the new building and running parallel to the old. This construction leaves an open drive about 20 ft. wide and 55 ft. deep to facilitate loading and unloading of merchandise. This open area is the only part of the operation exposed to the weather and

with the change in the roof design will be much easier to keep free from snow.

This was completed on about October 15th, 1949, at a cost of about \$15,500.00. On Friday, October 14th, 1949, we held a grand opening with orchestra and refreshments. The Firemen's



Association cooperated and we had a wonderful time, with over 480 present. Many salesmen attended and flowers were sent by several suppliers and local business wishing us success and prosperity.



(left to right) Duncan S. Briggs, Maurice Church, Arthur H. Holden, Roscoe C. Briggs

We gradually built up our stock of merchandise and began to get back the trade that left after the fire.