

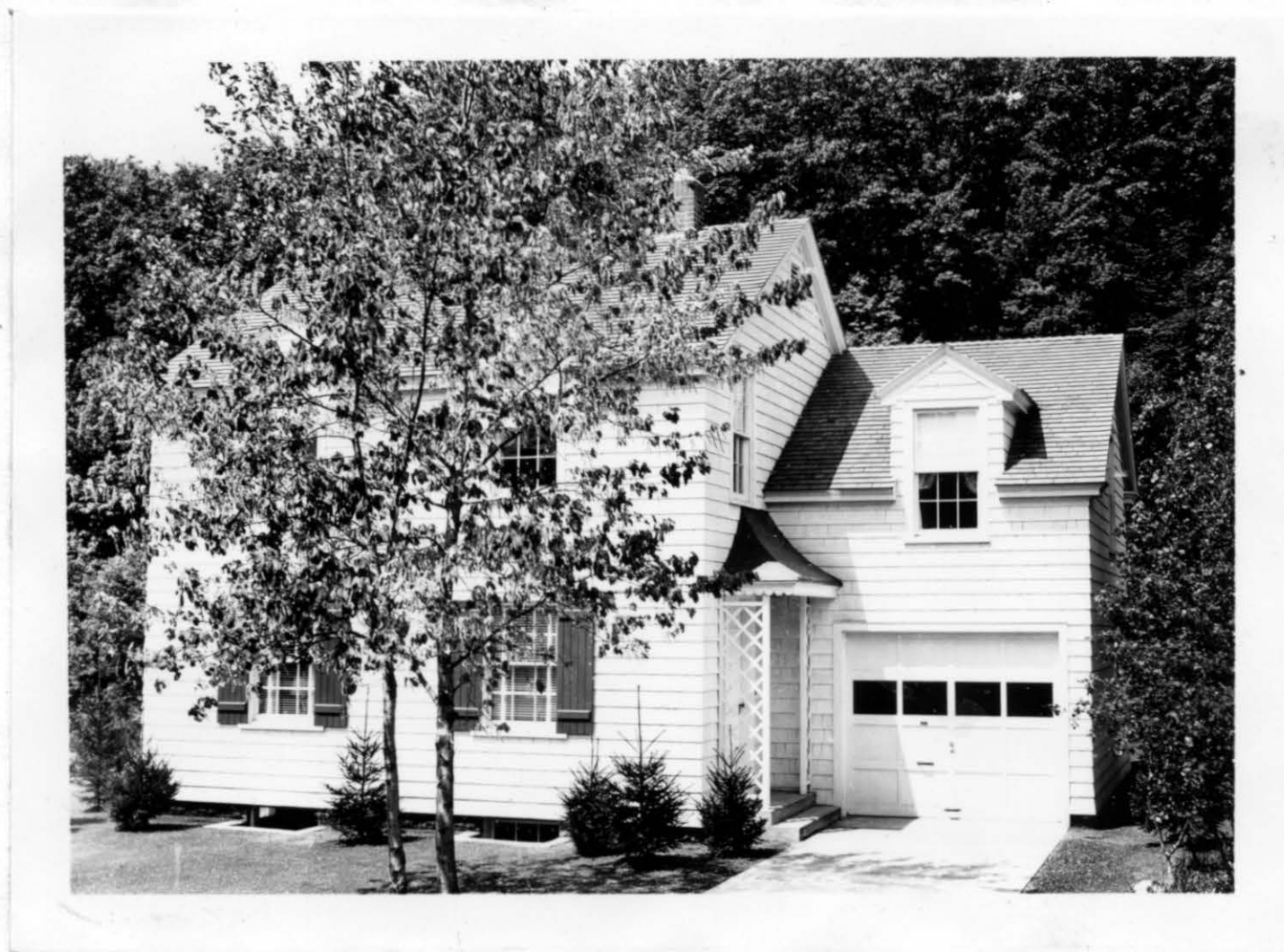
In 1927 when airplanes began to get more than casual attention we had a direction arrow and our name painted in large letters on the roof of our shed.

We used this in our newspaper displays. This received enough attention so that the Junior Chamber of Commerce have kept the direction markers painted since we discontinued.



In 1935 when trucking companies were so rapidly developing and taking business from our local railroads we secured a letter from the superintendent of the D. & H. telling us the amount of money we had paid for freight in the preceding year. We had photostatic copies of this letter made and mailed them with a letter showing our R. R. interest to every R. R. group in the city. This produced results. Some groups wrote us that our letters were read at their meetings, some sent copies of resolutions commending our efforts. This was such a success and produced so many favorable comments that we are repeating the effort in 1953.

In 1933 we decided to build a "Brides Home".



Mr. Duncan Briggs visited several housing developments and from various plans we had an architect make plans and elevations. One of our local contractors did the work.

When the home was completed we secured the cooperation of our department store who furnished it completely. We advertized a grand opening at which time store representatives worked with our salesmen.

The house was sold for cash within two hours after the doors were opened and we believe we could have sold two more.

The plans were so acceptable that during that year four identical homes were built in our city. They have also been built in other communities.

We advocate this type of publicity but the time, location and cooperation of furnishing store is most important.

In 1920 we purchased and distributed numbered key rings with our names and an offer of \$1.00 for the return of lost keys to us. We still have the names registered and in two cases have paid the

dollar and returned the keys to the owner.

In 1924 we purchased fifty gold baby rings and sent them with a note to the parents of the first fifty babies born in Oneonta. Comment was favorable and in one case we were reminded to have a ring ready as his baby was coming soon.

In 1932 we sponsored a basket-ball team in Oneonta. It was made up of High School graduates who were enthusiastic and wished to continue their fun. We furnished transportation to towns in which we had yards and received fine publicity. The expense was very moderate. Uniforms and etc. about \$50.00. This is worthy of repeating but only when enthusiastic boys are available who will hold the group together.

In 1946 the mercantile bowling league asked us to sponsor a bowling team. This was done and the only expense was \$15.00 a year dues to the league and uniforms which cost about \$60.00. This was satisfactory but not outstanding. We are going to continue this until new uniforms are needed.

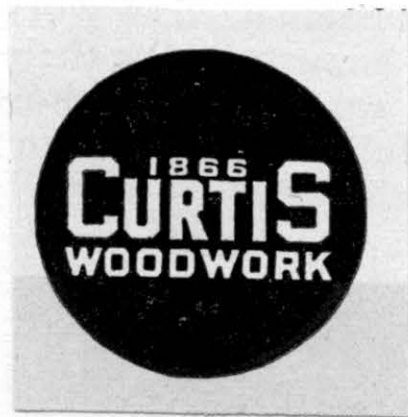
MILLWORK

Originally we manufactured our own windows, sash, doors, and mouldings. Native pine was used. Two light windows, six panel doors (three up and three down) were the types that sold.

When our mill was closed we bought from local mills until western mills came in the eastern market.

Five crosspanel fir doors were popular (incidentally a six cross panel door was one of the best doors ever made).

Curtis colonial woodwork with weather-stripped windows pioneered in national advertizing and we were active in their local promotion work.



The best houses in our territory have more or less Curtis products.

Architects specified this material.

Door styles changed from five crosspanels to two panels and within the last five years they are again changing to flush doors. At least 50% of the doors we retail are flush.

I would like to mention that we are retailers and do not try to job or wholesale our building materials.

OAK FLOORING

To us intense promotion is for dull times. During the first ten years of this century our territory was building no more than was actually necessary. We secured some 3/8" Oak Flooring and begun to promote its use in repair work and the installation of 3/8" oak floors in existing homes. We were successful but our competition soon followed suit. This flooring was shipped 1' to 16' with a few 12" and 18" bundles included. These brought many complaints so we sorted out the 12" and 18" bundles, added enough to the price of the flooring to cover these bundles, and advertised 3/8" Oak Flooring 2' and up - no 12" or 18" bundles. It worked and business came to us.

A carpenter, who often built a house for sale, was approached and we sold him the shorts at low price. He liked them and asked for more. In our next car we had 2,000' of 12" and 18" bundles. The price was very low and it sold readily. Soon the available floors in older homes were well covered with 3/8" flooring and we begun to push 3/4" stock. Many 15" bundles appeared so we sorted them out and sold them for speculative jobs. They were popular. In one year we purchased two full carloads of this 15" stock. At that time flooring mills were glad to get them out of their warehouses and made very low prices. Many other dealers did the same and prices on 15" soared until they priced themselves from our market.

Finished oak floors came on the market and we have pushed this type because we believe it to be best for the customer. Today our sales are 50% prefinished. Ranch Plank and block flooring have

their place and we are carrying the Ranch Plank Flooring as a regular retail item although the volume is small.

In about 1925 the American Lumberman conducted a contest for the best essay on "Advantages of Hardwood Floorings". We promoted this in our public schools and Miss Janice Neal of Oneonta won the first prize of \$25.00. The American Lumberman of Chicago printed the essay in full and included a picture of Janice. Soon after this we were solicited by many oak flooring manufacturers and congratulated for our promotion of its use. -(Refer to our oak flooring room as explained in the story of our Afton yard).

We expect to duplicate this flooring room in Oneonta.

SELLING

Public, central and private schools have manual training departments. We have tried to include in our purchases material that they prefer and can best use. Each summer when schools make up their orders for fall, we send a letter listing available items. We have had most satisfactory results. There seemed to be a demand for some hardwood items. We got in touch with Icabod T. Williams, hardwood specialists, and were able to buy their kiln dried mill ends in pieces up to 5 ft. long. These included Spanish Cedar, Mahogany, Oak, Avodire. This necessitated sending a truck to New York but nearly every school we notified sent a man to our yard and sorted the kinds and sizes they wished. When it is considered that all stock was short and relatively narrow, our sales of over 4000 board feet in one year was excellent. Schools are often in the market for plywood and general maintenance items, and our service to their manual training department has given us first chance. Acoustic ceilings have been sold to many schools.

During the slow business period in 1930's we decided to try a different method of house to house canvassing. It was handled about as follows:

We employed two kindly sweet faced elderly housewives who could give us a few hours time each day. They were each sent to canvass different Wards in our city. They had no prices but were to inquire regarding any new repairs or construction the home owner had in mind. They were to observe the condition of walks,

porches, roofs, sidings, floors, plaster, and cupboards and when one or more of these needed renewing or fixing they were to ask regarding them.

All of this information was contained in their written reports of each call. When costs or prices were asked an effort was made to make an evening appointment for a salesman.

The reports also told us when the home owner was not friendly to us and if possible to find out why. We cleared up every possible case of this type with personal interviews. These ladies discovered that 3 to 4 hours a day was all the time they could successfully use. 9 to 11 and 2 to 4 found the housekeeper most available.

By actual record each inquiry we received cost about 10¢ (this was in 1930's). When again we encounter quiet business this plan will be renewed. Its success is dependent on the choice of solicitors. Choose only those you would like to have call at your home.

A newly employed typist was asked to order some V. G. & F. G. flooring. Not satisfied with the initials she spelled out Very Good and Fairly Good.

The above story emphasizes the necessity of a lumberman speaking in terms understood by the layman.

Roofers means something to you but wouldn't matched roof boards or matched sheathing and floor lining mean more to the man or woman on the street?

Other Examples:

B.C. - Beaded ceiling

OG stops - moulded stop

Apron - casing under window sills

Window stool - inside window sill

Saddles - inside thresholds

Prime oak flooring - prefinished oak flooring

Select oak flooring - good grade but not clear

Door stops - moulding to stop door

Bevel siding - a siding made by resawing a board
so one edge is thicker than the other

Bed & crown moulding - a moulding generally used on
exterior cornice

Bridging - strips to strenghten the floor joist

Joist - timber that hold up floor

Furring - strips to strainghten a wall for wall
board of plywood

Think over other examples and it will assist in our selling.

SELLING 1955

In July one of our friends purchased a piece of real estate in an outside village. He received a letter from a lumber dealer expressing interest and suggesting that the dealer would be glad to work with him should he decide to build.

With that letter as a base we prepared a letter that each of our yards could send to people who purchased property. We went farther and included repairs and enclosed post cards as shown below. These letters will be filled in and signed by management.

These names are secured from Credit Bureau reports which all our yards have access. Results are not known at this writing.

Letter and copy of post card that is addressed to yard sending the letter.

Copy of Post Card

- I expect to repair or remodel
- Send me a plan book as I hope to rebuild.
- Send me your catalogue.
- Have your salesman call.
- Quote delivered prices on the following:

Name _____

Address _____

BRIGGS LUMBER COMPANY, INC.

BUILDERS' AND MASONS' SUPPLIES

YARDS AT
ONEONTA, N. Y.
SHARON SPRINGS, N. Y.
NORWICH, N. Y.
AFTON, N. Y.
COBLESKILL, N. Y.
ROXBURY, N. Y.
OXFORD, N. Y.

ESTABLISHED 1884

ADDRESS REPLY TO

-
-

-
-
-
We congratulate you on your recent property purchase in
Need repairs or alterations? Our men will gladly assist you with
latest ideas in materials and we will even submit simple sketches
to aid you and your contractor.

You will be delighted to know also that we can quote you DEFINITE
delivered prices on your materials; and we have a brand new idea
in budget plans so that you can pay by the month for materials and
LABOR THAT YOU HIRE.

If you are PLANNING A NEW HOME we have a fine blue print service
whereby you can make your choice from big scale sketches and color
photos. Our selection of modern, ranch-type and split level designs
is very, very large because we think that selecting a home is just
about one of the most important decisions you'll ever make.

You will be able to see and select materials that have stood the
test of time right here in this area, either for repairs or a new
home.

Need additional money? We will help arrange a mortgage loan that
will be tailored to your income.

We don't charge for delivery and we don't charge for all the extra
services that we have mentioned. Mail the enclosed card right now.
We assure you that you will be under no obligation.

Very cordially yours,

BRIGGS LUMBER COMPANY, Inc.



RED CEDAR

In 1898 the first Red Cedar came in our territory and 16" extra clear Red Cedar shingles. Mr. Arthur Lane, well known in western lumber circles, called at our office carrying a bunch of shingle in a papier-mache' case. Our trade liked these shingles and they became a leader with us. In about 1912 Mr. O. C. Frisbee, formerly of Walton, N. Y., who operated a Red Cedar Mill at Seattle, Washington called and we arranged to have him furnish us shingle. We were to give shipping dates as early as possible and the price was at time of shipment. This was a very satisfactory arrangement and we had 6" x 6" red labels made and pasted to each bunch. Mr. Frisbee also furnished us Red Cedar bevel siding with labels attached.



For ten years Record Brand siding and shingles dominated our market.

When 5 X British Columbia shingles came on the market we immediately changed to this better quality and lost our Record Brand name.

We carry the shingles today but asphalt has replaced their use and now our sales are largely for side walls. These are used with 12" exposure, double coursing, using #3 shingles as the under course.

In about 1920 stained shingles began to be in demand. Mr. Franklin Hofheins organized the Westherbest Stained Shingle Company and promoted the sale of stained shingles for sidewalls. This was a success and we were able to sell shingles for renovating of older homes. We intensified our local campaign and in one year disposed of five cars of stained shingle.

This selling pace could not continue as the older homes were well renovated and the sales were dependent on new construction. It was great while it lasted and in selling we did a favor to our customers by furnishing a quality product that added beauty and home insulation.

TEMPORARY SILOS

With a good snow fence connection in Standard Fence Company of Troy we were able to buy snow fence in truck lots. We advertised and talked silos and sold many to small farmers. They finally caught on and in one year we sold \$1000.00 worth of fence and sisalkraft from Oneonta. Many silos without roof placed a roll of snow fence and paper around the top so that after sealing the silo was fine.

STATE ASSOCIATION

In about 1906 we attended our first State Lumber Dealers Association meeting in Albany, N. Y. Discussions on cost, accounting, predominated and a fine talk on reforestation was enjoyed. Believing in the advantages of united effort and the information that close association with other dealers would give, we decided to take an active interest in State Association activities. Today we feel that the results of that decision have been most valuable to us.

We have seen the group grow from 100 attendance at conventions to about 4000. Many ideas which we have used to advantage were obtained at association meetings and in talks with dealer members. The writer, Roscoe C. Briggs, became active officially and in 1918 was president of the group. Today (in 1953) he is the oldest living past president.

Our contribution to the association when we introduced Mr. Paul Collier as Secretary was our best effort. Today Paul is the outstanding retail dealer Secretary in U. S. and he is recognized as such by every group.

In 1925 in cooperation with the various Mutual Insurance Companies conducted a "Clean Yard Contest". This was most successful and was continued for three years. During that

period our Oneonta Yard won first place in 1925, our Norwich yard 1st in 1927 and Cobleskill and Afton received honorable mention. This was most successful and we believe greatly reduced the fire hazard in Association yards.

We have also cooperated in use of uniform order blanks, calendar and other association advertising and have assisted and attended district association gatherings.

We were among the original subscribers to Employees insurance plan. Our company took a leading part in the union of various associations into the Northeastern Retail Lumber Dealer's Association.

At convention time our company are represented by 7 or 8 managers and their wives. The informal talks with dealers have been of the greatest assistance to us.

In 1952 we suggested that several local summer assemblies be held in six different cities. These have been successful and continued in 1953.



In the early 30's when we had yards at Cobleskill and Sharon Springs and Norwich we attended the State Convention.



This was taken at the convention. Front row left to right Mr. Ward Moxley, manager at Norwich. Mr. Roscoe Briggs, President. Mr. George Snyder, manager at Sharon Springs. Back row, Robert Briggs, Duncan Briggs from Oneonta office and Maynard VanDueson, manager at Cobleskill.

C O N T E S T S

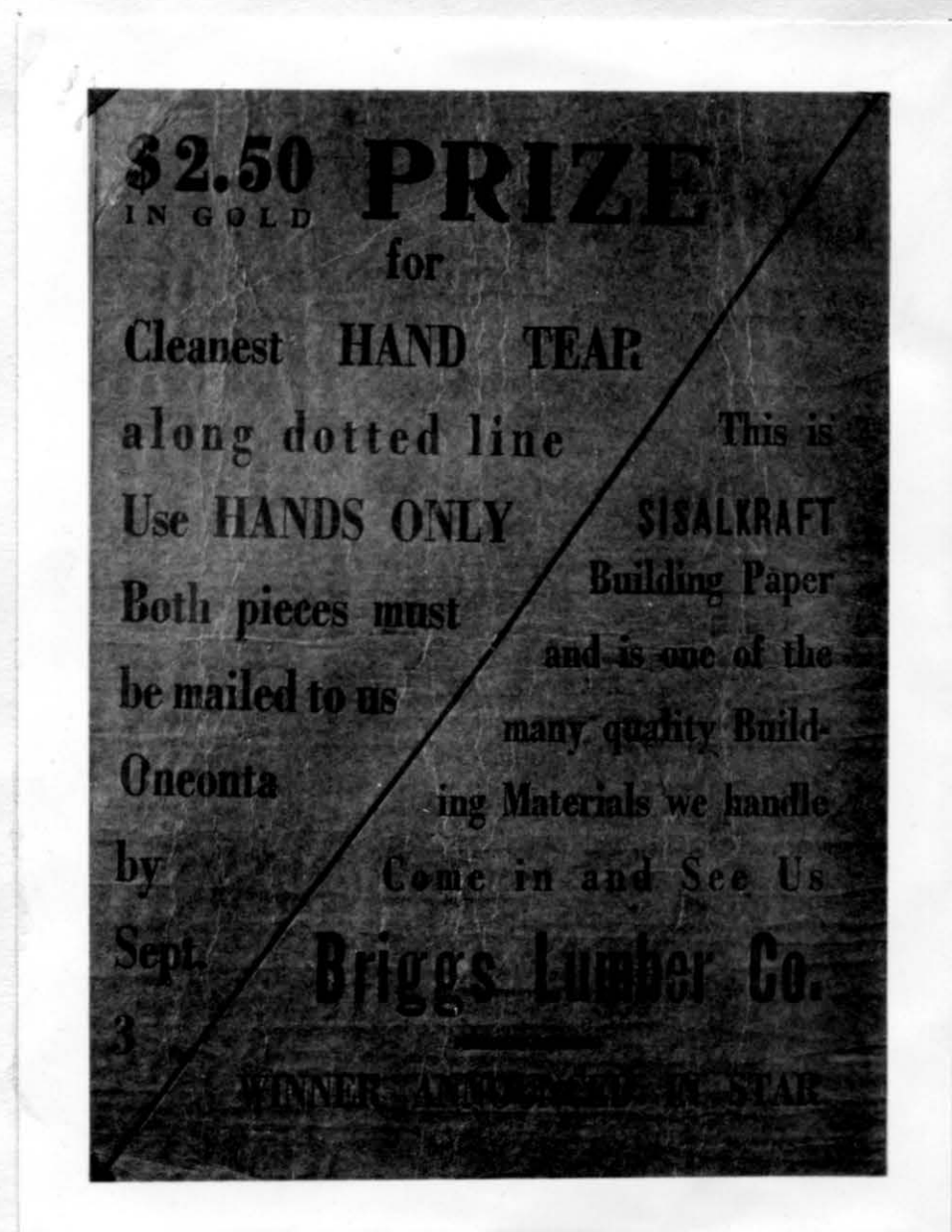
CONTESTS

When Sisalkraft paper came on the market we felt it was an item that should be promoted. In order that the public would become interested we ordered 1000 pieces of sisalkraft about 5" x 8" and had these printed as shown in picture.

These were carefully distributed at county fairs and from our office. The results were satisfactory. The winner was Miss Christine Molinari of Oneonta. Suitable newspaper publicity was received. Sisalkraft became a fine retail item and continued so until priced out of the market.

If good interest can be developed we know of no publicity that can produce better results with less expense than contests.

POULTRY (1946). In cooperation with the 4-H Club, boys and girls of Farm Bureau of our two counties, we put on a poultry contest. We arranged for 50 chickens for each contestant. This cost us an average of 20¢. Thirty-five girls and boys applied and we gave each entrant 50 barred rocks, white leghorns, or red chicks. These were to be kept until fall when two chicks



from each entrant were to be given to us and chicken judged for quality and size. We made quite an event of the judging, inviting parents, friends and newspapermen. A poultryman from Cornell did the judging and \$40.00 in cash prizes were distributed to the winners.

The prize chickens were dressed and put in freezers and they paid over one-half the expense of the chicks, prizes and advertising.

These contests were continued for 3 years and we felt they



were a success. We tried to call on contestants at least once during the year to see what progress was being made.

This picture shows Mr. Duncan Briggs Presenting \$10.00 prize to a winner.

During 1925 the American Lumberman of Chicago offered \$75.00 cash prizes for the grade student who submitted the finest essay on "Advantages of Hardwood Flooring".

We again brought this to the attention of our grade schools and many fine essays were submitted. Miss Janice Neal of Oneonta was awarded the first prize, Miss Gill of Needham, Ala. second and William Madden, Guttenberg, Iowa third.

She Raised Them to be Prize Winners
November 18, 1946



Norma Downs, Cooperstown 4-H member, exhibits her prize winning cockerels which won her first award at the poultry show and project exhibit here Friday night.