



This is a

Menasha History

Change Over Time

RESOURCE

Teacher Guide

Menasha Goes to Work

Menasha Goes to Work: Factories

Images 1-12 Menasha Woodenware, later Menasha Corporation

Image 1: Menasha Wooden Ware factory.

The Menasha Wooden Ware Company started as a small plant making tubs, barrels and pails. It grew to be the largest woodenware factory in the world. Later it added corrugated cardboard containers to its product line. After a major fire in 1964, the company built a new main plant on Bergstrom Road in town of Neenah.

Image ID: mplss4956

Image 2: Charles Buck saws a log into staves.

Sawing logs into staves, the specially cut board which make up the sides of the pail, is the first step. The staves were then stacked to dry, because wood shrinks as it dries.

Image ID: mww-p7614x2

Image 3: Setting up a pail in 1931.

This worker, John Remich, is “setting up” a pail, fitting the staves together. The metal frame around the pail holds the staves in place.

Image ID: mww-p7614d2

Image 4: Hoop maker.

Metal hoops will be used to hold the staves together. There will be different sizes for each size of pail or tubs, and for different locations on the tub or pail as it widens toward the top.

Image ID: mww-p7616d

Image 5: A Wooden Ware machinist.

These larger hoops will be for bigger tubs.

Image ID: mww-p7616

Image 6: Wooden Ware machinery.

Image ID: mww-p7616q

Image 7: Sanding the finished pails.

The three hoops are clearly visible on these pails which are being sanded by machine.

Image ID: mww-p7616b2-2nd

Image 8: Quality control.

Women worked in the factory too. This one is inspecting a cask. Although we think of overalls as men's work clothing, the Sears catalog for 1930 shows overalls for women.

Image ID: mww-p7614b2

Image 9: Butter tubs on conveyor.

Large tubs come down the line.

Image ID: mww-p7616b2

Image 10: Delivering tubs.

Tubs are stacked in a wagon for delivery.

Image ID: mww-p7616v2

Image 11: Break time for pail makers.

Image ID: mww-p761422

Image 12: Butter tubs on display at the National Dairy Show in Indianapolis, 1925.

Butter tubs became a specialty of MWW. Some kinds of wood gave the butter an off flavor, so a quality tub was very important.

Image ID: mww-p7616i2

Links:

For more information on the company:

http://www.menashapackaging.com/o/o/AboutMenasha/Company_History.html

<http://www.answers.com/topic/menasha-corporation>

Information on tub, pail and barrelmaking online tends to focus on small colonial era shops:

<http://www.gpschools.org/ci/ce/elem/fifth/ss5/trades/cooper.htm>

<http://www.history.org/Almanack/life/trades/tradecoo.cfm>

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~flbbm/heritage/cooper/barrelmaking.htm>

<http://www.wthines.com/> click on "White coopering"

<http://www.motherbedford.com/Cooper.htm>

Images 13-14 Paper Mills

The paper Industry is a major part of the Menasha/Neenah economy and has been for 135 years. Early mills were converted flour mills, and made paper from cotton rags. Beginning in 1872, wood pulp was used, sometimes in combination with rags. Kimberly-Clark Corp. was founded that year, with a mill specifically constructed for making paper. Through the years many types of paper were made, including fine writing paper by Gilbert, and kraft paper, the sturdy brown paper best known in grocery bags, first made in this country by the John Strange Paper Co.

<http://www.wipapercouncil.org/process.htm>

<http://www.wipapercouncil.org/paperwi.htm>

Image 13: Counting sheets of paper, Bergstrom Paper Company.

Image ID: mplss5562

Image 14: Supercalendar department, Gilbert Paper, ca. 1900.

Howard LeSage , department superintendent.

Image ID: mplss5461

Images 15-16 Banta Publishing Co., founded 1901. Later called Banta Corporation and as of 2007, part of R.R. Donnelley. Among Banta's achievements are publishing one of the first school workbooks in 1929. They chose to make it 8 ½ by 11 because the machine which printed that size was not busy, and it could print both sides of the paper. This helped keep costs down for schools. Another reason for that size was to make the workbook similar to the writing tablet, rather than the textbook which pupils were not supposed to write in.

Image 15: Banta Publishing composing room.

The many trays held type in various fonts and sizes. This photo is from between from 1901 to 1910 when the company was on Main Street. Behind the composing room was the bindery.

Image ID: dover45

Image 16: George Banta Publishing Company.

Banta moved from Main St. across river to Ahnaip Street in early 1911. The building has been added onto several times.

Image ID: bantaoffice

Menasha Goes to Work: Clothing Stores

Image 1: Tuchscherer and Schlegel, 170 Main St, northwest corner of the public square, Main & Milwaukee.

The Tuchscherer family came to the US from Germany in the 1850s. This building was built in 1895 by Adam J. Tuchscherer. Schlegel joined the business at that time. The upstairs tenants included a dentist's office, law office, and the public library until the opening of its building. Note wooden sidewalks, dirt streets. People of both sexes and all ages wear hats.

Image ID: mplss2424

Image 2: Tuchscherer and Schlegel interior.

This store sold “dry goods,” meaning clothing, cloth for home sewing, curtains, tablecloths and home furnishings. Note the row of stools. Shopping was not “self-service.” A patron would be seated and clerks would bring the goods to show them. The ladder at the left would have been used by the clerks to get items from the balcony. Just above the ladder is what appears to be an early electric light bulb.

Image ID: mplss2525

Image 3: Knickers Ad, April 9, 1913, Menasha Record

Boys wore knickers which fastened just below the knee. Long pants were a sign of the change to adulthood.

Knickerbockers were a men's or boys' baggy knee trousers particularly popular in the early twentieth century. Golfers' plus twos and plus fours were trousers of this type. . . . Until World War II, in the USA and Canada boys customarily wore short pants in summer and knickerbockers or "knickers" (or "knee pants") in winter. At the onset of puberty, they graduated to long trousers. In that era, the transition to "long pants" was a major rite of passage. The switch would come around the end of eighth grade, when most boys would leave school for work. Nationwide, 90% of children did not go on past 8th grade in 1900. By the end of World War II, this fashion was gone.

Image ID BoysSuits1913_04_09

Image 4: Knee Pants ad, April 9, 1892, Menasha Press

Image ID: Kneepants_1892_04_09

Image 5: Tuchscherer delivery buggy.

Henry J. Tuchscherer, a brother of Adam, ran a shoe store. His shoe shaped buggy would have been used for deliveries and perhaps in parades. Henry's shoe store was in business at the corner of Main and Mill from 1888 to the 1980s. It burned in January 1940, but was rebuilt on the same site.

Image ID: mplss2930

Image 6: H.J. Tuchscherer Shoes, Store, corner Main & Mill, 1898

H.J. Tuchscherer's career from Semi-centennial edition of the Menasha Press, 1898, Historical, Biographical, Descriptive. p. 48

Image ID: hjtuscherershoespg58

Menasha Goes to Work: Drug Store

Image 1: Schultz's Drug Store, 194 Main.

Drugstores often had soda fountains, a tradition which began with the practice of dissolving powdered medicines in soda water to help them get into a person's system faster. Alka-Seltzer is one modern example of this.

Schultz Drugs moved a few doors west to 180 Main, the corner of Main & Milwaukee in November 1918.

Image ID: mplss1919

Image 1 Closeup

Note signs:

Welch's Grape Juice, developed as a temperance alternative to wine. http://www.welchs.com/company/company_history.html

Drink Coca-Cola 5¢

Try our Chocolate Ice Cream Soda

Image ID: mplss1919 closeup

Image 1.5: Morton's Pharmacy, 312 Racine St., 2007.

You can see bags of candy, but there is no soda fountain. They do have a soda vending machine, not in this photo.

Image ID: mmmortonsinterior

Image 2: Rupp Drug Store Ad, April 21, 1898, Menasha Press.

Today we would not think of a drug store selling wallpaper, but in those days wallpaper was thin and inexpensive, not washable like today's papers. Paint was less washable also. Wood stoves and coal heaters made a house smoky, so people re-papered often as part of their spring-cleaning. Note the ad is dated April.

Image ID: Rupp-wallpaper_1898_04_21

Menasha Goes to Work: Grocery Stores

Image 1: City Meat Market, Nick Beck, proprietor.

Nick Beck bought this building in September 1886. It burned in the 1894 and was replaced by the brick building still standing at 186 Main.

Image ID: Mpl_00469

Image 1.5: Piggly Wiggly, 1151 Midway Road, 2006

The modern grocery store is much larger and sells all kinds of food and other household needs.

Image ID: mmpigglyexterior

Image 2: City Meat Market, interior.

Note sausages and carcasses hanging on the right, with a strip of sawdust below to catch drips. At left are stools for customers to sit on while waiting for the meat to be cut to their order. You can read the name N. Beck on one sign and 'strictly cash' on another. The dial of a scale and rolls of paper for wrapping the meat are visible as well.

Image ID: Mpl_00472

Image 2.5: Piggly Wiggly packaged meat cases, 1151 Midway Road, 2006.

The modern store carries a large selection of pre-packaged meats.

Image ID: mmpigglymeat

Image 3: Rippl Grocery, Tayco Street just north of the bridge, circa 1916.

Note that most goods are in cases or on shelves behind the counter. You would ask for what you wanted, and the grocer would get it, add it to your order and pack it for you. You could even have it delivered! Items in the barrels would be scooped out and weighed. Chances are the barrels were made here in Menasha.

Image ID: Mpl_00516

Image 3.5: Frozen food department, Piggly Wiggly, Menasha, 2006

Now you can help yourself to the frozen foods at the Piggly Wiggly.

Image ID: mmpigglyfrozen

Image 4: Fruit and vegetable display. Joseph Luka store, corner Broad and Milwaukee, circa 1910.

Note pineapples at right on table and bananas hanging. You can see patriotic decorations through the windows.

Image ID: dover28

Image 4.5: Piggly Wiggly produce section, 2006

Better transportation and refrigeration help the Piggly Wiggly offer a wide selection of fruits and vegetables.

Image ID mmpigglyproduce

Image 5: The Keenway Food Store, Manitowoc St., circa 1943.

This neighborhood grocery was operated by A.J. Seithamer. The Seithamer family ran the store on this site from 1905 to the 1940s. It continued as a store under other ownership for another 20 years and then became the site of Chef Fresh pizza. The old (but working) Frigidaire meat coolers are still there.

Small grocery stores were common in residential neighborhoods. Frequently the family which ran the store lived in back or upstairs. The Seithamer family lived next door. In 1948 there were still 27 neighborhood groceries in Menasha.

Keenway was a chain to help small grocers buy as a group for better prices and to advertise as a group. There were Keenway stores in Oshkosh and Little Chute.

Image ID: mpl_00723

Image 5.5 Chef Fresh Pizza, Manitowoc St., 2007.

Image ID: mmchefmade

Image 6: Waiting for service at M. A. Exley's meat market, 234 Main St.

The scale and butcher blocks are prominent.

Image ID: dover42

Image 7: Nick Beck and Sons ad, Sept. 11, 1925, Menasha Record.

Nick Beck and Sons continued to operate as a meat market and grocery for many years. This ad is from 1929. They advertise homemade sausage and sauerkraut. Note that they would deliver your order if you phoned in.

Image ID: Beck-Ad-1925_09_11

Menasha Goes to Work: Hardware Store

Image 1: Trilling Hardware Store, 208 Main St.

Trilling built this store in 1887; plate glass windows were added in 1908. This picture may document that change. It certainly dates from before Trilling bought the Planner building in late 1912. Vilas Brothers paints was founded around 1877. Trilling became the local dealer for this brand in 1892.

Image ID: mpl_000657

Image 1.5: Kitz & Pfeil Hardware, 1212 Appleton Road, 2006.

Image ID: mmkitzfront

Image 2: Trilling Hardware store interior, 212 Main, 1913.

Note assorted hammers in glass case at left, stoves at right. Note the horn of the phonograph. This kind of phonograph was popular in 1900-1920.

Image ID: mpl_00519

Image 2.5: Kitz & Pfeil interior, 1212 Appleton Road, 2006.

Tools and paint are still among the items stocked at hardware stores.

Image ID: mmkitzinterior

Image 3: Trilling Hardware store interior.

This photo is from the back door forward, probably at the same time as the other interior. Note the sleds on floor, and cookstoves at right. The store is ready for winter.

In 2007, this building is an antique store. The iron posts are still visible.

Image ID: mplss2323

Image 4: Bissell Carpet Sweeper Ad, Dec 20, 1890, Menasha Press.

Most homes had wooden floors with area rugs or carpets. To clean the rugs, they were taken outside and hung over a clothesline or fence. A rug beater which looked like a tennis racquet would be used to hit the rug, sending the dust flying out of it. This job was often assigned to the boys in the family. For a photo of antique rug beaters see <http://www.rugbeaters.com/>.

From www.bissell.com:

In the mid-1800s, Anna and Melville Bissell owned a small crockery shop in Grand Rapids, Michigan. While cleaning up after the day's work, Anna often became frustrated with the sawdust that was embedded in the carpet. The tiny, stubborn particles clung to the carpet, and trying to sweep them up was becoming a time-consuming nuisance.

Anna presented the problem to Melville, her mechanically inclined husband. Melville designed and constructed a carpet sweeper machine that he hoped would solve the problem once and for all.

His ingenious design was a success, and word of Melville Bissell's carpet sweeper spread quickly. People soon began asking where they could purchase a carpet sweeper for themselves.

The BISSELL Carpet Sweeper was patented in 1876, and in 1883 the first BISSELL manufacturing plant was built in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Image ID: carpetsweeper1890_12_20modified

Image 5: Folding Bathtub, May 14, 1892, Menasha Press.

Menasha did not have a city waterworks to supply homes with running water until 1905. Homes were often built without a special room for bathing. So having a tub which folded up out of the way could be an advantage. This tub was also "self-heating," although the ad does not say what kind of heat was used. Without that feature, water would be carried from the pump or well to the kitchen, heated on the stove, and then carried to the tub. If the water could be heated in the tub rather than being carried while hot, that would simplify the bathing process.

Image ID: Bathtub_1892_05_14

Image 6: Perfection Oil Stove Ad, June 22, 1925, Menasha Record.

Magazine ads in full-color would have helped create an interest in this stove. The four burners are in a single line. The oven appears here above the two right-hand burners, at eye level. The oil tank is at far right. The entire unit stands perhaps six feet high.

Image ID: Oil_stove_1925_06

Image 7: Koelsch Hardware Refrigerator Ad, May 3, 1898, Menasha Breeze.

Image ID: refrigerator2

Image 8: America Refrigerator Ad, May 4, 1898, Menasha Breeze.

Both of these are actually ice boxes, where the cooling is provided by ice placed in the top of the unit. The cold melting water runs down the side of a metal box, cooling the air and food inside the box. The water collected at the bottom in a drip pan, visible in the Koelsch ad.

For extra information about the history refrigerators try <http://www.history.com/exhibits/modern/fridge.html>

Image ID: refrigerator_1898

Image 9: Trilling Hardware Co., 1898.

History of Trilling family business in Menasha from Semi-centennial edition of the Menasha Press, Historical, Biographical, Descriptive.1898, p. 33.

Image ID#trillinghardwarepg3

Menasha Goes to Work: Deliveries

Image 1: Delivery wagon for Menasha Brewery, early 1900s.

Peter Winz driving. Note lacy hangings on horses, which kept the flies away.

Image ID: MPL_0082

Image 1.5: Federal Express Delivery Truck, 2007.

The FedEx truck delivers packages from all over the world to homes and businesses.

Image ID: mmfedex

Image 2: A horse-drawn sled hauling logs to Menasha Wooden Ware.

The Public Library and the Mill Street Bridge are visible in the background

Image ID: mpl_00590

Image 3: Charles Gear delivery wagon, bringing “Pure Country Milk.”

The Gear dairy was founded in 1883, east of town. They built a dairy on First Street in 1905 and a modern building in 1945. This building now houses SportsGraphics.

An article in the [Oshkosh] Daily Northwestern, June 13, 1967, quotes Hugh Gear, jr., “ ‘Before we had the glass bottle, the milkman used to go down the street ringing a bell. Housewives would bring pails, bowls, anything that could hold the milk and would buy it at 3 to 5 cents a scoop. . . . In 1914 we began pasteurizing the milk.’ ” “ . . . the wagons were drawn by horse until 1927 when the dairy got its first ‘stand-up’ delivery truck.” The Gear dairy also had the first homogenizer in the area, installed in 1931.

Image ID: mplss2829

Image 4: Dairy Delivery.

You can read “Quality Ice Cream” on the side of the wagon.

Image ID: dover02

Image 5: Wheeler’s Transfer Line, Bus, Baggage, Dray & Livery, Tayco St.

Wheeler’s had an office and barn on Chute Street as well. You can read “Roberts House” on one carriage. This would be used to meet the train if Roberts Resort was expecting guests. Some wagons had wooden seats, but the buggy with the umbrella for the driver appears to have upholstery.

Image ID: wheelerstransferline

Image 6: Menasha Wooden Ware motorizes. August 21, 1917, Menasha Record.

The Menasha Wooden Ware Company is Testing Out Modern System Within City

Note: driving two horses in a team is harder than driving one. Deliveries call for backing the horse up precisely to doors and making them stay steady during unloading. That is why being a teamster was considered a skilled job. These days we hear the term as part of the name of the union founded for drivers, even though they are no longer working with horses.

Image ID: MWWmotorizes_1917_08

Image 7: .Trumbell Truck ad, Sept. 11, 1915, Menasha Record.

Note the gas mileage. The open truck pictured has curtains, ,probably canvas, which can be lowered in case of rain or snow.

Image ID: Trumbell_truck1915_09

Image 8: Kimberly-Clark Co. truck.

This delivery truck weighed 3 ¼ tons, and could carry 2 tons, for a total of 5 ¼ tons. Drivers had to know the weight of their vehicle and load because some bridges could not carry heavier loads safely.

Image ID: mpl_00703

Menasha Goes to Work: Other Businesses

Image 1: Hotel Lenz, corner of Racine and Third.

This is the McDonalds location in 2007. You can see electric streetcar tracks and wires, but the street does not appear paved. That dates the photo to between July 1898 and June 1910. This hotel also served food and had an outdoor seating area in summers.

Image ID: mplss1415

Image 2: Hotel Menasha's Station Wagon, circa 1920.

The station wagon was operated for the Hotel by Menasha Motor Car Co., which can be seen just east of City Hall on the 1913 Sanborn map. This photo was taken in front of 119 Main Street where driver Andrew Borenz

lived. His wife May and children, Margaret and George, are also pictured. The house is no longer there.

Image ID mpl_00592

Image 3: Walker Barber shop, Main Street, circa 1914.

The man on the right has been identified as Roy Walker, who was born in 1898. On the left is his father Joseph, who was a barber for many years. Joseph rented buildings in several locations on Main between 1900 and 1919, then bought the building at 205 Main in April 1919. Walker's Barber Shop stayed at this location until January 1940 when the neighboring Tuchscherer shoe store burned.

Men in chairs are being shaved. Many men went to the barber shop for shaves, not just haircuts. When fancy mustaches and shaped beards were in style, this was the best way to get a quality shave. The fact that water would need to be heated on the home stove was an added incentive.

Image ID: mplss2222

Image 4: Standard Oil gas station, corner Broad and Racine, December 1935.

This station was built in the summer of 1924.

Image ID: standardoil12_11_1935

Image 5: Ice harvesting.

Ice harvesting took place on the lake every year. When the ice was thick enough, workers cut it into blocks. It was taken to an insulated storage shed. Sawdust was placed between the blocks so they would not freeze back together. One storage building of ice was near the current Jefferson School. That's why the street is called Ice Street.

Image ID: mplss3031

Image 6: Ice to be Cut, Jan. 1, 1913, Menasha Record.

Image ID: IceHarvest1913_01_11

Image 7: Ice Harvest Ends, Feb. 22, 1913, Menasha Record.

Image ID: iceends1913_02_22