THE CULLEN & VAUGHN COMPANY

The Rapid Rise of Hamilton's Biggest, Youngest and Most Progressive Contracting Firm.

Starting with a single office, and competing with firms of world-wide reputation, the Cullen & Vaughn Company has grown, not only into the leading contracting firm of Hamilton, Ohio, but into one of the leading contracting firms of the middle west. Headed by two hardworking, ambitious young men, F. R. Vaughn and J. W. Cullen, the firm soon grew out of a single office and took over another contracting company. This expansion soon proved too small and another company was taken over only to be found that the growth of Cullen & Vaughn was just starting and finally the largest and best known contracting company in Hamilton was added to the list.

On March 1, 1911, F. K. Vaughn and J. W. Cullen decided to go into the contracting business in Hamilton. Offices were secured in the Rentschler building and the two young men started out on a small scale to do contracting work. By August of that year the business had increased to such an extent that a lumber yard was purchased from the Arent Lumber Company and the young men began contracting business on a larger scale. In eighteen months the business had increased so much more that the present quarters were not adequate and the Semler plant was purchased, and the lumber yard extended to the opposite side of the street. This was in North "B" street, Hamilton. But with the additions, plants and lumber yards, in six months the firm had outgrown them and on October 6, 1913, Cullen & Vaughn took over the offices, yards and business of The Bender Company, then the best known contracting firm in the city, and the firm which had created most of the city's best buildings.

The new plant gave Cullen & Vaughn the opportunity for which they had been striving and today they have reached the top rung of the ladder of successful contracting work.

As soon as the new plant was secured The Cullen & Vaughn Company began to make such improvements as would bring the plant up to the latest word in contracting plants. The taking over of the enormous business of the Bender company taxed the efforts of the young contractors to the limit, but in a month's time they had succeeded in mastering all difficulties and with the largest plant in Butler county, the best equipped, and an efficient corps of experts in all departments, the new firm soon attained a ranking second to none.

The officers of the company are: Jas. K. Cullen, President; Jas. W. Cullen, Vice-President; F. K. Vaughn, General Manager; S. M. Goodman, Secretary and Treasurer.

The founder of the Bender company, which Cullen & Vaughn succeed, was F. W. Bender, Sr. This sturdy German came to Hamilton sometime in the middle fifties, after spending about a year in Cincinnati, to which city he had gone directly after arriving in America. After acquainting himself with the opportunities afforded a house-builder in the little but growing country town of Hamilton, Mr. Bender believed he saw great possibilities here for the building trade; and so great was his faith that he bought himself a home and settled down, determined that here he would make his home. His attention was particularly attracted to the then sparsely settled Fourth ward, in which he believed that much of the future growth of the town would sooner or later take place. That his belief proved a true prediction the people of the present day well know. Mr. Bender bought ground on Lowell street adjoining the old People's Flour mill, operated by J. W. Carr & Sons, and erected a frame planing mill, taking into partnership with him his sons, J. F. Bender, Jr., and Henry and Ernst Bender. More ground was added as the increased business made it necessary and the concern gradually expanded and has continued to expand into the magnificent plant which is being operated at the present day. F. W. Bender, Sr., died in the latter sixties and after his death the business was carried on by his sons, under the name of J. F. Bender & Bros., until the year 1888, when it was incorporated under the name of The J. F. Bender & Bros. Co., and later changed to The Bender Company. When the Carr Flour mill burned the Benders, secured the ground it had occupied and the present large brick planing mill was constructed. The former building, now torn away, stood just to the north of the present mill, along the hydraulic.

The J. F. Bender Bros. Company operated the most extensive building and contracting business in this part of the state and the big planing mill, at Fifth and Dayton streets, the large lumber yard at Fifth and Maple avenue and the numerous warehouses and storehouses of the concern together have a capacity which is most unusual.

The officers were: president, Peter Bender; vice-president, John Bender; secretary, W. E. Bender; treasurer, D. W. Heiser.

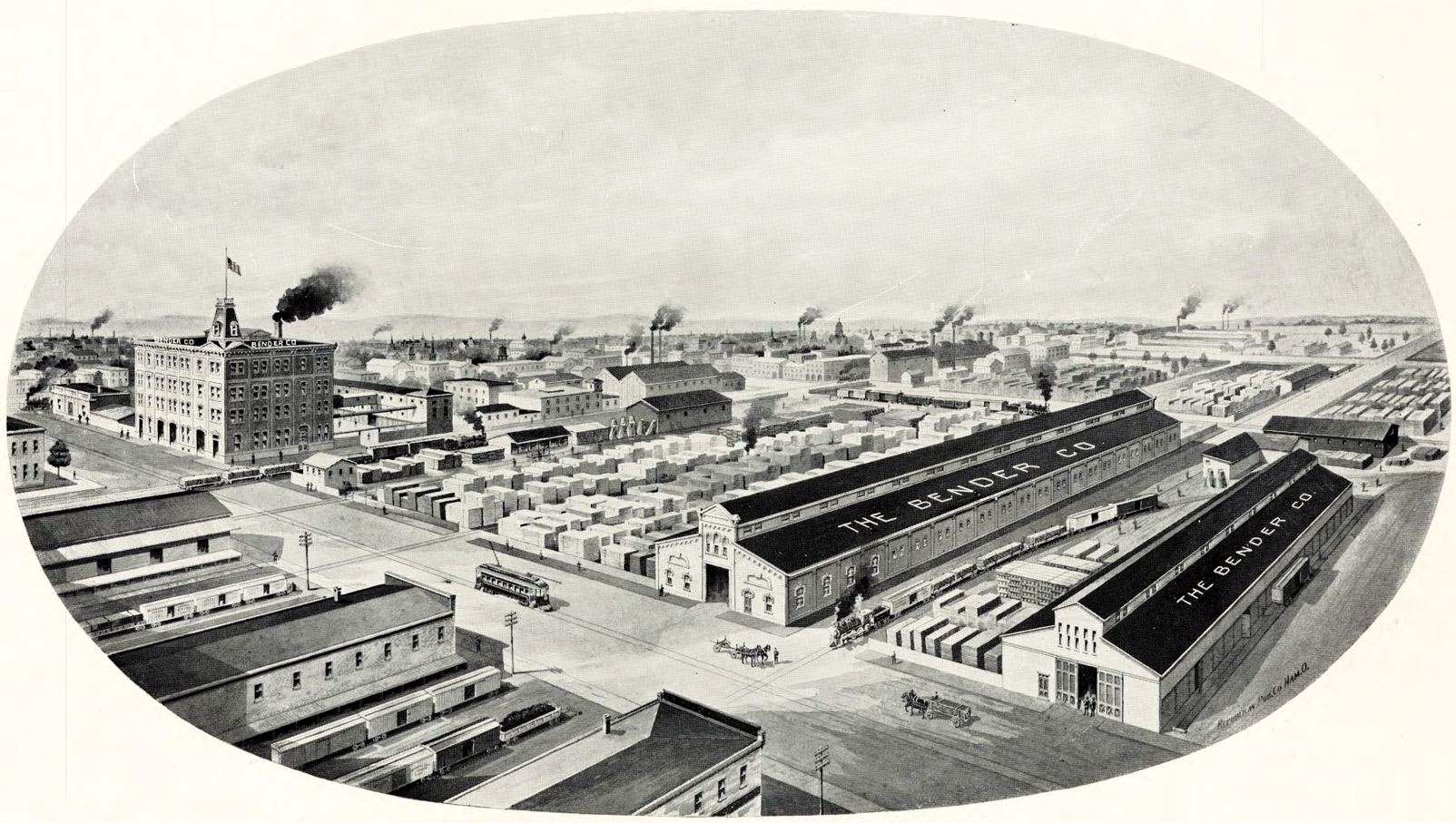
There probably is not a street of any length in the city of Hamilton on which does not stand a house erected by the J. F. Bender & Sons Co., or by one of its capable sub-contractors. Many people are content to rent their homes, but it is one of Hamilton's distinguishing features that the percentage of renters to house-owners is unusually small.

The Bender company had skilled architects to look after this most necessary adjunct of the business; and in past years some of the most substantial and imposing structures in the city of Hamilton and in other places have been designed by the men of this company. The contracting department was in charge of a competent man who had had years of experience in the business and is thoroughly acquainted with all sides of it. Among the structures contracted for are the remodeling and practically the rebuilding of the Beckett Paper Company's mill, the big addition to the Champion Coated Paper Company, a large mill at Capac, Mich., and the Bell telephone building. Among the larger structures which have been up some years, and which this company constructed are the Niles Tool works, Mosler Safe works, Macneale and Urban Safe works, Fred J. Meyers plant, and many of the city's public school buildings, including the Central High school.

The Bender company always played a leading part in the public and private improvements of the city of Hamilton and was pre-eminently the leading firm of builders and contractors in this vicinity. In fact, the city's progress, was the company's, so closely was it identified with the building interests of Hamilton.

This was the reputation which Cullen & Vaughn was forced to sustain if the new company wished to hold the enormous business of the Bender Company. Not only did they sustain it, but they added to it.

The first big task which confronted Cullen & Vaughn was the completion of the new Y. M. C. A. building in Hamilton, already begun by the Bender Company. Here the new company gave an example of the kind of work which had made it flourish in the three years of its organization. The work which has been progressing slowly but surely was given an extra impetus and the work was completed on schedule time. This was only one of the many contracts which the new company took over and every one was finished in less time than had been expected by the owners. By this kind of work Cullen & Vaughn rapidly added to their reputation for swift, efficient work and today the reputation of the company is rapidly spreading. The contracts of the Bender company came from long distances but the contracts of the Cullen & Vaughn company are coming from even greater distances. Judging from the rapid growth of the company to date, within a few years it will be recognized as the leading contracting firm in this section of the United States.



MAIN OFFICE AND PLANT OF THE CULLEN & VAUGHN COMPANY.
SUCCESSORS TO THE BENDER COMPANY.