

Robert S. Wertheimer

1900-1957

Robert S. Wertheimer, vice president and resident manager of Longview Fibre Company, guided that company through years of expansion and change from its infancy in 1926 until his death in 1957.

In addition to Mr. Wertheimer's professional accomplishments, he was an enthusiastic participant in civic affairs, as well as organizations tied to the timber industry.

Bob Wertheimer was born in Los Angeles on June 21, 1900. He graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Mechanical Engineering in 1924. From 1924 until 1926 he served as assistant engineer with the Thilmany Pulp and Paper Company of Kaukauna, Wisconsin.

When his father, the late Monroe A. Wertheimer, was promoting the creation of the Longview Fibre Company to use sawmill refuse and to be built next to the Long-Bell mill in Longview, Long-Bell management was greatly concerned about the odor of a kraft mill. Accordingly, they visited Kaukauna to judge the smell for themselves. Bob Wertheimer was assigned to the pulp mill to hold the smell down. Apparently he succeeded as the Long-Bell officials agreed to the project! It took many years of technological improvement before the Longview mill was as odor-free as the demonstration at Kaukauna!

When the mill at Longview was begun in 1926, Bob Wertheimer joined the firm as an

engineer. When production started in 1927 he became Resident Manager. One of his early assignments was to work with Long-Bell to establish the weight equivalent of a cord of sawmill refuse. To be sure to get a close-piled cord, he piled it himself. When weighed and sampled for moisture, the cord was found to contain approximately 2400 pounds on a bone-dry basis. This became the standard unit for the purchase of wood waste by Longview Fibre from Long-Bell and ultimately for most purchase and sale of chips in the Pacific Northwest.

In December, 1932, Bob Wertheimer was named Secretary-Treasurer of Longview Fibre Company and in January, 1940, he became Vice President and Resident Manager.

In the twenty years that Bob Wertheimer ran the mill at Longview, it was enlarged from one machine and one hundred tons per day to seven machines making a total of about eight hundred tons per day. In the course of this expansion, Longview Fibre outgrew the fiber supply from the adjacent Long-Bell mill. Wertheimer embarked on a major program to acquire chips saved from waste from sawmills in Oregon and Washington. The technology for doing this salvage work at sawmills and plywood plants was in its infancy, shortly after World War II when Longview began its massive programs. Bob Wertheimer played

a major role in bringing together machinery builders, sawmill and plywood plant operators and Longview Fibre in a cooperative effort to capture this vital resource. He served as a catalyst to bring about this vast improvement in utilization.

At the time of his death, Bob Wertheimer was president of the Pacific Coast Association of Pulp and Paper Manufacturers. This association, which represented and assisted the manufacturers in labor matters, had been founded in 1934. The association assisted in producing many years of labor peace in the industry. Bob Wertheimer served the association in many capacities including Job Analysis Director. He was also active in labor negotiations.

In the early 1950's the industry recognized that their economical salvation existed in a solution to environmental problems and began to organize to meet this challenge. Wertheimer served as a member of the operating committee of the National Council for Stream Improvement which sponsored research on the industries' problems. He was a founder and vice president of the Northwest Pulp and Paper Association, which deals with environmental problems in Washington and Oregon.

Outside his profession, Bob Wertheimer was a vigorous organizer. In 1948 there was a major flood of the Columbia and Cowlitz Rivers. Longview is on a delta at the confluence of the two rivers and is protected from flooding by a dike built in 1923. Preserving the integrity of the dike, which had had little maintenance in its 25-year life, required an organized effort of sandbagging and other measures. Bob

Wertheimer played a major role in helping with this effort.

Extremely active in civic affairs, Bob Wertheimer had been a campaign chairman for the United Fund and a leader in the Longview Fund movement, was a past president of the Longview YMCA, a leading figure in Boy Scout activities, and a member of the advisory board of St. John's Hospital. He was a member of the Elks Lodge, the Longview Yacht Club, the Longview Chamber of Commerce, and the Longview County Club.