



## *Dr. Dwight F. Brooks*

1849-1930

Dwight F. Brooks was born to Dr. and Mrs. Sheldon Brooks on June 1, 1849, in Oswego County, New York. The family moved to Winona County, Minnesota and then to Minneiska, in Wabasha County, Minnesota, while Dwight was young. Minnesota was still frontier in the 1860s and the country was deeply involved with the tragedy of the Civil War. From his boyhood hardships, Brooks developed a life-long conviction that thrift and personal sacrifice were essential to human accomplishment.

Dwight Brooks received his formal education from tutors before spending a year at the University of Michigan preparing for the study of medicine. He graduated from Long Island College Hospital as a physician in 1876 and returned to Minneiska to practice medicine.

In 1873 Lester R. Brooks, an older brother of Dr. Brooks, organized the Brooks Brothers Company with Dr. Brooks and Anson Brooks, a younger brother, as partners. The purpose of the partnership was to carry on their father's successful grain operation that included several elevators and a mercantile store. Membership of the Brooks Brothers partnership remained unchanged from the date of incorporation until the death of Dr. Brooks.

The sale of the elder Dr. Brooks' grain elevators in 1900 gave Brooks Brothers the capital to launch a large-scale lumber business. As was common, an elevator business often incorporated a small lumberyard. Brooks Brothers' expansion had begun in 1875 with the purchase of a lumberyard at Minnesota Transfer, Minnesota. The Scanlon-Gipson Lumber Company was organized in 1894 by Brooks Brothers, with M.J. Scanlon and H.E. Gipson as their associates. This company operated a mill at Nickerson, a small station on the Great Northern Railroad between Minneapolis and Duluth. A little later this company bought out H.F. Brown of Minneapolis, a lumber manufacturer.

In 1899 the Scanlon-Gipson Company, of which Dr. Brooks was president, built at Cass Lake, Minnesota, what was at the time the largest sawmill in existence. This pine mill held the world's record for many years for the production of lumber, with an annual output of 115 million board feet.

Dr. Brooks and his brothers believed that capital was not to be idle, but was to be put to use as quickly as funds accumulated, and in 1905, blocks of timber were purchased in

Oregon. However, Oregon investments were stunted by the lack of developed transportation inland. So their attention turned to the purchase of Banner Lumber Company in Kentwood, Louisiana, where the estimated total cut was a billion board feet and total profit exceeded \$2 million. The Brooks-Scanlon Company of Kentwood, Louisiana was organized in 1905 and the company became one of the largest producers of long leaf yellow pine lumber. The timber of Kentwood mill was depleted in 1921 after the mill had produced 1.3 billion board feet of lumber.

In 1909 the Powell River Paper Company was acquired by the Brooks organization, with Dr. Brooks as president. The company built and operated one of the largest pulp and paper mills in Canada, with a capacity of 150,000 tons of newsprint paper annually.

Powell River Paper Company proved to be a most difficult company. Tremendous capital investments were necessary to supply the rapidly expanding venture. In addition, the company operated in previously undeveloped land regions accessible only by water and had to cope with foreign customs and logging practices. These complications nearly exhausted the previously indefatigable Brooks-Scanlon team.

However, Dr. Brooks with his pragmatic, conservative, pioneering efforts overcame the obstacles. Brooks-Scanlon pledged its stock ownership in the Oregon timberlands as collateral, and individuals pledged private capital. The resulting incorporation of Crown-Willamette saw newsprint come off the rolls in 1912. Powell River Company became one of the outstanding paper mills in the world.

In each of these ventures Dr. Brooks played a leading roll. The teamwork of Brooks Brothers and M. Joseph Scanlon produced solid financial and corporate management. They accumulated capital for the purpose of making it work. Dr. Brooks especially loved large operations knowing they were producing that, which could benefit mankind as a whole.

In 1914 the Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Company of Bend, Oregon, became active. One of the largest pine mills ever, with an annual output of 200 million board feet and a renewable timber supply, followed in 1918. Dr. Brooks was one of the directing forces of this great operation for the remainder of his life.

Dr. Brooks and associates made another investment in the South in 1917. They purchased the properties of the Carpenter-O'Brien Company, Eastport, Florida, and acquired the present stand of more than one billion board feet of timber. By this investment a substantial interest in the Burton-Swartz Cypress Company of Florida was acquired.

The Brooks-Scanlon interests also made an investment in the Bahama Islands in 1906. A company to hold these interests was organized under the name of the Bahamas-Cuban Company, Limited. This company produced and distributed lumber throughout Cuba and the Bahama Islands. Dr. Brooks was president of the enterprise.

At the time the mill of the Brooks-Scanlon Corporation of Florida was moved from Eastport to Foley, the Brooks-Scanlon Corporation acquired the Live Oak, Perry and Gulf Railroad. Dr. Brooks, as Chairman of the Board, directed the affairs of the railroad company.

Occasionally, the Brooks Brothers were approached by prospective buyers and tempted by diversified investment possibilities, but their commitment to the lumber business held firm and their successes continued. Investments received national recognition for their growth and profitability.

The Brooks-Scanlon team directed progressive successes from the time of purchase of a lumberyard in 1875 to the establishment of sawmills, a lumber salvage business, the organization and operation of a railroad, pulp and paper mills, and a hydro-electric plant. Their holdings spanned the United States, Canada and the Bahamas.

Dr. Dwight F. Brooks was considered an avid, almost compulsive businessman of robust constitution. His conservative and thrifty nature rendered him a vital member of the Brooks-Scanlon empire.

Although Dr. Brooks' many business activities forced him to give up the active practice of medicine in 1887, he still maintained an active interest in the profession. Much of his spare time was spent with books and current literature in order to keep himself informed of progress in the medical profession. Some even say he had developed a practical remedy for the common cold. He maintained a physician's office in the rear of the Brooks Brothers office in St. Paul where he treated employees of the company whenever required. He numbered among his family many in the medical profession of the Northwest.

Dr. Brooks was a member of the Masonic Fraternity for almost 60 years, and was a Past

Master of the Minneiska Lodge. He was a member of the Minneapolis Club and the Union League of Chicago.

In business, Dr. Brooks was a tireless worker. He was never known to take a vacation. He had few interests outside his business and the medical profession. At the time of his death, he was enroute to visit a sawmill. He was a reticent man given to few words, but was wise in counsel and resourceful in action.

Dr. Brooks was a tremendously capable administrator and was scrupulously honest in meeting his obligations and fulfilling his promises. Accordingly, he commanded the respect and admiration of his associates.

Dr. Dwight F. Brooks was a pioneer in the lumber industry, an industry that he knew in every detail.