Edward Hines, Sr.

1863-1931

Mr. Edward Hines was born in Buffalo, New York, July 29, 1863, son of Peter and Rose (McGarry) Hines. His father was a ship carpenter. In 1880, Mr. Hines took over principal responsibilities for the sale of lumber for S.K. Martin, a Chicago lumber wholesaler. When the business was incorporated as the S.K. Martin Lumber Company, he became secretary and treasurer and built the firm into one of the largest distributors of lumber in the Middle West.

Mr. Hines soon found there was a limited future in working for others and founded Edward Hines Lumber Company in 1892 with capital of $200,000. In the early days of the company, Mr. Hines devoted his energies and capital to the buying of cargoes of lumber from ports in Wisconsin and Minnesota and shipping them in company vessels through the Chicago River to the company yard. This rough white pine and Norway pine was dressed and worked to pattern and shipped East and West in carloads. Mr. Hines often reminisced about the building of pioneer cities in Kansas and Nebraska.

Within a few years, Mr. Hines and his associates bought sawmills and timber in Michigan and Wisconsin to supplement the supply of lumber for his growing business. There was no long-term financing then for timber purchases. Thirty to sixty-day paper, hopefully renewable, was the only credit available to the timber pioneers.

As the northern timber tracts were cut, the Southern pine and cypress tracts were rapidly developed. Distribution practices changed dramatically. Lumber cargo shipping on the Great Lakes stopped abruptly. To meet these changing conditions, Mr. Hines in 1907 began acquiring stands of virgin longleaf yellow pine in Mississippi.

Two large mills were constructed in the South. One of them, located on river transportation, specialized in exporting yellow pine to South America and to Europe. Through Mr. Hines' effort, the special qualities of longleaf yellow pine established this species for many uses.

In the middle of the first decade of the century, Mr. Hines began to develop the company's Chicago business. He established a group of 25 branch yards whereby dependable service by horse and wagon was readily available to the company's customers. The Hines Branch Yard System was the first effort in-group merchandising in the city of Chicago. It was followed in time by the establishment of other chain retail outlets, drug stores, food stores and the like.

In later years, the company had large tracts of hardwoods and hemlock in Michigan and Wisconsin. Marketing these new species was important to popularize them, and make them profitable. Careful manufacture and proper seasoning by modern dry kilns were the principal factors in marketing the northern hardwoods.

In 1912, Mr. Hines became President of the Virginia & Rainy Lake Lumber Company in Virginia, Minnesota.

The company's mills at Virginia became the largest manufacturing center of lumber in the United States at one point, producing one million feet of lumber per day.

In 1928, Mr. Hines and the U.S. Government undertook a mutual project, the first such cooperative effort between the U.S. Forest Service and private interests. It was agreed that manufacture of lumber from the largest federally owned Ponderosa pine forest in the U.S., located in Oregon, would be undertaken. A $7 million sawmill and railroad were placed in operation at Hines, Oregon, when Secretary of Agriculture, Arthur M. Hyde, touched a button in Washington, D.C., January 1930. The mill was capable of manufacturing 125 million feet of lumber annually, and today, is the world's largest producer of Ponderosa pine at one location.

In 1900, Mr. Hines was elected President of the National Lumber Manufacturers' Association, and served as a Director of the Continental and Commercial Bank, Chicago.

Mr. Hines was married in Chicago, June 12, 1896, to Loretta, daughter of John O'Dowd of that city, and had four children: Edward; Ralph J.; Charles M.; and Loretta, who married Howell Hoffman Howard. Mr. Hines' death occurred in Chicago, December 1, 1931. Mr. Hines' son, Lt. Edward Hines, Jr., died in World War I. His remaining sons, Ralph J. and Charles M. followed him in the Presidency and Management of Edward Hines Lumber Company. His two grandsons, Howell H. Howard, and Edward Hines III were both active in the company at the time of writing.

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