

SHELLER, HARRY E.

Harry E. SHELLER, president and general manager of the SHELLER Wood Rim Manufacturing Company of Portland and long regarded as one of the active and progressive factors in the commercial and industrial life of that city, is a native of the Buckeye state, born in Seneca county, Ohio, March 30, 1877, son and only child of Amos and Emma J. (WADE) SHELLER, now residents of Fostoria, Ohio. Amos SHELLER, a retired contractor, was for years engaged in the clothing and furniture business at Fostoria. Harry E. SHELLER was reared at Fostoria and completed his schooling in the Fostoria Academy. Upon leaving school he became engaged as a cleric in his uncle's clothing store and was thus engaged for two years, at the end of which time he entered the field of oil development and for eighteen years was engaged as a contracting driller, operating two rigs and working mostly in the Lima region and on leases of his own in the neighborhood of Beaver Dam, and became widely known as a successful producer. In July, 1911, Mr. SHELLER abandoned the oil field and located at Portland, where he established on West Water street a factory for the manufacture of baseball bats, carrying on the business under the name of the H. E. SHELLER Manufacturing Company. In 1916 this factory building was destroyed by fire and instead of reconstructing the plant Mr. SHELLER reorganized his enterprise as the SHELLER Wood Rim Manufacturing- Company, capitalized at \$25,000 and in October of that year started out along new lines. The stock in this company was subscribed by substantial business men of Portland, and in the organization of the company Mr. SHELLER was elected president and general manager, a position he since has occupied, his executive capacity long ago having demonstrated his fitness for the position. The new company bought the abandoned plant of the Journey Manufacturing Company on South Bridge street, at a cost of \$9,500, and refitted the building for the manufacture of the SHELLER products, the chief of which are steering wheels and wood rims. The initial success of the enterprise was assured when Mr. SHELLER secured from the Ford Motor Corporation a contract to supply that concern with automobile steering wheels, and since then the demand for the SHELLER products has necessitated the enlargement of the plant on several occasions. On February 12, 1918, the capital stock of the company was increased to \$50,000, and on June 30, 1919, another increase was made to \$300,000. The concern is now manufacturing a composition steering wheel, suitable for all makes of cars, the Ford concern continuing to be one of the large users of the product.

On July 3, 1900, Harry E. SHELLER was united in marriage to Ida O. KUHN, who was born at Bascom, Ohio, daughter of Daniel and Katherine KUHN, and to this union one child has been born, a son, William Edward SHELLER. Mr. and Mrs. SHELLER are members of St. Mary's Catholic church at Portland and are Republicans. They are members of the Country Club, and Mr. is a member of the local lodges of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and of the Fraternal Order of Eagles. He has long been regarded as one of the "live wires" in the commercial life of the city and is a member of the board of directors of the Portland Chamber of Commerce.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.342-343. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.