

The prosperity of any community, town or city depends upon its commercial activity, its industrial interests and its trade relations, and therefore among the builders of a town are those who stand at the head of business enterprises. Prominent in that class in Malcom is numbered W. G. Bair, proprietor of the W. G. Bair Lumber Company, one of the most extensive concerns of its kind in Poweshiek county. Iowa claims him as her native son, his birth occurring in Ladora, Iowa county, on the 23d of March, 1876. His parents, George W. and Phoebe Ann (Close) Bair, were natives of Ohio although of Pennsylvania parentage, and as children came to Iowa with their parents, the family homes being established in Iowa county in the '50s. The father engaged in farming until his retirement from active life, and at one time also conducted a hotel at Ladora. He and his wife now make their home at Washington.

W. G. Bair spent his boyhood on his father's farm, near Ladora and attended the country schools until he was fourteen years of age, when his parents took up their abode in the town and there he graduated from the high school with the class of 1896. In 1897 he completed a commercial course in the Iowa City Business College, and at once accepted a position as bookkeeper for A. L. King, conducting a lumber, furniture and undertaking establishment at Ladora. He was employed in that capacity until 1902, at which time the money which he had carefully saved enabled him, in connection with E. B. Cook, to purchase the business, which was then conducted under the firm style of Bair & Cook for one year. He next entered into a partnership with E. W. McKnight, under the name of Bair & McKnight, which association was continued for two years, at the end of which time Mr. Bair sold his interest to Mr. King and came to Malcom, arriving in this city on the 26th of September, 1905. Here he purchased the grain, lumber and coal business of F. P. Hubbard & Son which he at once reorganized as the W. G. Bair Lumber Company, Mr. Bair being the sole owner and manager, although his wife and two sons are interested in the business.

From a small beginning the business has grown with a rapidity that is almost surprising, its trade being built up along progressive and substantial lines until today it ranks among the foremost enterprises of Malcom. It carries a heavier stock than any other concern of its kind in Poweshiek county and its banking for one year amounts to over two hundred thousand dollars, while it employs from eight to twenty men. The prosperous condition of the business is due entirely to the well directed efforts of Mr. Bair, who in the conduct of his affairs has strongly manifested keen discrimination, sound judgment, executive ability and excellent management, supplemented by an unbending integrity, un-

abating energy and industry that never flags. In 1910 he established a stone business at Ewart, which is operated in connection with the business at Malcom, and he also engages in the manufacture of cement blocks, in which direction his efforts have likewise met with substantial results. He is interested, too, in farm lands in Canada and Minnesota.

The year 1899 witnessed the marriage of Mr. Bair to Miss Maude Wing, a native of Iowa county, Iowa, and a daughter of L. E. Wing, and unto this union have been born two sons: Harold and Ronald.

Mr. Bair holds membership in the Methodist Episcopal church and is well known in fraternal circles in this community, being a Royal Arch Mason, while he is also identified with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Knights of Pythias. In his life he has exemplified the term progress and in his intelligent appreciation for and utilization of opportunities is found the secret of his success. He has become widely known through the extent of his business interests and is regarded as one of the most prominent business men of this community.