

FALL CREEK FURNITURE COMPANY

Old State Road 67 & Bridge Street

Mooreville, Indiana

SOURCES

- “Old Furniture Factory Now Site of Automotive Armature,” *Mooreville Times*, June 29, 1967.
- Hardin, Becky. “Many Businesses Have Flourished Here,” *Mooreville Times*, July 24, 1985.
- Undated photograph of Fall Creek Furniture Factory in Mooreville, Indiana (probably circa 1925-1930) (photographer unknown).

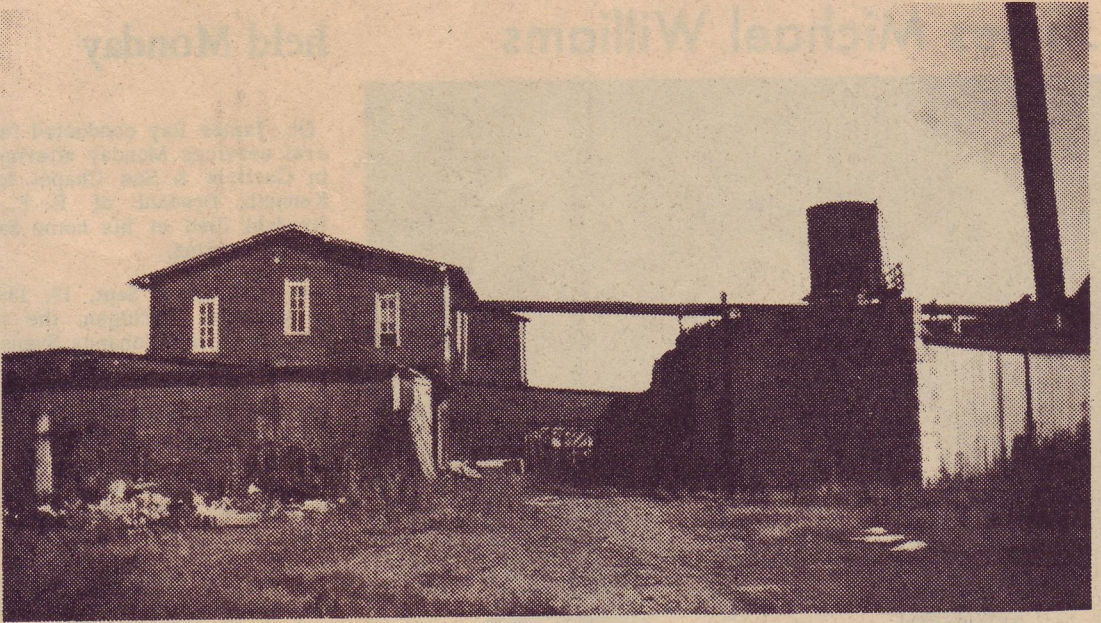


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Bass Photo Co

Times
June 29, 1967.

Old furniture factory now site of Automotive Armature



Mrs. Kenneth Fields submitted the above picture of the old furniture factory which stood at the present site of Automotive Armature Co. on old Rd. 67 and Bridge street.

The old factory was razed in 1930. Before the building was

used for making furniture it was known as Morgan's Sorgum factory.

In the second picture are the furniture factory employees in 1909-1910.

Bottom row, left to right are John Shrake, Dave Bain and Mr.

Carlisle; second row - unknown, Milo Raiden, Buck Farmer, Carl Houson, Bill Cox, former JP, Mary Shrake, Mark Adams, foreman; top row - Jess Squires, John Stanley, Skinner McCarty, Doug Shrake, Clarence Marine, Myron Marine and Louis Shrake.

Many businesses have flourished here

by Becky Hardin

Furniture Business

Around 1900, Indiana Brass and Iron Bed Company provided much employment for Mooresville area people. It was located west of the railroad track on East Washington Street. (The building was later used for Johnson's apple-packing house and now is occupied by Automotive Armature).

Fall Creek Furniture

A year or so later, Mr Von Cannon established the Fall Creek Furniture Company. It was in buildings on Indianapolis Road, now occupied by Automotive Armature and Summitt Finishing. Von Cannon had financial troubles and sold it to Walter McDaniel, Harry Wolf of Indianapolis and E. F. Hadley of Mooresville, who assumed debts and ownership.

Evidently business prospered until the 1930 depression. It was the policy for the company to hire Mooresville people in the office as well as in the factory, often high school students Mildred Ulrey Thompson, Mary Ethel Sampson McKinley, Russell Hinkle, Irvin Milhon, Milford Cox and Elvin Shepherd. Shepherd and Cox took their business training at Central Business College, riding the interurban to Indianapolis.

Milford Cox was purchasing agent and when the company went into receivership, Chester Lawrence was receiver and Milford worked for him.

Well Built Furniture

This factory was complete in all operations. Lumber was shipped from the west coast. The factory had its own dry kiln, mill department and cabinet makers (some Swedish people). There was a room for fillers (hair, tow, cotton, kapock, which had to be kept very dry).

At one time, there were 500 people employed. The important product was three-piece living room suites. Fifty a day could be produced, and for customers at a distance, as many as 15 suites could be packed into trucks and hauled to jobbers. Albert and Omar Cordrey drove trucks. Chester "Goöse" Holliday and A.A. Whitmer were salesmen.

This furniture was well built and several people still have some of it. Frames were strong, with steel-riveted brace. Doweled pegs were secured with hot glue. Frames were in one piece. Mary Ethel McKinley said one of their competitors, John J. Madden, manufactured with one frame.

Kelly Poe was the fastest front rail tack splitter. He held the tacks in his mouth. His hammer had a magnet in the end and was used to pick tacks out of his mouth.

Milford Cox recalls that an efficiency expert named Bryan, who lived on High Street where Century 21 is now, came in with a report he thought would save lots of money. When the tack splitters finished, they spit tacks on the floor. The expert had estimated how many tacks were on the floor. Cox said these had already been figured in the cost.

Wood finishing was done by dipping wood parts into vats of stain or varnish. The company did its own designing, cutting and sewing. The sewing room, and a garage for trucks, was where Summitt Finishing is now. Fall Creek sent exhibits to the Chicago Furniture Mart. The business was important enough the materials salesman came to Mooresville. The company sold to Peoples Outfitting. Fall Creek received about \$200 a suite, but sometimes this same suite would be resold for \$700. Some of the furniture was shipped to Washington on the west coast.

Depression problems

The company, along with all other businesses, had financial problems. It went into receivership, with Chester Lawrence appointed receiver and Milford Cox worked for him.

The February 14, 1935, the Mooresville Times stated the company would be moved to Rushville. L.L. Morton, plant manager, said "the conditions of the building, together with the expense of heating the workrooms, caused the company to operate at a loss the past year. International Furniture Company had been operating a year and half in Mooresville. Payroll for the past year had exceeded \$80,000."

The Chicago company was a mail order business and operated on a low margin of profit in order to meet competition. The mill room was a frame structure, described as impossible to heat, powered by steam and great pressure was required to run any one machine.

The factory had completed payments on all machinery and equipment in the plant and was receiving offers from other towns whereby buildings free of rent, payment of power, and one with a \$20,000 sinking fund as insurance against loss by the company, had been offered.

The Times article pointed out that the \$80,000 payroll for a town of 2,000