

Charles Henry Hackley, 1837 - 1905

Attachment One

Lesson One: Charles Hackley - A Man with a Plan

Charles Henry Hackley, 1837-1905

Charles Henry Hackley was born January 3, 1837, in Michigan City, Indiana, the oldest of five children of Salina (Fuller) and Joseph Henry Hackley. In 1847 he moved with his family to Kenosha, Wisconsin where his father was in the building trades. By age 14, Hackley had left school and was driving a horse for 15 cents a day. At 19, he worked his way from Kenosha to Muskegon on the schooner "Challenge" to join his father, who had been commissioned to build a sawmill along Muskegon Lake. The day after his arrival in May of 1856, he went to work shoveling sawdust into a boiler in the lumberyard of Durkee, Truesdale and Company at a monthly wage of \$22, a figure soon raised to \$26. When the mill closed that fall, Truesdale sent him to the lumber camps to scale logs.

The previous summer, young Hackley had learned office procedures and the basics of the lumbering business in the company store in the evening after his day's work outside. When a slow time at the lumber mill occurred, Truesdale suggested that he return to Kenosha for a six-week bookkeeping course. Hackley finished it in four weeks and returned to Muskegon. Meanwhile, the Durkee, Truesdale firm had been liquidated and Gideon Truesdale headed its successor company. Charles Hackley assumed charge of the books, the supply store, and lumber shipments for \$30 a month.

The city's saw mills formed, changed, closed and reformed. Hackley's family followed him to Muskegon and founded the lumbering firm of Hackley and Sons. This later evolved into the lucrative partnership of Hackley and Hume. This firm was one of the largest operators in the country, cutting 30,000,000 feet of lumber a year at its peak in 1894. In 1864, Charles Hackley married Julia Ester Moore. They adopted one son, Charles Moore Hackley, in 1898, and raised a foster daughter, Erie Caughell (Hackley).

Hackley amassed a fortune of \$18,000,000, one third of which he gave back to Muskegon. His first gift, given in 1888, was for the construction of Hackley Public Library. He served on the Board of Education of the Muskegon Public Schools for twenty years, was an alderman and a state delegate to two national Republican conventions.

Hackley died on February 10, 1905, of a ruptured aneurysm. He lay in state in what is now the Children's Room of the Library and more than 7,000 mourners passed the casket.

(Information excerpted from: *Hackley Public Library, A Centennial History*, by Marilyn Anderson and *The Centennial Walking Tour of the Hackley Public Library* by Janie Lynn Panagopoulos.)

