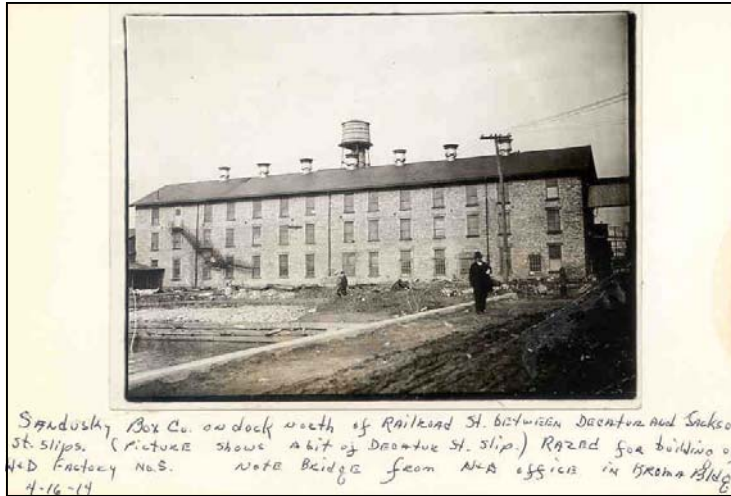


THE TUG OF WAR FOR NUMBER FOUR

By Gordon Wendt
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This is the history of the Hinde & Dauch Paper Company factory and office building at 409 West Water Street in Sandusky, Ohio, once known by its employees as "Plant Number Four".



As this is being written, the building is the subject of a "Tug of War" between the city government which wants to demolish its condemned building and a dedicated group of 'conservationists' who want it preserved.

Hinde & Dauch began manufacturing straw butcher's paper in a small

mill on Filmore Street in 1888 and was expanding into corrugating its paper and needed more room.

A building on West Water Street was leased in 1895 in which to make this product. The building was the historical "Norman Hall" of 1855. It was built as a concert hall, two lofty stories in height. Many of Sandusky's early stone buildings had 'halls' or auditoriums for various types of entertainment, many of a cultural nature.

The building was purchased soon afterward, but was damaged by fire in June, 1897. It was rebuilt but additional space was needed and property directly west was purchased in 1901 for use in



West Water Street building formerly known as "Norman Hall"

warehousing. In the following year, two buildings adjoining it to the West and extending to Decatur Street were purchased. These were the Lang Planing Mill and the Asher Building. The photo above shows these two buildings and Norman Hall to their left.

Further growth occurred in 1905 when the combined buildings were expanded to five stories in height. The new building façade looked as it does today and close inspection of the rear reveals parts of the three original buildings.

Production of an ever-growing variety of paper packaging continued in the big building until the completion in 1918 of the huge brick building across the railroad tracks to the north.

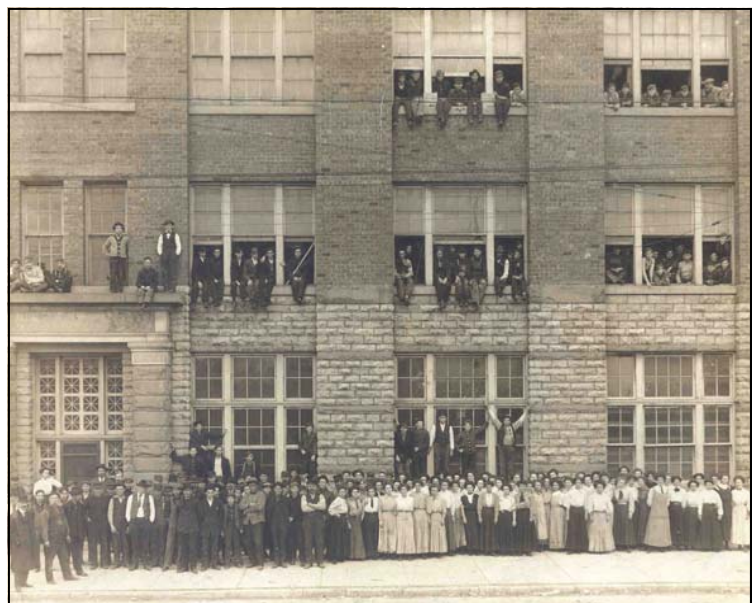
Although the old building was sold to the Kroma Color Associates in 1920, (American Crayon Company), the Hinde & Dauch general offices remained in it until completion of the handsome new office building at 407 Decatur Street in 1927.

While operating in the Water Street building, the offices were located in the western end of the first and second floors. Shipping docks were at the Decatur Street end and in the rear. Manufacturing occupied the remainder of the building.

An interesting facet of the old building was a wooden bridge over the rail tracks connecting it with the stone building on the pier which had been the Sandusky Wooden Box Company and now was used for storage. A portion of the bridge shows in the photograph on Page 1. The bridge was demolished during construction of the new plant.

An intriguing photo on this page shows what must have been the entire work force of the Water Street factory sometime between 1910 and 1918. Many of the manufacturing operations were performed by women and a large group of them are shown in front of the building.

Many men appear in various parts of the building including in the windows! Mr. J. J. Dauch, Company President, is standing in the West, main entrance, wearing a large black hat. Peter Klotz, Factory Superintendent, stands nearby wearing a black felt fedora hat and a black Chesterfield coat.



Hinde & Dauch factory workers, approximately 1910 – 1918.

Somewhere among the ladies may be my mother, Sallie Genevieve Gordon, who was secretary to Mr. Dauch from the time of her graduation at Sandusky Business College in 1908 until 1916 when she left to be married to Louis R. Wendt. My father joined the company in 1910, became an officer in 1923 and stayed until his retirement in 1957.

During the years after removal of Hinde & Dauch from the building, "Kroma" operated in it and the large black water tower then carried their name rather than that of the Hinde & Dauch Paper Company.

For a number of years after World War II, the Waverly Manufacturing Company built steam irons in the building until they were bought by a company in Kansas City and left Sandusky.

In recent years, the building has been used as a warehouse for various products and the name on the water tower has been "Keller Building". It now belongs to the City of Sandusky and awaits an uncertain future.



Kroma operated in this building now referred to as the "Keller Building".

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

At the time of this writing, February, 2007, Gordon Wendt is one of the few remaining third generation Hinde & Dauch employees. His grandfather, V. H. Wendt, and his father, L. R. Wendt, both joined the company in 1910. Gordon was first employed in 1939 and worked until 1982, excluding four years while serving in the U.S. Army. He began in sales and as the company Credit Manager, and later worked as Regional Administration Manager for ten box plants.