



HISTORY OF THE SHOE FACTORY IN DIXON

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In 1953 Brown Shoe Company purchased the shoe factory. This new building was completed in 1956.

Photo courtesy of Centennial Souvenir Jesse E. McCully Library.

With much hard work on the part of some of the townspeople, to mention only one, Mr. Fred Gilbert of Dixon, a shoe factory was formed and opened in the spring of 1946 under the ownership and management of William Kaut, Jr., Louis Lauman, and Frank Winters, forming the manufacturing name as Kaut, Lauman, Winters, Inc. This factory was located in the down town area of Dixon in the American Legion building and adjoining buildings.

Kaut, Lauman, Winters, Inc. first started the production of a child's sandal, and during the same year went into a few hundred pairs per day of regular children's shoes. At this time they were producing probably no more than a few hundred pairs per day with approximately 100 employees. It soon became necessary to enlarge, so part of the employees were moved into a building now replaced in its location with Gilbert's Rug Store. Also at this time the office was in a third location near where Eileens' Beauty Shop is now located.

During the year of 1948 a new building was constructed in the southwest part of town, and the company then expanded more in production and employees. The daily scheduled production at this time being approximately 1800 pairs per day with the maximum of approximately 200 employees.

In April, 1953, Brown Shoe Company purchased the shoe factory from Kaut, Lauman and Winters, and in May of that year started producing Buster Brown shoes for girls. This continued until November of 1956 until completion of a new building located on a tract of land in the northwest part of town. The more modern and larger building enabled Brown Shoe Company to produce more shoes and at the same time provide more jobs for some of the local and surrounding area people. They continued to make Buster Brown shoes for girls. Buster Brown is now the oldest brand name in the children's shoe field.

The scheduled production has been 5,000 pairs per day with approximately 400 employees. However, the present average

scheduled production is 4500 pairs per day with approximately 370 employees.

In 1967 and 1968, the plant underwent a large improvement program with the installation of conveyors for carrying work to operators and air conditioning of the entire plant.



Fitting department at shoe factory. Photo submitted by Van Beylder.



Kaut - Lauman - Winter, Inc shoe factory established in 1946 and was housed in the former American Legion and adjoining buildings. Photo submitted by Van Beylder.