

Citizens – G. J. Moog & Son

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George John Moog, owned and operated a hardware, furniture and undertaking business on Colby Street in Whitehall. He served on the local school board for 17 years. He was township clerk, treasurer, and active member of the village Council. He was a Master Mason in Baraboo, Wisconsin and a member of the Whitehall lodge. He was also a member of the Odd Fellows and the GAR.

Born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania on 8 October 1844, his mother died when he was 22 months old. He was cared for by a housekeeper who his father later married. He moved to Wisconsin with his father at the age of nine where he learned to work on a farm. His father died a year later. George was cared for by the stepmother, who married again shortly after his father died. At the age of 12 he left his home and cared for himself from that time on.

He enlisted in the 11th Wisconsin Infantry on 11 September 1861 in Baraboo, Wisconsin, and served for three years and 9 months. He was in Grant's corps at Vicksburg, where he was wounded below the knee in a charge in which 350 men were lost. Suffering, he lay all day under the July sun, without daring to move a limb for fear one of the enemy's sharpshooters would see movement and dying for thirst. At night he dragged himself into his own lines.

He came to Whitehall by stagecoach from Muskegon in May 1865. He worked in the mills on the lake and in Oceana County for a few years and at one time was a sawyer in the A. J. Covell mill.

George married Miriam E. Streeter on 22 November 1870 in Whitehall. Their witnesses were Wm. H. Thompson and Wm. P. Streeter. They had a son George Judson on 18 April 1875.

He opened a furniture business organized as McCoy and Moog in June 1869. They were located in a small building at the head of Thompson Street. When the RR came to town, it was necessary to tunnel directly under the building requiring them to move the building and relocate up Colby Street in November 1870. In May 1871, Mr. McCoy became dissatisfied, and wanting to gain wealth and notoriety more quickly, he sold his interest to a Mr. H. Hill, changing the name to Moog & Hill. The new firm found their business increasing steadily and wanting to keep up with the demands brought in William H. Thompson as a partner in June 1872.

In September 1872 a 27x42 foot addition was added to their current building. A. M. Thompson bought the interest of H. Hill and W. H. Thompson, and the firm became known as Moog & Thompson.

By June 1874 it became necessary to make more room which was accomplished by widening the original building making a new front, giving the outward appearance two-stories in height, with a 27 foot front and 88 feet deep. They also created a finishing and repair department which was run by C. W. Clark.

At the time, they advertised Chairs, Bedsteads, Bureaus & Stands. Tables, Sofas and Lounges. Ready-made Coffins of all kinds were also kept constantly on hand.

In 1880 Moog bought some property at the rear of D. Skeels Bakery which was located across the alley where the Masure/Hunts/Gilroy Hardware building is now located. A covered elevated walkway from the second floor of the original Moog building to the new Moog building was constructed.

In an ad from 1898, it indicated that George J. Moog sold road wagons, farm wagons, carriages, and bicycles as well as lawn mowers, potato planters and wallpaper.

George became interested in the undertaking business. In those days a man's measurements were taken and his coffin was made and trimmed in a few hours. Moog took several courses of study and gained experience until he ranked one of the best funeral directors in Western Michigan. He was a Charter Member of the Michigan State Undertaker's Association and served as County Coroner for 28 years.

In 1899, George's wife Miriam died. He then married Mrs. Ida May (ne Parsons) Forbes on 17 April 1904. They were married at his home with just his son G. Judson Moog and her daughter Miss Hazel Forbes as their witnesses. Unfortunately, the marriage was short lived as Ida passed away 17 June 1908.

George's son G. Judson Moog had married Hazel Forbes 7 January 1905. Tragically she died in May 1905. In December 1910, he married again to Bertha E. (ne Titus) DeNike. They had a son Ferris in 1913.

In November 1910 Moog received a new up-to-date funeral car with richly hand carved panels and massive silver-plated lamps. He also purchased a 6-passenger coach.

April 1912 Moog decided to discontinue the Farm Implement business at the store.

George John Moog died 15 August 1916 as the result of a freak automobile accident when he was struck by a car while at the White Lake Garage on Colby Street. He was pinned between the car and the building, and it is believed he suffered a heart attack from the shock which caused his death. His son George Judson Moog continued to run the business for a number of years.

In March 1923 fire wreaked havoc with the Moog & Son building and for a time threatened the entire business block. Fire was discovered at the rear of the large wooden building about 2 AM. The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company (A&P) which shared the front half of the store suffered some damage in stock by water and smoke. The building was quickly put back into shape.

By 1930 G. Judson Moog retired from the business and went to work as a salesman of mortician's supplies. The building was then occupied by Charles L. Reed's antique shop which later relocated to the Ruggles building west of M-11 garage in 1938.

In July 1938 the old Moog building was torn down. The building was regarded as a fire trap and in the last few years sagged to the East so much as to become a menace to the Masure/Hunts/Gilroy Hardware building across the alley. It's now a parking lot for Hokey Pokey.

G. Judson Moog retired around 1940 and made gardening his hobby. He passed away at his home in Whitehall on 27 June 1945.