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"To Be Helpful"

**THE SHERWIN-WILLIAMS COMPANY**

601 CANAL ROAD, N. W., CLEVELAND, OHIO

CONFIDENTIAL BULLETIN NUMBER **Three**

DATE **February 10 1921**

SUBJECT **Wilkinson, Ind., Pop. 324**



*Store of our agent, Miller & Reeves, Wilkinson, Ind.*



*Mr. J. F. Miller*

## FROM \$600 TO \$5000 IN A TOWN OF 324

**Enron's Norm**—This is another of the bulletins we will publish on actual agency experiences in towns of various populations. This bulletin was prepared by Mr. Miller and appears here in his own words. It is the most striking proof of the soundness of our basic plan that we have seen. In a later bulletin we will give the Western District and Indiana Resale Plan in further detail as a help to other Districts, Divisions and Representatives, who should be interested in making more of this splendid business-getting plan.

*By J. F. Miller,  
of Miller & Reeves, Hardware Dealers, Wilkinson, Ind.*

I had the pleasure of attending your Western District Convention at Chicago in November, and I am glad to put down here some of the things I tried to say from the platform.

Your great sales force of the Western District seemed to get something out of my experiences with the S-W Line, so if these experiences will assist all of your Districts and Divisions in a like manner, I shall feel that my efforts have been worth while.

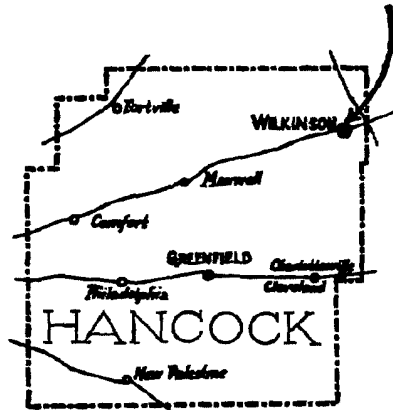
Wilkinson is a town of 324 people. It is located in Hancock County and is some thirty miles from Indianapolis. It is just such a town as you would expect from such a population. It has a fair trading radius and has the average business and farm opportunities.

In 1909 we bought the hardware store where we are now located, as shown in the picture. We purchased with this store a stock of Sherwin-Williams Paint and sold a small amount of it at a profit of

This Bulletin sent to  
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All Reps.  
Promoting Depts. are  
getting an extra sup-  
ply for SFA work.  
Agents will get it later  
in a monthly news  
letter.

35 cents per gallon. Owing to a little difficulty at that time with your line, and not knowing how to test the quality or sell the line, and through the influence of a big, good-natured competitive salesman, we discarded your line and took over Blank's line of paints.

Perhaps you would like to know some of the "many" sales arguments we used at that time to sell those goods. The facts are we never had any sales arguments. If, when Bill Smith came in, he asked, "Miller, what kind of paint do you sell?" I would say, "We have Blank's, a little of Smith's and a little of Jones'. What kind do you want or I mean what color do you think you want?"



Outline Map of Hancock County

He would say, "Well, I hardly know. Have you got a color card?"

"Yes, I think we have," I would reply.

Then I would look through all the ranges, stoves and implements and ask my partner if we had any color cards. He asked what the color cards were for and I told him they were to show the colors of paint. He would say we ought to have some, but we could not find any.

I would then say, "Well, Mr. Smith, I think No. 63 would make a dandy house job."

"What color is that?" he would say.

"Well, I think it is a gray," would be my reply.

"What is it worth a gallon?" he would ask.

"I believe we have been getting \$1.50."

"Well, I will see you some other time. Goodbye."

Then he would walk out.

I simply mention this as somewhat typical of our paint salesmanship in 1909, and I think if you had made a survey of other

paint dealers at that time, and even now, you would still find a lot of that sort of thing.

That is about the way things went year after year. In 1916 we paid \$487 for paint. In 1917 we paid \$529 and in addition to this we paid The Sherwin-Williams Company \$442, but sold very little of your goods. Why? We didn't know the first principles of selling paint. Up to this time we have never had anyone teach us how.

The hardware man hasn't time to keep himself posted on all the sales arguments on all his lines. He has too many. So what is he going to do? This is just exactly what everyone would do—sell the line of merchandise he knows the most about. Who can tell me what line that is? It is usually implements. I never knew the time when implement houses did not send out canvassers to drive with the dealer and keep him posted on all the new implements and all of the very latest sales arguments. Therefore, the dealer would spend most of his time driving with implement men because he had this help.



*Main Street, Wilkinson, showing our Agent's Store*

Sometimes a dealer puts a lot of his time into this work on implements without checking up his profits to see whether it is really worth all he puts into it. The implement season is rather short and a merchant must figure out whether he is turning his stock over sufficiently.

Last Spring we bought a carload of implements—as many as we thought we could sell during the year. This was necessary, first, because we knew under the conditions we would be unable to get them when we needed them, if we did not place our order for a car at a time. On this car of implements, which was invoiced at \$4,000, we netted about 15% profit with one turnover. We cannot buy one

binder or mower and sell it and then order another and sell it, and so on and turn our money three or four times a year, as we should do on account of the short season.

I am simply pointing this out as a fact and as no reflection on the wonderful implement opportunities or manufacturing firms.

In the Spring of 1918 your Mr. Trees called on us and found on our shelves practically all of the SWP we had bought the year before. He did not ask us to buy more paint, but asked us if we would be willing to co-operate with him, do a little local advertising and move this paint. Of course, we were not overly enthusiastic about this, but told him we would do it. The next thing he did was to put on a demonstration at our store. We did a little advertising and about a week before the demonstration he came out and decorated our windows with a lot of window trims. He showed so much interest in us and made our store look so nice that we at once became interested.

We began to talk about this demonstration to our customers as they came into the store, and by the date set we had a nice crowd. Mr. Trees was there with another representative of your Company, and they went into this paint and showed the difference between high grade and cheap paint, and made tests of paints and varnishes which created a very favorable impression on the crowd. We gave away premiums to help out and had a drawing contest. *These demonstrations are what sold our community as well as ourselves on the S-W Line*, and I believe our territory is as well sold as any other in your District.



Demonstration Day and Spring Opening, Wilkinson

About a week later Mr. Trees came back and we got into the old Ford and started out. I will say that, during this demonstration, we had in connection with our drawing contest some coupons printed, and on those we said "Are you going to paint?" We handed these out and in this way collected a great number of paint prospects.

When we called on the first prospect Mr. Trees took those little black test boards—you know what they are, and if you don't you should—and we began to demonstrate paint. It was interesting to this prospect as well as myself, and I became anxious to try it, too. I must say that we accomplished what I had always thought was impossible.

On that drive we sold one man SWP for his house and barn, yet he had already bought another line of paint and it had been delivered and ready to use. It had been purchased from some distant place, and after seeing our demonstration he decided he did not want to use that dope, but wanted SWP. We met another man on the road and sold him 100 gallons and delivered it at one time. He was a man who owned two big farms and bought this paint for his barns and silos.

We sold another man Commonwealth Barn Red for his barn—yet he was a merchant carrying a competitive line of paints in a town two miles away. In not a single instance did we cut our price.

Gentlemen, this is resale work, and will get the business.

I heard a paint salesman say that he did not care to sell the dealer, put the goods on his shelves, and then resell it for him. We will say, for argument's sake, that you do not owe this kind of service to your dealer. For the sake of any of your salesmen and particularly the young salesmen in whom I am interested, I will say that you owe it to yourself and to your Company. But more than that, you will enjoy it.

Remember that, while you are doing this, you are teaching your agent to sell paint. You are making him a better and more enthusiastic agent. You are teaching him how to make more money out of your proposition. You are rising above competition.

I presume we are not much different from hundreds of other dealers, who would enjoy this same co-operation. We became so enthusiastic about selling paint that when Mr. Trees got through driving with us, I asked him if we could borrow the little test boards and little spoons so I could demonstrate paint myself. He said he would give them to me.

Well, I was as proud of those as a boy would be with his first new slate, and we have followed this plan of selling paint up to the

present time. We now make three drives to sell paint where we make one to sell implements. Why? First, because of the profit; second, because we now know how to sell paint better than any other line.

As a result of this co-operation we paid The Sherwin-Williams Company in 1918 about \$3,576 for paint. Our total paint sales for 1918 were \$5,314.65. Our business jumped from \$600 to \$5,000 the first year of our rejuvenated S-W agency connection. In 1919 we had a change in the firm, and were involved in a lot of other things and were unable to do as much actual selling, so our sales dropped to \$2,675. Our sales in 1920 were about \$3,000. Our estimate for the new year is about \$6,000—not bad for a town of 324 people. If we make this estimate, it will figure over \$18 per capita on the town population alone, but of course we get a good share of the business from the outlying trading radius.

We believe in putting an estimate on ourselves, just as The Sherwin-Williams Company does in estimating its Districts, Divisions and Territories.

We previously handled what was considered the biggest selling varnish stain. That was the hardest line we had to give up as we had a fine business built on it, but since we have replaced this with your Floorlac, we have noticed a nice increase in our sales.

In conclusion I want to say that the resale plan has meant dollars to us, and will mean dollars to anybody who carries it out. I would like to say further that our Paint Department is the most valuable department of our business. I do not believe we had over \$1,000 invested in paint at any one time, even the year when our total sales were over \$5,000. Our total sales for the entire store, including all lines, in that year were \$35,000, so you will see one-seventh of the total was represented in paint. We are firm believers in the resale plan.