

History of Normington's Inc.

Frank H. Normington was born in Waukesha County in December 1872. His ancestors had immigrated to America from England in the early 1700's and members of the family had fought in the Revolutionary War. He married Nellie Smith on February 22, 1893 and the couple had seven children. After his marriage he operated a laundry in Milwaukee for one year and Tomahawk for three years before coming to Marshfield in 1902. He purchased a laundry operation from A. Rumenopp and built a



Normingtons Inc., Frank Normington by buggy and his employees, South Central and West Sixth, 1910.

building at Sixth and Central. It operated at this location until moving into a new building two doors south in 1915. He served as alderman four years, Chairman of the Board of Public Works two years, and served as a director of American National Bank.

In 1912 his oldest son Charles joined him in the laundry business except for time spent in army duty. He served several months with Company "A" Second Regiment, Wisconsin National Guard in the Mexican Border Campaign. During World War I he was an officer and became Captain of Company "E" 127th Infantry, 32nd Red Arrow Division for two years serving most of the time overseas. He was gassed and wounded in the battle of Argonne and spent several weeks in a hospital in France. He was released from service in May 1919, and in September married Martha Spearbecker, daughter of the William Spearbeckers. The Normingtons were parents of three children, Jim, Jerry, and Lois Normington Haugner, and the family home was located at 808 West Sixth St. During these years the laundry operation grew and professional dry cleaning was added as a service in 1912. He also served as a member of the Common Council in 1939 and 1940.

After Jim and Jerry graduated from Marshfield Senior High School and had served in World War II, they joined their father in the business. A new self-service laundry was installed in 1959 and it was the first coin-op in this area. After the death of their father the brothers continued the business until 1965 when Jerry bought out Jim's share. In 1968 the Marshfield Clinic bought the property for expansion and the business was moved to a new building at 110 West Upham St. It continues at this time as a self-service coin-op only, as the professional dry cleaning portion was discontinued in 1987. Video Exchange North now leases that part of the building.

Since 1902 the business has experienced many changes including self-service laundry, and converting horse and buggy delivery to truck routes. Many services were offered over the years including industrial, commercial, family laundry and dry cleaning, as well as alterations and repair of clothing. The highest number of employees was 52 when there were six routes delivering in Marshfield and as far away as Park Falls. Jerry Normington, current owner, related some services and prices offered when he entered the business such as: Oriental Rugs shampooed and sized - \$.04 per square foot; pillows renovated with new ticking \$1; finished shirts 5 for \$1; suits with vest \$1; and that included free pickup and delivery.

Submitted by Evelyn Arndt

From the Marshfield Story, 1872-1997, Piecing Together Our Past, Page 291.