



With Sincere Greetings  
and Best Wishes for

**Peace - Happiness and Health**

to - Faithful old friends,  
to - Cherished new friends,  
to - those whose friendship  
we hope to earn, —

from-

*The Sweeney's*

of Vancouver  
THE EVERGREEN LAND OF CHARM  
Population - Metropolitan Area - now - 659,000



LEO and MARY  
2495 WEST 10th AVENUE



## THE STORY OF SWEENEY COOPERAGE LIMITED

Established in Victoria, in 1889 by Michael Sweeney, who learned the art of making barrels by hand, through a seven-year apprenticeship in Newfoundland, and a signed and sealed document in long hand, certifying to this apprenticeship, was one of his prized possessions.

Michael Sweeney also served a post graduate course in Ontario where he was the "Champ" barrel maker in a large shop where piece work, rivalry and individual hand work was customary.

In 1888 he heard the call, "Go West young Man—go West", and, after a short time in Vancouver and New Westminster, he settled in Victoria and with a small set of tools started a one-man shop. Victoria then was headquarters for sealing, fishing and the British Navy, all of whom used many barrels.

The first shop was in a wood shed on Fort Street; capacity, six barrels per day.

Then to a vacated stable on Johnson Street (rear of home); capacity, ten barrels per day.

At age of 11 Leo "graduated" from entrance class and went full-time with "Mike" and together they sawed and split monster, stray logs on the beaches (bought at \$5.00 each—today's price \$220.00), into bolts which were horse-drawn to Cooperage Yard, and with a froe and mallet, split into staves and heads, shaped on a Cooper's Horse with a draw knife and jointed on a wooden bench jointer, bought second-hand hoops, and in their little Cooper Shop they assembled barrels, capacity per day 12.

1900 to 1912 . . . Additions were made periodically, property purchased close to downtown Victoria. The Klondike provided a call for Liquor Kegs, and demands were brisk for barrels, for sealskins, pork and beef, Salmon Bellies, Navy Buckets, Grog Tubs Barricoes, etc.

1908 . . . A more modern shop was built, and a few machines were installed. Young Leo took over machinery operations and, with a five-man crew, capacity was upped to per day—20, 30, 40, 50, 60.



1938 — "Hanging on"



In the boom days of 1912 their Johnson Street property was sold at a "fabulous" price; Sweeney Cooperage was incorporated with M. Sweeney as President and M. Leo Sweeney, Managing Director, and the latter has "sparked" the concern ever since.

In those "good old days" a 70-hour work week was not unusual.

In 1913 . . . A new Mill, Assembly Plant and Dry Kilns were built on E. & N. Railway in Esquimalt, and the firm was off to a good start, and all over Western Canada Barrels were sold—capacity, 300 per day.

In 1914 . . . established a little Branch Cooper Shop and Warehouse in Vancouver.

In 1920 . . . Leo married Mary M. Gregory of New Westminster, B.C.

In 1921 . . . the firm amalgamated with Vancouver Cooperage in Vancouver, and Western Cooperage of Portland, Ore., bought an interest; name changed to Canadian Western Cooperage Limited.

In 1923 . . . Leo and Mary, and two oldest girls, moved to Vancouver, also in 1923, the Victoria Plant was destroyed in one of Victoria's most spectacular fires of those days.

1924 . . . Victoria Mill was rebuilt on Victoria Harbor and sales zoomed.

1924 to 1937 . . . Territory expanded to 16 countries—capacity per day, 1000.

1937 . . . Assembly Plant at Vancouver burned down, rebuilt bigger and better than ever before.

1939 . . . Leo and Mary (with the aid of friendly Bankers) bought out all outstanding shares, assumed full ownership and changed name back to Sweeney Cooperage Limited.

1941 . . . Bought out the old established business of John Paxton Cooperage in Montreal and changed name to Sweeney Barrel Company and Plant is still operating in a modest way.



1939 — "Hoop 'er up"



1946 . . . A new, modern Mill was built on False Creek, alongside Assembly Plant; capacity per day, 1400 barrels.

1948 . . . Victoria Mill was shut down, and all B.C. operations concentrated in Vancouver.

1921 to 1933 . . . The family grew and so also the business. Over the years, many lines were lost, but others were developed farther afield, as well as other varieties of wooden barrels, and almost each year, strange as it may seem, the firm rolled out more and more barrels.

All five boys (football players, each and every one) worked around Plant at various jobs in spare time, as well as attending University, and two are still employed in executive positions and three going to Universities (Bill and Leo studying Theology and Frank, Physical Education).

Before marriage, daughter Margaret was employed in office for several years, and Leona and Patricia for short periods.

Over the years the firm bought out in whole or part, 24 Cooperages in the United States and Canada, such as British Columbia, Washington, Illinois, California and Alberta.

1954 . . . the firm purchased the entire Plant and property of Western Cooperage Inc., on Lake Union in Seattle, Washington, and have continued operating as an efficient Assembly Plant, and from there Sweeney Barrels keep rolling along the Pacific Slope from Bering Sea to Mexico, the staves and heads being supplied from Vancouver Mill.

The third generation now are keen operators and are gradually taking over—Jack G. as Assistant General Manager, Ed. as Office Manager at Mill, and son-in-law Don Vallee as Chief Accountant at Head Office.

JACK SWEENEY has had nine years of full-time, close-up experience, has worked on all machines in Mill and Assembly Plant, bought and sold logs, supervised both operations and is eminently suited and fully qualified as Assistant General Manager.



1941 — John Paxton Cooperage in Montreal Purchased



ED. SWEENEY has had 8 years of full-time experience on truck, machines, shipping, sales and accounting and well fitted for Mill Office Management.

DON VALLEE has had years of accounting experience and office work with large firms, one year with the Cooperage and is fully prepared and qualified as Chief Accountant in Head Office.

All have travelled extensively, have Barrel Making in the blood and are full of vim, vigor and vitality and their greatest pleasure in life is to maintain top quality and keep on "rolling 'em all over the world", and are saturated with the desire to PLEASE THE CUSTOMER.

Many employees have been associated with the Company upwards of 20 years such as—

Don Ward—Mill Superintendent.

Andrew Castelan—Assembly Plant Superintendent.

Pete Bennett—Heading Room Foreman.

Charlie Arden—Deck Foreman.

Windy Wadden—Mill Shipper

Leo Riordan—Assembly Plant Shipper.

Bennie Karasowski

Ted Bethune

Alex Slater

Alex O'Neill

And at Seattle (formerly Western Cooperage, Inc.)—

Ted Siegfried—Sales Manager.

Miss Hazel Haydon—Office Manager.

Sid Skutle—Superintendent.

Ned Honeychurch—Shipper.

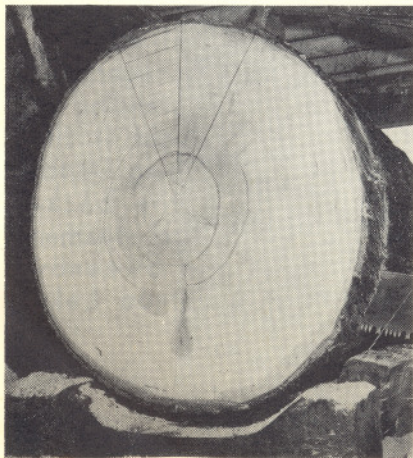
Henry Schultz

Andy Hoza

Reynold Frederick

Vic Wallin.

(Incidentally, the Western Cooperage, Inc., at Seattle, successors to the Fremont Barrel Company, was managed by four generations of the Buhtz Family — Albert, Sr., Al J., Lawrence T., and Rod L.)



A typical log starting on its way to being made into a fine barrel



In all its history, the firm has maintained an excellent reputation and has had only one law suit against it and one against a buyer — which happened prior to 1918 — and that just about brings us up to date.

For "relaxation" at various times, Leo has been President of Vancouver Kiwanis Club and Lieut.-Governor of Kiwanis District 1A; also Presiding Officer of Vancouver Tourist Association, B.P.O.E., and B.C. Automobile Association; Knights of Columbus, and Canadian Cooperage Association; and has addressed many Service Clubs and Community Organizations in British Columbia, Washington and elsewhere, and has been dubbed "Vancouver's No. 1 Booster" by Vancouver Newspapers.

He is also a member of the United Air Lines' 100,000 Mile Club with a credit of 300,000 miles of world-wide air travel; besides over a million miles by rail, boat and car.

He has been enrolled as an Honorary Kentucky Colonel and a Knight of Saint Sylvester.

In early days was a member of Victoria "Rep" Rugby Team, the All-B.C. Rugby Team, Big Four Rowing Crew and Victoria Lacrosse Team.

Is also a member of Canadian Manufacturers' Association Executive Council.

Mary has been President of Vancouver Kiwassa Club and is active in many Community Organizations.

To all our customers, suppliers, associates and friends, generally, we are deeply indebted for your esteemed co-operation and affection, and extend our most sincere heartfelt thanks to you and yours with the fond hope that the friendships gained over the years will be maintained and the list continue to grow for a long, long time to come.

To one and all . . .

Good Luck! Good Health! . . . and . . . Happiness.

Devotedly . . . the SWEENEYS.



1952—M. L. Sweeney demonstrates the art of barrelmaking in the Barbados and other far away places



