



This is C. T. Loewen's sawmill at the site of the present retail store on Main Street around 1925. Note the oxen at extreme right which were being used to haul away the sawn lumber.

—photo courtesy Ed Loewen

his forefathers, he thought the farm was a better place to raise his growing family and he sold his shares in the business to Mr. Loewen.

The business kept on growing and a sideline that proved very profitable and rugged enough to suit the temperament of Mr. Loewen was moving of houses. Later this business was taken over by his brother, J. T. Loewen, whose fame as house-mover became almost legendary.

The war ended then and the year following proved to be very profitable for the small firm. As many as 12 carloads of lumber, all marked 'C. T. Loewen, Steinbach,' sometimes sat on the track at Giroux at the same time and business really boomed.

The first millwork equipment was purchased and a three-sided planer and a combination wood-worker were installed. It was at about this time too, that a young man named Frank Friesen applied for and landed a job as yard man and mill-worker. At this time however, very little millwork was done outside of a few storm windows and screens and then more as a convenience to customers than a specialized department of the firm.

Boom times of 1919 soon dissipated and because of the rapid decline of business, Mr. Friesen decided to leave. In 1923 he found employment with a large furniture factory in Chicago. The experience he gained there was

to prove invaluable in later years when he returned to manage the factory in Steinbach.

Another young man who joined the firm in the early twenties was Jonas Friesen, who became general manager of the firm and then later took over Steinbach Lumber.

"Business was so slow in those days," Mr. Friesen said, "that we thought we did good if we sold 10 pounds of nails in a day."

Then came the bee supplies business. Frank Friesen came back to Loewen's in 1932 and again went back to his old job. At about this time also, there was a renewed interest in the ancient art of producing honey and Loewen's took on a bee supply line for an eastern firm. One day Adolph Freund, one of the major honey producers in the district, asked Frank why he didn't make the supplies himself. Frank thought he could, but nobody else did. Using odds and ends of lumber around the yard and working in the evenings, he turned out the first bee supplies made here. Freund was 100 per cent satisfied so the firm soon began manufacturing for others. An old storage shed was insulated and this was the first real factory.

By 1936 the bee supplies business had become big, at least for those times, and the first catalogue was published and mailed out to apiarists. Steinbach Sheet Metal built most