

# Aloyes Bauer

When Aloyes Bauer decided it was time to make his way in the world he did what most teenage boys did in the late nineteenth century – he followed in his father’s footsteps. For young Aloyes, that meant starting work in his father’s carpenter shop when he was just fourteen-years-old.



From this simple beginning in 1875, it would have been impossible to predict that Bauer would one day start his own business and count among his clients Henry Ford and Colonel R.S. McLaughlin, founder of the forerunner to General Motors.

The story of how Aloyes Bauer, born in Waterloo in 1861, became a supplier to the legendary car makers begins with horse-drawn carriages. In 1888, he established A. Bauer & Company, a business that manufactured cotton felts and batts for mattresses, furniture, and horse and buggy cushions.

When McLaughlin Motor Car Company started making automobiles in 1907, Bauers began making their car seat padding in its large factory on the corner of King and Allen Streets. Bauer had the plant built after buying the 2.5-acre site from his brother-in-law Louis Kuntz, whose family established the Kuntz Brewery at King and William Streets in 1844.

Today, 119 years after it was established, what is now called Bauer Industries is being operated out of a Dutton Drive facility. The business has gone from “quill to state-of-the-art computer, survived reorganizations, recessions, family differences and a major depression.”

Bauer Industries, which has grown to be the largest manufacturer of its kind in Canada, supplies automakers with products that capture heat and lessen sound in cars. The business is being run by the fourth generation of Bauers, with offices in Waterloo, Detroit, Michigan, and Hildebran, North Carolina.

The historic factory, which was closed in 2001, is currently being redeveloped and will hold retail stores, office space and modern living suites.

What is notable is that Aloyes Bauer was involved in other business and community matters while building his own company. As the son of Karl and Sophia Bauer, who came to Waterloo from Bavaria by way of Buffalo in 1855, Aloyes was first a builder.

Before marrying Magdalena Kuntz in 1885, he worked tirelessly to build his own home, which was debt free when the young couple moved in after the wedding. When Magdalena’s brother Louis died suddenly in 1891, Aloyes Bauer was asked to manage

Kuntz Brewery Ltd. until the young Kuntz heir was of age in 1910 to take over the brewery business.

Bauer was also vice-president of the Globe Furniture Company, was on the board of directors of several insurance companies, and served as a member of the Water and Light Commission. He belonged to St. Louis Roman Catholic Church, and served on the Separate School Board for thirty years.

On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bauer Industries, Bauer's great-grandson Ray Bauer Jr. said, "Waterloo has been very good to us and we enjoy the quality of life we can attain here."

*Photo courtesy of the Waterloo Public Library.*