

# James P. Hamer



James P. Hamer was born in Mingo County in a sawmill camp of the Prindergast Coal and Lumber Company. He got his middle name from this company. He was a life-long citizen of West Virginia and had great pride in his state.

He began his career walking the railroad from Kenova to Williamson inspecting ties for the Harrison Tie and Lumber Company. In his early years, he worked for Kenova Sawmill Company as a lumber inspector, salesman and then general manager for Griffith Lumber Company before establishing the J.P. Hamer Lumber Company in 1937.

Through the years, the business expanded to run plants in Appalachia, Virginia; Burnside, Kentucky and Man, Edwight, Durbin, Roncerverte and Richwood as well as Kenova, West Virginia, where the central office was located. The company built a laminating truck flooring plant in Kenova which was the second of its kind in the world and pioneered the commercial use of this product.

His pride in his community and state were well known. He was active in local organizations: AAA as director, a 32nd degree Mason, Rotary member, Ceredo-Kenova Band Boosters, C-K Athletic Boosters and the C-K Chamber of Commerce. He was a member of the First Baptist Church of Kenova. He was a board member and chairman for the First Bank of Ceredo for 25 years. In his early years, he was a Scout Master in the Ceredo-Kenova area.

Mr. Hamer served the state Chamber of Commerce as president, as well as a member of its communities. He was one of the founders of the West Virginia Forestry Association and, along with six other companies, committed to underwrite its cost during the first few years of its existence. For many years, he sponsored a statewide poster contest in the grade schools to help educate young peoples about the seriousness of forest fires.

Nationally he held office of the president for the national Hardwood Lumber Association and Appalachian Hardwood Manufacturers Inc., and was on the National Association of Manufacturers Board. He also served on the Southern Railroad Board, U.S. Procurement Board, Ration Board and was chairman of the Lumberman's Underwriting Alliance for 18 years.

Throughout his career, Mr. Hamer was most interested in good forestry practices and promoted their use by others. In 1957, the state of West Virginia presented him the "Conservationist of the Year Award" for his efforts. Mr. Hamer was known as the "Dean of the Hardwood Sawmillers" by his fellow lumbermen.

Although James P. Hamer is known for his accomplishments in business and association work, he is best known for his charming personality and sincere interest in people. Untold hundreds called on him for advice concerning important matters.