

## **Philip Gies**

(Excerpt from the book 'A History of Kitchener, Ontario' by W. V. (Ben) Uttley)

Philip Gies, in the seventies, learned the hardware and tin-smithing<sup>1</sup> trade at Hymmen Bros.' establishment. The first year he received his board and twenty-five dollars; in the second, thirty-five dollars in cash. In the summer of both years, he was given two weeks' holiday to go out to a farmer's and earn enough to buy his clothes. In the third year, the cash payment was sixty dollars. Afterward he gained further experience in other towns, and then bought the right to manufacture a patent steam-cooker in Ontario. Later on Hymmen Bros, re-engaged him. When he left their employ, he was the highest paid mechanic in Berlin, receiving eleven dollars a week. In the mid-eighties, he entered into partnership with Henry Wolfhard and Wm. Mickus to launch a hardware store and tin-smithing shop. Mr. Gies put in \$400, Mr. Wolfhard, \$350, and Mr. Mickus, \$650. A store was leased in the Canadian block. After a few years, Mr. Mickus sold his share to George Meisner. Three years afterward, Mr. Wolfhard and Mr. Meisner sold their shares to Mr. Gies, Peter Itter, and Henry Hymmen. Philip Gies & Company leased quarters in the new Walper block. Finally, Mr. Gies bought his partners' interests and engaged Thomas Cowan as store manager. Meanwhile he had taken on plumbing and heating. In 1902, he sold his retail departments to Henry Wolfhard, George Sehl, and W. K. Weber. He then built a foundry in South Water Street to manufacture heaters and fill orders for castings, etc. Later on he started a plumbing and heating service in J. M. Staebler's block, at 45 West King Street, which five years after he sold to Hollinger & Durst. Mr. Gies subsequently bought an imitation leather enterprise for son Harry, that has since been sold to an American company. In 1922, he purchased the gasoline-pump department from V. O. Phillips. His son Harry is manager of this undertaking.