

John Hoff Biography

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Settler Overcame Many Setbacks.

John Hoff, one of Wausaukee's earliest pioneers, experienced many ups and downs while he resided in the community. Hoff arrived shortly after John S. Monroe and assisted with the construction of an office addition to the Monroe log house, the first structure built in the settlement.

Born in Switzerland, January 15, 1845, Hoff came to this country at the age of 22. He worked at charcoal kilns in Marquette, MI., and later in the mines at Hancock. He married Marguerite Eiler of DePere in June, 1872, and took charge of kilns for the National Furnace Co. at Rockland Glenmore and Forest Junction.

He established several charcoal kilns, which he operated for seven years. He also engaged in logging and lumbering. At first he slept in a tent, then established a rough camp, which he occupied with his family. In 1887 Hoff suffered one of his many misfortunes of his life. Shortly after he and his family moved into a large new house, near the kilns, fires swept over his property, destroying his house, store, stables, and about 800 chords of hardwood. The family escaped without harm, but they were left with only the clothes on their backs. The uninsured loss was estimated at \$10,500.

Two years later, forest fires destroyed a \$3000 stock of polls and posts, and in 1898 a lumberyard fire claimed 250,000 feet of lumber, a loss of \$2500. Shortly thereafter, his shingle mill went up in flames.

Hoff then built a lumber and shingle mill on the branch Road where he owns 600 acres of choice timber. This along with a boarding house, store building and stock of general merchandise, blacksmith shop, six houses and shed, his lands and a substantial number of stock animals were sold to J.A. Phillips of Wausaukee in 1901. The Hoff's then moved to DePere.

Despite the setbacks, Hoff seems to have prospered in the Wausaukee. The Independent noted he had sufficient income to "keep himself and his family and comfortable shape the rest of their mortal lives."

Hoff passed away September 15, 1905, two weeks after stomach surgery.