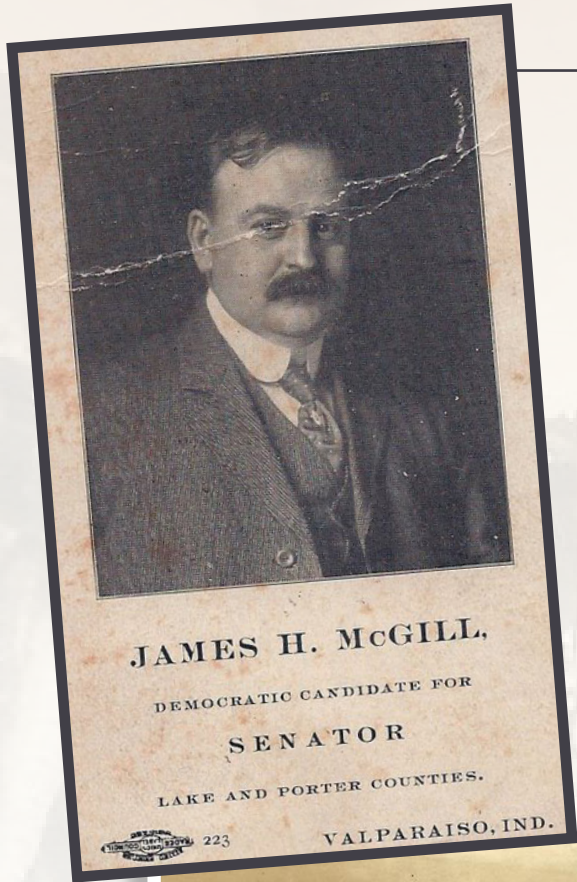


AN ENCORE CAREER PIONEER



The Multi-Industry Success of James H. McGill

By Kevin Pazour

James H. McGill was born on a farm in Eagle Creek Township on November 13, 1869, in Lake County, Indiana, where he attended school until his family moved to Hebron, Indiana, in 1884. Graduating from Hebron High School in 1886, McGill attended the Northern Indiana Normal School and Business Institute (now Valparaiso University) while he owned and operated a students' supply store on College Hill in Valparaiso.

McGill's first experience in the electrical business happened in 1891 when he took employment in the retail sales department of the Electric Supply Company in Chicago, Illinois. He used this experience to open an office as a representative of various electrical concerns and also worked as a traveling salesman for different midwestern electrical supply and manufacturing companies.



Records disclose that in November, 1894, the Valparaiso City Council granted McGill a telephone franchise in the name of the Valparaiso Telephone Exchange. The exchange was built in early 1895 and the company started operations with 50 telephone subscriptions, the minimum permitted by its franchise. It eventually grew to have more than 5,000 telephone stations as the Northwestern Company.

The revenue generated from the growth of this new form of technology allowed McGill to

establish the Crescent Company in 1905 on Indiana Avenue inside the old Kellogg Foundry (259 Indiana Ave.) This company was officially incorporated as the McGill Manufacturing Company in 1910. In 1918, the Levolver Switch patents were secured and jumpstarted a new era for the electrical division. The McGill Metal Company, a separate corporation engaged in the manufacture and sale of precision ball and roller bearings and aluminum bronze die castings, was merged into McGill Manufacturing in 1930. From a small beginning, the business grew into one of the leading companies in the country, manufacturing electrical supplies and ball bearings.

James H. McGill served as President of the McGill Manufacturing Company until he was succeeded in 1940 by his son, Charles S. McGill. By the time of his passing in April 1948, McGill was known far and wide for his entrepreneurial spirit and his "try anything once" mentality. This philosophy clearly served McGill well considering success in two different industries is no easy feat.

P.S. - Most people don't know that the Klin-McGill Golf Manufacturing Company was also made a division of McGill Manufacturing in 1933, but the production of golf clubs was discontinued in 1939 due to the rising material demands of World War II.

The McGill Manufacturing Company was acquired by Emerson Electric Company in 1989, which was acquired by the Regal Beloit Corporation in 2014.

