

# The Artifact

## A Sidewalk Stamp

**"Cement Work. Curbing, sidewalks, driveways, cement or asphalt. 28 years in the same business. John H. Beckert, 3823 Mackinaw. 2-7767"**

*-The Saginaw News. May 13, 1948, p. 4*

This month's artifact story comes with homework - you will need to read to the end of the article to learn your assignment.

When you walk the sidewalks of Saginaw – actually any city, it is hard to miss the ubiquitous markings stamped into the surface of walks. Stamped into the wet concrete, they record the name of the contractor and when the work was completed. They provide insight into the history of a community and even clues to when adjoining buildings were constructed. They also link us to the contractors and their workers who poured and finished the sidewalk.

This month's artifact is a stamp used by the John H. Beckert Company. Designed so that the year could be adjusted, this stamp was last used in 1969 and still exhibits traces of the concrete poured more than 60 years ago. City Council proceedings document that J.H. Beckert received several city projects in 1969. Late in the year, they were awarded a contract for pouring 9,560 square feet of new sidewalk in the Eddy Urban Renewal Project Two and repairing another 17,725 square feet in the area. The firm also completed numerous private projects.

John H. Beckert was born in 1900. When he passed

away in 1983, his obituary noted, "He was born in Saginaw and has lived here all his life. He followed the cement contracting business for 67 years and was still active in the business."

When donating the stamp, his family recounted:

**They did a lot of work for Standard Oil and sidewalks. Mostly concrete work. Worked on Curry's Motel but not much general contractor work. The business started in 1921 using trucks to haul logs from lumber camps to sawmills. One brother bought out the other and kept up with the concrete business. The J Beckert Concrete business was located on Mackinaw between Davenport and Weiss.**

Two homes the company constructed in the 1930s, 3817 Mackinaw and 21 Berger Road, were featured in *The Saginaw News*.

Although space doesn't allow, we could continue with the story of the Beckert family or the history of concrete sidewalks in Saginaw. However, we are out of space, and you have a homework assignment to complete.

**Your homework assignment:**

**We are trying to locate sidewalks that have the impression of this stamp. We really want to find ones that carry the 1969 date.**

**If you locate one, please contact Tom Trombley at [ttrombley@castlemuseum.org](mailto:ttrombley@castlemuseum.org) or 989-752-2861 ext. 304.**

