

From "Business Biographies" in the Farm Bureau News, Sept. 14, 1933:  
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## **BEN KOETJE**

Ben Koetje, manager of the Oak Harbor branch of the Columbia Lumber Company has been in business since he was 20 years old when he started a transfer concern in Oak Harbor. He later started a lumber business here, sold the transfer company and in 1930 sold out to the Columbia Lumber Company and has since managed the local yard.

Koetje was born in Michigan in 1899. His father came originally from Holland and his mother was a Michigan girl. They moved to Oak Harbor in 1912.

Ben attended school here for a time then began working out. As working on the farm was not agreeable, he decided to take up some other sort of work, so began a transfer business in 1919. While operating the transfer business, considerable lumber hauling was done for the saw mill owned by Charlie Nienhuis, and when this mill was discontinued, Koetje decided to start a lumber yard to supply Oak Harbor.

Barney Riksen, Charles Nienhuis and Ben Koetje began the lumber yard in partnership, and in the following year, Ben bought out the other two and ran the business himself. He kept the transfer until 1931 when he sold it.

In 1930 Koetje sold his lumber business to the Columbia Lumber Company and the Oak Harbor yard is now one of the 14 yards controlled by that company.

"All the stock in the Columbia Lumber company is owned by employers and employes of the Company," Koetje explained. "We employ three men at the Oak Harbor branch.

Ben is active in community affairs and was instrumental in helping start Oak Harbor's volunteer fire department of which he was chief for several years. He enjoys travelling; and two years ago made a trip to Michigan, the place of his birth.

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