CHAPTER XIV

Industry

The Hamilton Manufacturing Company

An amazing story of industrial progress was begun in 1880 by James Edward Hamilton. It was a story that meant great personal achievement for "Ed" Hamilton, fame for the community, and thousands of jobs for our people.

Ed Hamilton was a native of Two Rivers and enjoyed a reputation as a skilled industrial woodworker. Late in the year 1880, Mr. Hamilton agreed to construct a quantity of wooden type for Editor W. L. Nash of the Chronicle, a local weekly newspaper. It seems that Nash had to produce a "rush" printing order and it would take too long to receive a shipment of type from Eastern manufacturers. Soon orders for the type came in from places like Chippewa Falls and Green Bay. Ed Hamilton set aside a room in his home and busily turned out Hollywood type faces on his foot-powered scroll saw. The wood faces were then glued to thick blocks of less expensive wood, which brought the total block to exact printing height, and the finished product was ready for wrapping and shipping. Mrs. Hamilton helped in the infant enterprise by doing the bookkeeping. At the end of the first year, Mr. Hamilton could report a gross business of $1,200. In 1882 his business increased 1,000 per cent and that year he loaded all of his equipment on a two-wheeled cart pulled by a billy-goat and moved to his first plant, erected for $760. The new plant meant the employment of more men and the addition of steam-powered industrial engines.

The talents possessed by Ed Hamilton became quite evident as the J.E. Hamilton Hollywood Type Company grew during those early years. He showed great enthusiasm for his
work, exhibited a mechanical genius in the development of a product, and was relentless in his insistence that well-designed production machinery be developed and installed in his factory.

The 1880's were a prosperous time in American History. Most of the nation’s manufacturing was done in the New England and Eastern states. A product which was produced in the East and sold in the Midwest incurred large shipping charges, which made its retail price high. Ed Hamilton's concept was not only to manufacture type for the Midwest market but to make such refinements in the product and efficiencies in the means of production that the demand of customers would insure future business.

Ed Hamilton guided the business and it prospered during the 1880's. "Days in shop and office were followed by nights spent in correspondence, or in creating new type faces. Mr. Hamilton made frequent trips to Milwaukee to obtain proofs of different type faces, and designed several original faces in the flamboyant curlicued style which was then in vogue."1

It soon became evident that one man could not manage every phase of an expanding nationally-recognized firm. For this reason J.E. Hamilton began to surround himself with a number of new business associates chief among whom was his brother, Henry P. Hamilton. A printer by trade, Henry Hamilton had left Two Rivers to join another brother in publishing the Detroit, Minnesota Record. The Minnesota newspaper was to serve as a proving ground for samples of Ed Hamilton's type. Henry Hamilton returned to Two Rivers in 1883 and joined his brother's business. As the new supervisor of the type cutting department, Henry Hamilton used his knowledge of the printing trade to offer suggestions that proved valuable to the firm.

Seeing a need for additional capital, Ed Hamilton took on a business partner by the name of Max Katz on November 1, 1881. Katz purchased half of the business for $1,600. The firm of Hamilton and Katz continued to receive record orders for their Hollywood type and the partnership continued until 1887. Mr. Katz sold his half of the business to William Baker of Springfield, Illinois. Baker's interest in Two Rivers was considerable as he was already a partner in a local sash and door factory located on the west bank of the Mishicott River.

1 The Hamilton Story, page 21.
The Hamilton Company now purchased the Hintze and Baker factory, a move which provided needed space and equipment for increased production. The Hintze and Baker location came to be the present site of the Hamilton Manufacturing Company.

The next factory expansion came in 1891 and on November 20, 1892, the Manitowoc County Chronicle was able to report "The present plant was erected last year, and in it are incorporated the most modern ideas of factory architecture and convenience, and if the reputation achieved by the company of being the largest concern of the kind in the world with the most perfect and complete plant in existence be a criterion from which to form an estimate, they have accomplished their purpose. Much of the machinery in use is from original designs, consequently matchless in its actions and results. The buildings are perfect in their plans and construction, all electric lighted and steam heated and supplied with automatic sprinklers for fire protection. The illustration in this issue will give a fair idea of the plant. The buildings are of the following sizes: A. 40x100 ft.; B. 67x120 ft.; C. 40x100 ft.; G. 40x85 ft.; office 30x40, engine room 30x64 and several other buildings of various dimensions. The product consists of wood type and printers' materials, a variety too large to mention in detail. These are made from original designs. Several expert designers are in constant service, under the supervision of H.P. Hamilton, a brother of the founder. Type is now made in ten different languages, Chinese, Burmese, Greek, Hebrew, German, etc. The company has warehouses at 327-329 Dearborn St., Chicago, and 16, 18, and 20 Chambers St., New York, to supply the trade tributary to those cities. The business, as before said, was founded in 1881, and during its life several men have been associated with it as co-partners. In 1888 it was organized as a stock company and in 1891 absorbed the William H. Page Wood Type Co., of Norwich, Connecticut. The officers at present are J. E. Hamilton, President, Treasurer and Manager, W. D. Richards, Vice-President, and L. J. Nash, Sec. The two latter are residents of Manitowoc. Mr. Hamilton is not only a gentleman of wide business calibre, but also possesses a mechanical ingenuity which has served him valuable ends. The company now own some twenty-two patents, mostly conceptions of his fertile brain and in him we find qualities rarely seen in our modern business life namely, business ability of the best quality and a wide range of me-
chanical capacity, so that the entire operations of this immense concern are manipulated by him. It is no trouble to run one department of any business, but to manage them all single minded requires great executive ability."

Backed by a considerable number of investors, Ed Hamilton strove to consolidate a number of smaller associated industries into one larger, more efficiently-run industry. The volume of business enabled the Hamilton Company to produce special machinery suited to low-cost mass production.

The line of printers wood was expanded in the 1890's to include printers' furniture. The first items produced in this line were open case stands and square-legged imposing tables. With this additional business line the company employed some 200 men and did an annual business of some $500,000 by the early 1890's.

While business slackened in the years 1893-94, a new era of prosperity was to characterize business conditions around the turn of the century. In 1901 the Hamilton Manufacturing Company turned its attention to the manufacture of dental cabinets. This new field was envisioned and assessed by another of Ed Hamilton’s associates, Mr. H. C. Gowran. This phase of the business was carried on by the American Cabinet Company, a subsidiary of the Hamilton firm.

It was only natural that the company should stabilize its economic position by diversifying its products. A new line of medical office furniture soon joined the dental furniture line. In a short time the production of drafting room equipment became a part of the Hamilton line.

"In 1912 a modern steel plant was erected, and the Hamilton Manufacturing Company began the manufacture of steel printers' furniture and cabinets. The popularity and practicality of these goods have caused the steel plant to grow with abnormal speed. Eight brick additions have been made to the mammoth plant of the company within as many years; in 1926, two additions were made, one to the steel plant, and one to the type plant."

During the World War I period the Hamilton Company received a large order for De Haviland airplane fusilages and wing frames. Other war orders included field battery boxes, field dental cases, and field hospital furniture.

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3 E. Beth, A History of Two Rivers, Wis., p. 27
In 1920, J. E. Hamilton retired from active business. George Hamilton, a son of J. E. Hamilton succeeded his father as President of the company.

Hamilton's products continued their surge in the 1920's and now included such items as office furniture, filing cabinets, desks, optical cabinets, bank counters, and radio cabinets.

It was "Largely through the efforts of the present head of the firm, E. P. Hamilton, that the company bridged the seemingly large gap between the manufacture of professional furniture and children's nursery furniture.

Believing firmly that it could be done, Mr. Hamilton urged the purchase of several basic and unique patents in this field in 1938, and the firm entered into another vast field of production. With the patents as a foundation in addition to a separation of juvenile furniture manufacture from the rest of the plant, the Hamilton company rapidly rose to a dominant position in this field.

The reasons behind getting into the juvenile furniture field were very sound. There are about two and a half million babies born every year. The firm estimated that some 30 percent of these births represent the market potential for nursery furniture. The market, of course, is stable . . . a demand that exists regardless of economic conditions."\(^{4}\)

One of the more recent additions to the goods produced by the company has been the automatic clothes dryer. The product was first introduced in 1939 and was the invention of one J. Ross Moore, a native of North Dakota. Moore grew up on a farm and had the unpleasant chore of hanging up the family wash to dry. In the winter the farm house contained slow drying clothes hung up in its various rooms. The problem of how to make clothes drying easier caused Ross to invent a crude dryer in the 1920's. His first model was a centrifugal force device which failed to bring about the desired results. Moore next developed a drum type dryer and spent a decade in removing the "bugs" from the device. Ross approached the Hamilton Company and a development and production agreement was reached. Moore's models were tested, overhauled, and re-tested. Finally, the product was marketed and the last area of drudgery in the American washday began to be eased.

During World War II the production of Hamilton dryers ceased. Experimental improvements of the dryer continued

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during the war and the Hamilton firm resumed production during the post-war period to meet the huge public demand.

Current products added to the large list already mentioned include science laboratory equipment, home economics equipment, art and craft course tables, library shelving equipment, and folding cafeteria tables.

"In the field of employee relations, the company worked out an insured workmen's compensation program even before the state legislature put into effect a similar program. Insurance, largely carried by the firm, was adopted early in this century for its regular employees. A nursing service and shop committee were also added.

The company early in this century also adopted a vacation plan for employees and held an annual Hamilton Night festival. One of its oldest outside activities is the Hamilton band, which has grown during this half-century from a so-called "hobo-band." This band now gives an annual series of free concerts here and in Manitowoc and is known as one of the better bands in the state.

The 30-Year Hamilton service club has been in existence for many years, while the 10 and 20 year service Clubs were formed last year. The company also sponsors a Goodfellowship club for its employees, as well as a 30 to 35 voice mixed chorus, basketball teams, and men's and women's bowling teams.

One of its organizations, the Hamilton Foremen's club, last year received national honors from the National Association of Foremen and from Freedom's Foundation, Inc., for their civic work and efforts on behalf of employee relations. The latter award will be made here in March by Foundation officials."5

In 1968, the officers of this progressive firm were:

R. G. Halvorsen, President
C. H. Rippe, Marketing Vice-President
W. A. Friedrich, Sales Vice-President of Education, Health, and Research Products.
E. P. Hamilton, Jr., Sales Vice-President of Professional and Industrial Products
C. H. Carr, Sales Vice-President, Appliance Products
A. F. Rankin, Secretary
A. R. Leass, Treasurer and Comptroller
O. V. Uhlir, Vice-President, Manufacturing

5 *The Hamilton Story*, p. 22
Board of Directors
E. P. Hamilton, Chairman
C. A. Bickel
R. G. Halvorsen
E. P. Hamilton, Jr.
J. S. Hamilton
G. R. Rahr
A. F. Rankin
H. R. Schuette

On Friday, March 1, 1968, the Hamilton Manufacturing Company announced that the 88-year old firm would merge with the American Hospital Supply Corporation of Evanston, Illinois. The announcement was made by Mr. R. G. Halvorsen, Hamilton Manufacturing Company President, who announced the closing date for the transaction would be April 1, 1968.

The stockholders meeting, a necessary step in the merger plan, was held on Thursday, February 28, under the direction of E. P. Hamilton, chairman of the board of directors.

The activities and operation of the Hamilton Company would continue as in the past with the possibility that Hamilton would manufacture a number of new products.

Today, the Hamilton Manufacturing Company adds to the legacy of a success story by researching new product areas and producing products to fill current needs. The company now consists of two large plants in Two Rivers and one in Kosciusko, Mississippi.

The Carron Net Co., Inc.

The Carron Net Company was started in 1936 by Norman E. Carron and his father, the late Edward Carron. They made basketball nets and small fish nets and sold them to sporting goods stores in the area. In 1941 the company received orders for camouflage nets for the Armed Services and began manufacturing them in the Engineering Sales Building on 9th Street, now the site of the Formrite Tube Company. After a few years they needed larger quarters and moved to 1809 Washington Street, now the Messerman Furniture Co. Building. They made camouflage nets, barrage balloon nets, and sports nets at this location.

After the war, in 1945, manufacturing turned to fish nets and sports nets of all kinds. They made shrimp netting for the Gulf, and tuna and salmon netting for the Pacific Coast fishermen plus many other types of fishing nets. The com-
pany then moved to 17th and Monroe Streets into the build-
ing of the former Pail Factory. They bought and remodeled this place and have put several additions onto it over the years.

Norman E. Carron is President and Eugene Carron is Sec-
retary-Treasurer of the firm. They have several large net making machines and sewing machines of all types to help in production of nets. Thirty-five people are employed there at this time. Sports nets, such as tennis, volleyball, badminton and basketball nets make up a great part of the business. Fish nets of all kinds are made and in the last few years many special nets have been added to their line. Gym dividing cur-
tains made of part netting and part canvas or vinyl are made for gyms and recreation centers throughout the country. Large baseball cages and backdrops have been made for places like West Point, Wrigley Field, and Air Force Academy.

They weatherproof and tar and dye many nets and have a special department and drying room for these operations.

Salesmen are currently covering all of the United States, Puerto Rico, and Canada. Recent sales have also been made in Europe.

The Becker Manufacturing Co.

The Becker Manufacturing Company, a general jobbing foundry making grey iron and semi-steel castings from sev-
eral ounces to five thousand pounds, was founded by Frank Becker in 1903, using buildings formerly occupied by Hein-
rich Kappelman for foundry work. Mr. Becker, born in Mani-
towoc, learned the foundry trade at the old Allis foundry and Filer and Stowell foundry in Milwaukee. He also worked in foundries at Geneva, Illinois and Manitowoc.

In 1910 an addition was added and a new furnace and traveling crane to handle larger castings were installed. In 1924 a brick structure was erected over the old frame build-
ings which were torn down later.

The business was incorporated in 1918 with Frank Becker as President and Michael Becker, a brother of Brillion, Wis-
cconsin, as Secretary-Treasurer. After twenty-six years with the company, Michael Becker sold his interest to the Frank Becker family.

Roland Becker, the present manager, eldest of Frank Beck-
er's eleven children began his foundry career in 1918 under
his father's supervision. Upon the death of Frank Becker, age eighty-five, in 1959, active in his foundry affairs to the end, Roland Becker was named President. Louise and Clarence Becker, Vice Presidents, Hugo Becker, Treasurer, and Edward Becker, Secretary, are the other officers of the firm.

Among the employees in 1968 are Roland and Hugo Becker, sons of Frank Becker and Thomas and Daniel Becker, sons of Hugo Becker.

*Mirro Aluminum Company*

The Mirro Aluminum Company, now known as the world's largest manufacturer of aluminum cooking utensils with its six factories, rolling mill and customer service center, had a humble beginning back in 1895.

The present corporation is the result of a merger of the Manitowoc Aluminum Novelty Company, the Aluminum Manufacturing Company and Standard Aluminum Company of Two Rivers and the New Jersey Aluminum Company of Newark.

On July 30, 1895, the Aluminum Manufacturing Company was incorporated, "for the purpose of manufacturing and selling useful and ornamental articles of aluminum, or of other material or metals." Inspiration for the new venture had been the Columbian Exposition of 1893 where novelties imported from Germany, which were made of the new white metal, were on display. Joseph Koenig started this business in a small rented warehouse in January of that year.

In 1898, another farsighted citizen in the neighboring city of Manitowoc also saw the great opportunity opened up by the discovery of a new process of producing the new metal, aluminum, economically. Henry Vits, successful operator of a tannery since 1864 and active in government as alderman, school commissioner and member of the State Legislature, set up shop to manufacture products of the new wonder metal. He had come to the United States as a boy and had begun his career as a school teacher.

Machinery was purchased and the tannery was converted for the manufacture of aluminum articles. The sign on the building was relettered to read, "The Manitowoc Novelty Company." Henry Vits was president, his son, William, vice president, and W. F. Pflueger was secretary.

In 1909, when the Manitowoc and Two Rivers companies
were consolidated with the New Jersey Aluminum Company, George Vits, son of Henry Vits, one of the founders of the Manitowoc company, is credited with doing much of the work which resulted in the merger. He became a vice president and sales manager of the new company, which was named the Aluminum Goods Manufacturing Company. The president of this company in 1909 was Gustave A. Kruttschnitt, vice president was Joseph Koenig, and secretary and treasurer was James C. Coleman. The main office of the company was at Newark, New Jersey.

Three years later, George Vits, who in the meantime had become general manager, was offered the presidency at the annual meeting. His acceptance heralded a bright new chapter in the aluminum business of Manitowoc and Two Rivers.

Manufacture of cooking utensils by mass production methods began in 1913 when the company produced a double boiler for the Quaker Oats Company which ultimately sold over the million mark. Up to this time the business had been mainly novelties, with aluminum combs the principal product. While the advantages of aluminum cooking ware had been recognized by the public, prices were generally too high to make them popular.

During this early period the company's heavy-gauge, high-quality brand of pots and pans was "VIKO," the name coined from combining the "VI" from Vits and the "KO" from Koenig. Aluminum was no longer considered a luxury metal and mass production methods were being incorporated to enable the company to offer a high-quality product at the lowest possible price.

In 1915 the company acquired the facilities of the Standard Aluminum Company, another manufacturer in Two Rivers. For the next two years the company concentrated on the production of cooking utensils.

Private brands of aluminumware for wholesalers, syndicate and for mail order houses accounted for the bulk of distribution. Carloads of utensils were made for such distributors as Sunlight Aluminum Company, Great Northern Manufacturing Company and The United Aluminum Corporation. While the first two are no longer in existence, the last named company is still a valued customer of the company.

During the same year, 1915, the Aluminum Goods Manufacturing Company received its first contract for automobile hub caps. Company history is not clear whether the first auto-
mobile manufacturer was Dodge or Studebaker who placed an order calling for enough hub caps to supply 25,000 cars. Buick soon followed with an order for several hundred thousand hub caps.

World War I had a big influence on the destinies of the company. While the capacity of their facilities was strained, there was no shortage of aluminum. The raw material was available and the only problem was turning out the finished goods. Factory buildings spread as need for space grew. Canteens, cooking utensils and mess kits were turned out in tremendous numbers. The biggest single item was canteens, the total of which went into many millions.

At the conclusion of World War I, the company set out on a large scale expansion program. A plant in St. Louis was purchased to obtain additional rolling mill facilities. Five large additions to the Manitowoc and Two Rivers plants also got under way in 1919. Later when additional facilities in Manitowoc and Two Rivers had been completed, it was found to be advantageous to dispose of plants in the other cities.

Up to 1917, the company had no nationally-advertised high-quality line. To change this situation, MIRRO, The Finest Aluminum, was introduced in 1917. Full-page advertisements in the Saturday Evening Post of that year told the women of the country about this new MIRRO line of aluminumware. Other advertisements followed in such publications as Ladies’ Home Journal, McCall’s, Good Housekeeping, Farm Journal and Better Homes and Gardens.

George Vits, who was president at this time, had an intense personal interest in his employees. A familiar figure in the shops, he knew most of the workers by their first names and he knew about the families of many of them. As early as 1917, the company had an employee insurance plan, which insured adult male employees for $1,500.00 and all employees under 21 years of age for $1,000.00.

There came the time when the company had grown to such proportions that it was physically impossible for one man to keep in contact with all of the employees. But there was one day each year when these employees got together. It was what, in later years, became almost a community affair, the annual Company Picnic. It was a day that was looked forward to from year to year. A parade marked the official opening of the big day. There were bands, floats and clowns. There was fellowship and merriment, for picnic day was a day of
gaiety for young and old alike and really a special day for the entire city. A separate picnic was held for Manitowoc and one for the Two Rivers plants.

In 1914, Albert J. Vits succeeded Henry Vits on the Board of Directors. On May 1, 1914, Mr. J. F. MaGee resigned as secretary and treasurer and R. J. Findlan was elected to fill the unexpired term of Mr. MaGee. In 1921, A. J. Vits was elected as vice president. He had been a stockholder in the company since 1902. Also in 1921, C. F. Isselmann was elected assistant secretary.

The company launched an aggressive sales and advertising program. Dollar sales and special event sales stimulated the business and the policy of giving the trade the largest possible values was instituted. From a line of aluminum novelties, the Aluminum Goods grew to leadership in the field of aluminum cooking utensils during this period.

Not only was the company seeking diversification in products, but diversification in distribution also. Rapid growth of chain and mail order distribution resulted in building merchandise to meet the specific needs of these outlets. Premium, jobbing and retail store distribution was also greatly extended by a large and intensive sales program.

In 1929, when the depression struck, the company which employed 3,400 people at the time was not affected immediately. Sales and production, like employment, was at a new all-time high. However, during the following year, 1930, there was a definite decline in sales and the number of employees was also reduced slightly.

Sales continued to decline during 1931 and 1932 which were the darkest days of the depression. But with sales down more than 65%, the number of employees, in 1932, was reduced only to 2,500. Therefore, three quarters of the 3,400 employees of 1929 were kept on the job during the period when there was no work to be had for millions who sought it.

In 1933, sales showed a slight increase and the number of employees immediately rose from 2,500 to 2,700. The worst of the depression was over.

During the 1923 to 1933 period, the company and the community suffered the loss of three AGM Co. executives. On November 15, 1929, Joseph Koenig died. Mr. Koenig was vice-president and general superintendent and had made a tremendous contribution to the mechanical development throughout the plants. R. J. Findlan, secretary and treasurer, died
April 22, 1933. Mr. Findlan had been an officer of the company since 1915 and he, too, had played a substantial part in the growth of the company.

The community was further shocked by the news of George Vits' death, November 15, 1933. It was almost impossible to believe that the man whose vision and courage had guided the company safely through the formative stage was dead. Other officers of the company at this time included A. J. Vits, who was vice president, C. F. Isselmann, vice president and assistant secretary, H. L. Vits, vice president, Earl O. Vits, vice president, and John F. Walton, Jr., secretary and treasurer.

Upon the death of George Vits, his brother, A. J. Vits, executive vice president, took over the direction of the company. He had been a director since 1913 and a vice president since 1921. It was during this time, 1934 to 1941, that the company recovered from the effects of the depression.

On August 8, 1936, the community was further shocked by the death of Mr. C. F. Isselmann. Mr. W. F. Bugenhagen, who had been with the company since 1910, succeeded Mr. Isselmann, becoming vice president in charge of sales.

The company's facilities were engaged both directly and indirectly in national defense work in 1940 and the years following. Production included coffee filters, meat platters, syrup pitchers and other utensil items for the armed forces, contract parts such as airplane fuel tanks, landing gear parts, airplane engine deflectors, radar parts, meat cans and cartridge cases of brass and steel. Again millions of canteens were made for our armed forces, just as had been done during World War I. Aluminum was also rolled for Lend-Lease.

With the war over, the company resumed civilian production at the end of 1945, when another milestone was reached in the introduction of the MIRRO-MATIC Pressure Pan. This was the highest priced utensil ever made by the company and has since sold in the millions. Another product introduced a little later was the MIRRO-MATIC Electric Percolator which also became a big factor in increasing the sales of the company.

In the effort to establish a growth pattern and carry out a policy of continuing warranted expansion, the company acquired a 104-acre site between Manitowoc and Two Rivers to be used for future building expansion. Within the next two years the first unit (Plant 5) of the new building expan-
sion was erected in 1955 and used as a central Receiving and Supply Department. A second unit was added in 1956 which is currently being used for warehousing and part for manufacturing.

In August 1957, the company announced its plans to erect a new $12 million rolling mill adjacent to Plant 5.

The new operation has the newest type heavy-duty, fully integrated mill using the latest methods and the most modern machinery obtainable. It has an annual capacity of 60 million pounds of sheet aluminum.

The new mill has put our company in a stronger position to engage in the development and marketing of more new products, thereby broadening our operations and expanding our sales.

While the company has been known primarily as a cooking utensil manufacturer and a leader in this field, it has branched out into other lines such as giftware, boats, aluminum siding, toys, aluminum foil and foilware.

On April 10, 1957, stockholders of the Aluminum Goods Manufacturing Company voted in favor of changing the company's name to the MIRRO ALUMINUM COMPANY. It became effective on December 31, 1957. The name change provides immediate brand identification every time the company's name is mentioned.

Upon the death of A. J. Vits in January, 1955, W. F. Bugenhagen was appointed to the presidency by the Board of Directors.

In 1963 a new Customer Service Center was completed on the company's 104-acre tract northeast of Manitowoc, adjacent to Plant 5 and the Rolling Mill. This 362 \times 717-foot building provides central shipping and product storage facilities for all Mirro manufacturing plants.

Purchase of the National Metal Coatings, Inc. at Oconomowoc, Wisconsin was consummated in January 1964. This plant, known as Mirro Plant 8, manufactures building materials, primarily aluminum siding.

In September 1964 a 30,000 square foot addition to the company's rolling mill facilities at a cost of $350,000 was announced. The addition is used to concentrate the finished inventory of rolled metal within the mill thereby eliminating storage at the fabricating plants.

In 1960 A. L. Vits became president of Mirro and W. F. Bugenhagen was made Chairman of the Board. In 1964, Mr.
Bugenhagen resigned as Chairman and was named an honorary director. C. W. Ziemer was named to the Board of Directors in 1964.

In 1966 additions were completed to the Rolling Mill, Plants 1 and 4 and the Boat Plant.

On January 1, 1967 A. L. Vits was named Chairman of the Board and C. W. Ziemer named President and Chief Executive Officer of Mirro.

Other officers of the company include, F. Terens, Senior Vice President-Manufacturing; R. J. Paddock, Vice President-Manager of Manufacturing; F. C. Prescott, Vice President Marketing; L. L. Newberry, Secretary-Treasurer; C. J. Stephenson, Assistant Secretary and U. E. Garey, Assistant Treasurer.

The Formrite Tube Company

The Formrite Tube Company, founded in May 1950, began with the purchase of an 1800 square foot building that earlier had been a schoolhouse, warehouse, and center of operations for several small manufacturing firms.

Founding the company, were Joseph J. Birkenstock and Donald J. Surfus, longtime Manitowoc residents. Birkenstock was named president, and Surfus, secretary-treasurer. Both serve in the same capacity today.

In addition, both men had acquired considerable experience as engineers with a company, which is now one of Formrite's competitors.

Formrite specializes in the design and fabrication of precision formed metal tubes for fluid transfer lines.

It has complete lines of tube fittings in all standard shapes and a large range of sizes, plus a broad line of hose assemblies. Forgings, castings, and flange mounted fittings are also available and can be machined to exacting requirements.

Its services include everything from the initial engineering of pilot models, to consultation on fluid power line installations.

Formrite field engineers are made available for assistance on new tubing applications and problems, or for recommendations on improving existing fluid transfer line installations.

Formrite Growth

From its modest beginnings 18 years ago, Formrite Tube
Company has greatly expanded its physical plant facilities, original equipment manufacturer customers, and number of employees.

At its inception, the company was Birkenstock, Surfus, and two other employees. Today, the firm boasts nearly 300 employees in three U.S. cities, and a Canadian community.

Its plants are located, in addition to Two Rivers, in Medina, Ohio, Peoria, Illinois, and Simcoe, Ontario, Canada.

Formrite's rate of manufacturing facility growth has been rapid and consistent.

Following the original 1950 purchase of the 1800 square foot building in Two Rivers, the company, through the leadership of its two principal founders, added a 4800 sq. ft. addition to its Two Rivers plant in 1952. Further additions were made to the plant in 1954, 1956, 1959, 1961, 1963, and 1965, bringing the total square footage in Two Rivers to 52,000 sq.ft., or more than 25 times the founding size.

In addition, the company built an 18,000 sq.ft. plant in Medina, Ohio in 1961. Another 23,000 sq.ft. of plant space was added here in 1963.


Last year alone, Formrite fabricated over 5 million feet of tubing for blue chip original equipment customers throughout the U. S. and Canada.

Markets

Formrite markets for its products at present, include manufacturers of construction, farm, earth-moving, mining, materials handling, outdoor power lawn and garden, snowmobile, and military equipment, plus producers of hydraulically operated machine tools.

The firm has come a long way since 1950, and plans call for a continued, conservatively-aggressive growth in the years ahead.

When asked what makes Formrite run, Birkenstock and Surfus are quick to answer — "Customers, and the service they expect from their suppliers."
Kahlenberg Bros. Co.

The Kahlenberg Bros. Co., one of the pioneer internal combustion engine builders of the United States, was founded in 1895 at Two Rivers by Wm. R. Kahlenberg and his brother Otto R. Kahlenberg. They started operations in a small machine shop adjacent to the hardware store and tin shop on 16th Street which their father had established shortly after returning from the Civil War.

At first the principal work carried on was the rebuilding of steam engines and conversion of engines in fishing boats and tugs from the simple high pressure to the more economical and higher output compound type. At the same time, small steam engines for land use were manufactured and sold for commercial operations before electric motors became common.

In 1898 Wm. R Kahlenberg designed and built for John LaFond, pioneer commercial fisherman of Two Rivers, a marine gasoline engine for a fishing boat of the so-called Mackinaw type, which then employed oars and sails to reach the fishing grounds. The success of this first engine soon led to its use by fishermen all along the Lake Shore.

In 1901 another brother, John L. Kahlenberg, became the third member of the firm and the secretary and treasurer. The demand for engines by fishermen, tugboat owners and yachtsmen grew rapidly until it became necessary to build a new factory, which was constructed at the present location on the south side of the city.

During the early years new models and larger sizes were added, and soon the engines were in use in other parts of the country and many were exported.

With the increased cost of gasoline in 1914 the company developed a new line of diesel type engines operating on fuel oil instead of gasoline.

This engine, in the following years, replaced the gasoline engine in fishing boats, tugs, and other commercial craft. Again, the first engine was installed in a fishing boat. Arthur Luebke and Hugo Heller, both well-known local commercial fishermen, were the owners. In 1918, and again in 1924, plant facilities were enlarged to take care of orders from boat owners in this country and world ports.

In 1927, upon the death of Otto R. Kahlenberg, John L. Kahlenberg became Vice President. Roger W. Kahlenberg,
with the company since 1923, was appointed secretary and George E. Kahlenberg, with the company since 1920, became engine test and service manager.

During succeeding years improvements and larger models were added and a line of various allied marine products such as propellers, marine whistles, air horns and navigation aids was put on the market.

In 1929 Wm. J. Kahlenberg, youngest son of Wm. R. Kahlenberg, joined the company as sales manager. In 1938 John B. Kahlenberg, son of John L. Kahlenberg, became associated with the company in management activities.

With the advent of World War II the plant was put on a war production basis, and extensive machine shop facilities were added. Many engines were built for the use of the armed forces in the South Pacific.

The company has always enjoyed a reputation for good workmanship and materials, which is reflected by the long service life of it's engines. To this record many skilled men of Two Rivers have contributed. Some have completed 40 and 50 years of steady employment with the engine company as machinists and in engineering and drafting work.

In 1950 development of a new higher output marine engine was begun; and the first unit of this larger series was installed in an Illinois Waterway towboat in 1956. At the same time manufacturing of other marine products was expanded and many new items have been developed.

During 1957 William R. Kahlenberg, who headed the company for 62 years, passed away and in 1960 John L. Kahlenberg, who guided the company's finances for 59 years, passed away. In 1950 Karl W. Kahlenberg, son of Wm. J. Kahlenberg, joined the company in a sales capacity.

Present officers are:

Roger W. Kahlenberg - President
Geo. E. Kahlenberg - Vice President
Wm. J. Kahlenberg - Vice President & Treasurer
John B. Kahlenberg - Secretary
Karl W. Kahlenberg - Sales Manager

The Paragon Electric Co., Inc.

The word "automation" carries the meaning of "people deprived of jobs" to some. Not so at Paragon Electric Company, Inc. a subsidiary of the American Machine & Foundry Company. Paragon is situated in Two Rivers, Wisconsin,
occupying a modern building comprising about 200,000 square feet of manufacturing and office space. One thousand people headquarters here to manufacture and sell time controls to farm, home, industry and commerce. Here automation has not created a lack of opportunity for people, but on the contrary has provided jobs and challenges for those who accept them.

Paragon had its beginning in Chicago in 1905 as a small selling company. Its founder was Edward M. Platt, a graduate of the University of Wisconsin. Among the products sold were electrical grounds, electrical wire, and most important of all, the time switch. It was the time switch that brought Paragon out of Illinois and up to Manitowoc, Wisconsin, where it was first assembled in a small shop in the year 1920. Since then the need for time controls has steadily increased; so too has the stature of the company so that today Paragon is recognized as one of the world’s leading manufacturers of time controls.

A time switch is basically a clock mechanism arranged to operate a switch at preset hours automatically. Typical applications for one or more of these time controls include street, store, and farm lighting — also heat regulation. In general, a time switch programs any recurring operation involving electrical switching on a day-to-day basis. A simplified example is a Paragon home convenience timer that automatically turns ON and OFF appliances such as coffee perks, radios, TVs, rotisseries, electric ovens, lamps and other electrical comforts and gadgets having less than an 1800-watt capacity.

A more complex control manufactured by Paragon is the new momentary contact time control that provides momentary switch closures to both ON and OFF contactor coil terminals. This control can come equipped with an Astro Dial face that keeps the control ON time, relative to the rising and setting of the sun, without seasonal adjustment. Once the control has been installed and the ON and OFF operation set, that sequence will be followed until manually changed. This control can also be installed with a spring wound Carry-Over that will keep the momentary contact time control on time in the event of power failure.

Actually, Paragon manufactures hundreds of different controls. On the farm they can be found controlling ventilation, automating hog and cattle feeders, and magically starting and stopping the egg-gathering equipment in modern poultry barns. In industry, Paragon controls time metal castings, control conveyors, lubricate giant machines with split-second ac-
curacy, and hundreds of other applications requiring a re-
curring operation for maximum efficiency. In industry, Par-
agon has indeed removed the human factor that could cost
the manufacturer thousands of dollars due to man's fallibility.

Paragon soon outgrew its facilities in Manitowoc and in
1941 with 27 employees moved to Two Rivers. By the time
World War II ended, the company employed 300 people. A
decade later saw Paragon become a dominant supplier for
defrost controls for such customers as Frigidaire, Whirlpool
and Crosley. As a tandem development, Paragon today leads
the field in furnishing automatic defrost controls for large
customers such as Hussman, C. V. Hill, Kramer Trenton, and
others. It is a fact that well over 90 percent of the open
refrigeration cases found in super-markets are controlled by
Paragon.

Since the mid-1950's home automation has become more
and more important and the market, of course, grew for
automatic devices. In most homes today you will find Para-
gon controlled automatic washers, dryers, water softeners, etc.

That automation creates jobs is well proven by the 1,000
employees at Paragon. The controls that are being built also
take the lady of the house out of the kitchen when she really
has more important things to do. Agriculturalists, too, have
found that time controls permit them to have a bigger and
more efficient operation. So too the industrialists.

Not only does Paragon manufacture time controls, but mil-
ions of synchronous motors are also built. And recently Par-
gon has electrified its version of the original Benjamin
Franklin Clock. This clock is a conversation piece. Like
Franklin's clock, it has only one hand with which to tell the
exact time of day. Upon receiving one of these clocks,
Whitfield J. Bell, Jr., the librarian of the American Philo-
sophical Society Library, wrote: "I think that Benjamin Frank-
lin would appreciate your wiring his clock for electricity." To-
day, the company has a second plant at Summerville, South
Carolina. Both plants are subsidiaries of the A.M.F. (Améri-
can Machine and Foundry Co.). Mr. George J. Platt is the
President of Paragon Electric Co., Inc.

Perhaps twenty-two words that appear in the company em-
ployee magazine best describe what 1,000 people are doing in
Two Rivers. "Electricity: Ben Franklin found it, Tom Edi-
son brought it out of the laboratory and 'Paragon married it
to time for modern living.' "
The Eggers Plywood Co.

From the timberlands of Australia, the far east and the south seas, from the jungles of Africa and South America, and from the hardwood lands of Wisconsin and the upper midwest comes the wood that goes into the architectural plywood made by the Eggers Plywood Co. of Two Rivers.

But you can’t buy a panel of Eggers plywood off the shelf from a lumber or building materials dealer anywhere in the country.

“Rather,” said James Lester, Eggers’ executive vice-president, “every plywood panel is custom crafted to the architectural blue prints for a particular project, or to the specifications of a desk, table or similar manufacturer.”

Reorganized in 1942

Eggers is an old name in Wisconsin industry, going back to 1884, when the firm began making plywood veneer seating for railroad seating, churches and other public places.

“But it was not until 1944,” said George Lester, president of the company, “that the firm really started to grow.”

The company had gone through financial setbacks through the depression of the 1930’s, and in 1942 it was reorganized.

The elder Lester — James is his son — became general manager in 1944 after working in the plywood field since graduation in 1928 from Purdue university with a degree in industrial engineering.

Today, Eggers has two plants in Wisconsin — the plant here where the custom architectural plywood is produced and the Eggers Hardwood Products Corp. at Neenah. The Neenah firm, recently acquired by Eggers as a wholly owner subsidiary, makes custom doors.

“The company started its growth after 1944,” the elder Lester said, “because the times were in our favor and we rolled up our sleeves and went to work.”

Philosophy Outlined

“We tried to develop quality products that would best utilize our materials and our skills,” he added, “and they were products which our competitors were likely to shy away from.

“We believed that every customer was entitled to what he
wanted, when he wanted it, if he could get it at a fair price — and that's why we really became custom manufacturers of plywood.

"We were interested in the small purchaser and felt he needed our product and was entitled to it, even though he might not be a large buyer — and that pretty much has been our continuing philosophy."

For awhile, the firm made church pews. "But," said Lester, "they became a cheap competitive item and when we get into a cheap competitive item, we step out."

James Lester compared the company's work to that of a men's tailor. Where a tailor shows a customer swatches of cloth, the Eggers people show an architect or other customer flitches of wood.

**According to Order**

And then when the flitch (a wood sample showing the grain and color) is selected, Eggers is given the blueprints or specifications and work starts on a customer's order.

Architectural paneling is the biggest segment of the firm's business at its Two Rivers plant. Eggers plywood can be found in the lobbies and executive offices of some of the biggest banks in America where conference tables and office desks and furniture may be co-ordinated with the wall paneling. The plywood is also produced for paneling and furnishings in corporate executive offices, college libraries and chapels, private clubs and luxury restaurants, and quality homes.

Outside of the plywood building products fashioned to architectural specifications, the Eggers firm also makes a number of plywood products for other manufacturers. Among them are:

- Desk tops that are prefinished and banded before leaving the Eggers plant.
- X-ray machine panels.
- Drawing board tables.
- Decorative paneling for luxury yachts.
- Crutch components.
- Prefinished and premachined wardrobe doors.
- Templates for the ship building industry.
- Platforms for the floor of funeral hearses.
- Doors, which are generally of the custom type at the plant here and of more standard types at the Neenah plant.
Exotic Woods Bought

George Lester said the plant here will run about two million feet of logs per year through its veneer mill, most of which comes from Wisconsin, upper Michigan, and the upper Mississippi river valley. Another two million feet of lumber are purchased for the plywood cores.

In addition to this, the company buys the exotic woods from around the world — teak from Burma, rosewood from Brazil, mahogany from Central America and Africa, paldao from the Philippines, black bean from Australia and many others.

James Lester described the Eggers operation as “totally integrated” in that it has a broader range of capabilities than many larger companies in the plywood field.

The result is, he said, that Eggers sells large quantities of single ply veneer and plywood cores to other plywood manufacturers.

Process Controlled

“We have our own rotary veneer mill (a machine that cuts veneers to varying thicknesses and operates much like an apple peeler) which many plywood firms don’t have,” James Lester said. “With this mill, we can have close control over special thicknesses, and special grades of high quality veneer.”

The firm also does its own veneer slicing. And it has its own core mill where the inner segment of a plywood panel is made. Here, basswood is air dried, then kiln dried before being processed into the desired thickness.

“With such capabilities, the Eggers firm is able quickly to meet the requests for unusual plywood thicknesses and quality,” James Lester said, “without turning to outside suppliers.”

“Another capability that helps to maintain the Eggers firm’s reputation for custom plywood craftsmanship is its ability to produce large panels,” George Lester said. “Most firms make plywood in standard four foot by eight foot sections,” he added, “but Eggers can make the panels up to 4 feet by 12 feet. And for a new building for a Dallas (Tex.) savings and loan association, it produced panels 4 feet by 16½ feet.”

Firm Employs 360

And in the plant’s machine shop, panels can be produced
in other than flat shapes — all to an architect's specifications.

Among the buildings where Eggers plywood has been prominently used are the music hall of Southern Methodist University, the Notre Dame library, many of the Playboy clubs, the General Motors technical center and the Henry and Edsel Ford auditorium in Detroit, as well as new bank buildings and college libraries around the country.

The Eggers firm has about 360 employees — 180 in Two Rivers and an equal number in Neenah — and has an annual payroll in excess of a million dollars in each community.

The company is privately held.¹