

Ohio Brass Started As Small Jobbing Foundry In 1888

Although the Ohio Brass Co. was incorporated in 1888 as a small jobbing brass foundry, the past 50 years have seen it gradually concentrate upon products for the growing electric power industry. Bronze valves for plumbing and heating, and materials for electric transmission, however, have remained important products for the firm almost from the day the company was founded.

Today, Ohio Brass manufactures and sells a number of its trolley products to the needs of mine trolley operation. This led to the gradual development of other products for the mining market, which transport that coal to the generating stations. It has become a diversified company, employing more than 2,000 people at its plants in Mansfield and Barberton, O., and at Niagara Falls, Canada. There are more than 1,000 Mansfield employes on the payroll at present.

In October, 1888, Frank B. Black and five other Mansfield men raised \$5,000 to start Ohio Brass Co. as a jobbing brass foundry and a machine shop. The company soon began making finished products to sell, as a means of reducing the company's dependence upon job-shop work. These early products included brass and bronze valves. The company's employment at this time was less than 30.

In 1893, Mr. Black hired a young man from Chicago named Charles K. King, who designed a line of brass fixtures for the overhead power systems used to run electric trolley cars. Not only did this man's designs help make O-B a leader in the trolley and street railway industry, but Mr. King launched a career with Ohio Brass that led eventually to his becoming president and then board chairman of the company. Upon his death in 1952, Mr. King bequeathed his estate to the people of Mansfield for what now is Kingwood Center.

Ohio Brass Co. was originally located in a building at 207 North Main St., but moved to its present location at 380 North Main in 1898 upon buying the Mansfield Buggy Co. at that address. A fire destroyed almost the entire plant in 1905, but it was quickly rebuilt and business continued.

As it became engrossed in the manufacture of trolley equipment, Ohio Brass began making more and more electrical products for all types of electric rail transportation. With the advent of electric locomotives for hauling coal from within the mine to the surface, O-B adapted many

of its trolley products to the needs of mine trolley operation. This led to the gradual development of other products for the mining market, which transport that coal to the generating stations. It has become a diversified company, employing more than 2,000 people at its plants in Mansfield and Barberton, O., and at Niagara Falls, Canada. There are more than 1,000 Mansfield employes on the payroll at present.

During the early streetcar days, just as today, the trolley wires which carried the electric power along and above the track had to be insulated with porcelain insulators. Because many customers wanted O-B to supply these insulators, as well as the equipment it was then manufacturing, the company acquired an interest in the Akron Hi-Potential Porcelain Insulator Co. in Barberton. In 1910 it became a wholly-owned subsidiary and was later set up as the Barberton Division of O-B.

In 1910, Ohio brass introduced the first practical design for a porcelain suspen-

sion insulator to be used on high-voltage electric power transmission lines. Since that time Ohio Brass has been the world's largest producer of these porcelain suspension insulators, having now made more than 40,000,000.

In 1922, O-B formed a subsidiary corporation in Canada for the purpose of making and selling porcelain insulators and other products in that country and throughout the world.

At the time of Frank B. Black's fatal heart attack in 1937, he was recognized as Mansfield's best-known industrial leader. He had moved up to the post of chairman of the

ORIGINAL BUILDING — This two-story brick building at 207 North Main St. was where the late Frank B. Black started his machine shop for brass goods and founded the multi-million dollar industry now known as Ohio Brass Co. First day of operation in this building was Oct. 17, 1888, and some of the first output from the little factory went into the construction of the U. S. battleships, the Kearsage and the Kentucky.

board in 1928 after having led Ohio Brass through its formative years.

Charles K. King followed Frank Black as O-B president from 1928 until 1946 when he was elected chairman of the board. George L. Draffan became president in 1946 and has been serving as chairman of the board since January, 1957. Roger A. Black was

electd president at the beginning of 1957 and still serves in that capacity.

In the 10 years following World War II, Ohio Brass spent approximately \$10,000,000 for capital expenditures and will have added another \$5,000,000 for the period between 1956 and the end of 1958. A substantial part of these expenditures has gone into modernization and replacement of buildings and equipment.

Busted Elephants

NORTH SYRACUSE, N. Y. (UP) — Even thieves can do much with pink elephants. Howard C. Smith told officers that a thief, failing in an effort to haul away his two stone pink elephants driveway markers, smashed them pair.

Toy Gun Dangerous

SYRACUSE, N. Y. (UPI) — Toy pistols can be dangerous. Firemen quickly doused a blaze after Michael Neel, three, laid his plastic revolver on the stove and the heated pistol fell to the linoleum floor, firing the linoleum.



FIRST EMPLOYEES AT O-B — Valued highly by Ohio Brass Co. officials is this rare picture of 21 members of the company's original 28-man employment in 1888. Left to right, front row, are: Jacob H. Hanafius, Frank Faust, John (Jack) O'Leary, Tom McNiece (with necktie) the boy, John Winfield; John Berry, unidentified, and Jacob Linderman. Children in their early teens were often employed by industry before the Child Labor Laws went into effect. Second row: Gus Witt, George Mull, Emanuel (Tommy) Meily, unidentified; Charles Livensburger, other two unidentified. Third row: first youth believed to be Bill Lauer; unidentified, John Phillips (heavy mustache) George Cenners, other two unidentified.



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