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 transit, 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 products to the electric power industry, to the mines which produce coal for electrical energy and to railroads, which transport that coal to the generating stations. It has become a diversified company, employing more than 2,000 people at 17 key locations in Mansfield and Barberton, Ohio, and at Niagara Falls, Canada. There are more than 1,000 employees engaged in the payroll at present.

In October, 1888, Frank B. Black offered all Lake County residents an opportunity to invest $5,000 each in the 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.

In 1910, Ohio brass introduced for the first time, a porcelain suspension 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 the ranks from the rank of chairman of the board in 1928 after having led the Ohio Brass through its formative years.

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

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 McNeice (with necktie) the boy, John Winfield, John Berry, unidentified, and Jacob Live- derman. Children in the 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 Connor, other two unidentified.
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