AIRFLEX

(Who Are We?)

What is now the Airflex Plant of the Eaton Corporation was an original venture by Mr. Thomas L. Fawick. (slide of Mr. Fawick) Mr. Fawick was an inventor of great imagination and a compatriot of Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Harvey Firestone, etc. The initial development work of the Airflex Clutch by Tom Fawick dates back to the summer of 1936.

The practicality of the clutch idea was demonstrated by the successful installation of several expanding-type units on a drilling rig manufactured by Young Engine Corporation of Canton, Ohio. So you can see that the association between Airflex and oil field applications goes back a long way.

The first Airflex units were of the rubber-faced type. This is what the early models looked like. (slide of "Fawick First") This was a 24 inch diameter by 4-3/4 inch wide expanding unit. The tube was vulcanized to a cylindrical steel rim which was then riveted to the stamping of a Ford truck wheel.

At that time, an air pressure of 50 PSI was used as opposed to the 110 to 125 PSI used today. This first unit proved very successful in transmitting the power from a 185 HP engine at 400 to 450 RPM's. This unit compares to our present 24ER475 element assembly.

In order to make the clutch more universally acceptable in those early days, it was found necessary to add asbestos lining to the friction surface. The early units of all sizes had the friction block molded into the tube, as seen here. (slide of 4EB) It was quickly seen that when the friction material wore out, the whole unit would have to be replaced.

Barry Inman v. A.W. Chesterton, Inc. et al.
St. Louis City Circuit Court No. 0922-CC09067 10/8/2010