

50

years in sealing products



The first factory—a store building on Chicago's West Side, into which the business moved from a basement shop. Here John H. Victor produced gaskets for the early automotive industries.

There's a distinct parallel in the history of gasket and oil seal development and the 50-year growth of Victor Manufacturing and Gasket Company.

John H. Victor had an idea for building a better gasket than was generally available at the time. Against the toughest odds—for he had no ready access to capital—he was determined to do something about it. A skilled tool and die maker, he had the manufacturing know-how, and already he owned at least one basic patent on gasket construction. But more so, he held the conviction there would always be a market for better-made sealing products.

That was in 1909, and that's how the Victor Manufacturing and Gasket Company was born in an apartment house basement shop. Later that year, still in the modest basement quarters but now with five employees, the business was incorporated.

Quickly John H. Victor took his product to the several similarly pioneering automotive builders. They liked what they saw—a new copper-asbestos gasket construction that promised tighter engine sealing, with longer life and greater protection against blow-out.

It wasn't long before the Victor company became the major gasket supplier to the rapidly growing automotive industry—and young John H. Victor's business philosophy was completely vindicated. On his better-product philosophy his company would grow—and grow it did.

NEW GROWTH ERA

In 1919, after two earlier expansion moves, Victor was established in its own built-to-order plant with quadrupled space. The plant was completely equipped for quality mass production and personnel numbered about 185. But this major move was only the beginning of a new growth era for the still young company.

While automobile manufacturing boomed, new markets across industry opened for Victor. Each new application need was a challenge to design and build the best gasket possible. Each such challenge was met with constantly improving manufacturing techniques, quality control, and testing methods.

Steel and asbestos gasket structures grew in use along with the original copper-asbestos combination. New packing materials were added. Developments in these products enlarged the company's basic patent holdings.

OIL SEALS ADDED

Early in the '30's John H. Victor was ready to expand into oil seal production. Again he saw the opportunity for product improvement; he wasn't satisfied that leather was the best sealing element. In a few short years Victor Research Laboratories—the first in the sealing products industry—pioneered the development of the synthetic rubber sealing element.

The next decade marked wide expansion in both product lines and production techniques. There was development in packings—astbestos, cork, and rubber compositions. New machinery, much of it built to the company's own specifications, replaced the old.

During World War II, Victor's total facilities worked at full capacity to keep our war machine on the road to victory.

MORE NEW PLANTS

With the war won and business booming, more plants were added to take care of the now worldwide demand for Victor sealing products. These plants included a complete gasket manufacturing unit at St. Thomas, Ontario, Canada.

As a result of this steady growth and expansion, Victor today produces over 100,000 different sealing products—gaskets, oil seals, packings. These products are sold the world over, direct to every automotive and machinery industry for original equipment—and through thousands of jobbers and wholesalers for every replacement need.

