

profile...

A patriarch of west coast industry, Wilson & Geo. Meyer, a distributor of important raw materials for agriculture and industry, acts as the sales department of companies it represents

ON THE WEST COAST, any company with a history that stretches over 107 years is classed as a patriarch. Such a company is Wilson & Geo. Meyer & Co., San Francisco distributor of agricultural and industrial chemicals. The company's forerunners date back to the days of the gold rush.

A look through this company's records is a look at the growth and changing pattern of the American West. The company was founded in 1849 by William Meyer, great uncle of Wilson Meyer, present head of the firm. The company imported manufactured products and essential raw materials needed in the settlement and development of the West. Imports then varied from fertilizer materials to rails, steel, and cement.

Today, Wilson & Geo. Meyer is still a distributor, rather than a manufacturer. But in keeping with the character of growth in the West, it has specialized in raw materials for the agriculture and industry of the area. Although it began by representing chiefly foreign interests, it has now cast its lot largely with domestic producers.

Distributes Stauffer Fertilizers

In its agricultural department, Wilson & Geo. Meyer & Co. distributes phosphate fertilizer products produced by Stauffer Chemical's three Pacific Coast plants—at Richmond and Vernon, Calif., and Tacoma, Wash.—and by Western Phosphates at Garfield, Utah, near Salt Lake City.

The firm also distributes nitrogenous plant foods—calcium nitrate and urea—manufactured by Norsk Hydro, one of the world's largest producers of fixed nitrogen from the atmosphere.

The company's agricultural division is a large importer of Canadian peat moss used in western gardens. In this line it represents Canadian Peat Moss, Ltd., and Western Peat Co., Ltd.

Its representation also includes products produced by the Chemical

& Pigment Co. of Oakland, Calif. These include zinc sulfate and zinc oxide. In addition, it distributes manganese sulfate produced by Eastman Chemical Products, as well as copper products of the Mountain Copper Co., San Francisco.

Wilson & Geo. Meyer looks upon itself as a typically traditional San Francisco company. This point of view is in keeping with its membership in California's Hundred Year Club, composed of the few organizations that have been doing business in California for 100 years or more.

In discussing the nature of the firm's operations, company president Wilson Meyer points out "We prefer to think of our company as being in

the sales management business. By this, I mean that we act as the sales departments of the companies we represent. In this capacity, we sit in with their managements when new plants and products are considered, and when sales problems are discussed.

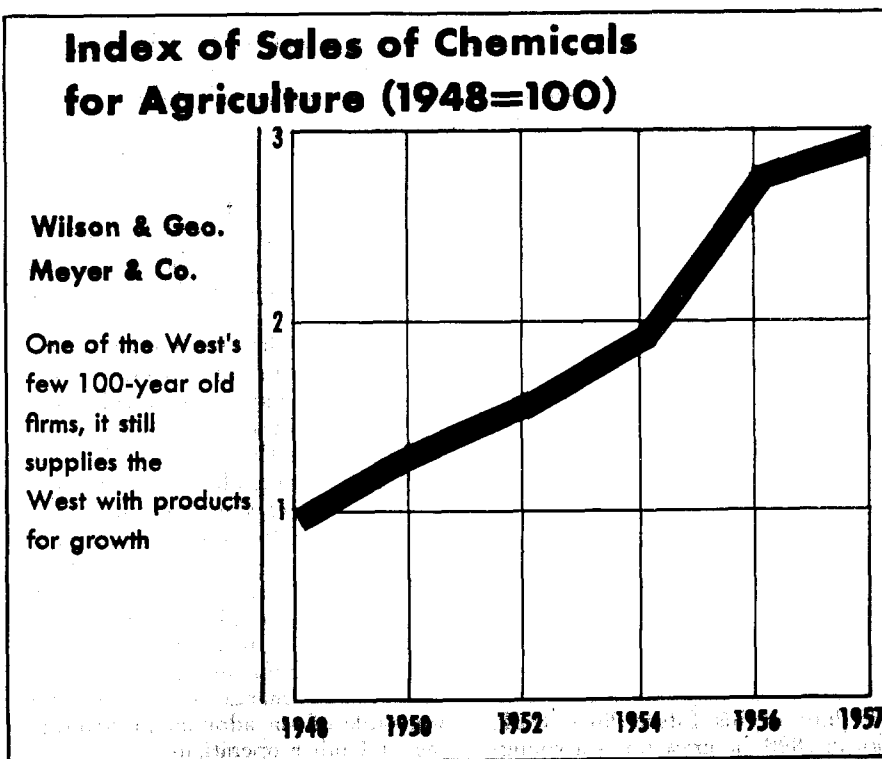
"This means," Meyer continues, "that we handle sales promotion and market analysis, as well as customer field service, for all our clients."

These responsibilities require a large staff. The company has expanded its organization to do the job under the guidance of Ralph Waltz, vice president and manager of the agricultural department, and Jeffery W. Meyer, vice president and manager of fertilizer sales. From a modest staff of six people and one office in 1927, the organization has grown to 80 people in nine offices stretching as far east as Denver, to Seattle in the north, and along the coast to Phoenix in the southwest.

The Careful Approach

Wilson & Geo. Meyer regards itself as relatively conservative, and has always taken the careful, studied approach to business. It has, however, changed its distribution methods and promotional techniques as required.

During the past six months, for instance, it has launched a new program designed to help its customers (the distributors of dry fertilizers) improve their profits and at the same time provide better service to growers.



This new program involves the development of improved techniques for handling and applying bulk phosphates. The company has set up a market development department to prepare sales programs for each area, based on local agronomics and economics. It has also engaged an engi-



The President . . .

Wilson Meyer

Improving Distribution

neering firm to design and fabricate the equipment necessary to carry out the program.

This new approach to fertilizer sales has been well received, the company says, since it offers a welcome change from low profit, low service programs prevalent in much of the dry fertilizer business.

Industrial Chemicals Also

In addition to its large activity in the agricultural field, Wilson & Geo. Meyer also maintains an active industrial chemical division. Its industrial representation includes Eastman Chemical Products, for which it distributes Tenite molding powders. In fact the company has handled the Tenite family of plastics since they were first introduced in the West. Meyer also distributes Tenamene, an additive for production of high octane, knockproof gasoline, as well as other chemicals, plasticizers, and solvents produced by Eastman at Kingsport, Tenn., and Longview, Tex. Meyer also handles Eastman Kodak's Kodapak sheeting.

Industrial and foundry coke, produced by Semet Solvay Division of Allied Chemical & Dye, is another product handled exclusively in the west by Wilson & Geo. Meyer.

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