

History of Lever Brothers Company

THE BEGINNING of Lever Brothers Company in the United States goes back to 1895 when William Lever established a sales office in New York to handle Lifebuoy and Sunlight Soap. Two years later the manufacture of these products was started at Cambridge, Mass., when he purchased a controlling interest in Curtis Davis and Company. In 1899 the remaining interests were acquired, and this plant became the nucleus of the great Lever Brothers Company production facilities. In 1903 the name of the concern was changed to Lever Brothers Company.

Growth was slow and steady until 1912 when Francis A. Countway became general manager and in 1918 president, an office which he held until his retirement in 1946. Under his leadership new developments followed in rapid succession. By innovation, advertising, and aggressive selling in the decade following 1918 four Lever brands: Lux Flakes, Rinso, Lux Toilet Soap, and Lifebuoy became leaders in their fields. During this period of rapid expansion a research and development laboratory was established to support the expanding product activities of the company. At the close of this period in 1929 with only the Cambridge plant, which had, of course, been increased enormously, the company had become the third largest manufacturer and distributor of soap and glycerine in the country.

The period 1930-41 was one of major expansion even though this was silhouetted against the background of the depression years. A

new soap plant was completed in Hammond, Ind., in 1930, and in 1933 a shortening plant was constructed in Edgewater, N.J. The latter signalled the entry of Lever



Lever, New York

Brothers Company into the edible products field with the vegetable shortenings Covo and Spry. In 1938 the company purchased the soap interests of the Hecker Products Corporation with plants at Baltimore, Md., and St. Louis, Mo. This acquisition added several new brands to the line, of which only

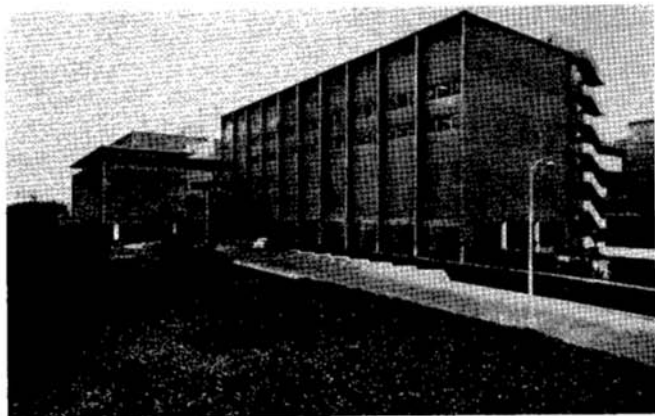
Silver Dust is still in existence. These plants have since been rebuilt and increased in capacity. In 1939 a modern headquarters building, known as Lever House, was erected in Cambridge.

DURING the war years with the exception of the introduction of Swan Soap there was relatively little new product activity. In 1944 Lever acquired the Pepsodent Company of Chicago which marked its entry into the dentifrice and toiletries field. After 48 years of service Mr. Countway retired in 1946, and Charles Luckman succeeded him as president. Diversification and growth continued with the purchase of the John F. Jelke Company, a pioneer manufacturer of margarine and other related products in 1947. The company also entered the light-duty detergent field this year with the product Breeze and in 1948 began marketing the heavy-duty detergent Surf.

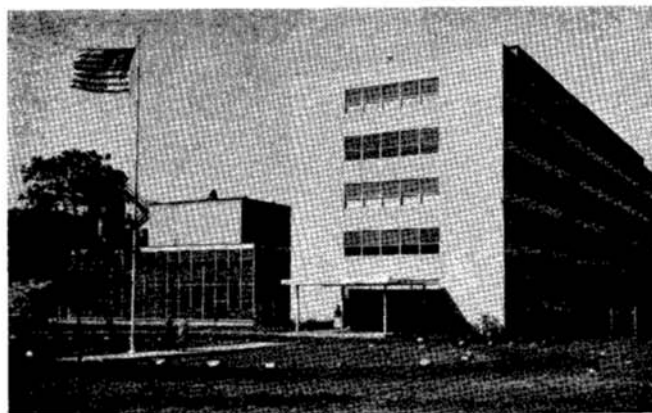
This same year Lever pioneered the use of fluorescent dyes to whiten cottons efficiently, introducing these agents, under the name of Solium, into Rinso. Today after years of intensive study and development dyes of this type are universally used by the detergent industry.

In 1949 the headquarters were removed from Cambridge to New York and housed in temporary locations. The following year saw a change in administration with Jervis J. Babb as president and John M. Hancock as chairman of the board.

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Lever, Los Angeles

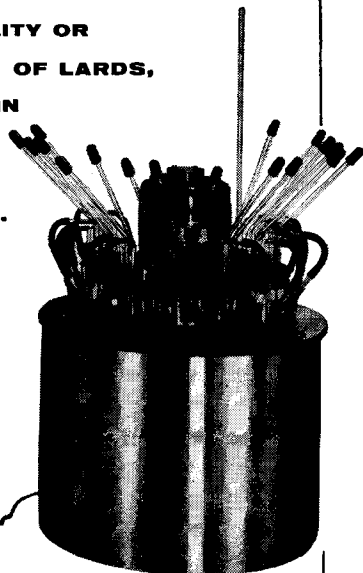
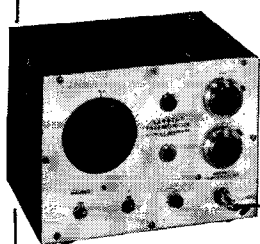


Lever, Edgewater

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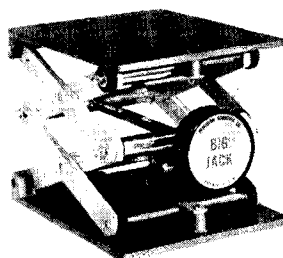
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• A.O.C.S. Commentary

(Continued from page 4)

In 1951 one of the most modern detergent and soap plants in the world was put in operation in Los Angeles. With the subsequent installation of edible fats and oils facilities this now manufactures most of the Lever products that supply the fast-growing West Coast market. In April 1952 Lever House was completed, and the new headquarters organization came together under one roof for the first time. This new glass and stainless steel building was hailed by architects "as one of the three most significant buildings in the field of architecture in America."

Of great importance to the future success of the company was the completion of the new Research and Development Center at Edgewater, N.J., in mid-1952. From these laboratories has come a steady stream of new products, of which Lux Liquid, Wisk, Handy Andy, Dove, Praise, Imperial Margarine, Stripe tooth paste, and Lucky Whip topping are among the widely-distributed brands.

WILLIAM H. BURKHART became president in 1955 and also assumed the duties of chairman of the board in 1958. Subsequently in early 1959 Milton C. Mumford was elected president while Mr. Burkhart retained chairmanship of the board. The introduction of new products and growth is continuing under their leadership. In addition to the marketing of new products the company's brands were augmented by the acquisition of the "all" products from the Monsanto Chemical Company in mid-1957 and of "air-wick" room deodorizers in 1958. In 1959 Lever moved into the frozen food specialty field by the purchase of the Dinner Redy Corporation.

Advertising and promotion are the means by which the industry is able to move large volumes of quality products from the grocery shelves into the hands of the housewife. Lever has been one of the leaders in this area and currently is one of the three largest buyers of television time, sponsoring or cosponsoring 16 daytime and six evening programs. Half of the latter are among the top ten in popularity ratings.

Frequently a company is thought of as an entity unto itself. This is not so. A company is people, the men and women who make its plans, set its policies, and do its work. Their skill, experience, and loyalty make up the driving force that maintains the business and paves the way for future progress. In Lever Brothers Company more than 40% of the staff have been with the company 10 years or more, and it is on this sound foundation that future progress is predicated.

L. B. PARSONS, Vice President

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