

## Osborn Since 1887

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### OSBORN SINCE 1887

The year was 1887 and Grover Cleveland was President of the United States. The Cleveland Blues was a professional baseball team. They played for two seasons in League Park (1887-1888) in the American Association. Cleveland, OH, emerged in the early 20th Century as an important American manufacturing center. And an engineer named John J. Osborn left his job as superintendent at the National Carbon Company, in Cleveland, and purchased equipment and brush designs from Mr. L. C. Abraham, also of Cleveland.

Initially, his principal products ranged from horse and butcher block brushes to street cleaning brooms. Thus was born Osborn Manufacturing Company at 106 Canal Street. Just three years later, F. Wayland Brown took over the business. In 1892, Brown was considering selling the company when he discovered his friend, Franklin G. Smith, was interested in buying the business. Completing a deal, Wayland and his brother, Milton, owned 50 percent of the Osborn Manufacturing Company, while Franklin Smith owned 48 percent – which he bought with \$2,100 borrowed from his uncle Henry Sherwin, founder of Sherwin-Williams Company. Henry Sherwin and a secretary in the office owned the remaining 2 percent.

### FOR HORSES AND BUTCHER BLOCKS

When Brown took over, there were about 10 employees on the staff, including office help, brush makers and salesmen. In the meantime, the company moved to 18 Huron Road, where it shared a building with a laundry as well as a candy and noodle factory. Osborn's largest and most profitable line was a series of horse brushes made of fine steel wire. The employees filled them all by hand with coiled wire cut to length on a cam operated machine – the only machine in the shop. The women would bend the wire in the form of hairpins and force it down, loop fashion, into the bored holes in wood blocks.

Other early Osborn products were flat wire brushes for the foundry industry, butcher-block brushes, street cleaning brushes and round wire push brooms. In 1894, the Brown brothers needed cash, so they decided to sell their Osborn shares to Franklin Smith. When the deal closed in 1895, Franklin Smith owned 97 percent of the business. He would continue to be actively involved in Osborn's operations until his death in 1968 – making his tenure with Osborn an amazing 76 years.

### MOVING UP ... AND OUT

In 1902, Osborn moved to Hamilton Avenue in Cleveland. The land consisted of a 100-foot frontage, running back to the Pennsylvania and New York Central Railroad tracks. The main building was two stories high, with an office on the first floor. The property also included a one-story frame building used for storage of the brush blocks, fiber and other materials.

During the more than 100 years on Hamilton Avenue, Osborn expanded to over 350,000 square feet. But as productivity improvements and changing customer demographics continued to impact the business, the company opened a new primary brush manufacturing operation in Richmond, IN, in July 2004. This new, modern and efficient facility of 180,000 square feet provided an optimized distribution location to serve Osborn's ever-expanding North American customer base, and also provided for improved efficiencies in manufacturing operations.

### GOING AND GROWING STRONG

A good bit of Osborn's growth through the years came from acquisitions and product line expansions. In 1906, Osborn bought the Rice Manufacturing Company, of New Durham, NH. It consisted of a wire brush works, a wood working mill and an enameling facility. The entire brush operation, except for a couple of product lines, was brought to Cleveland. The New Durham plant continued operating until 1916.

Shortly after the turn of the century, Osborn employed an enterprising brush salesman who serviced a large number of foundry accounts. He observed the arduous physical labor involved in producing sand molds for casting, so he invented the first successful mold-making machine. This resulted in Osborn establishing its Machinery Division in 1908. Through the ensuing years, this division produced sand molding and core-blowing equipment; sand storage, conditioning and distribution systems; pneumatic bulk conveying systems; and overhead rail crane equipment. Osborn innovation led the industry with the introduction of automatic molding and core blowing machines, attaining a position of eminence as a leading manufacturer of top quality equipment for the foundry industry. Osborn ultimately attained the distinction as the world's largest manufacturer of foundry equipment, with machines being exported to many parts of the world, including Russia and China.

Osborn foundry machinery also sold under license in South America, England and Japan. In the late 1920's, Osborn formed the Societe Anonyme des Machines — Osborn (SAMO), a wholly owned subsidiary near Paris, France, to manufacture and sell the standard line of foundry equipment in Europe. In the early 1960's, Osborn introduced its automatic molding and core blowing equipment to the European market through SAMO and J.W. Jackman, of Manchester, England. SAMO eventually became one of the leading manufacturers of quality foundry equipment in Europe. Osborn discontinued the manufacture of grinding wheels in 1984, selling the grinding wheel division to Ramron Inc. Osborn's Machinery Division continued until 1986, when, as part of the reorganization under Jason Incorporated, it was sold to Equipment Merchants International, Inc. (EMI), of Cleveland, along with the exclusive right to the Osborn trademark for foundry equipment. However, the right to manufacture and sell the line of Load Runners® idler rollers was preserved (introduced later).

The acquisition and expansion momentum continued. In July of 1911, Osborn purchased

and operated, until 1919, the American Wire Brush Company, of New York City. Meanwhile, in March of 1912, Osborn acquire The Colonial Brush & Manufacturing Company, of Milwaukee, WI. This entity continued in operation until early 1916 when manufacturing was discontinued and the building was converted to a sales office and warehouse. To meet government demands, in 1918 Osborn opened a plant in Newark, NJ, along with a smaller plant in Cleveland, to manufacture rifle-cleaning brushes. These operations were discontinued in January 1919 when the government no longer needed these brushes.

The spring of 1920 saw the purchase of a large tract of land on the Big Four Railway in Grafton, OH. There, Osborn erected a modern foundry for the production of its own castings, later selling the business in 1933 to the W.O. Larson Foundry Company. Cotton mops, dusters and liquid polish came into the product fold in January of 1926, when Osborn purchased the assets of the Do-All Manufacturing Company. This company operated as an Osborn subsidiary until the summer of 1927. Osborn also maintained a jobbing foundry supply business in Detroit, MI, up until early 1926 when it was sold to the manager. Paint and varnish brushes had been part of the Osborn line for many years, but they were manufactured by another company.

Then, an ideal opportunity presented itself to purchase The Rubico Brush Manufacturers, Inc., a paintbrush manufacturer in New York City. Rubico operated as a subsidiary from 1927 until 1951, when Osborn in Cleveland then assumed the assets and the business operated as the Rubico Brush Manufacturers, Division of The Osborn Manufacturing Company. Rubico was dissolved in August 1970.

Another new line came on stream in October of 1938 when Osborn purchased the assets and good will of Johns Conveyor Corporation of Newark, NJ. This included the exclusive license to manufacture a certain type of patented conveyor in the United States. In the first year; Johns Conveyor was devoted to engineering, development and the setting up of sales agencies in 12 major U.S cities. Near the end of 1938, the operations of Johns Conveyor moved to Cleveland. During World War II, the scarcity of rubber tubing – a key element in the conveyors –resulted in this Division being inactive until the war ended. Production did resume, and Osborn continued in this business until the early 1960's.

## MAINTENANCE MOVES

Rapid growth and expansion in Cleveland prompted a decision in 1946 to separate the maintenance from the power brush manufacturing facilities. Osborn purchased six acres in Henderson, KY, and production of maintenance brushes began there in early 1947. Henderson was chosen as a plant site in 1946 because of its proximity to lumber used in the making of brush blocks. Production began after a new 16,000-squarefoot building was equipped. The plant eventually grew to 65,000 square feet, but was closed in 1992 and operations moved to a new plant in Nogales, Mexico. The Nogales facility manufactures Osborn maintenance brushes today, after which they are shipped to Richmond, IN, for

distribution.

### A NEW LINE GETS ROLLING

Back in the foundry machinery area, Osborn's automated mold making systems employed needle bearing style cam followers to move heavy flasks from one part of the operation to another. They could handle the radial loads, but were poor performers where thrust loads were involved. Besides, the seals were not completely effective in keeping contaminants out and the lubricant in. This resulted in premature failure and costly downtime for replacement. Osborn's engineering innovation went to work in the early 1960's and came up with a totally new line of heavy-duty Load Runners® Idler-Rollers. They incorporate ball and tapered roller bearings, special seals, and the needed quantity and grade of lubricant. The result: Load Runners® Idler-Rollers lasted longer than anything else in the foundry business, which led to applications in other industries such as oil, aerospace, shipbuilding and automotive.

### REACHING OUT AROUND THE WORLD

Osborn Manufacturing Company lost no time in going international. As early as 1890, under F. Wayland Brown's leadership, Osborn operated a brush manufacturing plant in Brussels, Belgium. The formation of the Societe Anonyme des Machine — Osborn (SAMO) in Paris, mentioned above, remained an Osborn subsidiary until Jan. 1, 1986.

SAMO's success led Osborn into a similar arrangement for its power brush line with the acquisition in 1969 of the German brush-manufacturing firm Schmitz & Ludwig GmbH. Initially, both power and maintenance brushes carried the Schmitz & Ludwig name. Since early results were disappointing, Osborn reoriented its approach to the European brush market in 1972 by forming a wholly owned U.S. subsidiary, the Osborn Manufacturing International Company (TOMICO). The new approach permitted TOMICO to take advantage of the reputation and quality associated with the Osborn name.

In October of 1975, when Giddings & Lewis purchased Osborn, they did not purchase TOMICO, but left the ownership with Sherwin-Williams, who in turn sold the operation in February of 1977 to Dendix Brushes Ltd., a brush manufacturer in the United Kingdom. Dendix had already become an Osborn licensee in 1952 under an agreement allowing it to use Osborn patents, manufacturing techniques and machinery. Because of a special stock payment arrangement, Osborn attained 18.7 percent shareholding in Dendix.

When Dendix acquired TOMICO in 1977, it changed the name to Osborn International (OSBIN), and Osborn's ownership increased to 25 percent. Then, a holding company called Brushes International emerged in The United Kingdom to oversee Dendix, OSBIN and other acquired brush-making companies, as well as the brush portion of SAMO. Osborn's share in Brushes International was sold to them prior to the formation of Jason Incorporated in 1986; however, Osborn still maintained license agreements and a working relationship with Brushes International companies.

In February 1998, Jason Incorporated acquired the Brushes International Ltd. group and proceeded to consolidate all operations under the common Osborn International name. In December 1999, the group expanded with the acquisition of Sinjet Nassjo Borst, adding an additional plant in Sweden and a subsidiary, Borstenfabriken Dan A/S, in Denmark, to the group. These acquisitions expanded the Osborn group's capabilities into specialized brush machine production and the field of road and runway sweeping brushes. That same year, Osborn purchased 40 percent ownership share of its Romanian partner and, in 2003, tripled the size of the Romanian facility. Osborn also relocated its operation in Sao Paulo, Brazil, into a newer and larger facility to keep pace with the company's growing global business.

In December 2000, the group was again expanded with the acquisition of Maltarp A/S, in Denmark, and Industrial Brushes Ltd., in England. Those operations were soon consolidated into the existing Danish and Welsh operations. Then came the acquisition of Astro Brush SA, in Valencia, Spain, in January 2003 which extended the Osborn presence into that country.

### OWNERSHIP THROUGH THE YEARS

For its first 80 years (1887 - 1967) in business, Osborn operated as an entirely independent organization. Since 1892, the Smith family - first the father, Franklin, and then the son, Norman - ran the company. Then, in 1968, many events changed Osborn's course. In May, Franklin Smith passed away, and soon after, Norman, who had been president since 1951, decided to retire.

On Sept. 3, 1968 the Sherwin- Williams Company, of Cleveland, acquired Osborn as a wholly-owned subsidiary. Although this was primarily a diversification move, Sherwin-Williams had been well acquainted with Osborn for many years, both through family ties and business relationships. Later, a significant change in Sherwin-Williams' long-term growth objectives shifted the focus to strengthening its retail presence rather than the company's industrial operations.

As a result, on Oct. 8, 1975, Osborn became a wholly owned subsidiary, and later a division of, Giddings & Lewis, Inc., a machine tool manufacturer headquartered in Fond du Lac, WI. In June of 1979, Osborn acquired its own subsidiary, the Jackson Buff Company, of Conover, NC. This company manufactures buffing and polishing wheels, and buffing compounds for the metal finishing and furniture industries. When Giddings & Lewis restructured in 1982, Jackson Buff became a separate division of G & L.

The era of large conglomerate holding companies was still flourishing when one of them, AMCA International, in July of 1982, acquired Giddings & Lewis as well as Osborn Manufacturing. Soon Osborn and Jackson Buff were both included in AMCA's Aerospace Division.

## ENTER JASON INCORPORATED

In 1985, AMCA International decided to divest itself of several companies. Among them were Osborn Manufacturing, Jackson Buff, and Janesville Products, of Norwalk, OH, a maker of automotive trim products. Two enterprising AMCA executives, Vincent Martin, who was AMCA's group vice president – industrial products; and Mark Train, executive vice president – finance, resigned from AMCA and joined with the three division presidents to form a new company to acquire these three businesses. They named their new company Jason Incorporated, which officially began business as a Delaware corporation on Nov. 8, 1985. Jason purchased the operating assets of Osborn, Jackson Buff and Janesville Products effective Jan. 1, 1986. On June 16, 1987, public trading in Jason began on the NASDAQ exchange. In May 2000, Jason once again privatized with more than 40 key management members assuming an ownership share.

## INTO THE SECOND CENTURY

Osborn International is the world's largest manufacturer of power brushes and maintenance products. It has manufacturing facilities in 15 countries, on 4 continents, and sales in over 120 countries. Osborn turns out thousands of different stock brushes and special brushes, ranging from a fraction of an inch to lengths up to 18 feet.

Osborn also markets extensive lines of top quality paint and varnish brushes, rollers and accessories, squeegees, abrasive cut-off wheels and industrial aerosols, as well as the leading line of heavy-duty idler-rollers. Innovation, careful attention to quality, extensive inventory, unmatched application assistance, a network of the best industrial distributors and the finest family of loyal employees are all ingredients that have made, and will continue to keep, Osborn the leader in its field.