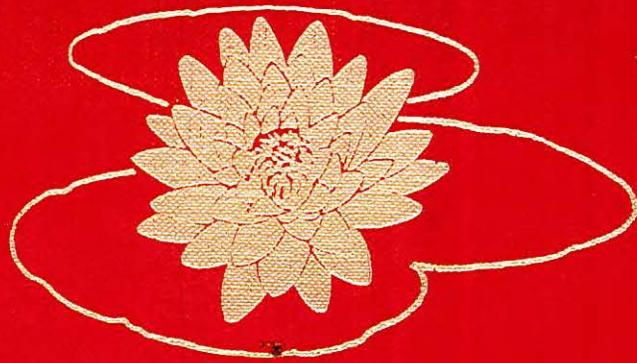
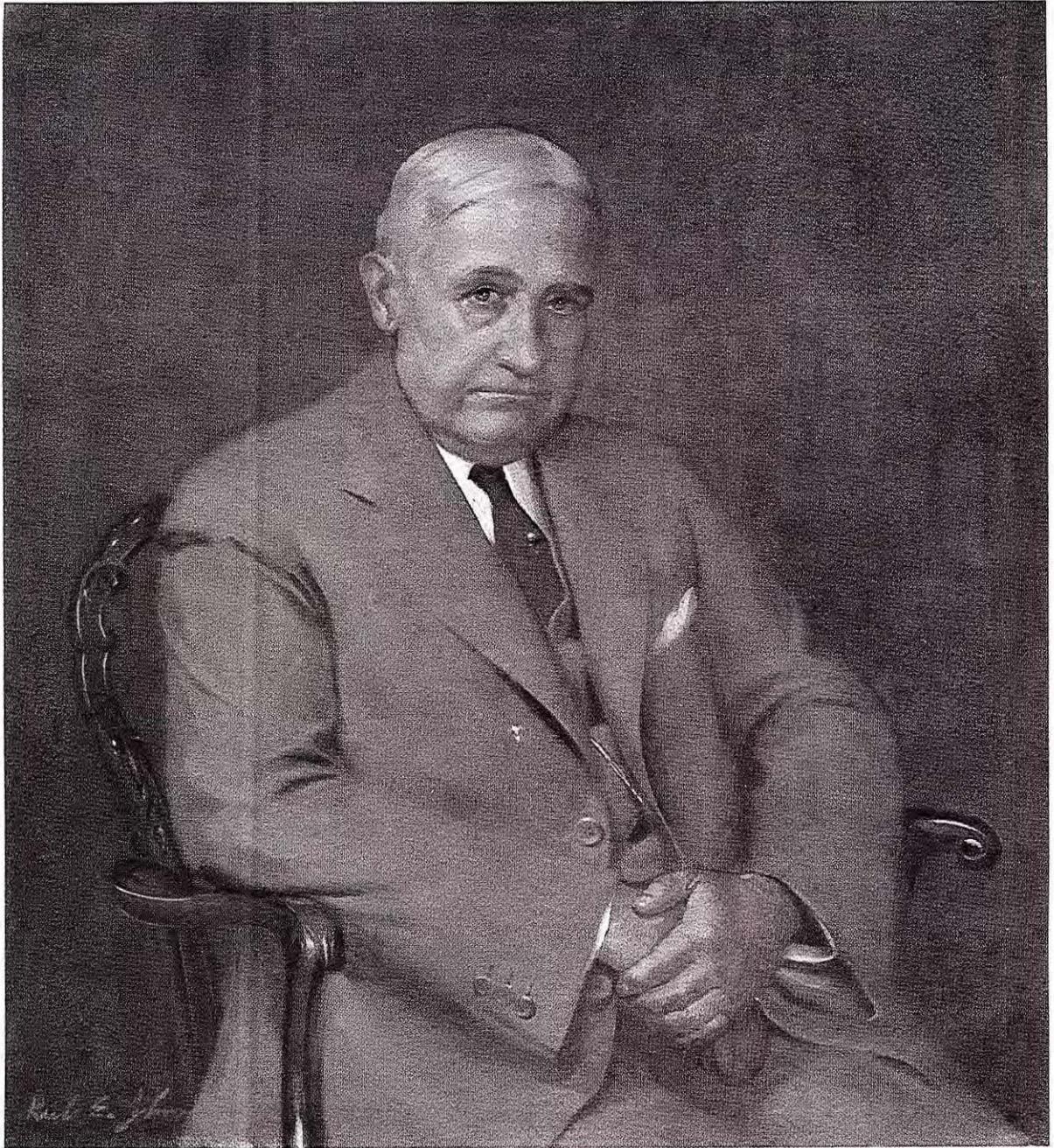


THE POND LILY COMPANY

*The Story of
One American Business*





SERENO CLARK SPERRY

President of the Pond Lily Company 1929-1935

Secretary 1912-1925

Treasurer 1925-1929



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THE POND LILY COMPANY

The Story of One American Business

BY

JOHN FRANCIS WELCH

1902-1970

PRIVATELY PRINTED

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

1943

(Revised 1971)

TO

SERENO CLARK SPERRY

*The personal loyalties that he
commanded will outlast his great
contribution to the material suc-
cess of this company.*



SERENO CLARK SPERRY, JR.
(1891 - 1964)

President of The Pond Lily Company 1944 - 1964

Joined the Company in June 1912. Elected a Director and Secretary 1925, Secretary-Treasurer in 1935 and President in 1944. Served the Company faithfully for 52 years.



JOHN FRANCIS WELCH
(1902 - 1970)

President of The Pond Lily Company 1964 - 1970

Joined the Company in February 1920. Elected Assistant Treasurer in 1947, Treasurer in 1954, a Director in 1956 and President & Treasurer in 1964. Served the Company faithfully for 50 years.



PAUL A. SPERRY

Chairman of the Board & Chief Executive Officer

December 8, 1971

TODAY marks the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of The Pond Lily Company. Through peace-time and war-time, times of prosperity and times of depression, and through the technological advances of the 20th century, The Pond Lily Company has grown.

This book, an updated version of one originally written by the late John Francis Welch, is a history of the past seventy-five years of The Pond Lily Company and of the mills that preceded it. It also traces the paths of one of our earliest settlers and his descendents through the history of the land.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank each of you, our past and present employees, customers, vendors, and friends for your part in helping us to make the first seventy-five years of The Pond Lily Company successful.

Paul Sperry

History is the essence of innumerable biographies.—CARLYLE

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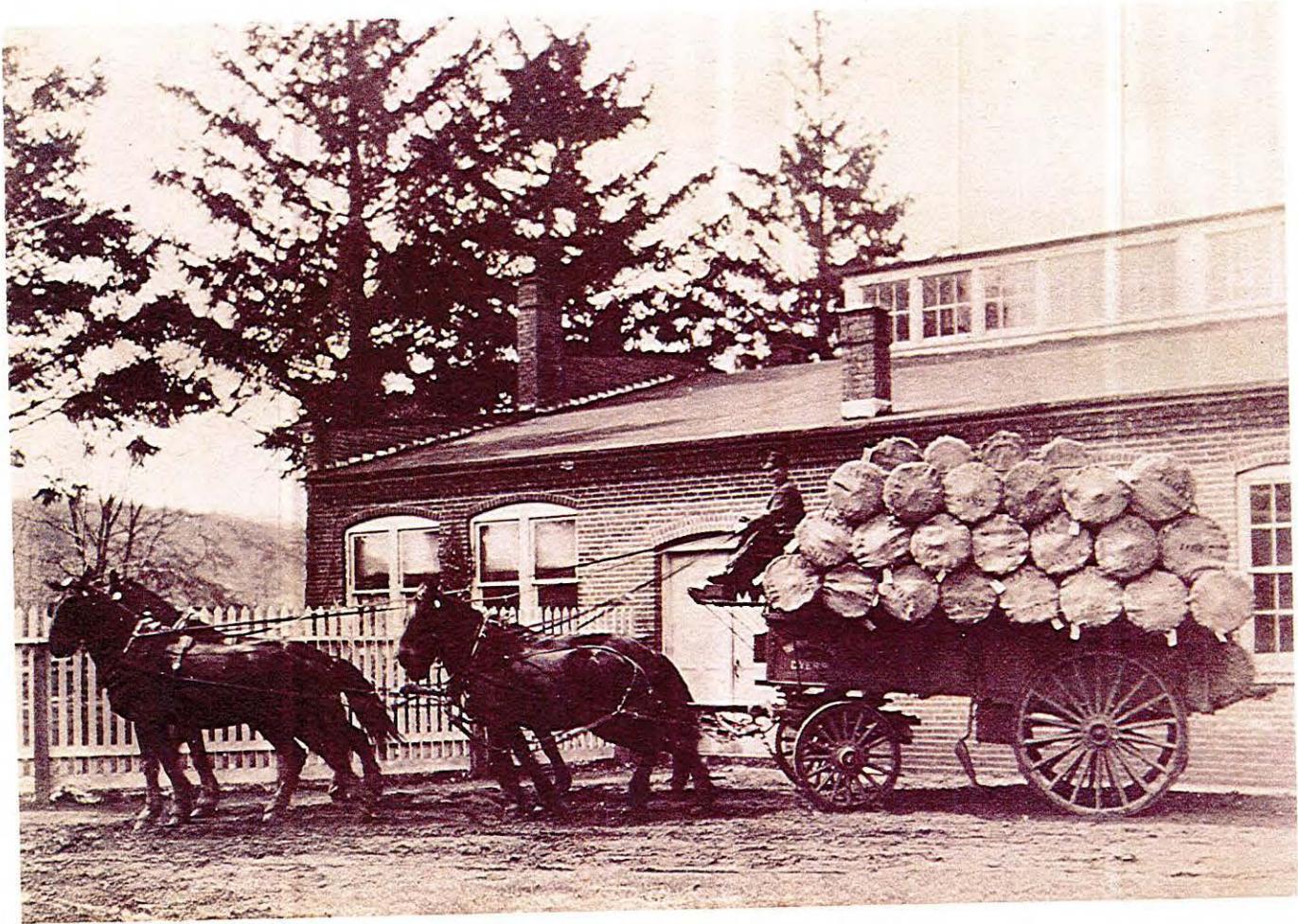
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Early Twentieth Century—A Shipment Leaving the Mill

I.

THE CAVE ON THE ROCK-TOP

ON A SPRING day in the year 1661, Richard Sperry, a frontier farmer, left his house early in the evening and crossed his fields where the mills of The Pond Lily Company now stand. In addition to his heavy flint-lock musket he carried a package and a jug.

From the border of the cleared land a forest stretched over the gentle slopes that marked the approach to a high rock formation. The rock was massive and forbidding, hundreds of feet high and thickly wooded. No trails led to its summit. Ascent was difficult and few men had been to its top. Wandering bands of Indians sometimes hunted in the forest that covered it, but the white settlers seldom made the difficult climb.

Into the forest the man strode as the darkness gathered. Some distance up the first slope he reached the objective that he sought, a low, hollow tree-stump. There he carefully concealed the package and the jug. Carrying only his musket now, he retraced his steps. When he reached the cleared land again, the last rays of the sun had disappeared. He recrossed his fields, guided through the darkness by the candle-lighted windows of his farmhouse in the distance.

During the spring and summer of that year Richard Sperry made the same journey on many nights; and thereby he risked being hanged.

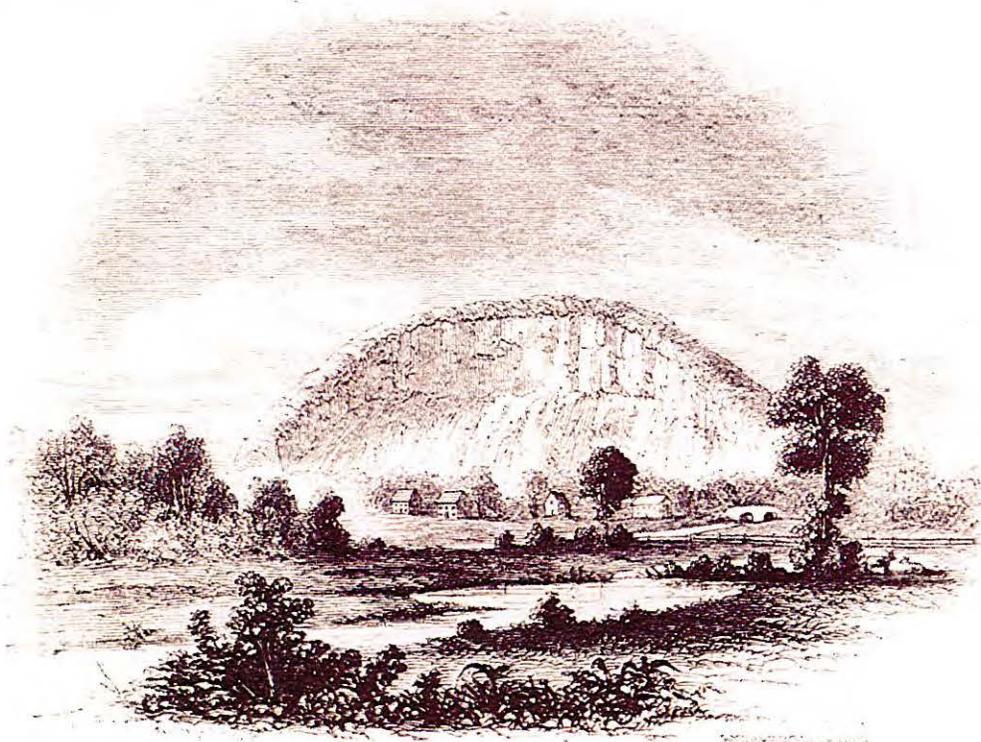


A year earlier, in July, 1660, William Goffe and Edward Whalley had landed at Boston. They were two of the judges who had decreed the beheading of King Charles I of England. When Charles II was restored to the throne one of his first acts was to order the arrest of the judges who had condemned his father. Nineteen of the regicides surrendered, other luckless ones were taken as they attempted to flee,

THE CAVE ON THE ROCK-TOP

of these ten were promptly beheaded. Whalley and Goffe reached the colonies safely. The people of Boston received them openly, believing that they would be pardoned by the new king. But word soon came that King Charles' officers were on their way to Boston with warrants for the arrest of the judges.

Thus began one of the strangest series of adventures in the history of the early colonies. For a year the judges travelled from town to town. At times they were sheltered and fed by friends. Often during that year they were set upon by highwaymen or Indians. At times their pursuers lagged and the judges enjoyed periods of comparative safety. But at other times the pursuit became close and the trail hot, then they made hairbreadth escapes. Early one morning they arrived in the colony of New Haven where they were given shelter in the town. Soon afterward a messenger arrived with news that the king's officers were closing in. A group of the citizens hurriedly met with the judges to consider plans for escape. In that group was Richard Sperry. He



The Rock

James Sperry Jr.

To all People to whom these Presents shall Come, Greeting.
KNOW YE, That I James Sperry of the Town and County of New Haven in the Colony of Connecticut For the Consideration of Ten pounds Lawfull money Full Satisfaction, of my Son James Sperry Jr. of P. Town

DO Give, Grant, Bargain, Sell and Confirm unto the said James Sperry Jr. and unto his heirs and assigns for ever One Certain piece of Land Situate in P. Town lying Eastward of my Dwelling house Containing in Quantity four acres more or less Bounded North and East on Land of Joseph Sperry South on Land of Mr. Tho: Darling and West upon a highway

To Have and to hold the above Granted and Bargained Premises, with the Appurtenances thereof, unto the said James Sperry Jr. his Heirs and Assigns for ever, to the said James Sperry Jr. and their own proper Heirs, Executors and Administrators, Covenant with the said James Sperry Jr. and his Heirs, Assigns, Executors and Administrators, That at and until the Enfeoffing these Presents, I do for my self and Heirs, well Seised of the Premises as a good indefeasible Estate in Fee Simple, and have good Right to Bargain and Sell the same in Manner and Form as is above Written, and that the same is free of all Incumbrances whatsoever. AND FURTHERMORE, I the said James Sperry do by these Presents bind my self and Heirs for ever, to WARRANT and Defend the above Granted and Bargained Premises to the said James Sperry Jr. his Heirs and Assigns, against all Claims and Demands whatsoever. In WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my Hand and Seal the 17th Day of July 1760 in the 34th Year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord George the Third of GREAT-BRITAIN, &c. KING. Anno

James Sperry - 

Signed, Sealed and Delivered in Presence of
Abig. Darling
Tho: Darling

New Haven County of New Haven July 17 1760
personally appeared James Sperry Signer and Sealer
of the foregoing Instrument & acknowledged to
be his free act & deed before me Tho: Darling Justice
of the Peace & Read July 17 1760 & Read
by Saml: Bishop Jr. Clerk

The First Deed to the Land

THE CAVE ON THE ROCK-TOP

father told him it was for men who were working in the forest. Not until years later did the boy learn the true identity of the two mysterious visitors who came on stormy nights always after dark, who supped with his family and were gone again before he arose in the morning.

After many months of living in this fashion the judges were forced to flee when the cave was accidentally discovered by a wandering band of Indians. Again Richard Sperry aided in the escape. When the judges were safely quartered in a nearby town he returned and took up the work of his land again.

Thus, more than a hundred years before the colonists broke in open rebellion against the injustices of the English kings, the spirit of that rebellion was alive. A generation later men of the same stamp made up the armies of Washington and the Continental Congress. These were the early signs of that love of liberty and freedom of action for which men risked their lives and often gave them.

Throughout the following years Richard Sperry and his family prospered. All around him the wilderness was being transformed into farms as more settlers came into the district. He added to his land many times. At his death this land was left to his sons who made further additions to it. In July, 1760, the first formal record of the land was filed in New Haven.

Then, when the colony of New Haven was expanding, when the outlying farms were producing and prospering, the dissatisfactions and discontents that had been growing in all of the colonies burst forth; the war of the Revolution began.

The outbreak of war marked the end of the period of expansion and development. For these men there was but one thing to do. In great numbers they left their farms, they abandoned the trade and commerce that had been built up through years of toil and effort, plans and hopes for the future were deferred. These things were not easy for them, they went to join the Continental armies grumbling, complaining, cursing and quarreling among themselves. They went to war because this was the more important thing, farming could wait, trade, and the building of towns and mills could be postponed for the more important goals: the freedom of the colonies, the founding of a nation. All other things could wait, or be abandoned if one

THE CAVE ON THE ROCK-TOP

fell by a British bullet. To these men this was their religion, their life.

Richard Sperry had been a symbol when, a century before, he strode in leathern tunic across the clearing that was his farm, bearing provisions for the regicides. His discovery would have meant his being condemned as an accomplice. He risked not only his own life but the place he was making in a new world for his good wife and their son, John. His duty was clear to him. He believed that the followers of Cromwell who ordered the execution of the king were in the right; that this was a first blow for liberty. Believing this, he had done his part without question, without regard for the risk.

The years that followed brought hunger and poverty to the Colonies. Bitterness and suffering were the common lot. The Colony of New Haven bore its share, it was attacked in July, 1779. A handful of the militia defended the town for most of one day but it was captured, sacked and partially burned by the British.

II.

THE MILL

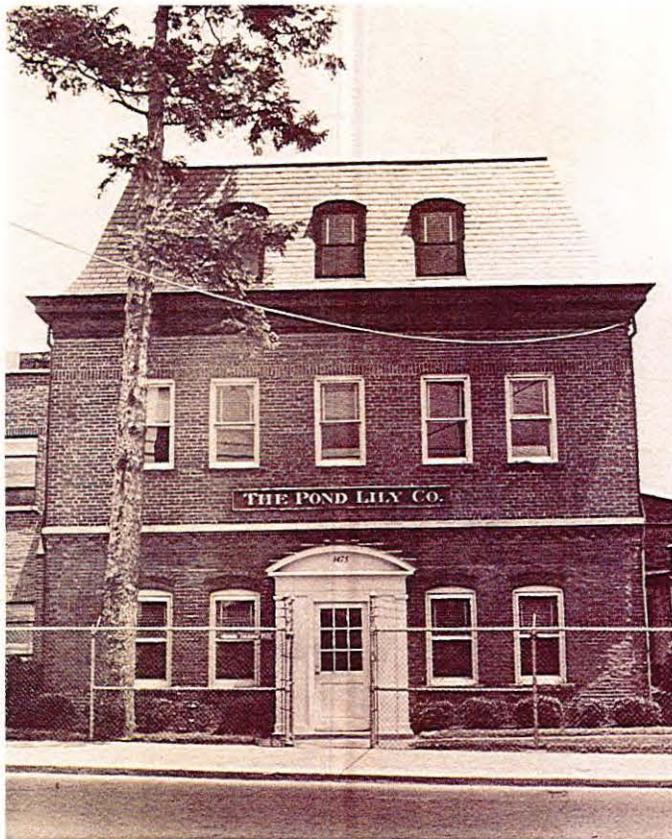
AT THE CLOSE of the war the men returned to the farms and the towns. It took many years to repair the damage of war and of disuse. There were many new problems now, self-government was difficult in its beginnings. But as the Colonies struggled through the changes from which they emerged as states under one central government, trade and expansion proceeded at a faster pace. Factories sprang up in New Haven and in the surrounding towns.

Levi Sperry, a descendant of Richard, saw the changes that were taking place and decided that there was need for a grist-mill in his district. He interested others in the idea. A river ran through his land; he built a dam to supply power, and finally, after much preparation and careful planning, the first mill was erected. This was in the year 1794.

The first venture was successful. Levi Sperry was an able man and he had spent much time in preparing. He knew well how much the mill was needed in the community and its importance to the farmers in his neighborhood and in the surrounding country. He foresaw the further development that would take place as the nearby farms grew in number and increased in size. The success of the mill was no accident, it was the result of vision, of foresight and of careful planning. For about fifty years the Sperry mill served farmers of the vicinity, grinding their corn and grain.

In 1809 James Brewster had formed a small company in New Haven to begin the manufacture of carriages. This business grew and other factories were opened. Before many years New Haven was becoming the carriage center of the world. With the rise of this new industry the life of the community was altered greatly; there were

Executive Offices



THE MILL

new demands on the city's resources and new opportunities in business and trade.

These events brought about a new decision affecting the future of the mill. Its owners saw at least a little of what was foreshadowed by the growth of industrialism. The grist-mill was closed and dismantled. Its close marked the ending of the whole era that had built it, kept it in operation, and that it symbolized so well. It had been a time of greatness; of great hopes and great beginnings for the nation. A new era was opening; a time of fulfillment and of growth.

On the site where the grist-mill stood a factory was erected for the manufacture of springs and axles to be used in carriages and in wagons. This business grew and prospered, following the rise of the New Haven carriage industry which it served.

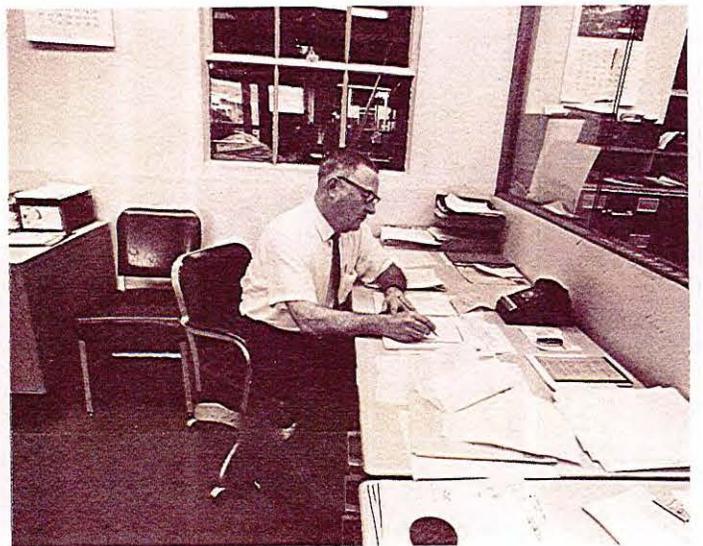
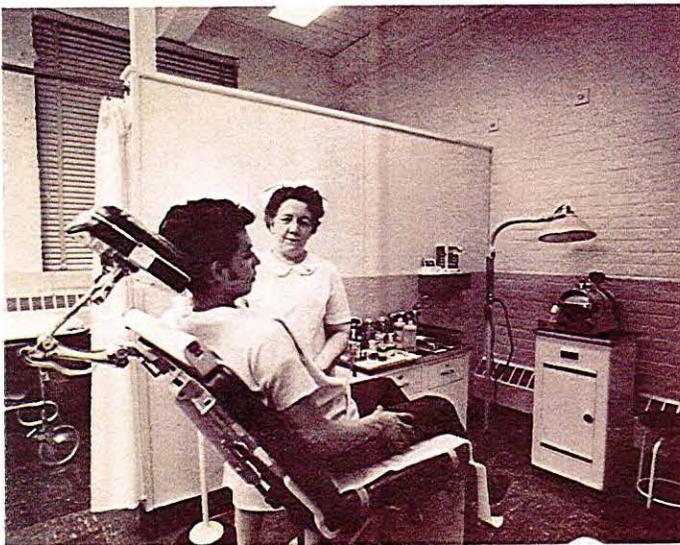
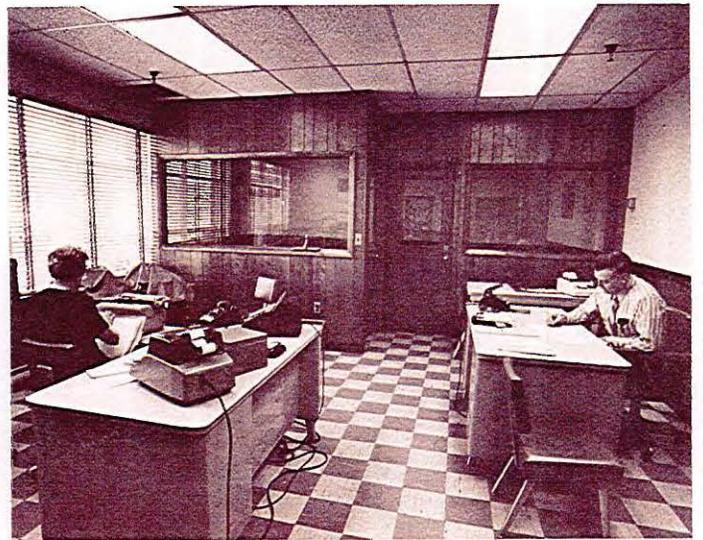
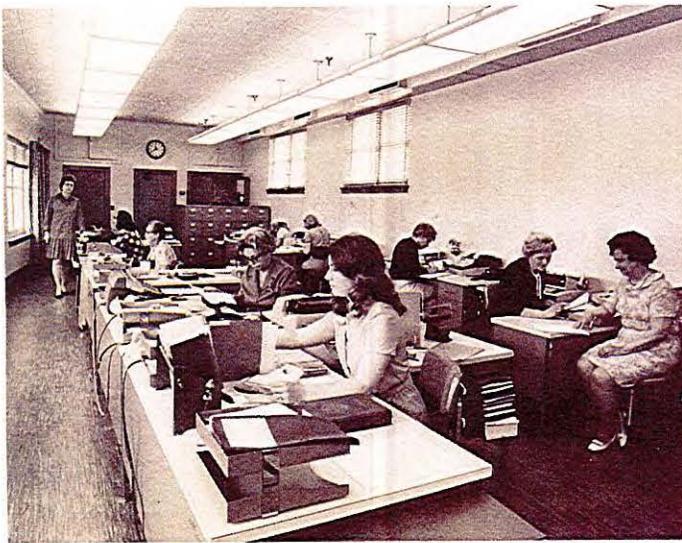
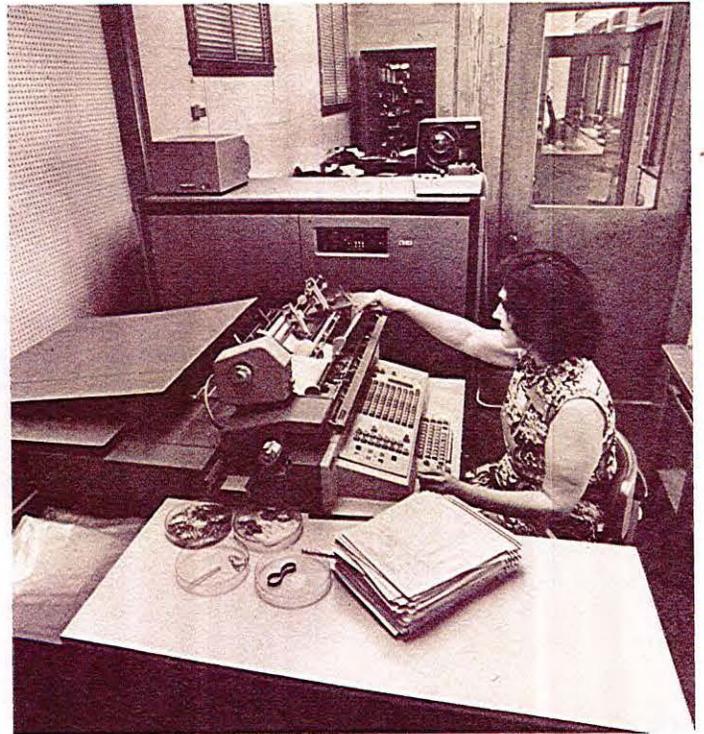
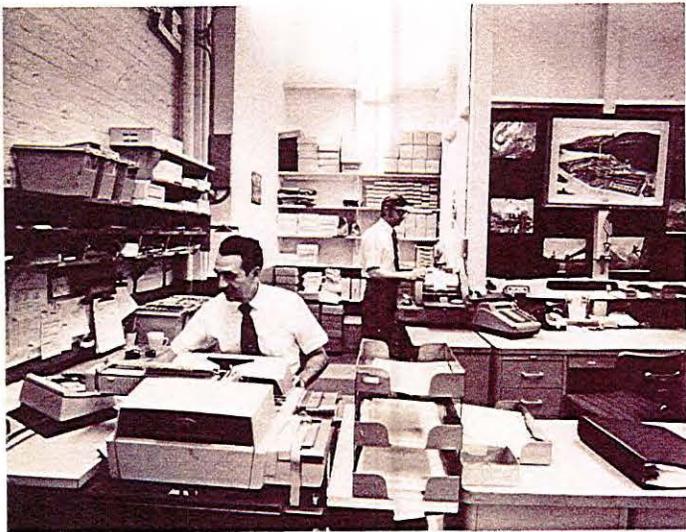
Several years later disaster struck. It was a disaster common at that time, especially to mills and factories situated as this one was, far from any town. On a night in winter in 1856, fire broke out; the entire plant was destroyed.

The factory was rebuilt and put into operation again. The rebuilding required a long time and it was probably several years before the business was entirely restored.

In 1861 war came again. This time the factories and the mills and the farms could not be abandoned as they had been during the Revolution. The armies of the Civil War were highly organized and depended on the transport of huge quantities of supplies by wagon. The axles and springs smashed on the wagons and gun carriages at Antietam and Vicksburg; at Gettysburg and Bull Run, had to be replaced. The plant supplied these in great quantities during the war years.

When the Civil War ended, the Nation struggled through a period of reconstruction. During this time the Company continued the manufacture of axles and springs. The years that followed brought many business changes. A severe depression struck the country immediately after the war. This continued until late in 1866. The return to normal trade conditions that followed was shaky and insecure. Many of the economic results of the war were yet to produce their effects. These economic factors were largely unknown and could not be measured,

Staff Offices



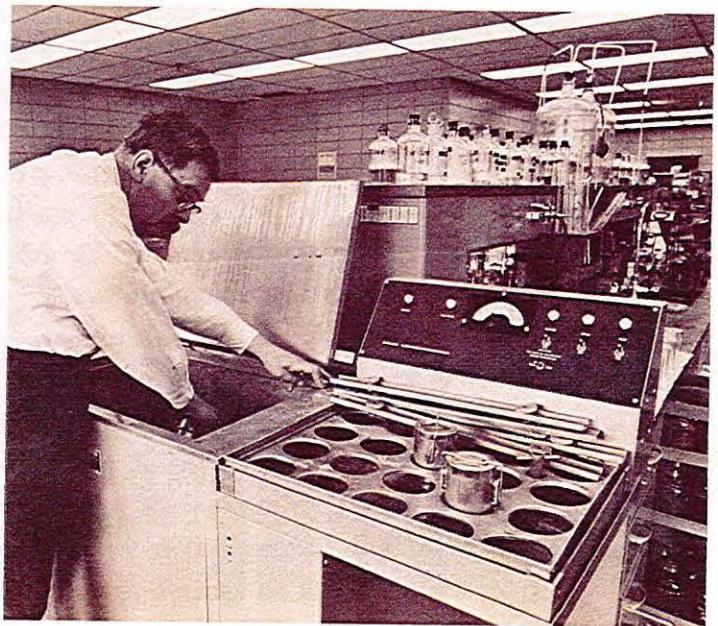
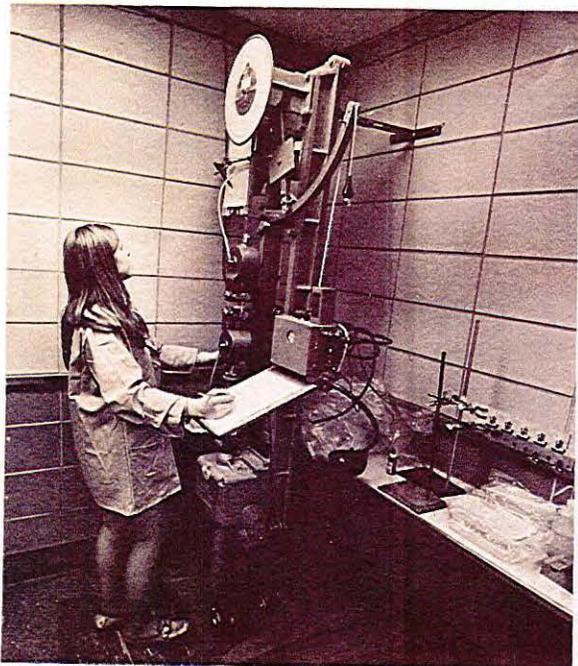
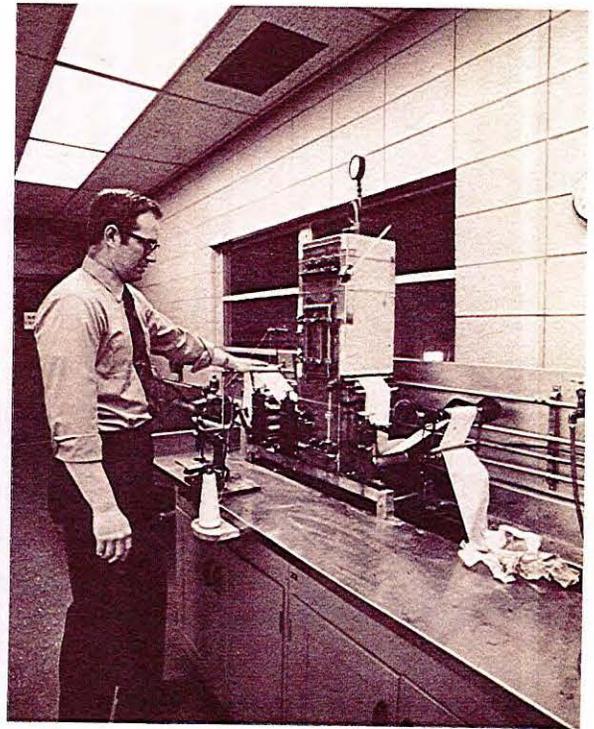
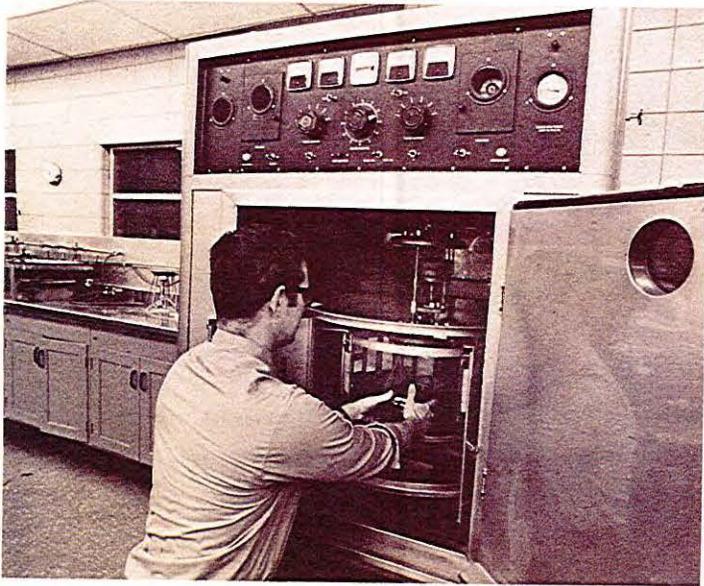
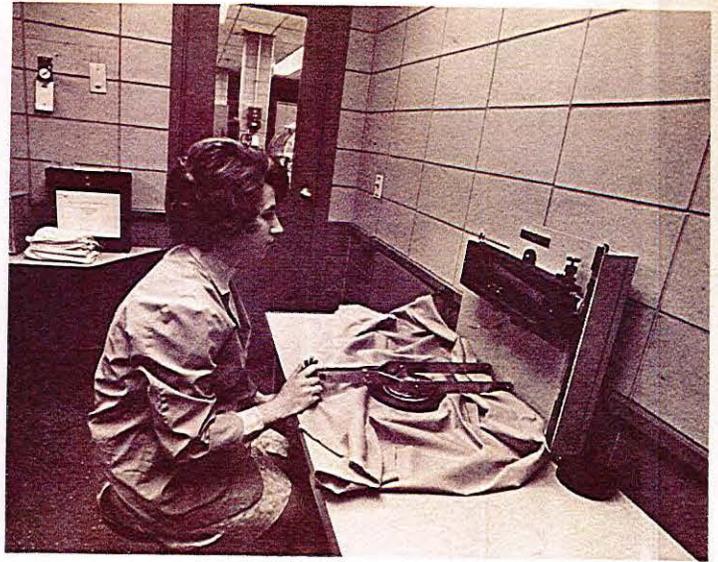
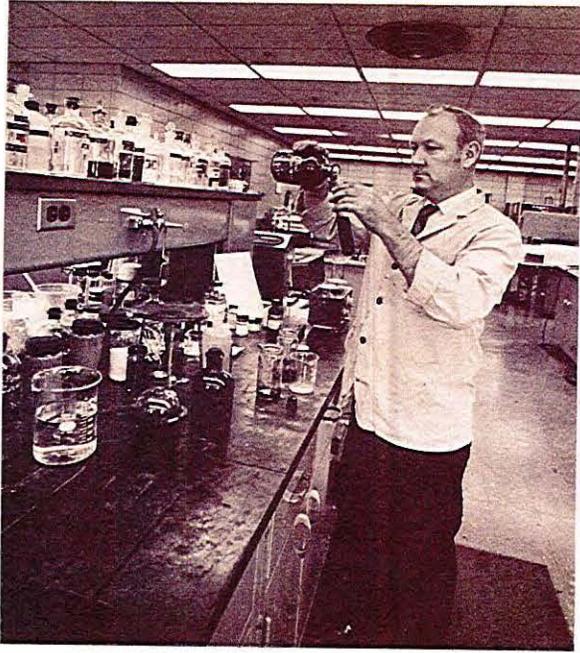
THE MILL

but their presence was felt and sensed, and they exerted a disturbing influence. Beginning in 1871, there was a general improvement in business conditions lasting until 1873. This was brought about by a sudden and sharp expansion of industry. This brief period was followed by a severe depression which lasted from 1873 until the middle of 1879.

During these times of uncertainty, the management of the Company decided to discontinue its manufacturing operations. Previous to this time, Joseph Parker had developed a new process for the manufacture of paper. His Company had operated a paper-mill near the Pond Lily mill. As the paper industry grew, other mills were built in the community. Because of the better prospects in the manufacture of paper and on account of an abundant water supply the Company's management, under the guidance of James Harper, decided to enter that business. The necessary changes were made and production was started.

The manufacture of paper was carried on successfully for many years. It was during this time that the plant became known as the Pond Lily Mill. This name was given it because of the lilies that grew in the mill pond which were famous in the neighborhood for their size and beauty.

Modern Laboratory Facilities for Research and Quality Control

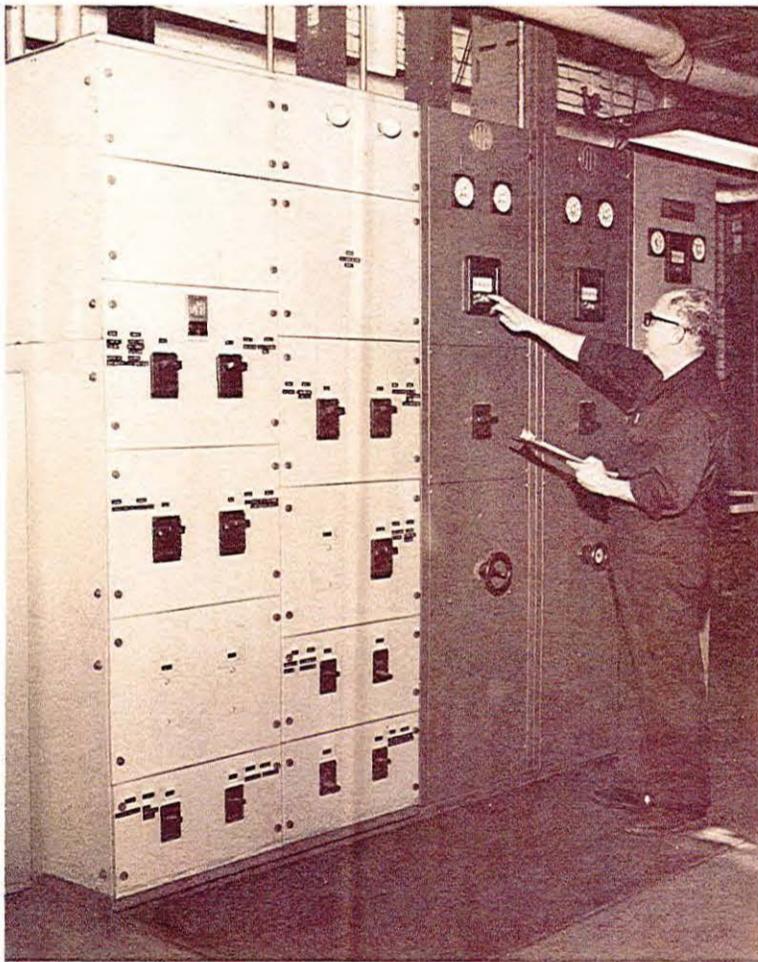
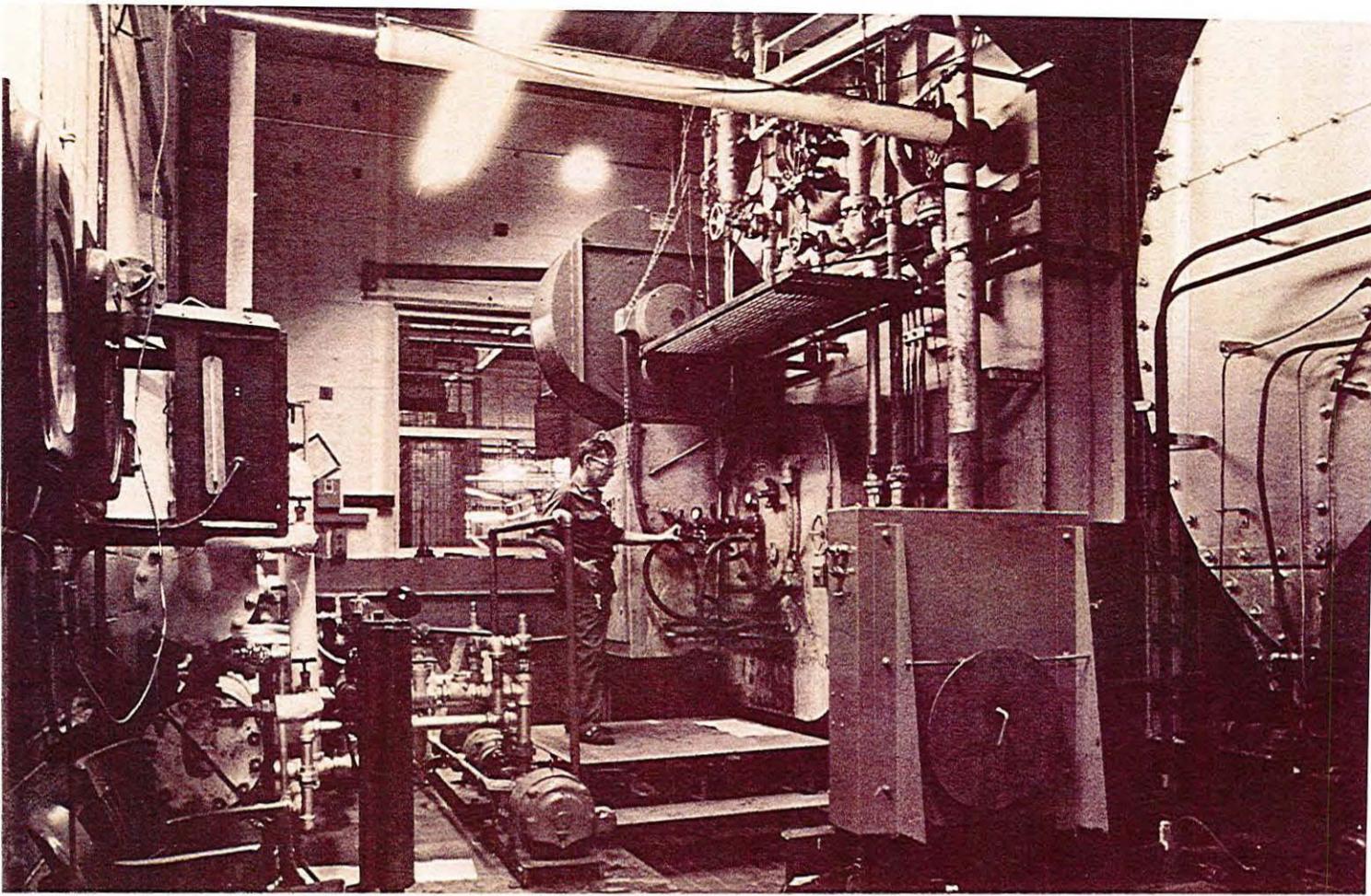


were to exert their force through a twisted skein of circumstances.

In 1915, after the war had been in progress for a year, the supplies of dyestuffs in the United States which had never been large, dwindled to nearly nothing. Almost all of these dyes, together with many vitally necessary chemicals had been imported from Germany. At the beginning of the war, reduced supplies had still reached this country. They were less than normal and shipment was irregular but this was to be expected. Then the British blockade tightened; more and more items were added to the lists of contraband. Shipments of dyes were further reduced—then stopped completely. That winter the last ship-load of dyes and chemicals reached New York where they were sold at fabulous prices. The situation grew desperate; our government lacked colors to print stamps and paper money; dyeing mills began to close as they exhausted the meager supplies they had in stock. On July 9, 1916, the cargo-submarine, *Deutschland*, made port at Baltimore, she carried a cargo that included some of the much needed dyes. Hope arose that regular shipments might be received via this route, but this hope was short-lived. If the journey was attempted again by other U-boats they were either sunk or turned back by the British patrols, for no other submarine reached this country.

This was the situation that The Pond Lily Company faced in 1915. The company managed to continue operations using its reserve stock that had been replenished as far as was possible whenever dyestuffs were available in even small quantities. But the company well knew that they faced the fate of the mills that had already closed unless the war ended quickly or a miracle happened. The war continued; but the miracle happened.

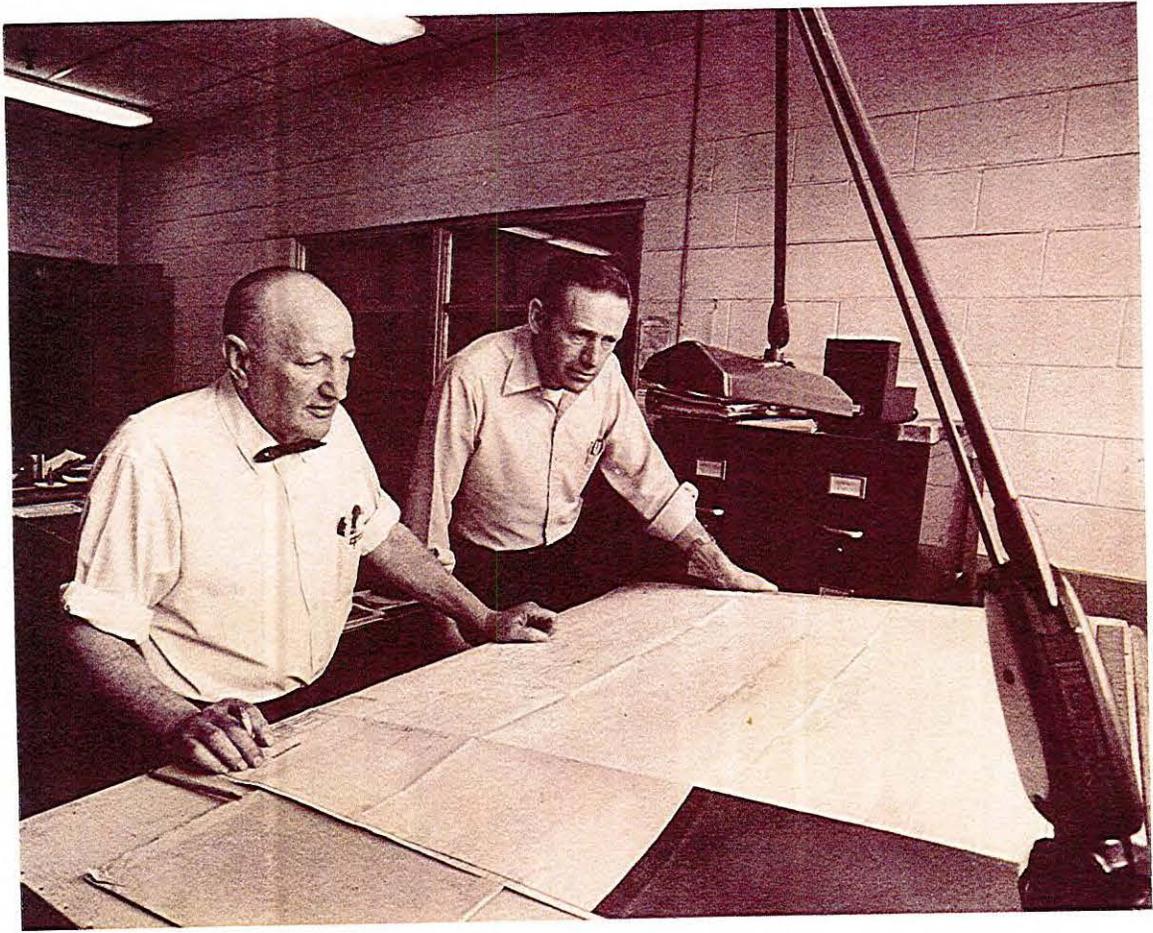
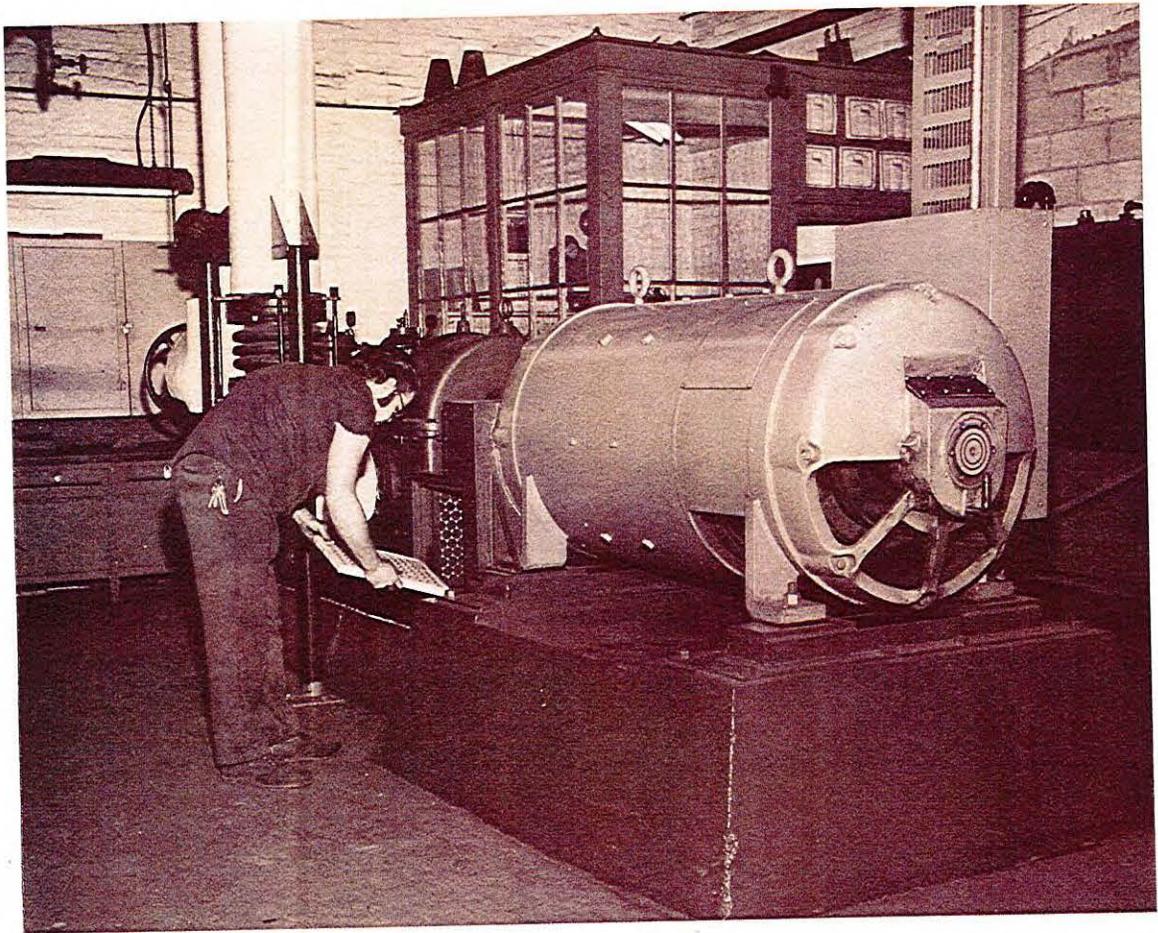
As soon as the dye shortage became apparent, American chemical manufacturers began to explore the possibilities of making dyes. This required work and imagination of heroic proportions. To start from bare beginnings, without trained chemists, without plant, apparatus or equipment, and to develop a whole new industry in time to save the dyeing mills that were faced with ruin, was a herculean task. That they succeeded in spite of the obstacles they faced was one of the greatest achievements of American industry. In an amazingly short time their plants were in production and a new American industry



Top. Boilers to produce steam for power and product.
Bottom. Electrical Power Controls to keep the machine

Next page.

Top. Steam Turbine Generator for D.C. power.
Bottom. Plant engineering office.



THE DYEING OF TEXTILES

was begun. This success meant that never again would the American mills be dependent on imports for their supplies of dyes.

When, in 1917, this country entered the war, great demands were made on the factories and mills of the nation. The Pond Lily Company made changes in its products. Work on fabrics to be used in civilian products were reduced; then, as the demands of the armies increased, was suspended. Soon all of the equipment and all of the energies of the plant were utilized in helping to supply the rapidly growing army. From that time until the armistice the mills ran night and day dyeing millions of yards of fabrics for the government.

The business boom that followed the post-armistice depression collapsed in 1920. From that time until the close of 1922, the Company was obliged to curtail its production in keeping with the general business conditions.

At about this time another problem was becoming apparent to the management. The genesis of this difficulty lay in the fact that The Pond Lily Company, from the time it entered the textile business, had been closely allied with the automotive industry. It had begun with the company's closeness to carriage manufacturing and had continued when that industry was replaced by the manufacture of the automobile.

During the war and immediately after it the engineers of the country had been busy with research. There had been many new discoveries and developments, particularly in the chemical industries, that were to alter the lives of the people as well as the business and industrial future. During these years America began its greatest period of industrial expansion. One of the things doomed by these improvements, however, was the open automobile.

The production of open cars had risen steadily from 1904 until 1923. The closed car had little popularity until 1919, when, with the many new improvements added to the closed models each year, its production rose sharply. It soon supplanted the open car in public favor. By 1923 the open car had reached its peak and began to decline. The decline was rapid, and by 1925 the management of The Pond Lily Company knew that its business of dyeing fabrics for the tops of open cars would not last much longer. They now faced the problem of expanding into some of the newly developed industries. They

THE DYEING OF TEXTILES

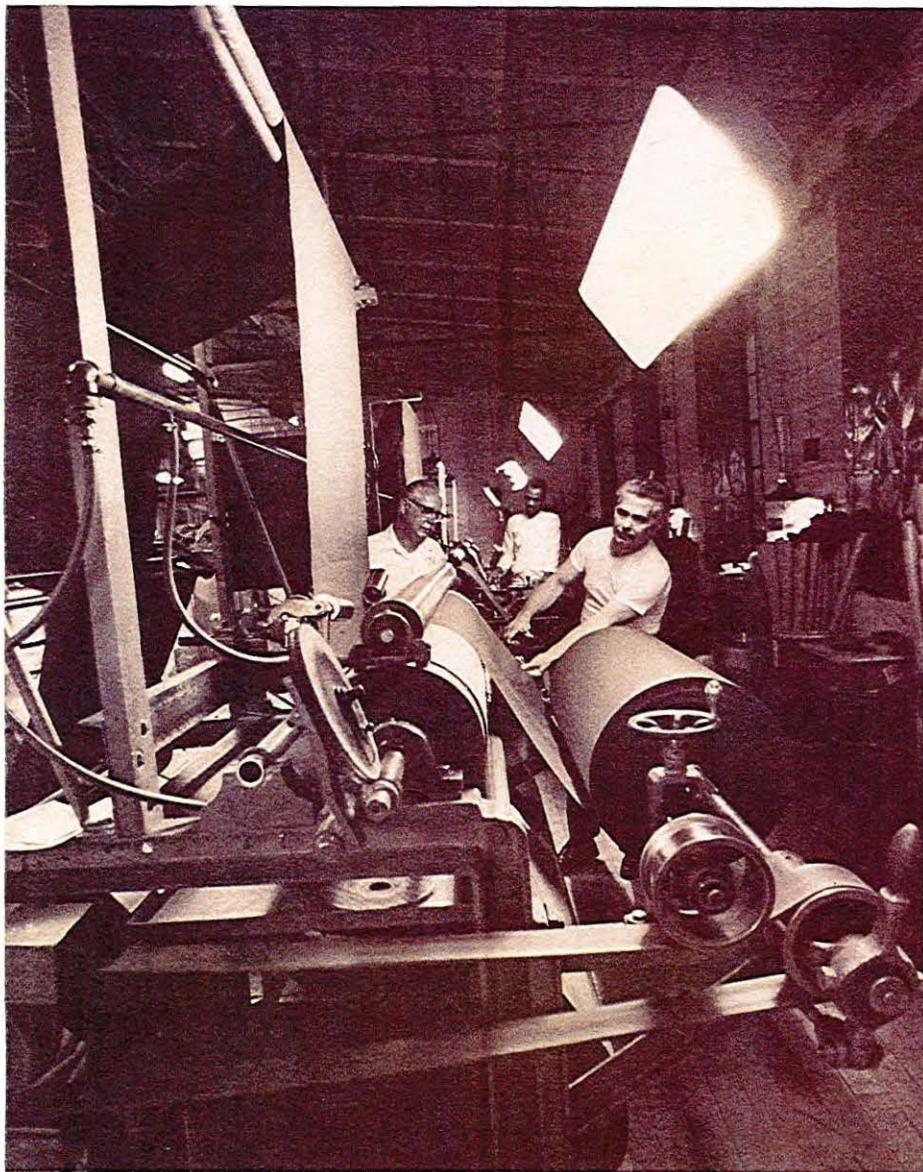
had long been aware of the dangers of being too closely allied with a single industry, and now that danger was becoming very real.

To find new markets and new industries meant judicious choice and prudent selection. Each choice meant large expenditures for machinery and equipment; for the expansion of buildings; and tedious, painstaking experiment and research. The new departures were begun. The clothing industries were explored and suitable markets selected. At this time there was also a good market in the artificial leather trade through which further expansion could be made. These, in addition to automobile topping fabrics for sport-model cars became the principal items in the company's production.

In 1929 the stock market boom collapsed. This event, foreshadowing catastrophe, ended the period of the "Coolidge Prosperity" which had reached its peak in the first year of Hoover's presidency. The depression that followed was the worst in American business history. Again the test of survival was to be applied, but this time it was to be a harder test, the hardest that business and industry had yet undergone, a time of economic darkness. It reached its lowest point, psychologically at least, in the "Bank Holiday," the days of near-panic when the banks of the country were closed to stop the mounting financial chaos. The actual business depression continued with only slight improvement through President Roosevelt's first term.

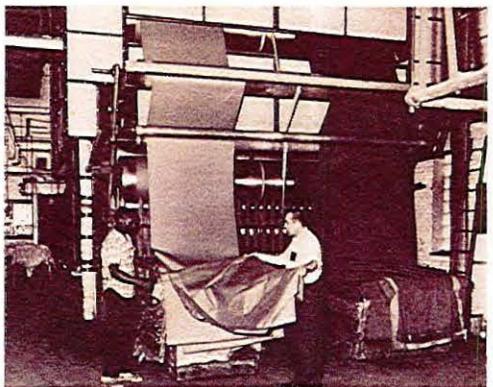
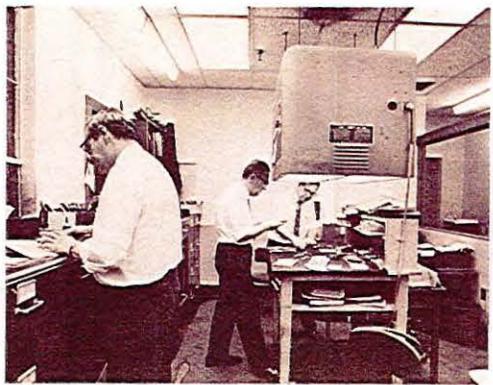
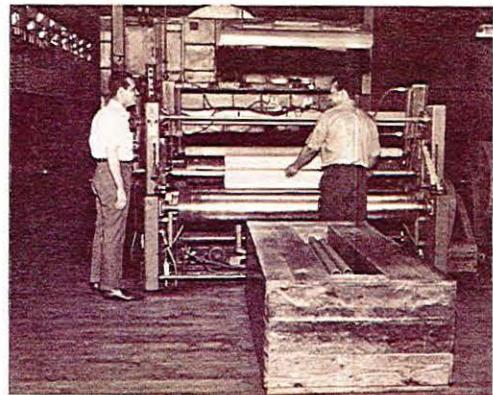
The management of The Pond Lily Company had made plans for more new developments; the question now was whether to proceed. As the depression continued the company was able to increase its production. The wisdom of the decisions made a few years previously was now becoming apparent. The management boldly continued to widen its scope, to seek still further outlets in the shrinking markets then available.

The bleaching of ducks for the shoe trades, in which the company had been conducting research, was developed on a large scale. New equipment was added, new machinery bought and buildings improved. The treatment of cotton fabrics to render them water-repellent was becoming an important field in the finishing industry. In this, too, the company had been quietly experimenting for a long time, developing and perfecting its own processes, foreseeing the demand



Above. Inspection of finished goods.

- Upper right.*
1. Tenter frame.
 2. Napping machine.
 3. Dyehouse office.
 4. High pressure drying cans.



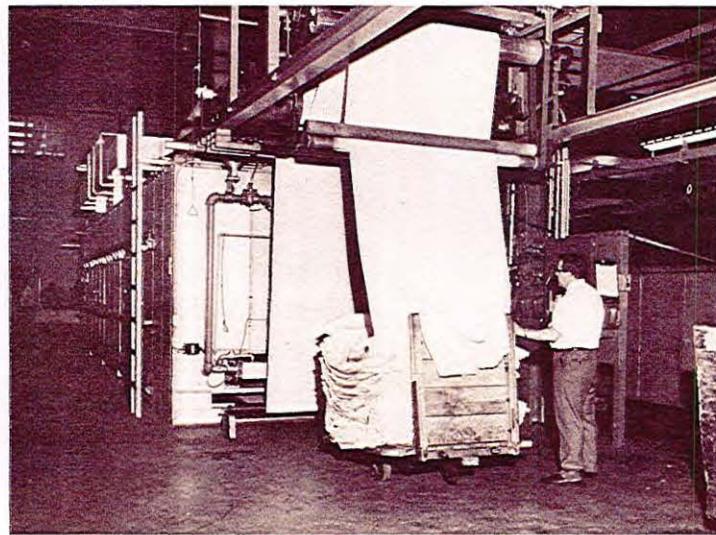
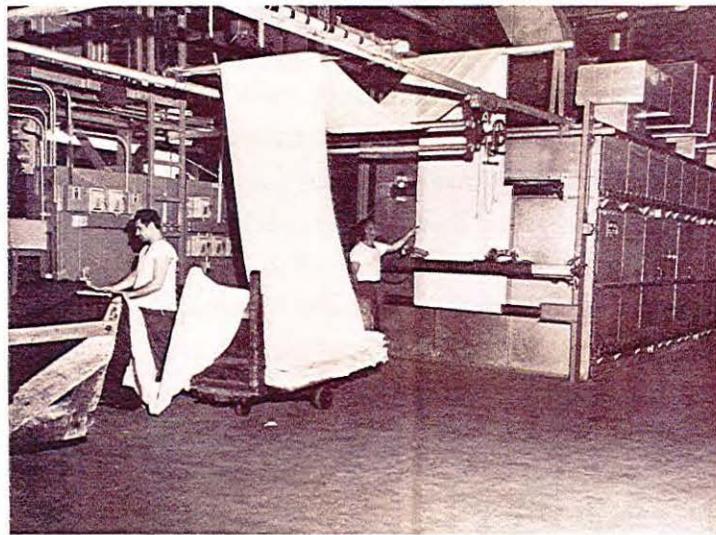
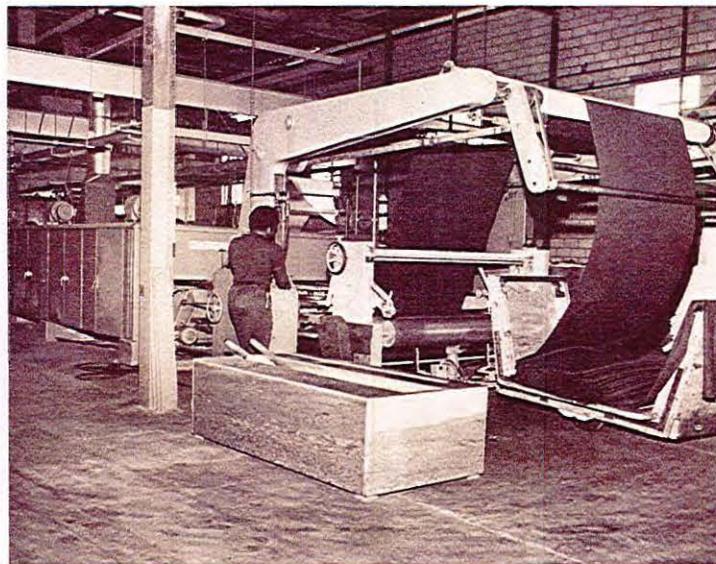
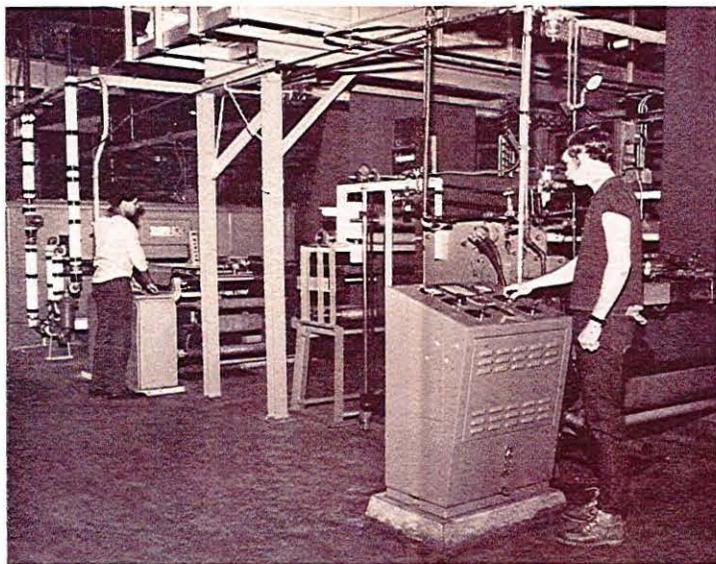
THE DYEING OF TEXTILES

there would be for this type of finish and the many, varied uses that would eventually be found for it. It continued to serve the clothing industries. It finished fabrics to be coated with rubber, and fabrics for the artificial leathers.

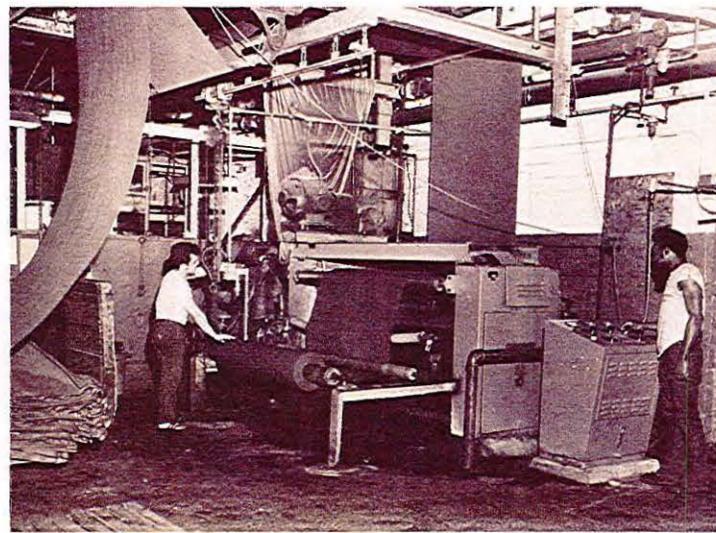
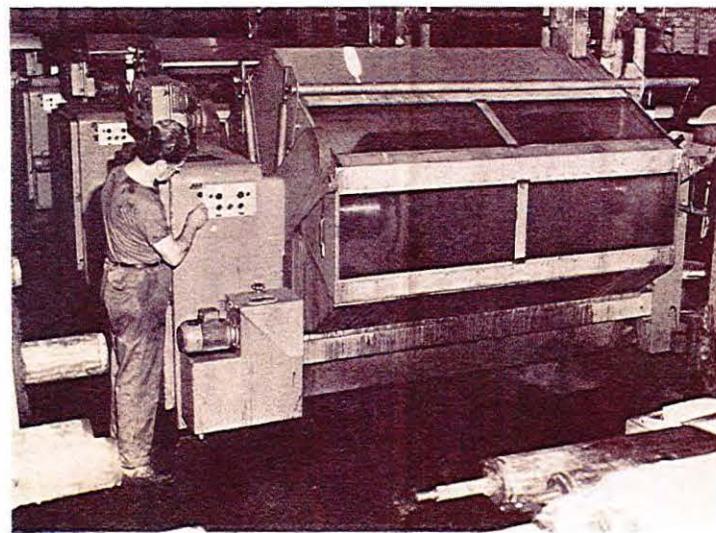
The goods finished now were being manufactured into literally hundreds of items. When women's fashions changed and brightly colored beach-shoes came in vogue the company finished those new fabrics that the shoe-trade needed. When the clothing industry made raincoats of cotton twill and gabardine with water-repellent finishes the company was prepared to furnish a large yardage of these fabrics. When Admiral Byrd went on a voyage of exploration into the Antarctic, The Pond Lily Company finished and dyed the fabrics for the tents pitched on the snow-fields of the South Pole. The mills worked overtime schedules, while the general trend in industry continued to reflect shortened hours and shut-downs. Wage rates increased from nineteen per cent above the average wage paid in the cotton textile industry as published by the United States Department of Labor in the period 1928-1930 to a difference of eighty-four per cent above that average in 1933. The results of the management's efforts and judgment, and the excellence of the company's products had been given their most rigorous tests; that they had more than met these tests was evidenced by the results of those years.

In 1940 the company emerged from the depression with a vastly improved plant, the most modern equipment, and an organization trained and skilled in the techniques of modern industrial management.

During the depression years great social changes, affecting all industry, had taken place. Labor had grown restive and bitter as a result of falling wages and widespread unemployment. Strikes were frequent and often violent. Poverty, unemployment and government dole were widespread. As the government took steps to alleviate some of these distressing conditions, and to attempt a solution to some of the broad social problems, its sphere of influence and direction in business and in industry was broadened and extended. More and more, business conduct fell within the scope of new laws and regulations designed to repair the economic disaster, and to correct some of the defects and shortcomings attributed to the conduct of business generally.



Finishing range for "Easy Care" finishes.



Modern equipment for sophisticated dyeing.

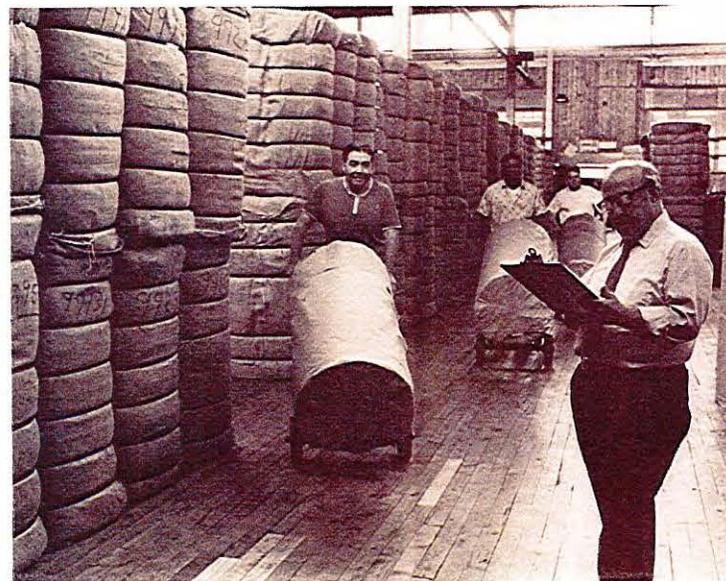
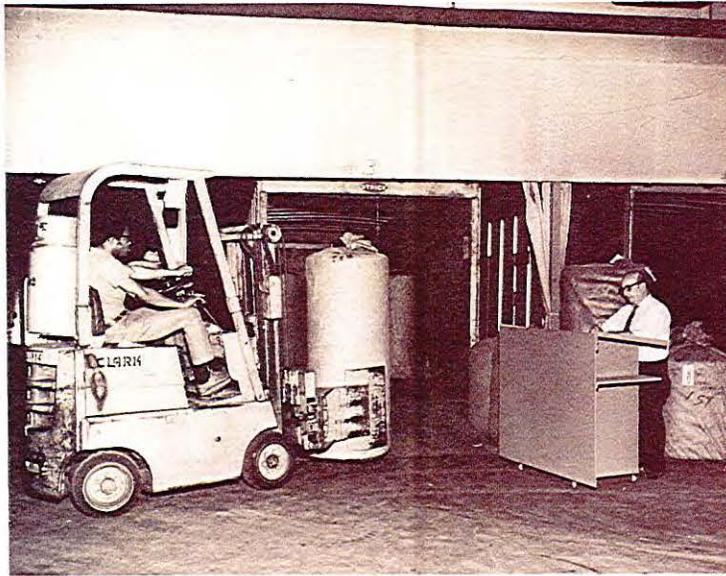
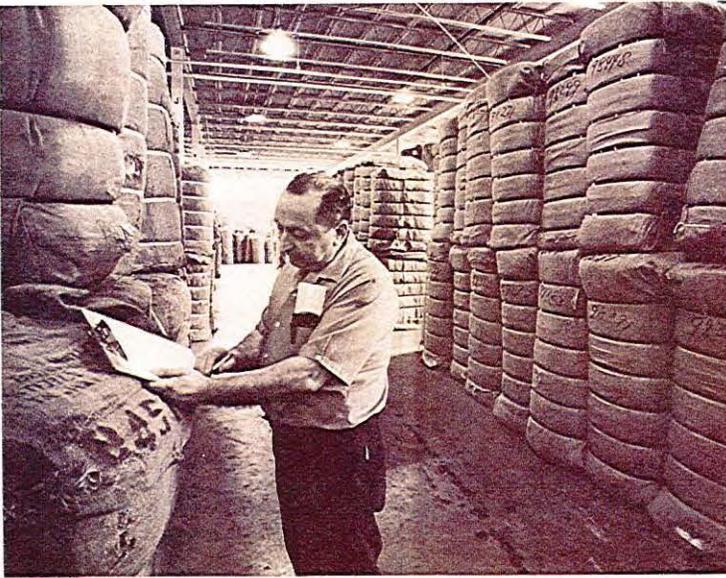
EXPANSION & DIVERSIFICATION

preparatory and finishing equipment enabled the plant to meet its production requirements on a competitive basis.

With the coming of the 70's, the need for diversification led to the perfecting of new processes including "easy care" finishes and the development of a technique to produce multicolored effects on fabrics, man made and of natural fibers.

In keeping with the expansion of The Pond Lily Company a new, modern laboratory for quality control, production control, and research was built and staffed. The addition of a new building enabled the Company to expand its repair and maintenance facilities to meet the needs of growth. The warehouse capacity was substantially increased to include a modern all weather shipping and receiving dock service.

Modern Warehouse Facilities



THE TIME TO COME

THE HISTORY OF this company parallels the history of this nation. From the beginning, when the land was cleared, through the growth and expansion periods, this company has reflected the changes we, as a people, have gone through. It has survived a revolution, wars, and disaster. It has been a part of the great changes; social, political and economic.

Mr. H. G. Wells has very sagely said that, "History is and must always be no more than an account of beginnings." This history is but a beginning. Change is the only thing we can be sure of in the future. One cannot now know what that change will bring, nor what the "brave new world" will be like. The years that lie immediately ahead will be a time of decision. They will be the most decisive years in the history of Western civilization. The place of industry will be important to that time, more important than it has been to any time before. It cannot be again an industry of isolation, nor can it remain insulated against the vast social scheme of which it is now, and for always, an integral part. The men of vision who lead industry know this and are preparing, now, for the task ahead.

No matter what plan or pattern or scheme that future will conform to, no matter how altered in shape, certain principles must always remain. Those who are fitted will survive in that future, as they have always survived in the past. That, sometimes, is a cruel ordinance in its operation, but it has operated in all phases of man's existence in no matter what sphere. There have always been criteria, set up by either nature or man, and men and institutions have always been measured by them. Adaptation is the most potent factor in survival, the ability to adjust to new demands and a changing environment.

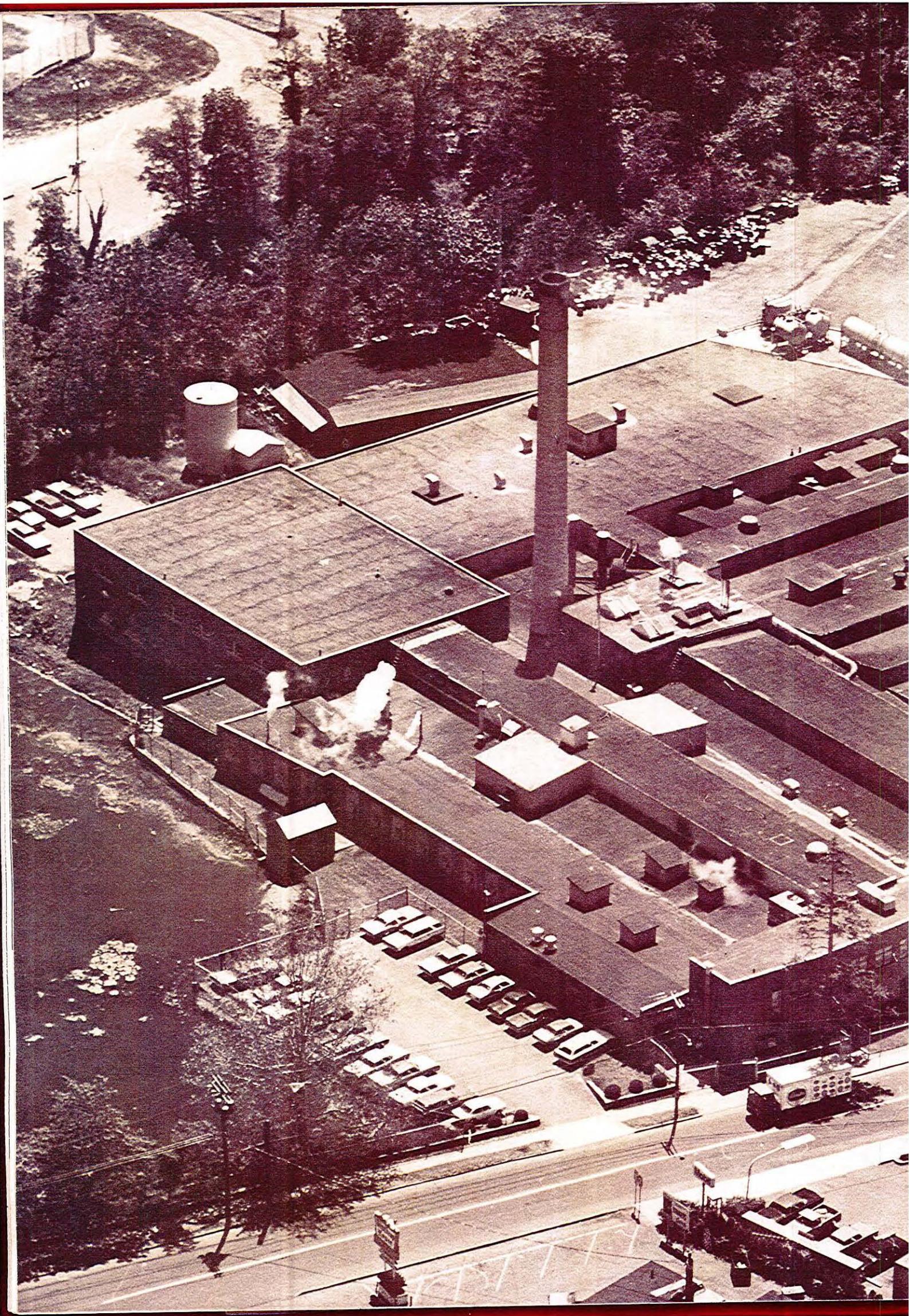
The mills here have produced food, when food was scarce and its

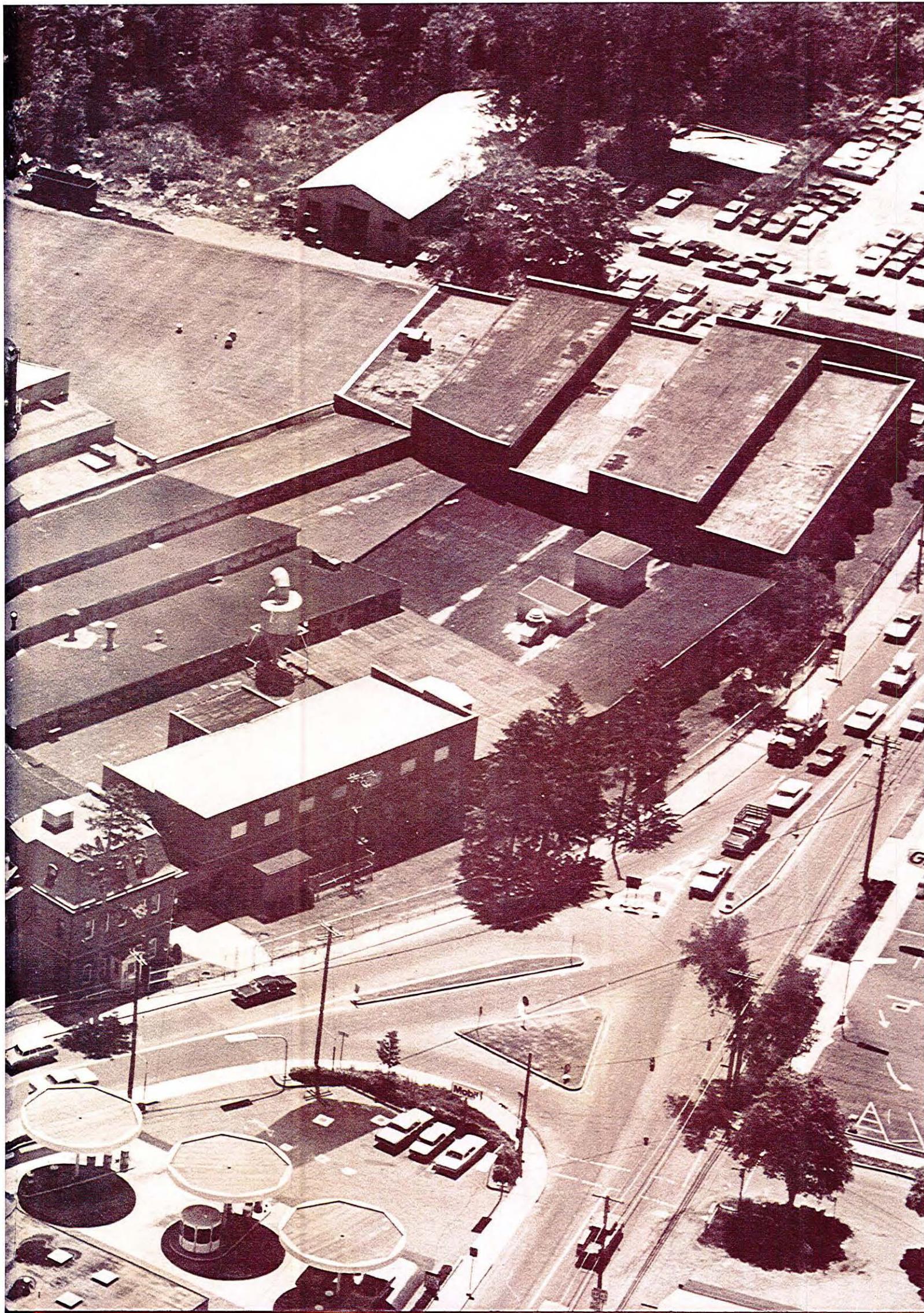
THE TIME TO COME

production vital. They have produced fabrics for shoes and fabrics for clothing. They have helped build transportation, from wagon parts to automobiles and the wings of modern aircraft. They have helped supply armies and navies and air-forces. They have done a share in equipping an explorer sailing to the last frontier in the world. They have produced fabrics that have bound the books of poets and philosophers; and bound the covers on the mouths of cannon.

When this Company takes its place in that time in the future, it will face new conditions and new problems. There will be changes to make, significant changes, changes that will call for flexibility both in operation and in thinking. Plans are being laid for the future. The Company is confident of that future, confident of the dynamic growth of the industrial life of this company that will begin anew in that future. It is confident, too, that it can maintain its part in that industrial life.

The descendants of Richard Sperry control that same land today that he worked for and defended. His family direct the mills built upon that land. This heritage is more than a heritage of property; it is a heritage of high principles. It is not given, nor held, lightly.







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