

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF MOORE ADDISON

MOORE ADDISON, Precision Machining/General fabrication; Non-metallics / Laminates / Plastics, was incorporated August 16, 1953 by Clarence Moore and Jim Holland. "It's a good idea." was the driving force behind the business' conception.

Clarence and Jim were both in their early 40's. Clarence had worked for Richardson in Stone Park, Illinois west of Chicago and Jim Holland for Taylor Fibre Company in Norristown, Pennsylvania east of Philadelphia across the street from Valley Forge.

Clarence ran production at his shop and knew how to get the work out. He was asked to leave when he got a little too vituperative with another manager. He had many friends in the Richardson shop that enjoyed working for him.

Jim Holland, everybody knew him as "Moose", was asked to open a Midwest sales office for Taylor Fibre in 1948. Mr. Taylor died in 1953 and his family members, who had a better understanding than dad of how the business dad developed should be run, had no idea why they needed a Chicago sales manager. And what's more, he was constantly pestering them about customer's needs.

Moose knew Clarence because he was selling Taylor's phenolic product to him to run on Richardson's punch presses. They decided to produce some paper based phenolic material and punch small electrical parts. They were small pieces punched from strips with a series of holes into which were wired various electrical components that were connected by copper on the board. These "circuit boards" were cutting edge in the 50's and made by the thousands. Because the components were automatically inserted into the holes, the holes had to be very precisely placed. Each stroke of the punch press was controlled by the operator to assure a part was properly punched.

Initially the two men were contemplating the manufacture of their own paper base phenolic sheet. However, "intellectual property" infringements did not make the task easy. They soon realized they could buy the material on the open market from about ten manufacturers and eschew the substantial expense of the equipment and chemicals to make the sheets in their own facility. Buying material in the open market is one of the cornerstones of Moore Addison's pricing system. Burden is lower and the customer benefits.

Clarence had the machinists from Richardson and Moose and some of his other colleagues in Chicago had the sales. Clarence knew how to make parts, but he didn't know how to manage money. The other salesmen became frustrated and moved on to other suppliers out of the Chicago region. Moose would not proceed with Clarence alone unless they set up and operated as a business; Moore Addison was not someone's hobby. They needed a business lawyer and an outside accountant. Moose's brother-in-law did the business organization and Clarence provided one Bob Roach as the accountant. The business was forged by a lawyer from Philly and a well-connected Chicago accountant. A machine shop seemed like a pretty good idea.

At this point you have a two man business, one focused on production and the other on sales. You also had a business that defined itself as working only in plastics. They were also defined more narrowly as a punch press manufacturer of precision parts. Their military and aircraft customers also demanded the level of record keeping where there is traceability of the work done in their shop. They had an office assistant who set up a system much like that being used by ISO today and quite compatible.

One of the gentlemen Clarence brought with him from Richardson was Al Hilgenberg. He considered himself to be a lathe operator and not merely a punch press foreman. He pleaded with Moose to get some turning. Why can't we make gear blanks? Metal blanks you can cut from steel rod; phenolic blanks you have to cut from sheet stock so the gear data runs perpendicular to the laminations of the phenolic sheet. Moore Addison already had a sheet grinder that could grind the news print off a newspaper. You grind the phenolic sheet on both sides flat and parallel to dimension. This eliminates the facing of both sides of each gearblank; a sheet yields several hundred gears. Therefore, a substantial savings to the customer ensues. Also, the gear industry requires even more precision machining and record keeping than the punch press industry. And Moore Addison did, and still does, both.

Moose was surprised at how much gear business there was in the Chicago area. Moore Addison soon became the focal point for all of the phenolic gears in the Midwest. Chris Holland, one of Moose's three sons, came to work "at the shop" during his high school years. He hated working in the shop unlike his older brother. He told Moose he'd contact every gear manufacture in the USA. The next summer Chris came back; he followed up; business developed.

Circuit boards became more sophisticated; the punching industry contracted; more and more gearblank business arose. And gears are made in more than just phenolic. Moore Addison was now working in other plastics.

Moose in his last days at Taylor, was working with the Chicago Transit Authority to replace the wooden insulators associated with the third rail current collector assembly. Chicago was the most ambitious city in maintaining these assemblies rather than have the manufacturer refurbish them. It was the "give the voters jobs" kind of thinking. Taylor Fibre couldn't develop the project because they had fired their man in Chicago. The work ended up at Moore Addison. These were precision high voltage electro-mechanical insulation parts. And, it turns out, there are other manufacturers that require high voltage insulation. Another market develops.

But this was work for machine shops with mills and lathes as opposed to a punch press house. About this time OSHA stopped by and was aghast at how the punch presses were running so close to people operating other machines. Clarence solved the problem. He gave away the punch presses and the work to a Richardson pal who set up his own shop a mile away. Both businesses were more successful interacting apart than under the same roof. And Moore Addison got some more mills and routers to produce the electro-mechanical insulation parts.

Moore Addison was now a full service precision machine shop with a pretty good reputation for full value = precision parts + on time delivery + attractive pricing. And Clarence and Moose got old. Clarence had a son who worked at the shop from its inception. Moose had a son, Jim, who wanted to be an orchestral musician and have a family. Clarence hired him so things would be even. And three months later, Tom Champion, the son-in-law of one of Clarence's good friends in the shop joined the firm. He had been working in real estate, but the market took a dive in 1976. Jim and Tom worked their way through the shop: Jim rising in sales and Tom in production. Danny Champion joined his older brother after working several years in a machine shop in their ancestral home of Fayette, Alabama.

Clarence's son was president for several years; the business did not flourish. Jim and Tom stepped up and made the business decision to do the precision machining Moore Addison has always been known for but to do it more efficiently and to even greater accuracy and consistency. And in the last decade, the sales and work force have almost doubled. Three recessions have been weathered. With this latest depression, Moore Addison appears to have come out a bit more quickly than most. Starting a machine shop was a good idea then; it's still a good idea.

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