

# History of The Austin Company

## HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The Austin Company was founded in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1878.

Samuel Austin, a young carpenter, came to the United States from England in 1872 with the intention of finding work rebuilding Chicago after the great fire in that city. Samuel never made it to Chicago, but instead stayed in Cleveland and began working with a contractor who was busy building mid-Victorian residences.



By 1878, Samuel Austin had earned such a reputation for good workmanship that he was able to set out on his own as an estimator and builder. Two years after establishing his own business, Samuel Austin founded his first shop in Cleveland.

His residential construction soon led to commercial work and in 1889, Samuel won the contract to construct a building for the Broadway Savings Bank. Among the bank's clientele were industrial executives who saw the quality of Samuel's work and who soon called on him to undertake their factory projects.

In 1895, the Western Mineral Wool Company of Cleveland decided to branch out and construct a factory in Chicago. The company asked Samuel to undertake the project. This marked the beginning of Samuel's work beyond Cleveland. Also in 1895, Samuel received a contract for Cleveland's first electric lamp factory, followed by a succession of contracts from the National Electric Lamp Association (NELA, predecessor of General Electric).

In 1904, Samuel's son, Wilbert J. Austin, became an engineering graduate of Case School of Applied Sciences (now part of Case Western Reserve University). At that time, Wilbert joined his father's company and conceived the then heretical idea of combining engineering and construction in one firm to offer a complete facility service.



This concept, which became known as The Austin Method<sup>®</sup>, broadened the traditional approach to construction by offering contracts that started with architecture and engineering, and ended with the finished building.



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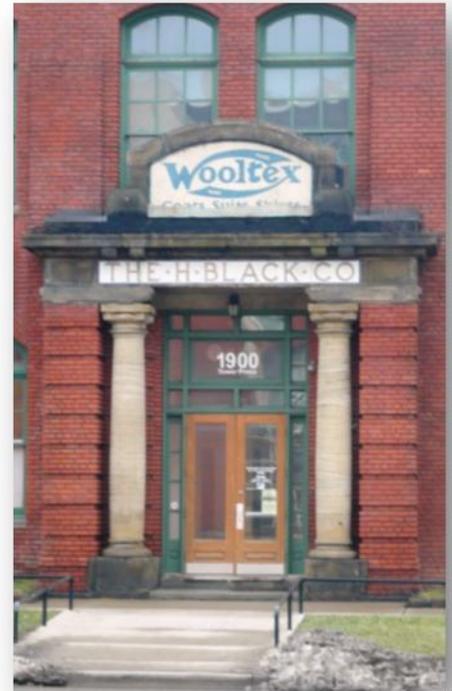
Before the end of that year, The Samuel Austin & Son Company was incorporated. The Austin Method® would carry the Company's name throughout the United States and the world.

## MAJOR PROJECTS AWARDED

In 1907, the Austins (father and son) constructed the first reinforced concrete structure in Cleveland for the H. Black Company. Today a registered Cleveland landmark, the Black Building was once the home of the Wooltex cloak factory, the largest manufacturer of women's clothing between New York and Chicago.

In 1911, NELA, which owned the first Austin-built lamp factory, awarded Austin a contract to engineer and construct a large research complex at what today is GE's NELA Park in East Cleveland. This was the world's first planned, campus-type, industrial research center. Simultaneously, NELA awarded Austin the design and construction of a large lamp manufacturing plant a mile from the research complex.

As these two jobs were the largest projects Austin had ever undertaken, the Company moved its offices to East Cleveland to be close to them. Austin's headquarters remained in East Cleveland until 1960, when the Company moved to nearby Cleveland Heights.



## COMPANY EXPANDS GEOGRAPHICALLY

As father and son refined their newly-conceived, single-source methodology, they developed a more comprehensive understanding of the basic economic problems inherent in the planning of new facilities. By 1916, contracts for lamp manufacturing plants and other buildings in New England, Canada, Chicago, St. Louis and on the Pacific Coast had given the Company a solid start in applying its concept of integrated design, engineering and construction.

Anticipating nationwide acceptance of The Austin Method®, the Austins established regional offices to expedite operations in



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various sections of the country. On April 16, 1916, Samuel Austin & Son Company officially became The Austin Company.

## THE WAR YEARS: WORLD WAR I

By the time the United States entered World War I in 1917, many of the plants designed and constructed by The Austin Company (Austin) were already supplying arms to the Allies. Meanwhile, other manufacturers under government contract to produce war material wanted plants quickly. They soon recognized that engaging Austin to design and construct their urgently-needed facilities was the only sure route to rapid response.

In 1918, Austin designed and constructed an aircraft assembly plant, then the world's largest manufacturing facility, for Curtiss Aeroplane and Motor Company in Buffalo, New York. Following the Armistice that same year, Austin established its first fully-staffed overseas office in Paris for work on the European continent.

By this time, Austin had initiated the concept of standardized industrial buildings and had shipped a dozen prefabricated factories to France – the first such modularized structures in history. During the war, Austin gained broad experience in a wide range of industries over a variety of locations.

## The 1920's: Innovative Leadership and Prosperity

Aviation was one of several industries in which Austin quickly achieved nationwide recognition. As a result, in the 1920's, the Company was called on to build support facilities at many of the nation's airports. This included work at the Cleveland Municipal Airport, the first publicly-owned airfield in the United States, which opened in 1925.

Austin soon became known as the preeminent designer and constructor of hangars and aircraft maintenance facilities. Under the guidance of Wilbert J. Austin, the Company perfected the concept of the so-called canopy door for wide-span hangars, which became the prototype for many hangars.

In 1925, Wilbert succeeded his father as president of the Company and Samuel Austin was elected chairman.

Concurrent with its activity in aviation during the 1920's, Austin established its leadership in facilities for the automobile industry.

In 1927, the Company constructed what was then the world's largest building for the Oakland Motor Car Company in Pontiac, Michigan. This project extended Austin's reputation to the Soviet Union, where in 1930, Austin was awarded a contract to design and construct a \$60-million integrated

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automobile manufacturing complex at Gorki. This project also included the infrastructure for a workers city with a population of 50,000 people. Using local Soviet labor under Austin supervision, the project was completed by December 1931, just 18 months after groundbreaking.

Prompted by the large tonnages of riveted steel required for heavy industry plants of the 1920's, Austin launched experiments in steel fabricating techniques using the new technology of electric welding.

This research led the Company in 1928 to design and construct, at its own expense, the world's first commercial building with an all-welded structural steel framework. It is a four-story building in Cleveland, known as the Upper Carnegie Building. Austin used arc-welding technology developed by its client, Lincoln Electric Company, to erect the structure, which is still in active use. Austin's success with this innovative design paved the way for widespread application of welding in construction.

## **The 1930's: Research Activities Intensify**

In 1931, Austin designed and constructed the prestigious Carnegie Medical Building, just across from the Upper Carnegie Building. This elegant eight-story building was specifically designed and built to fit the needs of the medical profession. For a number of years, it housed many of Cleveland's leading physicians and surgeons.

Research started in 1929 led to the design of the world's first controlled-conditions building for Simmonds Saw and Steel Company in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. In this windowless factory, every environmental factor was completely controlled in the interest of worker comfort and low manufacturing costs.

As business began to slow in the early 1930's, Austin intensified its research activities. In 1933, the Company established a division devoted to the design, production and erection of insulated steel buildings. This division had a record of continuous growth, broken only by World War II. It became a major source of porcelain-enamel service stations that were prefabricated in quantity for major oil companies and erected throughout the United States.

By 1936, when Samuel Austin died, the Company had completed more than 5,000 projects, representing an aggregate value of \$252 million. More than 80 percent of this work had been handled under the all-inclusive design, engineering and construction method originated by father and son.

In the late 1930's, Austin pioneered the installation of fluorescent lighting in industrial buildings and championed the efficiency of single-story factories. On December 4, 1940, Wilbert J. Austin was killed in an airplane crash at Chicago. This was a tragic irony, as Wilbert was one of the nation's earliest

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advocates and patrons of air travel, and the individual most directly responsible for The Austin Company's leadership in the design and construction of aviation facilities.

## THE WAR YEARS: WORLD WAR II

Under the direction of a new president, George A. Bryant, Austin responded to World War II with the design and construction of critical defense facilities, many implemented under Government sponsorship. Shortly after the war began, Austin was busy constructing aircraft-assembly plants, military airports, Air Force training stations and naval facilities.

For private industry, Austin constructed chemical-processing plants as well as numerous defense plants for many different industries.

## THE POST-WAR YEARS: GROWTH IN SPECIALTY MARKETS

Following World War II, Austin quickly developed business in: aviation, broadcasting, newspaper publishing, food processing and pharmaceutical manufacturing.

The Company also gained notoriety as the leading designer and constructor of specialized facilities for research, manufacturing, distribution and computer operations for a variety of industries.

### **Air Transportation and Aircraft Manufacturing**

Historically a leader in the design and construction of air transportation facilities, Austin created support facilities at a number of the world's leading airports in the United States, Europe, Australia and Pacific Rim. These projects have included: vehicle maintenance facilities, passenger terminals, reservations centers, flight kitchens, aircraft maintenance and paint hangars, and cargo facilities. Austin has completed multiple projects for major U.S. commercial carriers, such as Continental Airlines and United Airlines. Austin has also served numerous entities of the U.S. Government.

Aircraft manufacturing is another sector of the aviation industry in which Austin has been a major contributor. In 1991, Austin was awarded a contract from The Boeing Company to expand its assembly plant at Everett, Washington, by adding more than 1.9-million square feet to the building for production of the new 777 aircraft. The Everett plant was already the world's largest industrial structure when Austin originally constructed it in 1966-1967 for the assembly of the 747 jumbo jet. Austin expanded the facility in 1978-1979 for production of the 767 aircraft.

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The latest addition made it the largest-volume structure in the history of the world. Austin has worked on a near-continuous basis for The Boeing Company since 1924.

## **Broadcasting**

Since Thomas Edison's invention of the motion picture, Austin has been at the forefront of the communications industry. By 1923, Austin established two offices on the West Coast to serve the fledgling movie industry and soon designed Hollywood's first sound stages and film studios.

Like cinema, radio was one of the few industries to grow during the Great Depression. In 1938, Austin designed and constructed the National Broadcasting Company's famed Radio City of the West in Hollywood.

Building upon 20 years of experience in motion-picture production and radio broadcasting, Austin engineers began in 1943 to develop basic conceptual designs for local network telecasting studios and television stations. Because wartime restrictions prevented any actual construction, ideas were worked out in models, often in collaboration with technicians from NBC. These prototypes established the Company's leadership in the television field, even before it signed its first contract to design and construct a television station.

Postwar, Austin designed and constructed a number of facilities for the major American broadcasting networks, as well as 50 of the first 75 local television stations in this country from 1945 to 1955.

Austin has served all three of the original national networks — NBC, CBS and ABC — as well as newer networks like Fox and Univision (Spanish-language).

Among Austin's more recent broadcast projects are state-of-the-art digital broadcast centers for Cox Broadcasting in Atlanta, Georgia; Meredith Broadcasting in Portland Oregon, and Atlanta; and Schurz Communications in South Bend, Indiana. International projects include Manila-based ABS-CBN's broadcast center in the Philippines.

Austin is also involved in the design and construction of entertainment and leisure facilities for well-known names worldwide.

## **Food, Beverage and Consumer Products**

The Austin Company's activity in food and beverage processing dates nearly 100 years, and covers the entire industry spectrum, from coffee and confectionery, to baking and snacks, to flavor enhancers and meat processing.

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Austin's recent food industry projects include:

- Mother Parkers Tea & Coffee Inc.'s coffee roasting and distribution facility in Fort Worth, Texas – the facility was named as a Food Engineering Magazine New Plant of the Year
- Jelly Belly Candy Company's distribution center in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin
- A baking facility for The Portuguese Baking Company LLP in Woodbridge, New Jersey
- A manufacturing/ tour center for Superior Confections Inc. in Staten Island, New York
- Multiple bakeries for Bimbo Bakeries USA

Austin provided site location, incentive negotiation, and design-build services for a 250,000 SF dental cream manufacturing facility for Colgate-Palmolive. The state-of-the-art, LEED® Silver Certified facility was completed on an aggressive one-year construction schedule.

## **Information Processing/Communications Technology**

Operations centers are typically large and complex buildings, often containing computer centers. They are one of several types of facilities for which Austin's expertise is has been recognized. Austin designed, engineered and constructed one of the world's largest and most sophisticated bank operations centers for Bank of America (formerly Security Pacific Bank) in Brea, California.

While much of Austin's experience with operations centers has been derived from serving banks and other financial institutions, the Company also designs, engineers and constructs critical facilities for public utilities and government agencies. An example is the James H. Anthony Office Building for the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, and the Information Systems Building for the Salt River Project utility in Phoenix, Arizona.

## **Laboratory Research and Testing**

Austin gained its foothold in R&D facilities at the beginning of modern industrial research. As mentioned earlier, GE's NELA Park, designed and built by Austin between 1911 and 1913, was the world's first planned campus-type, industrial research complex and the forerunner of today's corporate research center. This was also The Austin Company's first major project. It remains today the principal research and development center for the Lighting Group of the General Electric Company.

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Today, Austin is the designer and constructor of one of the world's largest pharmaceutical research buildings, owned and operated by Pfizer in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

## **Logistics**

The Austin Company gained considerable experience in distribution facilities after World War II when the Company helped department stores, wholesalers and chain-store operators reduce distribution costs of bulk merchandise through automated material handling operations. Austin has sound experience in the design and construction of computer-controlled logistics facilities.

Among the most noteworthy distribution facilities designed and engineered by Austin is the U.S. Army's Eastern Distribution Center in New Cumberland, Pennsylvania. This 1.7-million-square-foot facility provides most of the supplies and equipment for U.S. troops in the United States, Europe and Middle East.

The Austin Company also completed more than 35 mail-handling facilities projects for the U.S. Postal Service.

## **Manufacturing**

While in recent years the Company has focused on cutting-edge industries requiring advanced facilities, The Austin Company was initially known as the preeminent designer and constructor of general manufacturing plants. Today, general manufacturing facilities are a fractional part of Austin's business, displaced by the emphasis on strategic industries and the transformation of American industry. Nevertheless, the Company annually designs and builds highly-efficient general manufacturing plants for a wide variety of products.

Austin provided The Boeing Company with design-build services for a 1.5 million SF factory which manufactures the largest structural component of its Delta IV rocket - the common booster core.

## **Printing and Publishing**

The Austin Company has had a long association with the printing industry. As early as 1921, The Austin Company constructed a production plant for The Warren (Ohio) Tribune. Over the years, Austin became well-recognized as a leading engineer and constructor of newspaper facilities in the United States and Canada.

The Austin Company has designed and constructed more than 100 community newspaper plants, as well as more than 30 metropolitan newspaper facilities. Among Austin's largest newspaper projects are the \$300-million production plant for the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News and the \$200-million publishing facility for The Plain Dealer (Cleveland, Ohio).



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In addition, Austin completed a 450,000 SF production facility that houses Cox Target Media's direct mail marketing system, Valpak, owned by Cox Enterprises, a long time Austin client.

### **Pharmaceuticals**

The Austin Company has been involved in the pharmaceutical industry since the 1930's. Austin has served most of the world's leading pharmaceutical manufacturers, completing facilities in the United States, Canada, South America and Europe.

Austin's former UK subsidiary (which maintains strong ties with Austin in the U.S. today) is particularly well-known in this industry and has an extensive list of satisfied clients in this market, including such global giants as Searle and Zeneca Pharmaceuticals and 3M Pharmaceuticals.

### **FUTURE PERSPECTIVE**

In 2006, The Austin Company became part of the Kajima USA group companies, a subsidiary of Kajima Corporation of Japan. This marked the beginning of an exciting new chapter in Austin's long history. As it has in the past, The Austin Company continues to impact virtually every facet of life — from aerospace, defense and aviation; to food, beverage and consumer goods; to entertainment, energy, technology and communication.

Under the direction of Mr. Michael Pierce, the Company's tenth president, The Austin Company is committed to innovatively solving the increasingly-complex facility challenges of industry, commerce and government. With the resources of Kajima USA and the worldwide Kajima organization, Austin continues to expand the breadth and depth of their solutions for a global market.