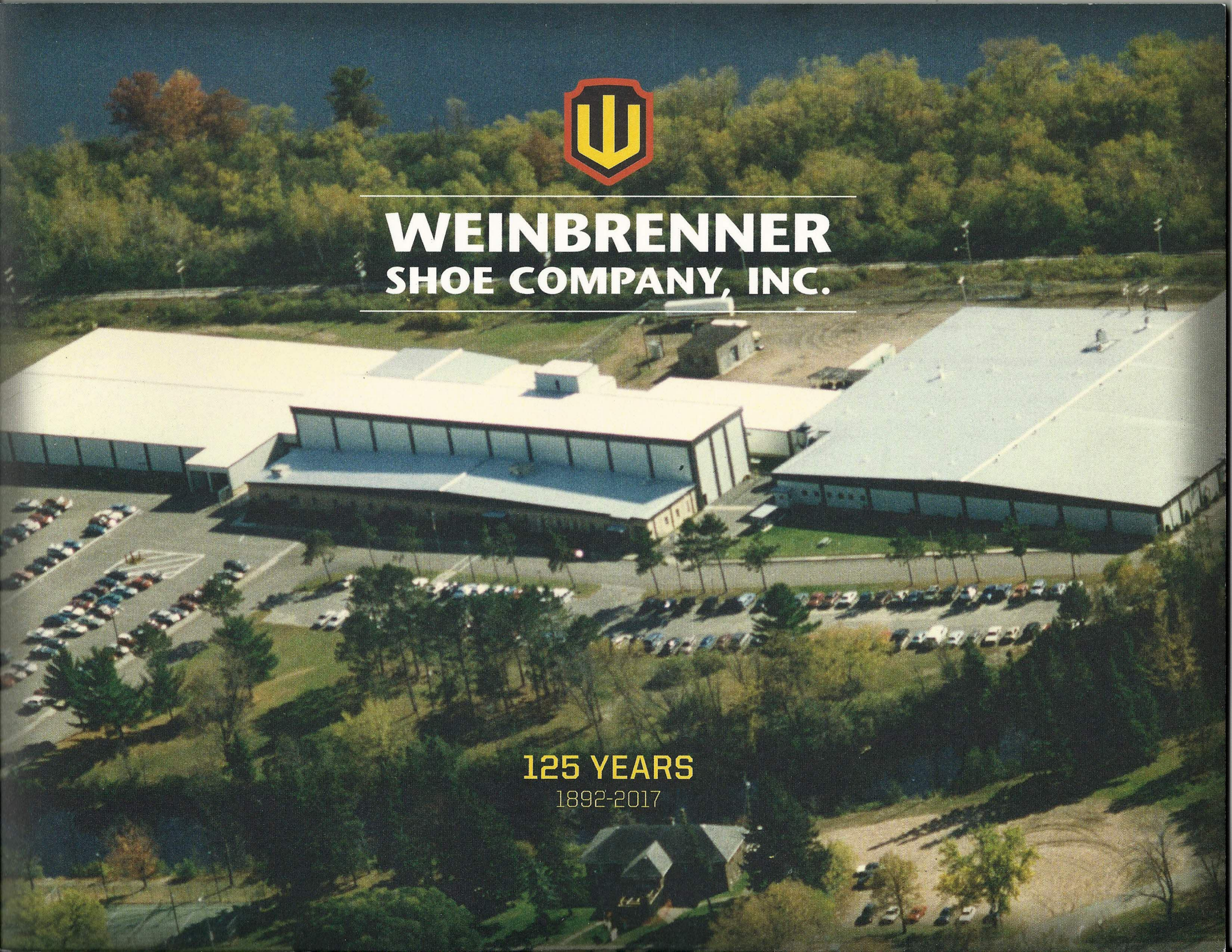
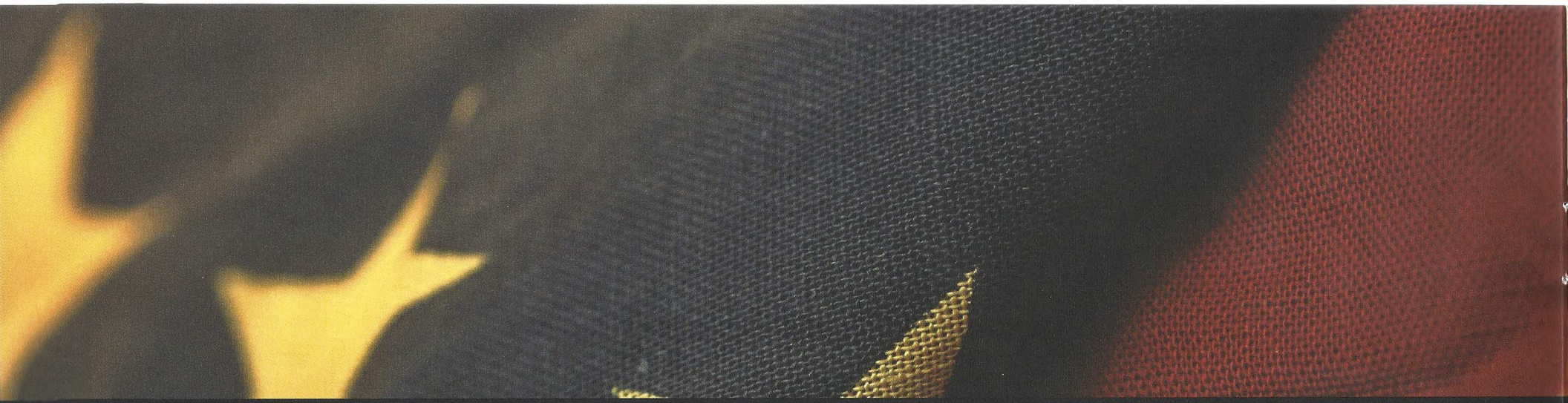

WEINBRENNER
SHOE COMPANY, INC.
125 YEARS
1892-2017



A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The many hours of research and writing needed to record the history of Weinbrenner Shoe Company was originally accomplished in 1983 by Lester H Schoenke, 74, who had 47 years of service to the company. Mr. Schoenke's career with Weinbrenner commenced on June 22, 1927 when he was 17 years old, a youth, just graduated from a Milwaukee high school. During his many years with the company, his versatility and expertise were used in manufacturing, costing and accounting. He was also instrumental in the movement of Weinbrenner production operations to north central Wisconsin, beginning with the opening of the Marshfield factory in 1935.

The history of Weinbrenner has twice been updated since Mr. Schoenke originally compiled it in 1983; once in 1992 and again in 2016. This additional information was compiled largely by Stanley G Gavic, who retired from the company in 2016 with over 35 years of service. Mr. Gavic drew upon his knowledge of company events acquired through his involvement in a wide range of company functional areas including retail store operations, outside sales, quality control/ISO-9001 management, environmental, safety, security, employment and human resources management.

Patrick Miner, Lance Nienow and David Gisselman also assisted in providing additional information for the 2016 update.



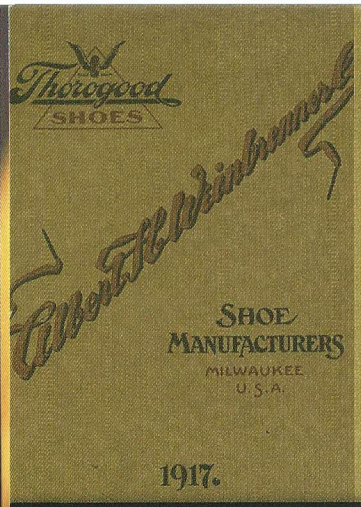
SINCE 1892

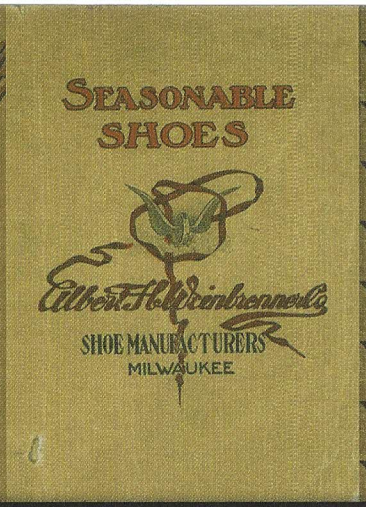
For the past 125 years, Weinbrenner Shoe Company, Inc. has been making Thorogood® brand and other private label footwear the only way we know how; handcrafted and made here at home, in the USA. Sure a lot has changed in our 125 years; cars, computers, and the idea of taking a "selfie." While we welcome many innovations, we believe in our heritage to make quality, job fitted boots, for the job you have to do.

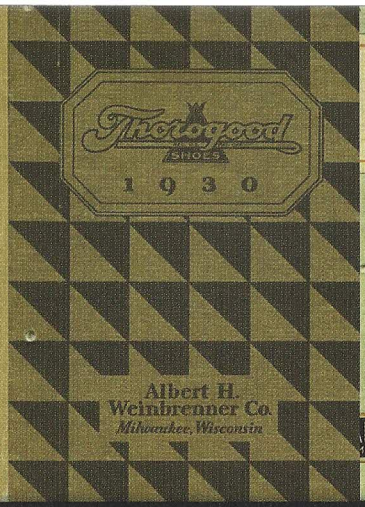
From hand-inspecting leather to the time they're placed in the box, our handcrafted shoes go though over 125 steps to create footwear that never lets you down on the job.

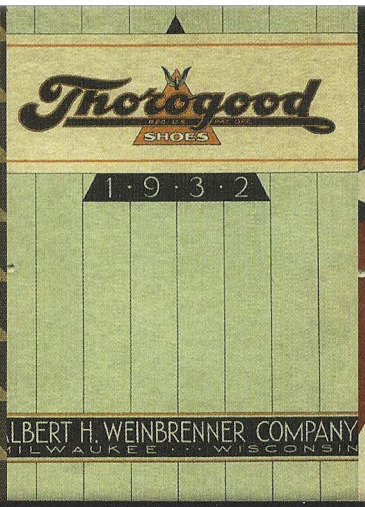
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SHOE COMPANY, INC.

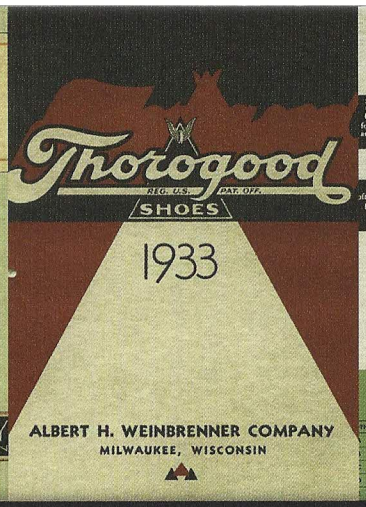
MERRILL, WI





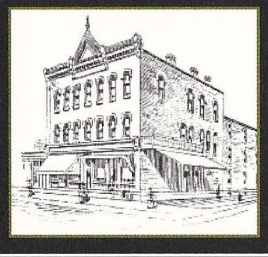








1892: Albert H. Weinbrenner, at the age of 27, opens a cobblery in Milwaukee with partner, Joseph Peffer serving "Jobbing" trades.



1900: Albert H. Weinbrenner Co. is formed.

1916: First catalog printed. Company has more leather cutting machines than any other in U.S.

1917: "Job-fitted" concept introduced. Weinbrenner is a major contributor of boots to U.S. Army in WWI.

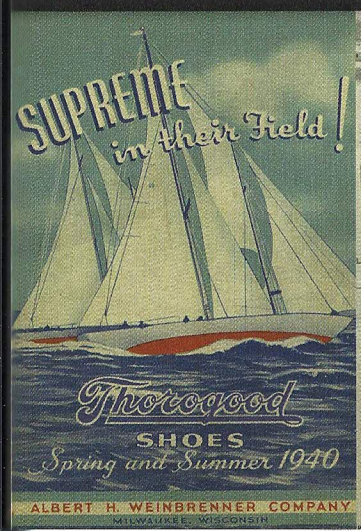
1938: Company takes first steps into safety footwear production.

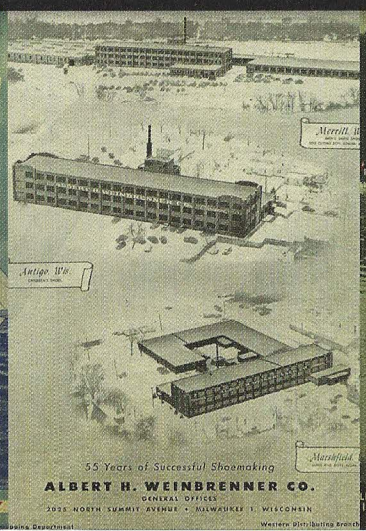
1942: Company celebrates 50 years in business. Converts to all-military footwear for duration of WWII, producing combat and dress styles. Military footwear also becomes popular with civilians.

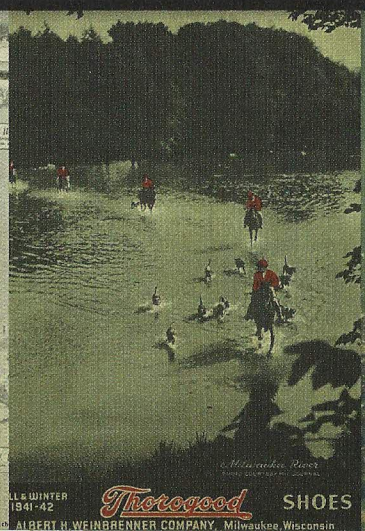
1943: Company workers organize under International Boot & Shoe Workers Union. Management and workers continue outstanding relationship through today.

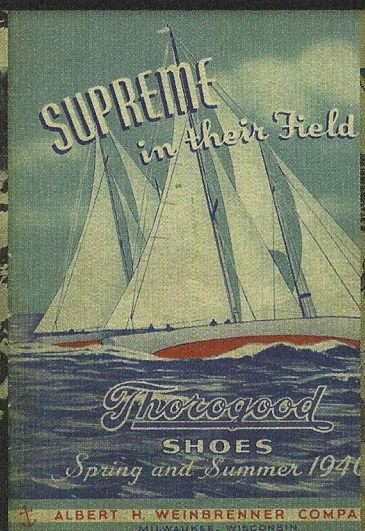
1892 1897 1902 1907 1912 1917 1922 1927 1932 1937 1942 1947 1952



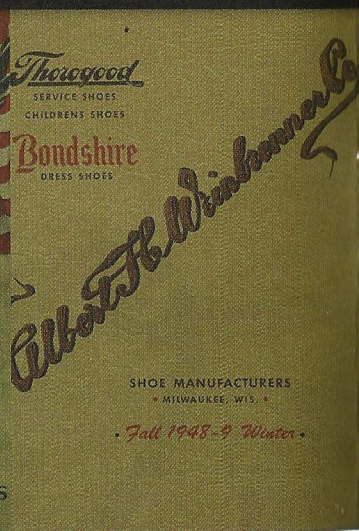




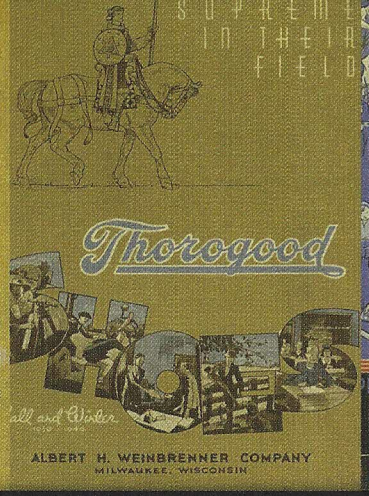


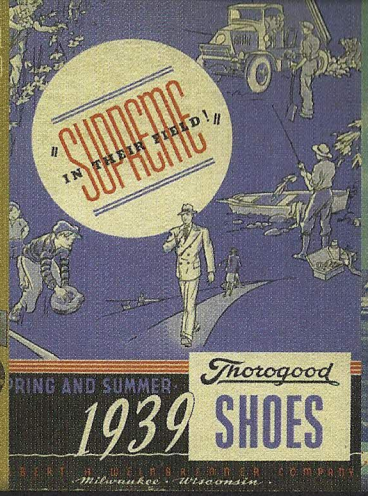




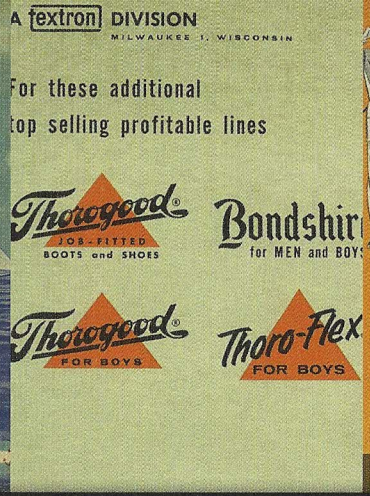


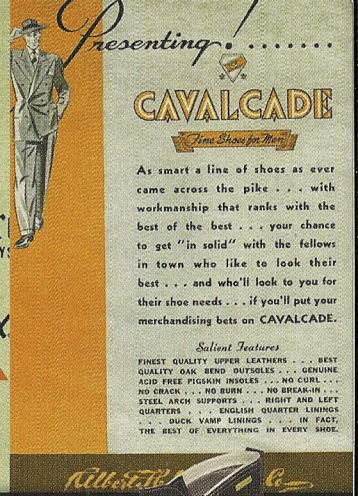










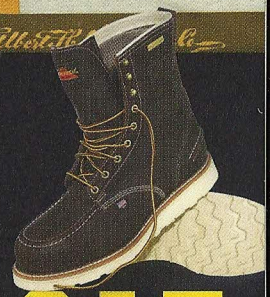






1988: Company purchased by local group including six employees. "ThoroGard" division created featuring high-tech occupational safety footwear.

2001: Within three days of the September 11 terror attacks, Weinbrenner donates and ships 300 pairs of durable work boots to Ground Zero for those working in the rubble. Another 200 pairs followed three days later.



1957 1962 **1967** 1972 1977 1982 1987 **1992** 1997 2002 2007 2012 **2017**

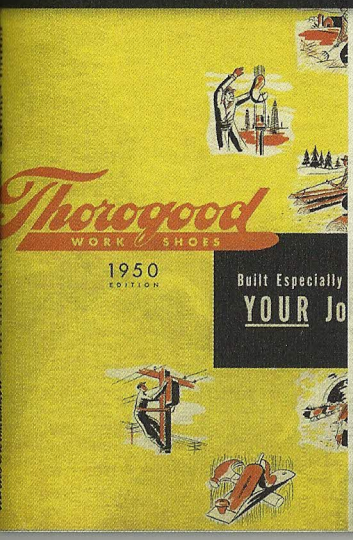


1964: The Official Boy Scout Boot: The Hike n' Camp is introduced with wedge sole and moccasin-style stitching. It becomes the company's best-selling boot of all time and is still available in its original design today.

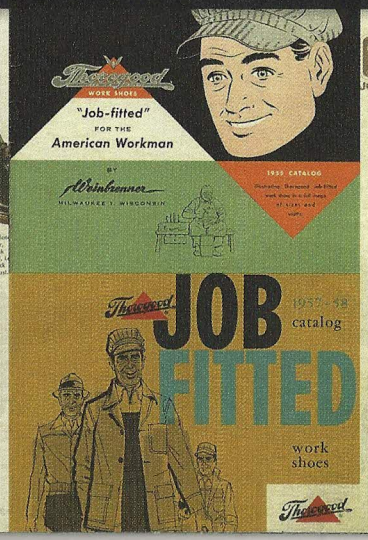
1992: Weinbrenner celebrates 100 years in business. "A Century of Lasting Quality"

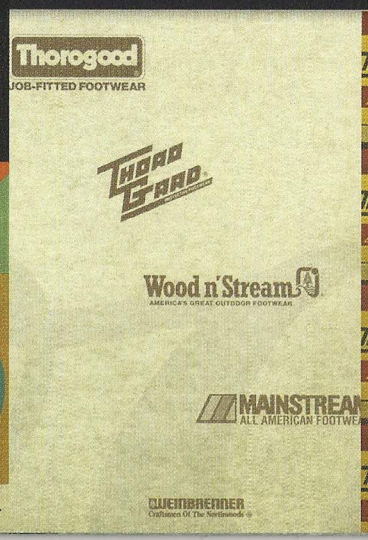
2000: Weinbrenner employees took ownership of the company through ESOP.

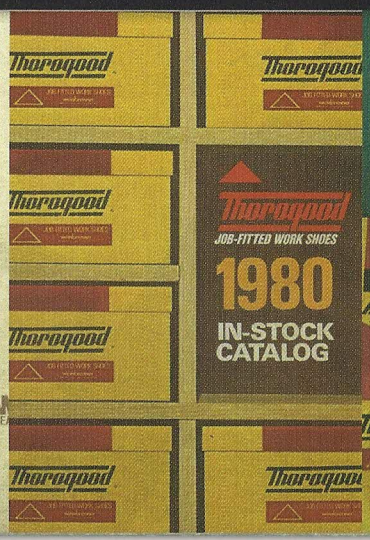
2014: 1892 heritage line of handcrafted, fashion-forward lifestyle boots is introduced, built on the iconic No. 60 last.

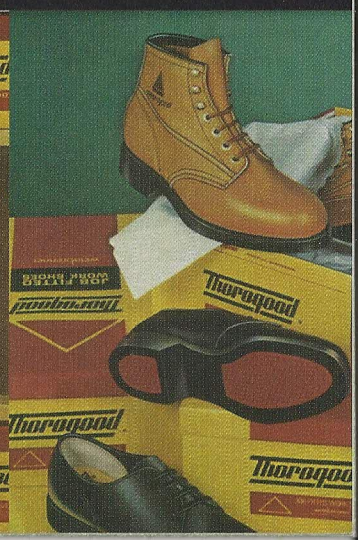













140
& PEFFER
WHOLESALE
BOOTS & SHOES

THE WEINBRENNER STORY

The Weinbrenner Family
In 1855 a German immigrant cobbler, Peter Weinbrenner, renounced his allegiance to Duke Alphonsus, ruler of the province of Weisbaden, to become a United States citizen at age 28 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. There he worked diligently in his cobbler's shop to support his small family. Seventeen years after his landing, his son, Albert, was born who would follow in his father's footsteps to become a leader in the field of shoe manufacturing.

A Humble Beginning in 1892
Albert H. Weinbrenner started his apprenticeship in his father's shop by learning to attach outsoles with wooden pegs at the age of 13. Fourteen years later, in 1892, he formed a partnership, "Weinbrenner & Peffer" with Joseph Peffer. They sold shoes and boots to the jobbing trade from a small store at 140 West Water Street in Milwaukee.

A Corporation Begins in 1900
On January 1, 1900 the manufacturing corporation of Albert H. Weinbrenner Company was formed, and each partner subscribed 50 shares of stock at $100 each. Two additional stockholders, Ferdinand Knoll and John Batstone, joined the firm with 30 shares each. The four men met at the Weinbrenner and Peffer office and elected Knoll, President; Peffer, Vice President; and Weinbrenner, Secretary and Treasurer. The next day, the group voted to buy the assets of Knoll Shoe Company for $1,500. The building was then rented by the new Albert H. Weinbrenner Company. Records show that the new president was named manager and given a salary of $720 per year. Mr. Batstone was hired as a cutter at the same salary.

Growth for the Company: 1902-1909
The Weinbrenner Shoe Company quickly saw success. On December 31, 1902 the secretary reported that the net profit in the last two years was $8,226.67, with production reaching 60 pairs per day. In 1905, the company moved to a larger factory in a rented building where production grew to 2,500 pairs per day. Shipments for that year amounted to $333,000. The following year Joseph Peffer retired and sold his stock to his partner, Albert.

In 1908 the company purchased land at the intersection of Juneau Avenue and Market Streets in Milwaukee for a future factory location. By 1909 the building was completed, consisting of four stories. A basement provided 45,000 square feet, and the other four floors provided nearly 157,356 square feet. The building was designed to withstand the addition of another five floors, if expansion was necessary. The innovative construction of a huge power plant in the basement of the facility provided all the power for machinery and lights at a substantially lower cost than the electricity provided by the utilities.

Boys Shoes and Factory Advancements: 1916
In 1916 the company employed about 1,200 people to make men's and boy's shoes in Goodyear welt, nailed, standard screw, and McKay processes. Styles ranged from 6 inch to 18 inch men's and boy's work shoes. Dress shoes were made only in 6 inch heights. Several ladies styles with buttons and kid and kangaroo uppers were also included in the line. Weinbrenner's production had now reached 20,000 pairs daily, which ranked it among the top manufacturers of footwear in the country. Much of the upper cutting in the industry was done by hand, but Weinbrenner had 82 clicker cutting machines, which was the largest number of any factory in the United States. The company also employed the use of 40 sole cutting machines for leather soles, which were used exclusively at that time.



Occupational Footwear & Military Shoes: 1917-1918
1917 marked the year that the Thorogood® job-fitted brand was first introduced. Catalogs stressed styles particularly designed for various occupations, such as hobnailed shoes for miners and quarry workers, manure proof uppers for farmers, along with various styles made for railroad workers, foundry workers, and an 8 inch boot for oil well drillers.

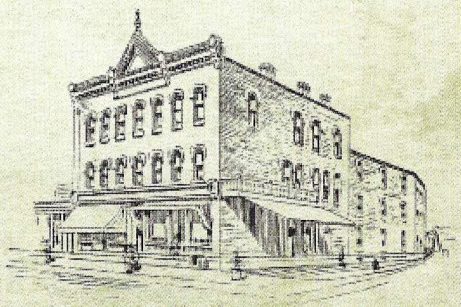
On May 28, 1918 the Thorogood trademark was registered and became widely known. By that time, military shoes had become very popular for civilian wear. One style alone, a semi-dress pattern, was being made by the company at a rate of 1,000 pairs per day.

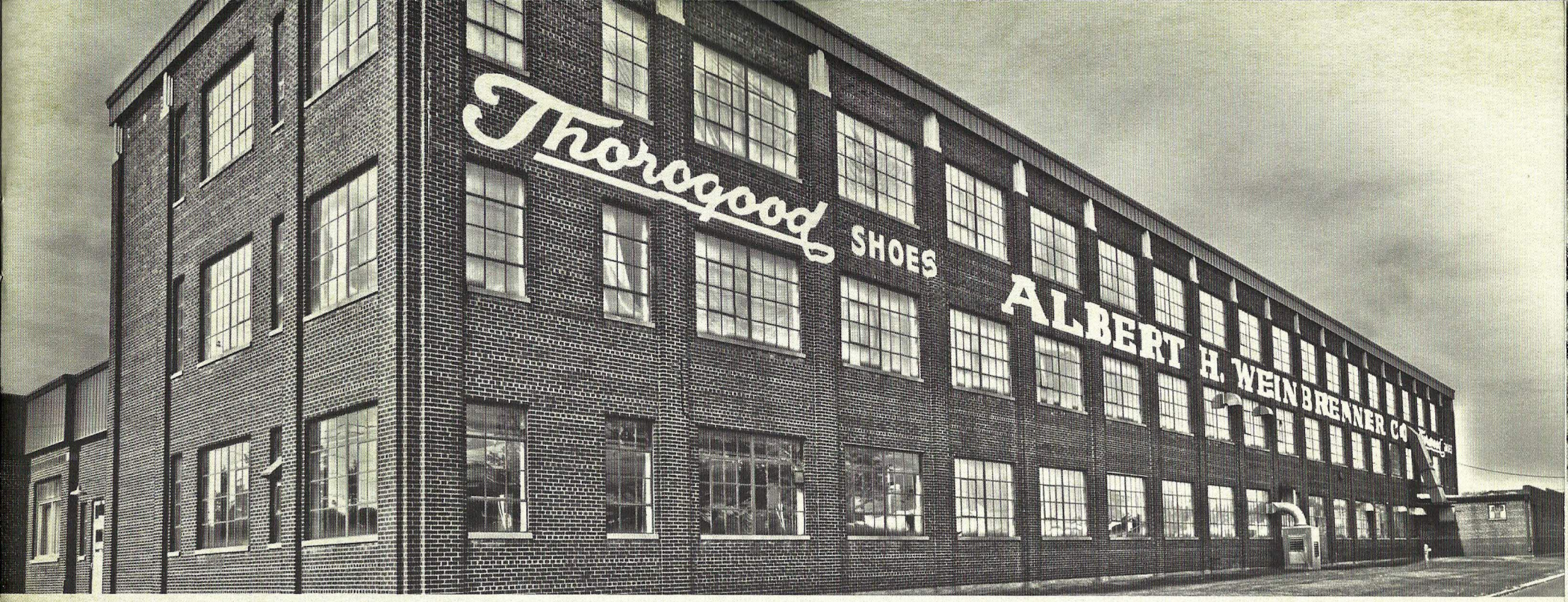
Nationwide Expansion: 1919-1939
The company opened its first branch warehouse in New York City in 1919 as a separate corporation. It had its own sales force, and shoes were shipped from Milwaukee to the New York warehouse in carload lots. During the next several years, branches were opened on the same basis in Pittsburg, Chicago, Kansas City, Atlanta, San Francisco, and Nashville. The New York City branch was later moved to Newark, New Jersey. In 1939, only three branches remained operational. The last branch in San Francisco was closed in the early 1950's.

In August of 1919 the company entered into a joint venture with 13 other companies that organized a cooperative box and crate manufacturer incorporated under the name of Manufacturer's Box Company. A.H. Weinbrenner Company was the second largest subscriber of stock in the venture. A.H. Weinbrenner was elected to the board of directors, and was later joined on that board by Weinbrenner Vice President, W.G. Hanson. The company continued as a stockholder of Manufacturer's Box Co. and was represented on the board of directors into the 1990's, at which point the firm's assets were liquidated, having achieved its purpose over the years.

Children's Footwear & the Ogden Shoe Company: 1924
During 1924, management decided to build a factory for children's footwear. The fourth floor of the Ogden Shoe Company was leased to start production before a new factory was available. The new building was completed the next year, and consisted of three stories at 33rd and Hadley Streets in Milwaukee. Initially 34 styles in misses, children's and infants were made. During the next few years, production increased to 3,000 pairs daily, but the great depression in the early thirties required changes.

A two-sole stitch down was developed and patented as the Hadley process. Using the midsole as an insole required changes in last and midsole design. The lower cost in this construction enabled the company to produce unlined barefoot sandals and unlined oxfords to sell to dealers at $.95 and $1.05 respectively, and helped the factory to continue production at full capacity during those hard times.





Relocation to Marshfield & Merrill: 1935-1937

In 1935, a delegation of the Marshfield Industrial Foundation in Marshfield, Wisconsin approached the Weinbrenner Shoe Company about relocating. They proposed building a factory and leasing it for a nominal amount. Marshfield, like other cities in that area, needed industry to replace the businesses that had disappeared during the depression. Plans were made accordingly, and the factory for work shoes was opened in January of 1936 to alleviate overcrowding of the Milwaukee facilities and to lower the costs of production.

For several months before the opening, a training facility was established in the Purdy School in Marshfield with upper cutting machines and sewing machines furnished by Weinbrenner. Uppers had been partially completed by the time the factory was ready to begin production. The first shoes were of nailed construction with black split uppers. The United Shoe Machinery Corporation maintained a staff of instructors to teach the operation of lasting and bottoming machines. Weinbrenner instructors were used for training on the other operations. Before the trainees were placed on the payroll, however, they had to obtain a certain level of proficiency within three weeks.

Goodyear welt production began several months later. In the meantime, work shoe production continued at Milwaukee, but was phased out as quickly as Marshfield could absorb it.

In March of 1936, a group of Merrill, Wisconsin businessmen invited Weinbrenner officials to visit their city to discuss building a shoe factory similar to the one leased in Marshfield. The company was interested, and the Merrill Industrial Foundation was quickly formed. On December 5, 1936 of that year, the building was dedicated and celebrated by enthusiastic residents of Merrill with a carnival atmosphere party throughout the city that was arranged by the Junior Chamber of Commerce and lasted two days.

Production in Merrill began in January of 1937 with Alvin Jung as General Manager. The next year, the city of Antigo built a similar factory for children's stitch down production, which was opened in early 1938. Employee hiring and training in Antigo and Merrill proceeded similarly to the program followed in Marshfield after production was completely absorbed by the northern factories.

Safety Footwear and a Change in Direction, 1938-1942

In 1938, the company took its first step into safety footwear, which would prove to be a cornerstone of its business in later years. The shoe was a vamp-lined 6 inch boot with a bulky tip that concealed a steel box toe. It was sold to dealers for $3.10 per pair.

In August of 1940, Albert H. Weinbrenner again assumed the duties of General Manager following the sudden death of W.G. Hanson who had been an executive with the company since 1917. Mr. Weinbrenner had been inactive in the business even though he still spent time at his office as president. Shortly after Mr. Hanson's death, Walter F. Kieckhefer, son-in-law of Mr. Weinbrenner, became a director.

The next year, James Childs, Jr. and Martin Mitchell, officials of the H. Childs Company of Pittsburg, called on Weinbrenner Shoe Company to discuss the safety footwear business. The safety shoe business was a separate division of the Childs Company, and was named the Iron Age Shoe Company. Weinbrenner became a major supplier to Iron Age as a result of the meeting between Weinbrenner and Childs Company executives.

With Word War II now in progress, the United States Government required shoe manufacturers to convert solely to military shoe production in 1942. Civilian shoes were allotted to territories and travel restricted because of gas rationing. The Antigo, Wisconsin facility was partially converted to welt production and made combat boots along with the Marshfield plant. The Merrill facility made shoes for the Navy along with a buckle oxford that was the official uniform wear for the Air Force. These patterns became extremely popular in civilian shoes and a good portion of Merrill's production was devoted to these styles.

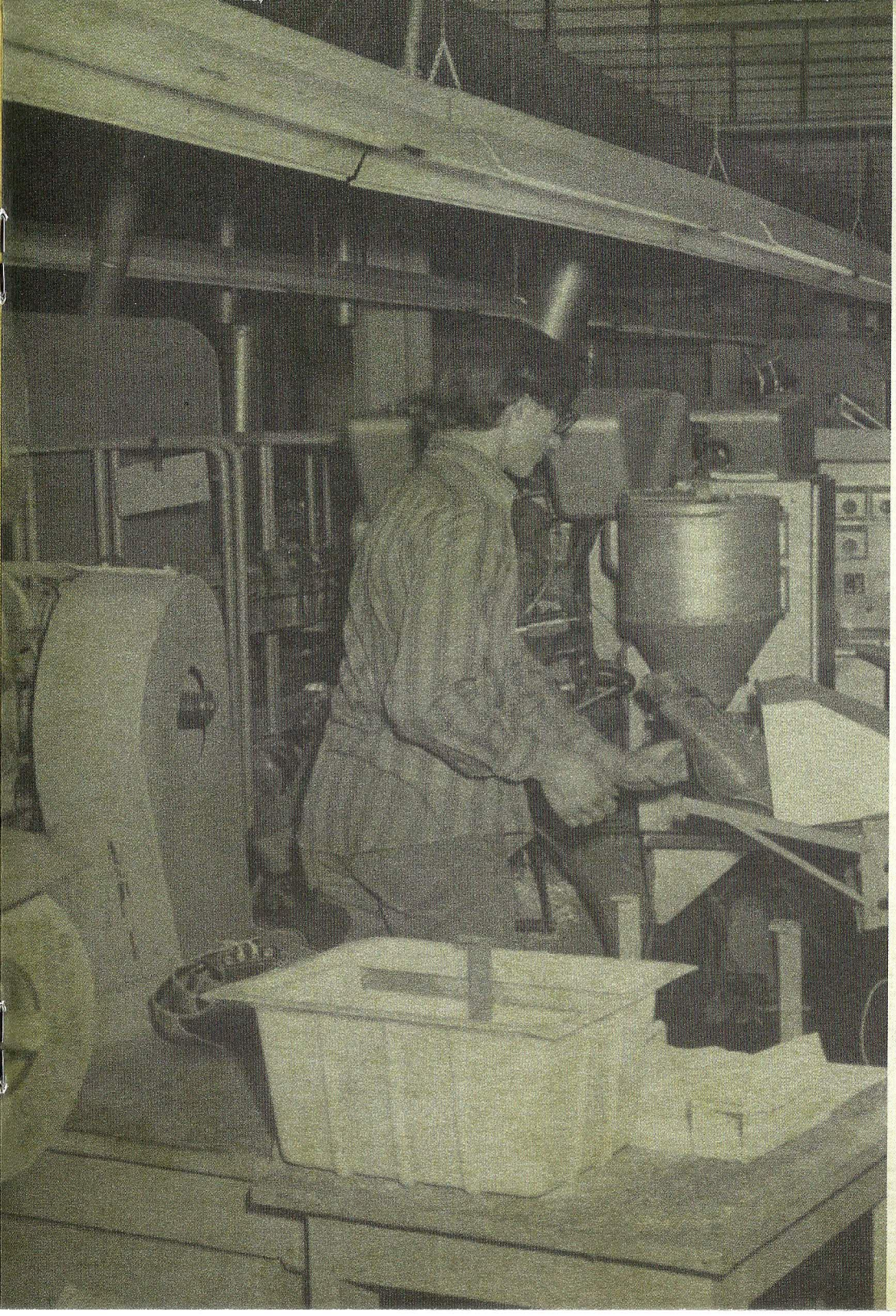
A Further Shift in Operations from Milwaukee to Merrill: 1945-1947
In 1945, Weinbrenner sold its production facilities in Milwaukee to the Cutler-Hammer Company. Up until that time it was used for corporate offices and a shipping warehouse. The children's factory had been sold earlier to the Milwaukee Saddlery Company, which later sold the building to the Ideal Shoe Company. The Juneau Avenue building having been sold, new office quarters were rented on North Summit Avenue in Milwaukee. New shipping warehouse space was added onto the existing factory in Merrill in 1947.

Rib Lake & an Enlarged Marshfield Factory: 1947
By now the company needed more work shoe production than Marshfield could provide. The City of Rib Lake, Wisconsin had a suitable building available and an ample labor supply. Production quickly began and grew to about 600 pairs per day. By the end of 1950, however, arrangements had been made to enlarge the Marshfield factory and the Rib Lake production was absorbed. A shoe manufacturer in St. Paul, Minnesota indicated an interest in continuing the Rib Lake facilities under the name of Jem Products.

Proud-Fit Children's Shoes: 1948
In 1948, Walter Kieckhefer was elected President of the corporation, and Mr. Weinbrenner remained Chairman of the Board. It was at this time that a separate division was formed to promote children's stitch down and compo shoes. It was called the Proud-Fit division and carried a special sales staff. A circus theme was used in cartoon design and national advertising featuring Felix Adler, the famous clown of Ringling Brothers Circus, as spokesperson for the line.

Albert H. Weinbrenner Passes Away: 1949
On July 4, 1949 a colorful career came to an end with the death of Albert H. Weinbrenner. His company had grown into one of the leading shoe manufacturers in the country. He was remembered as a tall and slender, mild mannered individual without bluster. His devotion to his family members was evident by the manner in which he included them in the affairs of his company. Even though he could afford any luxury, he preferred to be unpretentious and somewhat frugal.





Expansion and Textron: 1950-1960
By 1950, the work shoe line had been developed further toward special shoes for each industry. In that year the name Job-Fitted was trademarked and applied to individual styles. Names such as the Bruiser, Pole Hiker, Trophy, and Chore Boy were used in promotions. About 40 basic industries were supplied with their special needs in work shoes.

The company entered into another cooperative venture in October of 1951. Eleven shoe manufacturers joined together in forming the Manufacturer's Chemical Company which was designed to supply footwear, tanning and other leather industries with chemicals, adhesives, finishes, and related materials. Weinbrenner Shoe Company was a major subscriber of stock in the corporation and was represented on the Board of Directors.

The Weinbrenner family ownership continued until July 1, 1960, when Textron, Inc., of Providence, Rhode Island bought the company. Textron was originally a textile manufacturer, but had evolved into a large conglomerate by the time of the Weinbrenner acquisition.

While Weinbrenner family members continued as corporate officers following the purchase, by January of 1961, Textron appointed Frederick A Wilmanns to replace Walter Kieckhefer as president. Mr. Wilmanns had joined Weinbrenner in 1947 as a factory trainee and by 1954 he had risen to the position of Executive Vice President and Treasurer of Weinbrenner. He was at the relatively young age of 40 when named president.

Children's Shoes Phase Out & Vulcanized Footwear Begins Production: 1961
During the next several years, significant developments occurred. Children's shoes were phased out and replaced with men's casual cemented footwear in Antigo and Process 82, which directly vulcanized a rubber sole to a welted leather upper, was introduced in Merrill.
The first production of vulcanized footwear began in Merrill in 1961 in the area of the factory that had housed the sole cutting department. This construction became an important part of work shoe sales.

Specialty Shoes for Fishermen, Golfers & Hand-sewn Moccasins: 1961-1965
One of the most popular styles in the Process 82 line was a comfortable shoe, with an oiled soft leather upper, called the Strike, designed especially for fisherman. These shoes were packed in a plastic box, which could be used for fishing tackle.

Another important product of Process 82 was the Mulligan line of golf oxfords. These shoes were developed to compete with more expensive welt golf oxfords. Insulated, waterproof hunting boots were among the types made possible through the use of the vulcanized process or Vulco Process as it had become known
By 1965, genuine hand-sewn moccasin oxfords had become very popular in men's footwear. That year, production on this type of shoe construction began in the small community of Kimball, Wisconsin, which is about 100 miles north of Merrill. Training in the high skill of hand-sewing moccasin vamps began in a leased building and eventually production of the completed shoes reached about 400 pairs per day. Three years later, however, management decided to transfer production to the Antigo factory.



Bata Shoe Organization: 1966-1970
Weinbrenner Shoe Company became a member of the Toronto-based, worldwide Bata Shoe Organization on July 1, 1966 with Bata executive Paul P. Gross being named as company Manager of Weinbrenner. Weinbrenner headquarters remained in Milwaukee until 1969, when it transferred operations to the Merrill location.

In 1970 Weinbrenner Shoe Company became a Division of Bata Shoe Company, and Weinbrenner Corporation was dissolved, although the company still sold its products under the well-established Weinbrenner name.

New Management with James V. Greenlee & a Merrill Retail Outlet: 1973-1979
James V. Greenlee was hired that year as the new manager tasked with leading the company from its new corporate office in Merrill, Wisconsin. The Bata Shoe organization, a decentralized manufacturing and marketing operation out of Belcamp, Maryland employed 86,000 people worldwide during the years Weinbrenner was under its ownership. The organization included ninety footwear factories, five engineering works and over 5,000 retail stores. The philosophy that "The Customer is our Master" was strengthened in the merger of these two businesses, and is still of prime concern to the Weinbrenner Shoe Company.

A retail outlet for factory damaged shoes began operation in 1973 in space made available within the Merrill factory. A new factory outlet store was built in Merrill in 1978 to replace the original store at the factory location. During 1979, stores of similar design and operation were opened in Marshfield and Antigo.

Branding & Consolidation in the 1980's
By the early '80s, Weinbrenner was broadening its reach in sports-related footwear. The Ultimate Wading Shoe, which was designed by nationally-known professional fly fisherman Gary Borger, was introduced in 1980 under Weinbrenner's Wood n' Stream brand. This Goodyear welt constructed fly fishing boot featured a non-slip felt bottom outsole and a man-made upper that not only provided superior support, safety and comfort, but also dried out quickly without any special treatment.

Weinbrenner's Antigo plant was also expanding its injection molding business in 1980 and was working on a 50,000 plus pair order of cross country ski boots for Trak, Inc., located in Ward Hill, Massachusetts. The Trakker system incorporated a radically new concept in boot binding control whereby grooved runners were molded into the sole. The runners prevented the skier's foot from sliding over the edge of the ski.

As a division of the worldwide Bata Shoe Organization, Weinbrenner was led by a succession of Bata Company Managers following the retirement of Mr. Greenlee in July of 1982.

Peter J. Nicholls, who replaced Mr. Greenlee, had been with Bata since 1961 and had performed executive duties for Bata in England, Japan, and West Africa prior to being transferred to Weinbrenner. Mr. Nicholls was promoted in April of 1984 to the position of president over all Bata Manufacturing operations in the USA. While this promotion required that he move to Belcamp, MD, he still retained the position of Weinbrenner president.

J.A.G. (Duffy) Fraser subsequently was transferred to Weinbrenner to allow Mr. Nicholls to concentrate fully

on Bata's Belcamp operations. This three month assignment ultimately turned into a 26 month stay. Mr. Fraser was extremely experienced in Bata operations, previously being based in Toronto, Canada where he oversaw world-wide materials price collection and tannery activities and had previously been a company manager in Zimbabwe, Africa.
During Mr. Fraser's short tenure, U.S. footwear manufactures saw import sales in the U.S. rise from 75% to 85% and some 150 U.S. footwear manufacturing plants were closed. These were make or break years for many U.S. footwear manufacturers. In response to these turbulent times, Bata brought in Robert J. Selig in June of 1986 to address the rapid growth of imports in the U.S. by focusing on two key areas; increase sales and reduce costs. Mr. Selig set his sights on improving quality, reducing production times and waste and streamlining the management team.

The company consolidated its production facilities in 1986 so as to be more cost effective, competitive and better able to respond to customer needs. The first stage of this consolidation included the closing of the Antigo factory, which produced polyurethane injection molded and cemented footwear for the Thorogood brand and private label companies such as JC Penny. All equipment and production was transferred to Merrill. Simultaneously, all Merrill welted uniform footwear production was transferred to the Marshfield factory. As a result of the consolidation, Weinbrenner continued all welted production of work, safety, outdoor and uniform footwear at its Marshfield plant, with all polyurethane injected, cemented and vulcanized production done at the Merrill plant.

Weinbrenner's Wood N' Stream line of outdoor footwear expanded on its line of heavy, full-grain leather 16" Snake Boots in 1987 to include two new styles that incorporated ballistic fabric to defray the penetration of a snake's fangs and mini grid polyurethane soles which made the boots extremely lightweight and flexible. The boots were thoroughly tested and certified as being snake-proof.

Postal and Navy Footwear: 1986-1987
For many years prior Weinbrenner had been producing Thorogood Uniform Footwear worn by postal employees. In 1986 the United States government passed a law requiring all postal uniform footwear be certified by the U.S. Navy to be slip resistant. The Thorogood footwear already being produced at the time passed the test with flying colors and for the first time, Weinbrenner's 1987 catalog began offering uniform footwear that had received certification for use by postal workers.

New Wholesale Division, ThoroGard Develops: 1988
In 1988, a separate wholesale division named "ThoroGard" was created to sell a new generation of occupational safety footwear. This high tech line of protective footwear reflected the expertise, innovation and craftsmanship developed by Weinbrenner over its nearly 100 year history.

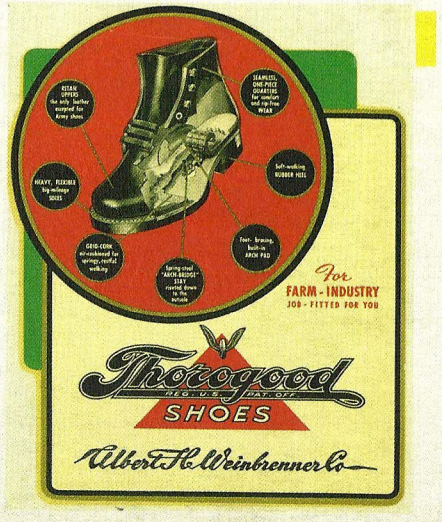
Weinbrenner Breaks Away from Bata Shoe Company: 1988
Weinbrenner came under local ownership in February of 1988 through the efforts of a local investment group which included six management employees. The company was purchased from Bata Shoe Company, which had expressed the intention of severing its ownership of Weinbrenner inasmuch as Bata was primarily interested in retailing shoes in the United States, not manufacturing them. This change was applauded as a move that helped retain the manufacturing facilities and jobs in the Merrill and Marshfield communities.

CAD/CAM Lightweight Footwear: 1990's
By the early 90's Weinbrenner was an industry leader in the production of lightweight footwear using soft leathers that provided outstanding comfort. The latest in "CAD/CAM" aided manufacturing was introduced including new cutting, sewing and lasting machines which provided uniformity and greater efficiency. A conversion process from an IBM 370 mainframe to a more advanced AS/400 computer was undertaken in 1990 and continued in phases through 1995 and included software programming upgrades to aid all operations.

Two Categories— Price & Quality: 1990's
The 90s were also defined by a series of international trade agreements that changed the retail playing field for all domestic footwear manufacturers, including Weinbrenner. In response to the flood of cheaper foreign footwear becoming available on store shelves, Weinbrenner embarked on a decade of re-invention that put its history of quality and value on the line...and won.

Weinbrenner split production of its footwear into two categories. On one hand, with careful oversight, the company contracted with select foreign producers to help it compete in this new price-conscious consumer market. On the other, Weinbrenner continued its commitment to maintaining its domestic production while competitors made wholesale moves oversees. This decision would prove extremely beneficial, especially when a reinvigorated wave of "MADE IN USA" consumerism began sweeping our country a decade later. While so many were not, Weinbrenner continued to promote its USA made Thorogood brand as well as private label production for Cabela's, LL Bean and Browning Arms kangaroo boots.

New President/CEO Lance R. Nienow: 1992
On February 17, 1992, Lance R. Nienow was promoted to CEO/ president after Mr. Greenlee stepped down. Mr. Nienow's career, which had already spanned 22 years in increasingly responsible positions in personnel, human resources, purchasing, and operations would continue for another 18 years as CEO. During his tenure, the company balanced the reality of an increased customer demand for imported footwear with a commitment to maintaining its domestic manufacturing plants. While many other footwear companies saw their domestic plants shuttered, Mr. Nienow's loyalty to American made footwear was a significant factor in Weinbrenner retaining its domestic manufacturing abilities.





100 Year Anniversary & Building Improvements: 1992-1998

In 1992, a significant efficiency improvement for the injection molding process was accomplished by the installation of an 18 station DESMA polyurethane injection unit for direct attach and outsole production. This unit replaced two older 12 station machines.

1992 was also a year of celebration as Weinbrenner observed its 100th anniversary. The company's centennial theme of "A Century of Lasting Quality" reflected the company's commitment to producing footwear of quality and value. Public open houses and plant tours were held in both the Merrill and Marshfield communities. Centennial themed banners, flags and stickers were displayed throughout the company. In appreciation of the commitment and dedication of its employees, each received a Weinbrenner jacket imprinted with the company's Centennial Logo as well as a special Centennial Logo Christmas ornament that year.

A company-wide picnic was held that summer on the corporate office grounds in Merrill. Current and former employees along with their families were all invited to attend a day-long celebration complete with a big-top tent, food, beverages, miniature train rides, carnival games, prizes, horse riding and a very popular dunk tank.

A series of major remodeling projects began in 1993 with the construction of a new 24,000 square foot raw material warehouse at the Merrill plant.

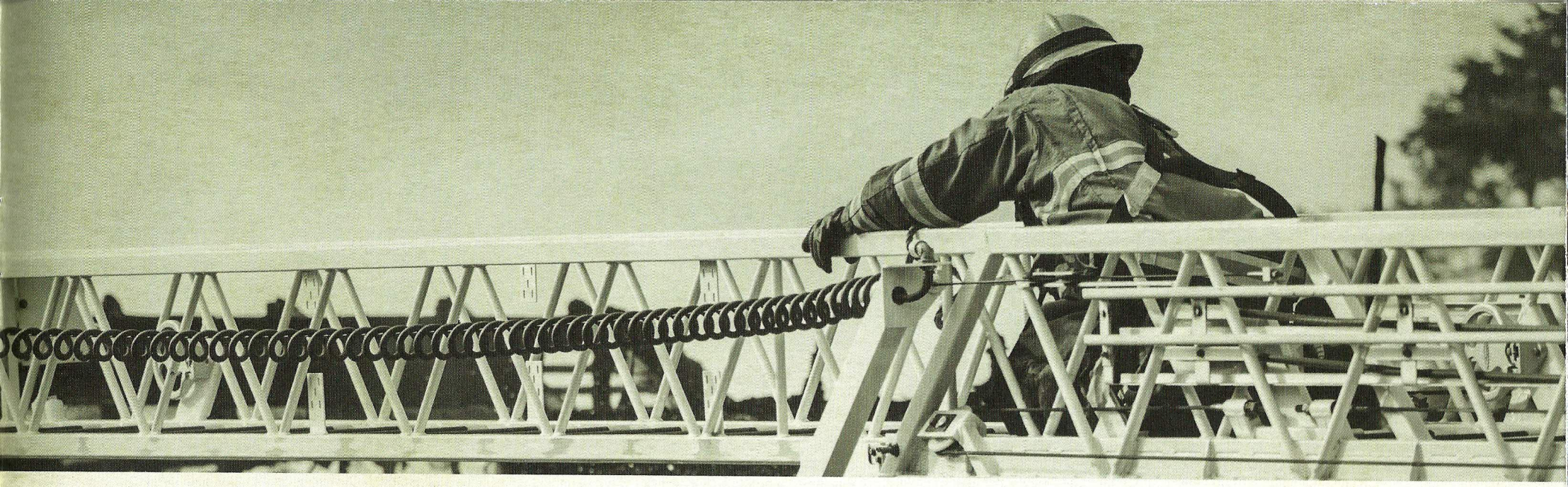
Subsequent projects through 1998 would result in new energy efficient heating units and lighting being installed in the plant along with a new heat exhaust system over the vulcanizing press area. Additional improvements included adding insulation, re-roofing and re-siding of the entire Merrill facility. A similar multi-phase, re-roofing project at the Marshfield plant was begun in 1998 and completed over the next ten years.

State Department of Corrections: 1993

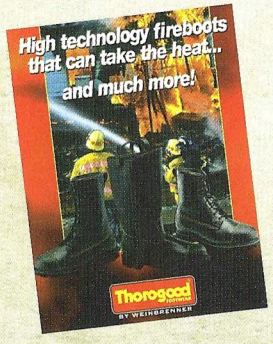
In 1993, Weinbrenner Shoe Company was also awarded a contract with the State of Wisconsin to supply Process 82 (P-82) vulcanized boots for the Department of Corrections. Over the years, production of these durable P-82 oxfords and 6 inch work boots being worn by inmates would continue under contracts held by Weinbrenner. Beginning in 2000 Lincoln Industries, a county based resource dedicated to providing training and employment opportunities for challenged individuals in Lincoln County, utilized the footwear as well. The contract awarded to Lincoln Industries was called an "Evergreen" contract in that it was ongoing from year to year and would not be put out for bids again. The contract called for Lincoln Industries clients to provide a set percentage of the labor required to produce the shoes. Weinbrenner acted as a sub-contractor, although it actually provided over 90% of the production labor.

This arrangement resulted in a win-win for all parties concerned. Wisconsin taxpayers saw their tax dollars used to purchase footwear for Wisconsin inmates from a Wisconsin based company. Challenged individuals in Lincoln County were provided job opportunities to learn and develop skills in an actual workplace setting and Wisconsin (Weinbrenner) employees benefited by having an ongoing customer to produce footwear, thus helping to retain Wisconsin jobs.

After a 55 year run, Weinbrenner retired the older, P-82 vulcanizing press equipment in mid-2016, but production of the prison shoes under the "Evergreen" contract continued by utilizing a modern, light weight, dual-density polyurethane injected sole.



Greenlee Award is Established: 1993
James Greenlee, who was one of the members of the local investment group responsible for Weinbrenner's purchase from Bata, came out of retirement to become president, a position he would hold through January of 1992. Mr. Greenlee would remain on as Chairman of the Board until January 31, 1993, when he retired for the final time. The annual Greenlee Award recognizes outstanding overall performance by a sales representative. Not just top sales were considered, but exceptional interaction with management, as well as support for the customer service and finance staff were taken into account.



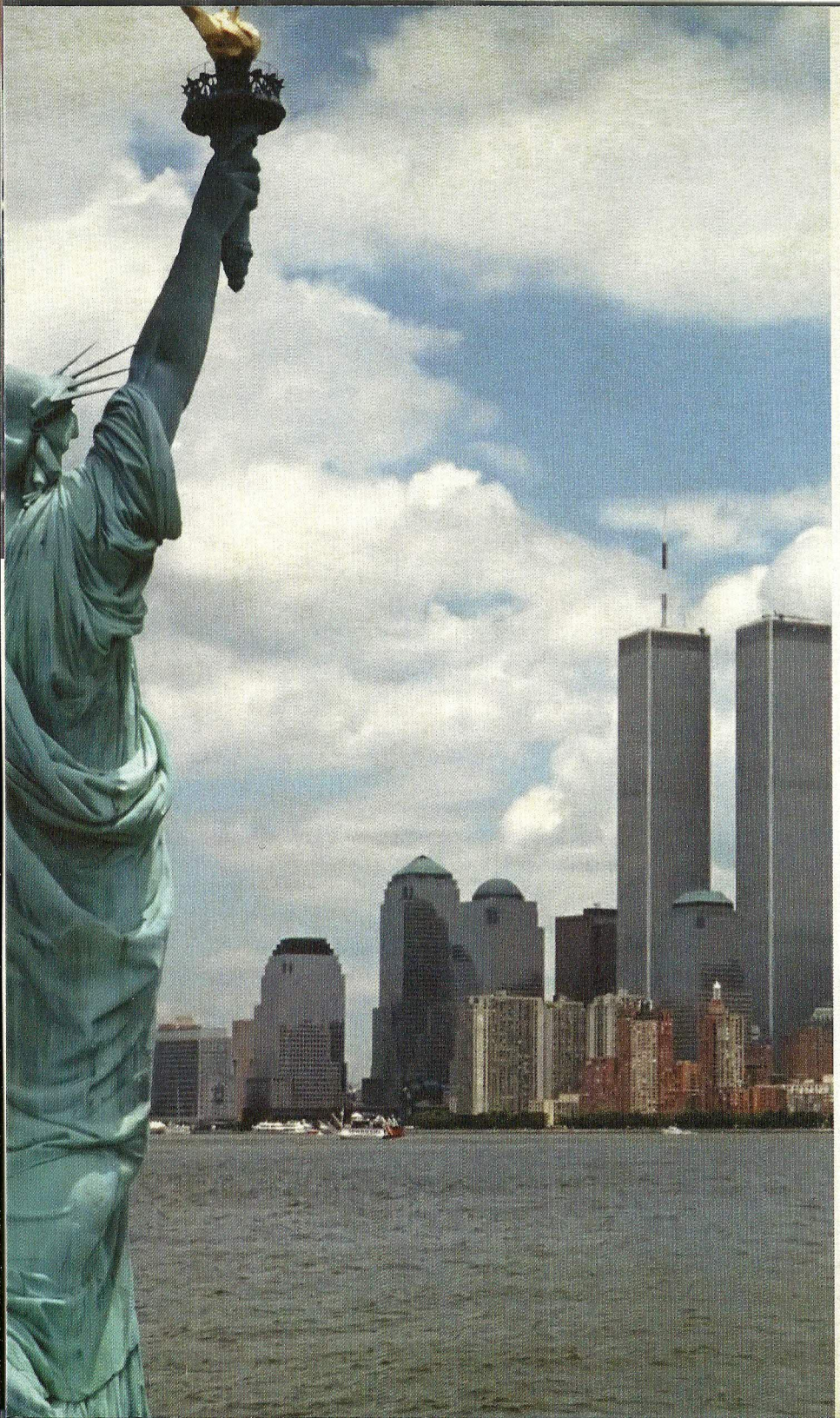
Firefighting Boots: 1997
In 1997, the Marshfield plant geared up to produce Thorogood® brand firefighting boots that would meet rigid NFPA certification and U.L. testing standards. Orders exceeded expectations in response to the safety features and craftsmanship built into this new line. The technology incorporated into these boots also improved other lines in the Thorogood® catalog advancing quality, occupational performance, and sales.

International Standards Organization: 1998
In 1998, Weinbrenner became one of the first US footwear manufacturers to become certified under the International Standards Organization (ISO)-9001 Quality Management System. Developed in Geneva, Switzerland, ISO-9001 provides companies a universal quality baseline or template that was especially beneficial in international trade. While being followed by many companies worldwide, this quality system was relatively new in the U.S. To become certified, Weinbrenner developed written procedures and controls that addressed virtually every core process within the Company. These procedures and controls still provide Weinbrenner customers today with the assurance that the quality of the products they order and re-order are consistent.

Company Website, ESOP and Chairman Gisselman: 1999-2012
After the www.weinbrennerusa.com website was established in 1999, the company's sales opportunities began expanding in the early 2000s as internet retail websites were added to the mix of brick and mortar dealers. Opportunities for exporting footwear began to expand as potential overseas customers became aware of Weinbrenner's product offerings by the click of a button. In 2000, the dawn of a new era began when Weinbrenner employees took ownership of the company through an Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP). Under the continued leadership of president and C.E.O. Lance Nienow the ESOP retirement program, which was developed by then V.P. of Finance David Gisselman, gave all of Weinbrenner's management staff, office personnel and committed full time sales reps an opportunity to profit from the company's growth. David Gisselman would later be named Chairman of the Board in 2012.

With the leadership of an experienced management staff, the talents of shoemaking craftsmen and a committed sales force, Weinbrenner entered the next century dedicated to making great "job-fitted" footwear. This commitment continued the legacy of quality and innovation that was established by its founder.

Under this new stewardship, the company took advantage of new technologies and markets to redefine its position in the industry. Form, function and fit soon established Thorogood® as the leading footwear brand in its markets. Advances included the introduction of lightweight internal metatarsal guards, dual-density outsoles, shock-absorbing heel pads, lightweight puncture resisting midsoles and form-fitting memory foam footbeds.



International Sales, Makeup & The Return of the Goodyear Welt: Early 2000's

The early 2000s saw an expansion of the company's exporting efforts with the creation of a new International Sales management position. Sales growth in the Middle East expanded, as exemplified by the purchase our 804-6391 Structural Fire Fighting boots by the Saudi Arabian Civil Defense Force.

During this time WSC began producing high-quality private label footwear for the Filson Company and Duluth Trading Company. The production of these Filson products put Weinbrenner in an elite category of higher-end shoe manufacturers as this footwear retailed at $200 - $300 or more. Cabela's, another major retailer, also partnered with WSC to make their boots as they looked to enter the work shoe market.

Due to an increase demand, production of Goodyear Welt footwear was re-established at the Merrill plant in 2000 after a 16 year absence. While Weinbrenner was expanding its customer base with some major retailers, it was also venturing into direct e-commerce by selling wading boots at www.wadingshoes.com.

Donations for September 11th, 2001 Attack

Like many others, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 left Weinbrenner management and workers stunned. All mourned those lost and prayed for those who had lost loved ones and friends. Weinbrenner employees in Merrill and Marshfield responded by collecting monetary donations to help in whatever manner was needed most. Within three days of the attack, Weinbrenner had donated and shipped 300 pairs of durable work boots to Ground Zero for those working in the rubble. Another 200 pairs would follow three days later. While Weinbrenner employees may have physically been in Wisconsin, their hearts were in New York.

This experience also led to the introduction of a new family of enhanced law enforcement footwear, the Thorogood® Commando series. At the same time, Weinbrenner's management made the conscious decision to honor this historical event by separating its fire footwear from the uniform division by creating its own 911 division.

Military Footwear: 1986-2002

WSC's domestic footwear production was impacted by the 2002 downturn in U.S. manufacturing and heavy industry sectors of the economy. In response, and although Weinbrenner's last Department of Defense Military contract, for ladies dress oxfords, was completed in 1986, Weinbrenner sought after and was awarded a contract to produce desert, steel toe, hot weather boots for the U.S. Air force. The boots became so popular that the Army also began using them for its members. This contract provided Weinbrenner with a significant amount of domestic production that would supplement the company's commercial footwear production.

Technological and Manufacturing Advances: 2002-2003
In Dec of 2002, Weinbrenner's revolutionary Aeromet™ internal metatarsal protection was trademarked and incorporated into the Company's line of Work One® occupational footwear. This technology greatly increased the comfort, flexibility and mobility for the wearer's foot and ankle when compared to a boot having an external metatarsal guard.

By 2003, greater distribution, higher quality materials and refined manufacturing strategies resulted in the highest sales the company had ever recorded. The thoughtful integration of domestic and overseas production opportunities had put Weinbrenner in a strong, financially sound position as it ventured into the 21st century.

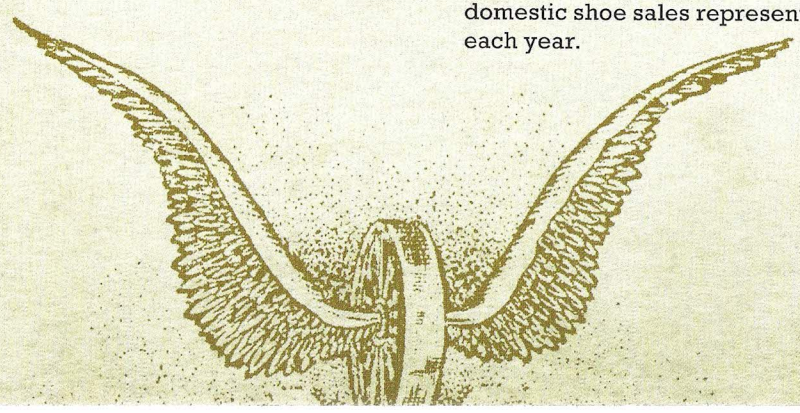
Dedicated Employees & Outlet Relocation: 2003
One measure of a company's worth can be demonstrated by the longevity of its employees. Weinbrenner has been fortunate to have had many employees who have enjoyed long and rewarding carriers with the company. This was exemplified in 2003 when the seven retirees recognized at that year's retirement banquet were employed an average of 41 years each and had accumulated a total of 291 years of service. Erv Ploog, who had advanced from production worker to a plant supervisor over the course of his career at the Marshfield plant, was recognized for having broken the previous employment record by three months, retiring with over 54 years of service.

Weinbrenner's factory shoe outlet retail store was relocated to the former Depot Youth Center next to the Merrill plant in 2003 after operating for 25 years out of a store in Merrill's Pine Ridge Avenue shopping area.

Expansion & Governor's Export Achievement Award in 2004
Following the 2004 installation of a DESMA 18-station, dual-density, injection molding machine in the Merrill plant, Weinbrenner expanded on its ability to manufacture footwear having directly attached single-density polyurethane soles, to producing dual-density soles as well. Thorogood® Hellfire® rubber boots were also introduced that year, making Thorogood one of the most complete occupational footwear companies in the footwear industry.

In recognition of Weinbrenner's success in developing and building its export business, Weinbrenner was presented with the Governor's Export Achievement Award in 2004 and the company's International Sales Manager, Richard Martens, was appointed to Wisconsin's International Trade Council.

With the company's increased business and growing footwear lines, the need for additional warehouse space was also resolved in 2004 following the company's purchase of a 33,750 square foot warehouse facility on Taylor Street in Merrill's Industrial Park.



Shoe College: 2007
Weinbrenner expanded its efforts at strengthening relationships with international customers in 2007 by holding its first International Shoe College. WSC first initiated the Weinbrenner Shoe College for domestic accounts back in 1999. Attendees graduating from this first International Shoe College class on the Company's Merrill campus represented Weinbrenner accounts in Trinidad and Barbados. The three days of intensive training included learning about various shoe constructions and costing procedures and involved both classroom and in-plant instructions.

Department of Defense: 2008
In 2008 Weinbrenner was again awarded a new five year hot weather boot contract from the Department of Defense. The company also was selected to receive a Defense Logistics Readiness Support Award for HUB Zone Small Business.

Lance Nienow retires, Executive Management Established: 2009-2010
Following the retirement of Weinbrenner president Lance Nienow in early 2010, Mr. Nienow continued his connection to Weinbrenner as Chairman of the Board until October, 2011, and currently remains a Board member. In honor of Mr. Nienow's dedication to the continuation of domestic footwear production, the Lance R. Nienow Award was created and given to the top Weinbrenner domestic shoe sales representative each year.

Leadership responsibilities were transferred in 2009 to an Executive Management Committee that was comprised of five company executives; Patrick Miner – Sales/ Marketing, John Schenzel – Merchandise, David Kucirek – Materials Management, David Cyrtmus – Finance, and John Henson – Operations. While collectively running the company through the Executive Management Committee, each executive also retained their positions in their respective areas of responsibility.

Patrick J. Miner becomes Weinbrenner's President: 2011
Weinbrenner's Executive Management Committee disbanded in October of 2011 following the appointment of Patrick J. Miner as president. Mr. Miner, who joined the Company in 2002 as V.P. of Industrial Work and had progressed up to Sr. V.P. of Sales/Marketing prior to being named president, remains Weinbrenner's current President and "Head Coach."

Following his appointment, Mr. Miner began implementing a number of major initiatives including a refocused emphasis on safety, moving away from the traditional footwear manufacturing model involving cases of footwear moving from operation to operation and department to department over to a one-piece-flow lean manufacturing model, replacing the long-standing piecework pay system for production workers with a flat hourly-rate wage structure and undertaking a major conversion project.

Overshoes, Metatarsal Guard: 2000-2012
Since 2000, the successful experience of selling overshoes to the uniform industry was expanded. Weinbrenner purchased the patent for the Shoe In in 2010. Under the marketed phrase of "Keeping Clean Floors Clean" and nicknamed the "Wife Saver," this unique product expanded the WSC overshoe reach into private homes, commercial services, safety toe, and ice traction arenas. The private label side of this product allowed the brand to expand into the concrete design and floor coatings industries worldwide.

Weinbrenner's patent for its I-Met® Internal Flexible Metatarsal Guard, which was issued in December of 2012 and had been federally trademarked since 2008, set Thorogood® apart from the competition. This cutting edge technology featured the only Internal Metatarsal Guard that integrated the guard with the steel toe cap and was available exclusively in Thorogood occupational footwear. Many industrial companies were looking for ways to increase the footwear comfort for its workforce; companies such as Alcoa Aluminum quickly approved this technology which could be used in high heat industrial and fire boot applications.

Wood N' Stream Outdoor Footwear Brand: 2013
In 2013, Weinbrenner re-introduced its Wood N' Stream Outdoor Footwear brand, focusing on hunting and outdoor activities. The consumer interest in Made in the USA outdoor footwear expanded to private label orders from Bass Pro Shops, Dick's Sporting Goods and Orvis.
An original 1957 Wood N' Stream boot sample was found in a historical shoe collection in Japan and brought back to Weinbrenner to create the foundation for a new series of "1957" footwear. This style was later expanded into the Thorogood work line as well.

Iconic, Handcrafted Styling gets Reintroduced: 2014
In 2014, Weinbrenner paid homage to it's heritage and to the Goodyear Welt process, a 200-plus-year-old boot construction technique, by introducing the 1892 Wisconsin Collection by Thorogood®. This collection combined the spirit of Weinbrenner's original premium handcrafted boots named after cities in Wisconsin that were established in the 1890's, featuring the iconic styling of the No. 60 last and the finest Horween Chromexcel leather.

Thorogood's white wedge 6 inch original Boy Scout contract boot (814-4200), retailed by JC Penney in the '60s, recently became one of Japan and South Korea's hottest fashion footwear styles, which reflected the Asian and European lifestyle influences that made the American-made shoes in this collection extremely popular oversees.

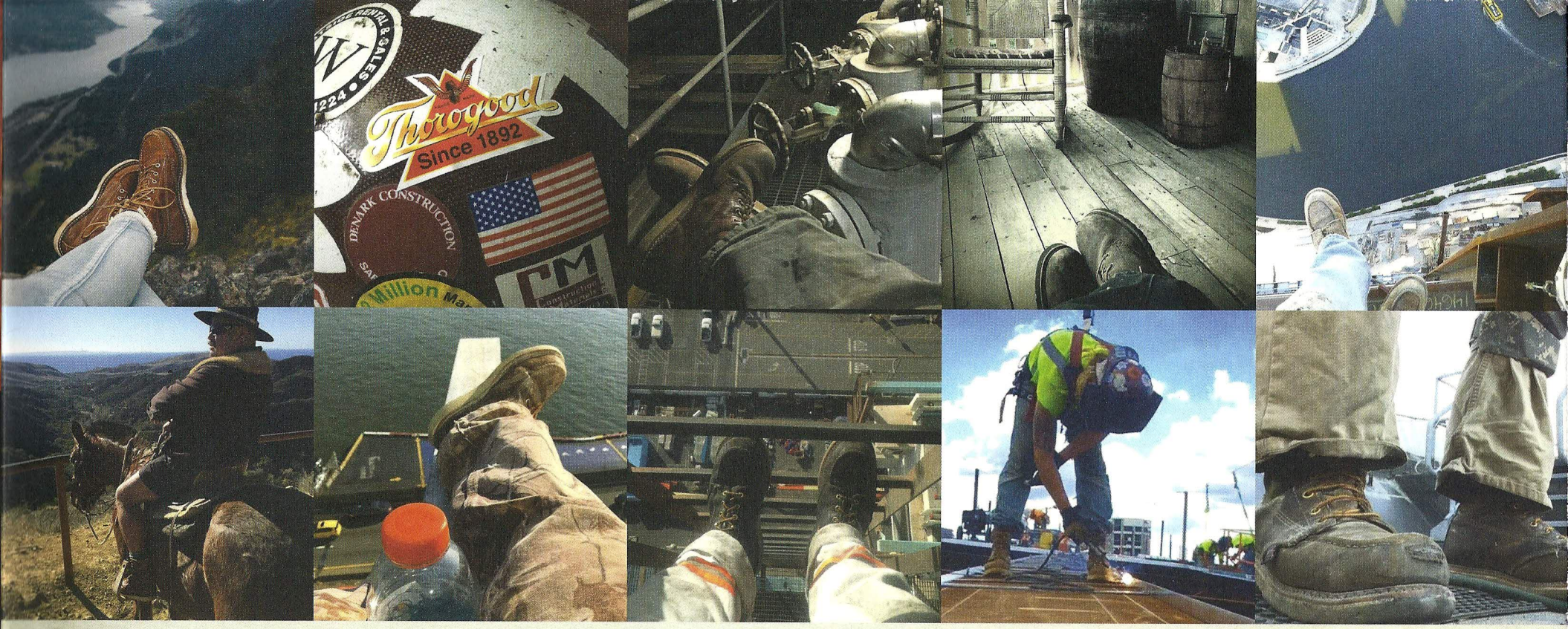
Factory Expansion, Celebrations & Improvements: 2014
Weinbrenner continued its investment in quality domestic footwear production by embarking on a two and a half year $2 million project to install a new state-of-the-art 24-station DESMA injection molding machine in its Merrill plant. This new equipment allowed the company to convert its welt constructed military hot weather boot production over to direct injection in early 2014. The machine could not only directly attach a rubber outsole and polyether midsole used on the military boots, but it could also attach dual-density soles used on other commercial footwear. The DESMA machine was also equipped with modern manufacturing technologies such as a robotic roughing arm and a robotic mold release spraying arm.

In 2014, Weinbrenner celebrated its 50 year relationship with Mill's Fleet Farm and Blain's Farm and Fleet. These long-standing relationships were recognized by presenting current family ownership members of both companies with framed "Together We Stand" flag posters that featured signatures of WSC management, office staff and union factory workers.

River District Walk & Bike Path: 2015
As a traditional supporter of local community activities, in 2015 Weinbrenner supported a City of Merrill initiative to build the "Friends of the River District" walk and bike path. The path, which is projected to go from Cooper Street in Merrill along the river as far west as route 64, was built solely with donations from private individuals and businesses. The path's projected length is slightly over 2.5 miles. A 400 yard portion of the path which runs behind the Merrill corporate office and factory promotes a healthy, active lifestyle for Weinbrenner employees and Merrill residents alike. WSC not only donated to this cause, but also promoted the use of walk way by allowing path access and parking east of the company's retail store and contributed night lights along the path behind the factory.

Lean Manufacturing, Computer Conversion: 2015
The introduction of lean manufacturing concepts began in the Merrill plant in 2015. The new "one-piece-flow" concept fundamentally changed the way production flowed from operation to operation within the manufacturing lines by eliminating the traditional use of shoe racks to hold and transport production from operation to operation. This was designed to improve efficiency, reduce waste, shorten production times and shrink the production footprint needed.
Lean manufacturing concepts were implemented in phases, initially involving lasting through packing operations in the Merrill plant. The same format was followed in 2016 at the Marshfield plant. An hourly-based pay system was also implemented for employees working in lean manufacturing areas which began to systematically replace the traditional piece-work pay system that had been in place for decades on most production operations.

A major multi-year computer conversion project began in 2015 to replace existing programs being used throughout the company. Sales, customer service, costing, purchasing, payroll, human resources, and other functional areas were all impacted by this upgrade. The last major computer project undertaken had been back in 1990 through 1995 when business and manufacturing software migrated from an IBM 370 computer system over to an IBM AS/400 system. The new M3 Infor system was needed to continue the lean thought processes throughout the company and to react to modern customer demand for ERP systems from large online retailers such as Amazon.



125 Year Anniversary: 2017

With 125 years of experience and history to draw from, Weinbrenner Shoe Company has reason to remain optimistic about its future. The Company is seeing an increase in the international demand for quality, AMERICAN MADE footwear. This demand has been met by expanding Weinbrenner's distribution partners in Central and South America as well as in Asian and European markets. Domestic branded production remains strong with strategies being implemented to not only maintain current production levels, but to increase potential production capabilities.

Retailers in both the U.S. and worldwide are discovering that the ideals of Albert H. Weinbrenner have survived the test of time... and will continue to do so far into the future. As Weinbrenner celebrates its 125th Anniversary in 2017, it is demonstrating a renewed commitment to upgrading and improving domestic facilities, machines, equipment, manufacturing methods and computer systems/programs. The company also remains extremely grateful for its most valuable resource, its employees. Without the remarkable commitment of its people, it would be impossible to maintain the quality of its products or provide the best service possible to its customers. The skills and dedication of Weinbrenner's employees will ensure that the company continues to offer the highest level of value in the footwear industry for years to come.



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