

HANSEN GLOVE CORPORATION

The Hansen Glove Corporation was founded in 1871 as the Cream City Hat Company, a partnership of two brothers, J. E. and O. C. Hansen, who carried on a retail hat business and a prominent wholesale and retail fur trade. In 1880 a five story building was purchased, located on East Water St. between Wisconsin Avenue and Michigan St. in Milwaukee. In 1890 the brothers dissolved the partnership, J. E. Hansen retaining the fur business and O. C. Hansen the hat business. O. C. Hansen then started manufacturing gloves. In 1901 the company was incorporated under the name of O. C. Hansen Mfg. Co. The company expanded steadily, and in 1930 the corporate name was changed to Hansen Glove Corporation.

Until 1942, all manufacturing was confined to the City of Milwaukee. Then the Company departed from this policy and established branches in four cities in the State of Wisconsin, located in Kewaunee, September, 1943; Kiel, October, 1943; Merrill, December, 1943; and Clintonville, January, 1944. Later the plant in Kewaunee was closed. In 1947 a new factory was opened in Ironwood, Michigan, where the company manufactures leather gloves exclusively.

Manufacturing was then discontinued in Milwaukee, but the distribution warehouse was still maintained. The Hansen main office is in downtown Milwaukee with sales offices in New York City and Chicago. The officers are: Edward Gerhardy, President; Walter R. Bliedung, Vice President; Joseph C. Barth, Treasurer; Carlton W. Bliedung, Secretary; Jack Bletsch, Vice President in Charge of Sales; Lawrence J. Stanton, Assistant Treasurer.

The products currently manufactured and distributed are fabric gloves, wool knit gloves and mittens for men, women and children, and leather dress gloves for men. In the early days the work glove was the major item, and a large volume was turned out for oil-field workers, engineers, electrical workers, etc. The coming of the automobile brought the heavy gauntlet. The closed car again changed glove styles, and now an unlined or light-weight wool lined glove is sufficient for most occasions.

The company has also designed and produced special gloves such as those worn on Byrd expeditions. Gloves of various types were manufactured for the Armed Forces during both world wars and other models are being produced currently under government contracts. Gloves are distributed to the consumer through thousands of department stores, men's and women's wear stores and specialty stores in every state in the union, Alaska, Canada, and South Africa. Consumer advertising is done nationally.

Approximately five hundred persons are employed. All work is done on hand-controlled power machines, equipped with safety devices. Working conditions are ideal in modern plants, with full benefit of daylight. The workers are unionized.

When work gloves were distributed, such names were known as 'The Corker', 'Dan Patch', 'Built Like A Hand', 'Oil Driller's Special', 'Iron Horse', etc. In the twenties, 'Aristocrat', 'Rob Roy', 'Ambassador', 'Baronet' were promoted in extensive national advertising. In the post war era, there were new brands such as 'The Short Snorter', 'Pig's Whiskers' and 'Hansen Occasion-designed gloves' in men's and 'Personality gloves' and 'Costume-knits', in women's. Today, as new fashion promotions and new fabric materials are being developed seasonally, such names as 'Pignylon', 'Short-stop', and 'Glove 55' are being nationally publicized.