

FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

McKee Door



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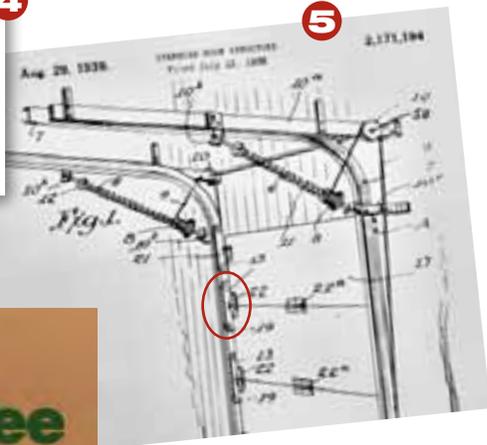
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Photos:

1. McKee's Aurora, Ill., plant, ca. 1950.
2. John F. McKee II and Chet McKee, DODA 1987.
3. McKee Doors staked an early claim in the service station door market.
4. James Harry McKee, 1873-1957.
5. This patent drawing from 1938 shows McKee's unique twin-roller system.
6. McKee Logo

Source: John F. McKee II and company files.

Milestones

- 1928 McKee Door Company is founded by James Harry McKee, 55. He had been working on a patent for a "mechanically balanced overhead sectional garage door" with a unique twin-roller system. He and his son, John McKee, 22, start in the family's garage in Harvey, Ill.
- 1930 The company moves to a nearby commercial building in Harvey. James' second son, Ted, joins the firm.
- 1937 As business expands to nearby states, the company moves to a 4,000-sq.-ft. facility in Aurora, Ill.
- 1942 During the war, McKee converts production to wing struts and fuselage bracing for fighter planes.
- 1950s McKee adds industrial doors and service station doors. As interstate highways develop, the market for service station doors grows.
- 1957 James McKee, founder, dies at age 84.
- 1959 Ted's oldest son, John F. McKee II, joins the firm.
- 1963 Ted's second son, Chet McKee, joins the firm.
- 1966 John F. McKee II becomes president. The new generation of McKees aspires to expand the business from a midwestern market into a national enterprise.
- 1968 Brothers Chet and John F. McKee II represent McKee Door at the first meeting of the National Association of Garage Door Manufacturers (NAGDM).
- 1971 Chet McKee is elected president of NAGDM.
- 1972 Chet McKee becomes president of McKee Door. John F. McKee II becomes vice president and takes control of McKee Illinois Door Sales, the company's Chicago-area retail operations.
- 1974 The company acquires Edko (Electric Door Co.) of Lombard, Ill., a maker of commercial garage door and gate operators.
- 1975 The company restructures, identifying the parent corporation as McKee Industries, Inc., a holding company with various divisions, one of which is McKee Door.
- 1976 McKee purchases AmBar, a rolling steel door manufacturer in Watertown, Wis.
- 1978 The company adds light commercial mini-warehouse doors by acquiring Roll-Right and its 32,000-sq.-ft. facility in Marietta, Ga. The firm says it is now "one of only three manufacturers with a complete product line."
The company celebrates its 50th anniversary with a dealer cruise in the Bahamas.
- 1983 A facility in Euless, Texas, is acquired for distribution and residential door assembly.
- 1985 From the early 1970s until 1985, sales increase from \$2 million to \$25 million, with international distribution. McKee now has 250,000 sq. ft. of manufacturing space and 250 employees. The firm is one of the eight largest garage door manufacturers in the nation, and "one of only two such firms" that are totally private in ownership.
- 1986 With no McKee children involved in the business and capital investment needs in the millions, the company is sold to Clyde Industries of Sydney, Australia. Clyde merges McKee with Clyde's U.S. affiliate, Porvene Roll-A-Door of Anaheim, Calif. The purchase creates Porvene McKee, based in Aurora (Ill.), bringing total annual sales to \$50 million with 450 employees nationwide, "the nation's sixth largest door manufacturer."
Ed Lang of Porvene becomes president of Porvene McKee. Chet McKee retires, while John F. McKee II remains active with retail operations.
- 1987 The Door and Operator Dealers Association (DODA) honors Chet McKee with the Special Distinguished Service Award for his contributions to the industry. John F. McKee II serves on the DODA board.
- 1991 With the decline of the Australian economy, Clyde splits the company into several pieces, selling the McKee Door plant in Aurora to a group of Aurora-based managers who resume operations as McKee Door Co. The Porvene McKee brand ends.
- 1995 McKee Door has annual sales of \$15 million and 160 employees. Financial troubles leave the company with huge operating losses. McKee Door closes, selling its machinery and equipment to Windsor Door of Little Rock, Ark.