

Eaton Corporation 1946 – Dynamatic History

The Great Depression of the 1930s was not an auspicious time to form a new company, but Anthony and Martin Winther were convinced they had a better idea, and were not deterred by the grim economic climate when they opened their small laboratory with four employees in Kenosha, Wisconsin in 1931.

The brothers, both engineers, had been born in Denmark, but came to Kenosha as youngsters. The Winthers were trying to develop an economically feasible electromagnetic coupling based on the eddy current principle. The Winthers made a drum of soft iron (the conductor) in which was fitted a rotor assembly of magnets and coils. The rotor did not touch the drum. The rotor assembly was turned by an engine, creating magnetic lines of force, which made the drum revolve. The coupling thus created could be used continuously without overheating or slipping.

Pullman Car & Manufacturing Company ordered the clutches to drive and control the speed of refrigeration compressors used for cooling railway and passenger cars. Growth was constant and in 1934, the Winther brothers incorporated as the Dynamatic Corporation.

Realizing the principle behind their coupling had broad application in other industries beyond railroads, the Winthers developed new uses for it and also sought new fields in which to put their skills to use.

The brothers' engineering talents were complementary. Anthony was the conceptual thinker and source of ideas. Martin brought to those conceptions the manufacturing and business knowledge needed to create a successful product.

Their joint efforts and talents led to development of a new type of engine-testing dynamometer, with capacities much greater than any other such machine in use at the time. It was used to develop early high-speed turbo-jet engines. The company eventually expanded its product lines to include speed controls and adjustable speed drives. Dynamatic was experimenting in the field of electronics when it became Eaton's first post-war acquisition in 1946.

-An excerpt from "The History of Eaton Corporation 1911-1985"

Anthony and Martin Winther, c. 1947

