

TYPEWRITER PLANT STANDS AS MONUMENT TO SMITHS



CARL GABRIELSON

Much of the credit for developing the many exclusive features of the L. C. Smith typewriter, a real Syracuse product, goes to Carl Gabrielson, widely known for his genius in the world of mechanics and engineering. In addition to conceiving and developing many of the important parts of the Smith typewriter, Mr. Gabrielson also designed much of the special machinery used in the manufacture of the L. C. Smith.



HURLBUT W. SMITH

Present active head of the L. C. Smith and Corona Typewriters, Inc., is Hurlbut W. Smith, youngest of the four brothers who played such an active part in spreading the fame of Syracuse throughout the world by their high-class product. H. W. Smith today serves as president and treasurer of the company, and keeps in close personal touch with all his employees, many of whom are veterans of 30 years or more service.



JOSEPH DRAIS

Daddy of all the employees of the L. C. Smith and Corona Typewriters, Inc., is Joseph Draais, who will round out 54 years steady employment next March. Draais went to work for the Smiths in 1880, when L. C. Smith was engaged in manufacturing of guns. He is now foreman of the ribbon mechanism department.

MORE THAN MILLION MACHINES MADE IN SYRACUSE FACTORY

(This is the first of a series of articles which will appear weekly in the Saturday edition of The Syracuse Journal, to permit Syracusans to become familiar with the inside story of the great industrial and commercial enterprises which have played important parts in the development of the city)

BY RICHARD E. WELCH

Billions of words of correspondence, literature and news have been written in all parts of the world on typewriters manufactured in Syracuse since the late Lyman C. Smith and his three brothers, the late Monroe C. Smith, Wilbert L. Smith and Hurlbut W. Smith, started to make writing machines just after the turn of the century.

Today, with records of the factory showing more than a million L. C. Smith typewriters have been produced and sold, the modern eight-story factory in the 700 block of E. Washington st., teeming with activity with a full force of employees, stands as a monument to these men who helped make the industrial history of Syracuse.

The Smith factory, now known as the L. C. Smith & Corona Typewriters, Inc., with factories at Groton, Cortland, Geneva and Aurora, Ill., and with sales offices all over the world, is a Syracuse institution.

It is managed by the family which founded it, the two surviving brothers and members of the second generation. It has men in its employ who saw the first typewriter put together and shipped away. These men are still at work with scores of other veterans of 25 years or more service and take just as much pride in their work and in the splendid record of their factory.

Lyman C. Smith was the first of the brothers to come to Syracuse from the family homestead at Lisle, in Broome County. He soon founded a gun factory in Walton st., the firm being known as Smith & Bacon. This factory started making shotguns in 1876. Lyman called his brothers to Syracuse to aid him and the family soon made itself felt as a real force in the industrial and civic life of the city.



W. L. SMITH

L. C. SMITH

M. C. SMITH

The other three Smith brothers who played important parts in the development of the L. C. Smith typewriter are Lyman C. Smith, first president of the company, who died in 1910; Monroe C. Smith, first secretary, who died in 1914, and Wilbert L. Smith, present chairman of the board of directors.

In 1880 Joseph Draais of 174 Cook av. went to work for L. C. Smith in the gunshop. He still works in the present factory as foreman of the ribbon mechanism department—54 years of perfect understanding between employer and employee.

In 1882 George B. Dean of 332 W. Newell st. secured a job with the Smith & Baker Gun Company. He still has the job and despite the fact he is more than 80 years old, works every day as an inspector, just as he worked in assembling the first typewriter.

In 1905, just after the Smith plant was opened, the first L. C. Smith typewriter was crated and shipped to its purchaser in New York City. The man who crated that machine is M. P. Freeborn, still active as head of the shipping department and through his hands more than a million machines have passed.

These are just a few examples to show the relationship between the management and the 3,500 employees of this Syracuse industry.

In 1888 L. C. and W. L. Smith became interested in typewriters and, with the late Alexander T. Brown, developed the Smith Premier. Later this company became the Union Typewriter Company, in which M. C. and H. W. Smith were also associated.

The brothers saw room for improvement in the old style

writing machine and secured the services of Carl Gabrielson, inventor, to develop a "visible writing" machine. They also introduced the use of ball bearings.

In 1903 the Smith brothers withdrew from the Union Typewriter Company to form the L. C. Smith & Bros. Typewriter Company. Two years later the factory on the present site was ready and the first shipment of typewriters made.

The company was expanded during the period of business boom when the Smith Company was merged with the Corona Typewriter Company of Groton to become the L. C. Smith & Corona Typewriters, Inc. During this period management of the company passed to Ford, Bacon & Davis with W. L. Smith chairman of the board of directors and H. W. Smith as a director.

L. C. Smith, the first president, had died in 1910 and M. C. Smith, secretary, died in 1914. The company continued to expand under the Ford, Bacon & Davis direction but with the business depression, orders slumped and dividends dwindled.

Two years ago, H. W. and W. L. came back to full control of the company, the former as president and treasurer and the latter as chairman of the board.

The result was soon felt. The plant resumed operations, slowly at first, but mounting steadily until now it has a full force of workmen and the plant is operating to the limit allowed by the typewriter code.

As H. W. Smith put it:

"The typewriter business has always been considered a good barometer of general conditions. The business of the L. C. Smith & Corona Typewriters, Inc., has shown an encouraging gain for the past twelve months. During the first quarter of 1934 our factory ran full time with an increased force, whereas during the corresponding quarter of 1933 it was operated only an average of between one and two days a week.

"It is gratifying to note that orders are not coming from any one locality, but are spread evenly over the United States. I have the greatest confidence in the future of America and American industry."

In 1928 the L. C. Smith Company joyously celebrated its silver anniversary and honored the veterans who had given faithful service in building up the concern.

At that time there was a considerable group which were

proud to be called 20-year men.

They included: George Dean, Carl Gabrielson, Nelson King, Walter L. Smith, Charles F. Parsons, Winfield W. Blaney, Henry H. Rolf, Bert R. Alexander, David R. Ackerman, John Krause, William H. Ginter, Stephen A. Gower, George Stanley, James Roberts, Hubert D. Northway, John Schmitz, Michael J. Reagan, Mauris P. Freeborn, Oscar H. Beckeman, Roy A. Seamons, Earl L. Chrystal, Hugh L. Eggleston, Lorell W. Brown, George H. Moore.

Fred Carlisle, Emmett E. Rooney, Joseph Neyhart, Charles D. Stevenson, David M. Davidson, William W. Snook, Frank E. Fulmer, Schuyler B. Post, Robert M. Potter, Henry W. Merritt, Harry C. Parker, Stephen A. Whitfield, Morton G. Gifford, Ransford C. Eaton, Joseph A. Draais, Charles O. Waters, Frank A. Spaulding, Joseph Bauer, Philip H. Rolfe, Charles A. Klink and George A. Gabrielson.

Many of these veterans are still at work at the factory in Washington st., although some have since died or have retired. The foresight of the men who founded the typewriter business is clearly shown by clippings preserved in the company's archives. There we find one clipping from The Syracuse Journal dated Feb. 16, 1903.

It was headed "Some Interesting Typewriter Gossip," and declared:

"The importance to Syracuse of the announcement made by L. C. Smith concerning the establishment in the city of a new typewriter factory is scarcely realized by the average citizen. Mr. Smith and his brothers promise that the new company will undoubtedly employ 1,200 men."

This promise was more than carried out in the years since that bit of commercial news was printed in The Journal. The 3,500 employees on the Smith payroll today is the best evidence that the prophecy was fulfilled.

In addition to the full force now at work in the Syracuse plant, the company operates the plant at Groton, where are made the Corona portable typewriters, Vivid duplicating machines and Corona adding machines. At Cortland, the company operates a large printing plant, where tons of advertising matter are turned out yearly. The branch at Geneva manufactures type, while that at Aurora, Ill., makes ribbons and carbon paper.

In addition to directing their own company, the Smith brothers were always unstinting in giving their time to civil and philanthropic affairs.

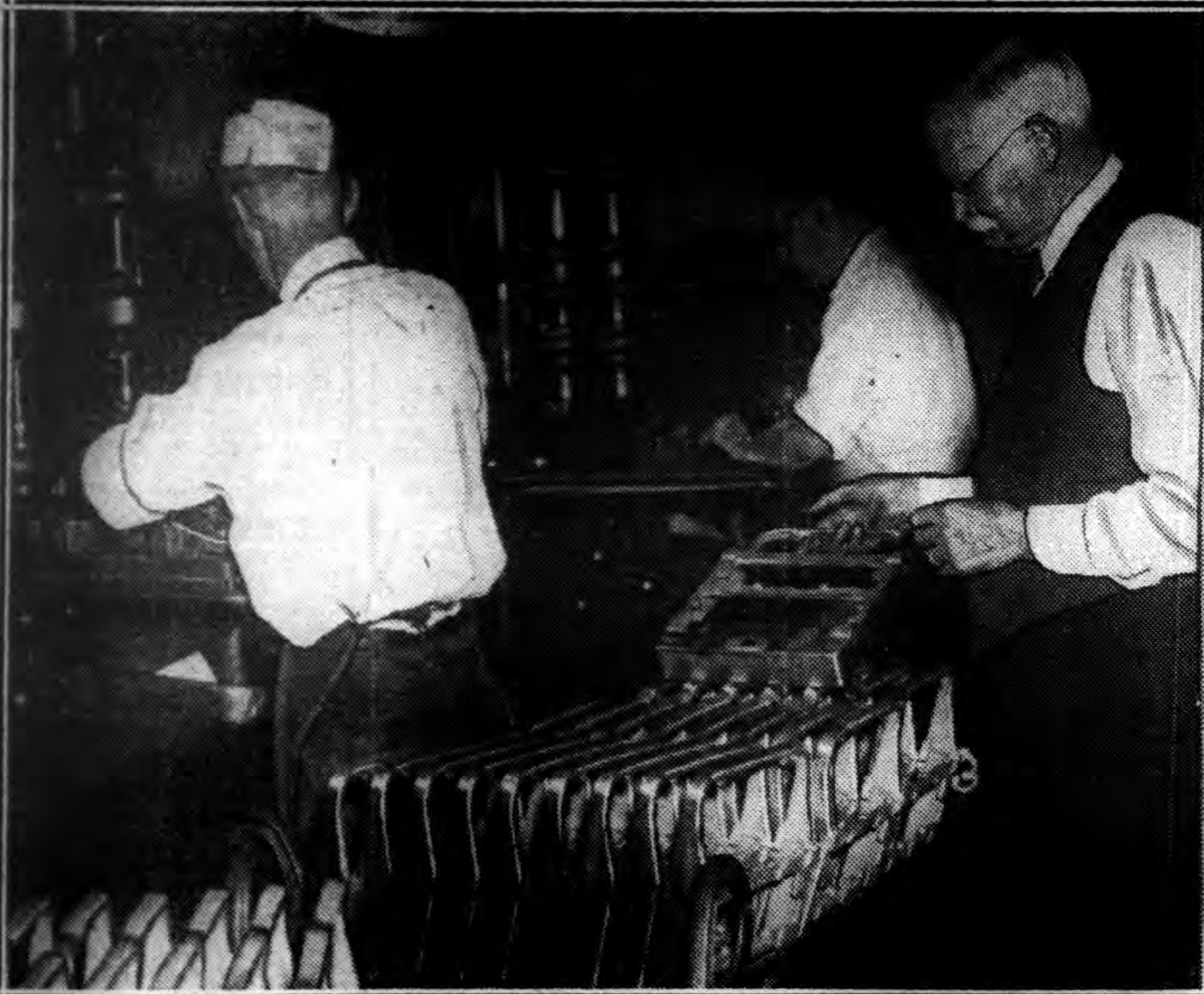
H. W. Smith is a director of the Great Lakes Steamship Company, director of the Toledo Shipbuilding Company, a director of Pierce, Butler & Pierce Manufacturing Company, president and treasurer of the Smith-Lee Company of Oneida, a director of the Crucible Steel Company of America, director of the Smith-Lewis Fibre Can Corporation of Lowville, director of the Syracuse Trust Company.

He is also a trustee of the Y.M.C.A., president of the board of trustees of Syracuse University, president of the Onondaga Orphans' Home, director of the Chamber of Commerce, president of the Automobile Club of Syracuse for more than 10 years.

W. L. Smith, in addition to being chairman of the board and director of the L. C. Smith & Corona, is chairman of the board, member of the executive board and director of the Syracuse Trust Company, vice president of the Smith-Lee Company, vice president of the Great Lakes Steamship Company, director of the Crucible Steel Company of America, and vice president of the Smith-Lewis Fibre Can Company. During the World War, W. L. was a member of the war service committee for the typewriter industry.

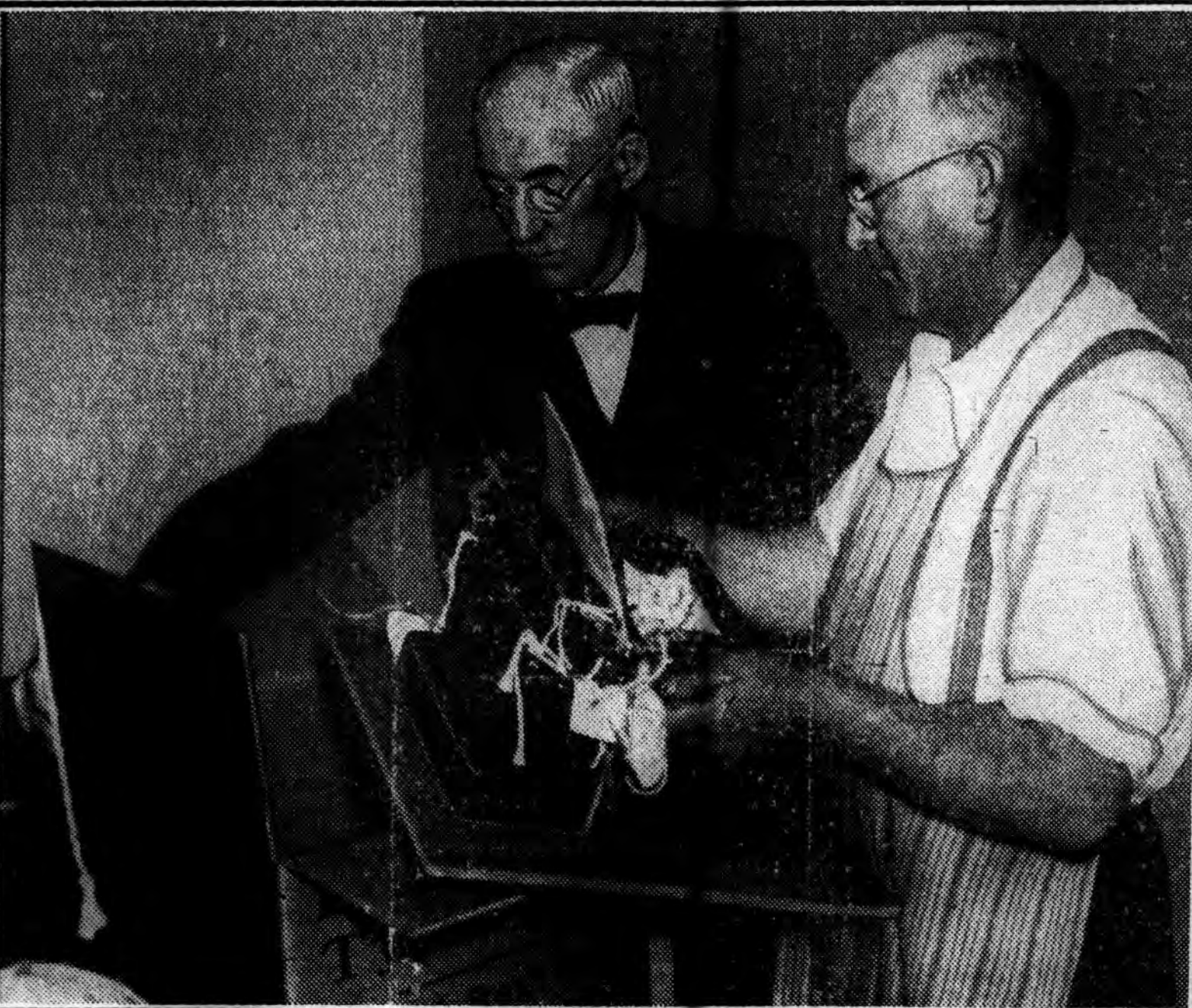
With men of this type at the helm and with able assistants who grew old in the service and took pride in their work, it is little wonder the Smith typewriter stood out as one of the best on the market and claimed its sales from all corners of the globe.

VETERAN EMPLOYEES OF WRITING MACHINE'S INFANT DAYS STILL TO BE FOUND ON JOB



GEORGE B. DEAN

When the Smith brothers, in 1903, turned their attention from making guns to writing machines, George B. Dean was a veteran in their service. He stayed with the Smiths and worked on the first typewriter manufactured. Now an inspector in the "base department," Dean is on the job every day, as this picture shows, despite the fact he is 84 years old. All pictures by Journal staff photographer.



M. P. FREEBORN

JOHN COYNE

When the first L. C. Smith typewriter was crated at the Syracuse factory and shipped off to its purchaser, M. P. Freeborn did the job. And since he has crated or supervised the crating of more than a million writing machines. He is shown here in his capacity as head of the shipping department, supervising the crating of one of the late models, being placed in its box by John Coyne, another veteran employee.