

EASY WASHER BRINGS WORLD-WIDE TRADE TO SYRACUSE

SMALL PLANT GROWS TO HUGE WORKS UNDER J. N. DERSCHUG

(This is the seventh 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

From the ingenious mind of a farmer, who saw his wife toiling over a washboard and decided to relieve her weekly burden, sprang the idea of a crude washing machine and from this idea in unbroken progression comes the story of how it grew into the Easy Washing Machine Corporation, turning out hundreds of machines a day and enjoying worldwide distribution.

It was back in the year 1877, before the era of electrical devices which have revolutionized housework, that C. A. Dodge, a farmer living in Vermont, watched his wife breaking her back over a washboard. He sympathized with her and decided to do something to ease her labor.

With only a few crude tools and such material as could be found around a farm, he figured that something that would create a vacuum to draw the soap and water through the dirty clothes might solve the problem.

Looking around, he found an old tin funnel and to this he attached a broomstick. To the extreme satisfaction of his wife, he found that working this device up and down in the washtub eliminated the necessity of a washboard. She used it with great success and its fame spread through the neighborhood.

Dodge was smart enough to patent his invention and soon orders were coming in fast enough to warrant manufacture on a commercial scale. The "funnel-on-a-broomstick" won nationwide sale and Dodge, who moved to Syracuse and set up a small factory at 537 S. Clinton st., set up a sales force.

One of the salesmen was Walter J. Zuill, a school teacher in North Dakota, who sold the plungers in his spare time and attracted the attention of Dodge by his success. Dodge communicated with Zuill and the result was that Zuill moved here and entered into a partnership with Dodge.

The firm then became Dodge & Zuill, and Zuill used his own inventive genius to improve the machine. By 1893 it had become a device which was fastened to a washtub and worked by a lever to lighten the amount of energy needed.

Then in 1908 two suction cups were used and the device was attached to a special tub on legs, protected by a metal cover. This washing machine could be motivated either by hand or foot and was constructed to work with very little physical effort.

Dodge died but Zuill carried on the business and made still further strides in its improvement by furnishing his machine with an electric motor in 1910. But all this time the washing machine company was operated on a very small scale and output of the factory, which was then at 507 E. Water st., was about one machine a day.

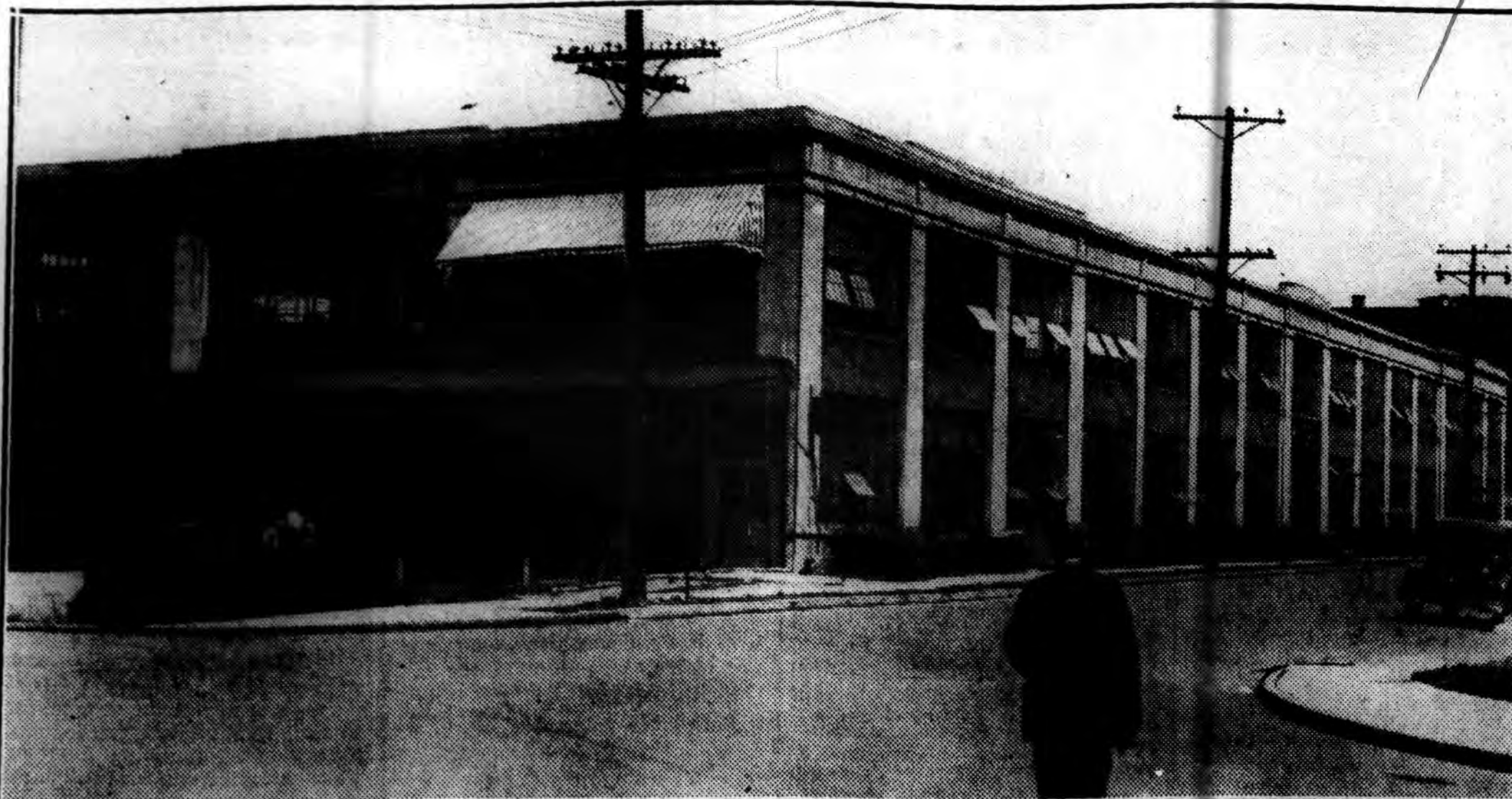
The company really started to make commercial history in Syracuse when John N. Derschug became interested in the manufacture of washing machines and finally became president and principal owner of the company.

Mr. Derschug was born in Buffalo, June 20, 1880. He received his education in the grade and high schools of that city and after graduation became associated with the Buffalo Morning News, learning the printer's trade with that publication. He remained with the News until 1901 when he moved to Chicago and obtained employment as a printer with the Sears Roebuck Company. He won advancement and worked his way up through the advertising and graphic arts departments of the Sears Roebuck Company.

In 1907 Mr. Derschug returned to Buffalo as advertising manager of the English Woolen Mills Company. Ambitious, he found advancement there too slow and in 1910 he came to Syracuse.

A short time later found him running his own advertising business, under the name of the National Catalogue Company.

MODERN FACTORY AND EXECUTIVE TO WHOSE COURAGE ITS MAGNITUDE IS DUE



Outgrowth of an ingenious farmer's success in relieving his wife's washtub burdens is this modern plant at Solar and Spencer sts., which is used today for manufacture of the Easy washing machine. The Easy Washing Machine Corporation, housed in this plant, now sends its product throughout the world.



JOHN N. DERSCHUG

Credit for the success which the Easy Washing Machine Corporation has enjoyed must go to John N. Derschug, who foresaw the need for relieving the housewife's burden and carried his plans through over obstacles which would have defeated less courageous men.

Mr. Derschug handled some advertising for Dodge & Zuill and then became interested in the product they made.

Seeing the possibilities of the device if manufactured on a large enough scale, Mr. Derschug invested his savings to purchase an interest in the business. The company struggled along and then, in 1917, Mr. Derschug bought out Zuill and became sole owner of the company.

He was president, sales manager, production manager, advertising manager and everything else around the little plant in Water st. Others thought the struggle would be hopeless but Mr. Derschug believed in his product and knew it would click sooner or later.

The all too inadequate machinery in the plant was worn out but Mr. Derschug had used all his capital to buy the company and credit was scarce. He struggled along but his confidence never wavered.

Then came the war and the cry was for labor-saving devices to release all possible man power to carry on the war. Many turned to washing machines and business started looking up for Mr. Derschug.

But the barriers seemed almost unsurmountable. The company boasted only one lathe and this was so worn out it was held together with wire and stove bolts. The staff of mechanics and workers Mr. Derschug had gathered around him had caught his enthusiasm and they overcame these difficulties.

Somehow Mr. Derschug borrowed money for new machinery. Just as he saw it installed, the government issued an order curtailing the use of copper, which was needed for war supplies.

Off went Mr. Derschug to Washington and he succeeded in convincing the authorities that his machines were playing an important part in releasing man power needed in the army or in other industries.

As result the restriction on copper was eased and again the washing machine company forged ahead. The washing machine, utilizing the same principle invented by Dodge, the suction cup, won favor with housewives and sales mounted.

By 1919 the company was doing a business which necessitated use of eight buildings and sales that year totaled \$1,500,000. Mr. Derschug saw a modern plant was necessary and started looking around for a site. He selected abandoned salt land at Solar and Spencer sts.

Other men thought he was foolhardy to even think of the site, but he saw the freight sidings and canal terminal as valuable assets to cheapen the cost of shipping.

To the amazement of Syracuse business men, Mr. Derschug started his factory in January, 1920. Two months later came the business slump of that year and as the company moved into its new \$1,500,000 home in the latter part of 1920, the business outlook was very black.

But Mr. Derschug's courage and management brought victory. While other companies were drooping in despair, Easy

Washer increased its sales in 1921 while other companies making the same type of product went into bankruptcy or were forced to curtail activities.

In 1922 Easy Washer doubled its sales, and the company was off to leadership in its field. From the time when the company turned out one machine a day, modern machinery has stepped up production until now the plant can turn out as many machines in thirty minutes as formerly required a month.

Mr. Derschug organized a sales force which took the Syracuse product into every state in the Union and into foreign markets. Even today with export business in a slump, the Syracuse company finds buyers in England, Switzerland, Hawaii, Australia, Spain, Italy, Belgium and other countries.

Engineering genius and technical experts were brought from wherever securable to make the Syracuse plant as efficient as humanly possible.

It is marvelous to walk through the factory today and see the modern methods and machinery, operating under skilled hands to turn out washing machines at a faster rate than the inventors ever thought possible.

The entire factory is equipped with automatic carriers, whereby parts of the machine are carried through the various processes.

The carriers focus on assembly departments and in amazing fashion expert mechanics assemble the finished product. In the department where the Easy Ironers are manufactured, the carrier starts with the bare frame, which has been stamped out in a gigantic punch press, and then the carrier brings it to the benches of mechanics, who install the motor and other parts before it passes to the paint sprayers and dryers.

It is fascinating to watch the crew work in the shipping department. Four men handle the machine as it rolls out of the final inspection, and almost in the twinkling of an eye it is securely crated and ready for its journey to the purchaser.

As an example of the efficiency of the Easy Washer plant, in the engineering department is found a most complete map, showing the location of every machine and every department. Experts study each process of the operation and devise ways constantly to decrease the time lost in transportation and handling between the various machines and departments.

At the head of this energetic organization Mr. Derschug still maintains his control. He is assisted by J. C. Nelson, vice president and general manager; L. R. Boulware, general sales manager; H. L. Babcock, treasurer; P. E. Geldhof, chief engineer; A. J. Hall, factory manager, and C. A. Houseknecht, factory superintendent.

The company still manufactures a washing machine which retains the suction cup principle, but in addition also has developed two other types, one using an agitator and another using a spiralator. All three types have wide sales.

In addition the Easy Washing Machine Corporation some time ago entered into a contract to make a washing machine

for the General Electric Company and this product is put on the market under the name of the latter company.

The washing machines are constructed in units, some of which are equipped with power wringers with a special safety device and others which damp dry the clothes by use of centrifugal force. The Easy Ironer was added to the company's products to complete the equipment of a modern home laundry.

The company is proud that many of the machines manufactured in its early days are still in use and are giving satisfactory service to the owners. These machines are serviced by experts and records are kept to show the durability of the machine.

Everything possible is done at the factory to make the workers happy and contented. Soon after the company moved into the new plant the company started operation of a restaurant which furnishes lunch to the workers at less than cost.

The inventive genius of some of the mechanics at the plant was brought into play to construct a potato masher for the plant kitchen, using an old type washing machine with solid plungers instead of the cups.

The plant has a completely equipped first-aid room with a nurse in constant attendance and the foremen's club operates a store at which supplies are furnished at slightly above cost.

Any profit made on the store is used by the foremen to purchase Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets for needy families and also in welfare work among the employees.

The present plant has a floor space of more than 250,000 square feet on a 25-acre site and the company at peak production employs more than 1,500 workers.

SKILLED WORKERS, HELPED BY MARVELOUS MECHANICAL AIDS, TURN OUT COMPLETED MACHINES WITH AMAZING SPEED



STANLEY PAWLICKI

The Easy Washing Machine Corporation manufactures its products in a factory which is the acme of mechanical perfection. This picture shows Stanley Pawlicki operating one of the giant punch presses which turn out various parts of the washing machines in the twinkling of an eye. This particular machine is set to stamp out the legs of the machine, one of which is being held by Pawlicki.



LEO MCKENTY

Skilled workers of all kinds find employment in the Easy Washer plant. Here we have Leo McKenty putting the finishing touches on one of the machines with a paint sprayer. The machines are carefully inspected and tested as they pass along carriers through the various departments. The factory has a peak capacity of one machine a minute.—Pictures by Journal Staff Photographer.



JOHN MOTT

FRANK MARCO

The speed with which the crew in the shipping room of the Easy Washer can crate the machines is amazing. John Mott and Frank Marco are shown lifting a machine on a platform, from which it is taken a few minutes later, safely crated and ready for shipment.