

## *Manufacturing History of the Gray Family*

The Gray family came into the United States after a brief stay in Ontario Canada, emigrating originally from Scotland.

William Gray moved most of his family from Ontario, Canada in 1893 relocating to Rochester, New York. William's oldest son Malcolm remained in Ontario as an owner/operator of a hardware store until 1898 when he sold the hardware store and moved to Rochester, N.Y.

Three sons of William Gray – Malcolm E.Gray, William H. Gray and Daniel D. Gray eventually having each secured jobs at the Rochester Stamping Company between mid 1894 and through approx.August 1903 learned the stamping/tinware trade to a point that they were ready to start their own stamping house.

September **1903** Atlantic Stamping Co. founded by the three brothers - Malcolm E.Gray,William H.Gray and Daniel D.Gray collectively secured a small room and purchased two or three second hand machines. Each of the brothers being knowledgeable mechanics began manufacturing household items starting first with making oil and gas cans. Eventually due to the high quality of their offering their customers encouraged them to expand their product offering which they did to include wash boilers and dairy pails. The rapid success of the Atlantic Stamping Company attracted the interest of several affluent Rochester business people most notably Mr.W.J.McKelvey a man well known in the Masonic circles of the city and state. A partnership was formed between the Gray brothers and Mr.McKelvey and soon thereafter they recognized as the business was rapidly growing they needed to expand with a larger building and more equipment to grow the product offering to include cups,dippers,dishpans,cream pails, cream seperators,galvanized wash tubs and other related goods. The company was incorporated and Mr. McKelvey being connected with many affluent Rochester businessmen attracted several investors to put capital in secured with company stock. After the infusion of investment capital it was decided to construct a state of the art manufacturing facility of 52,804 sq.ft. which was constructed on Ames St.Rochester, New York. During the period between March 1905 and September 1908 Malcolm and brother William file several patent applications for various metalware items resulting in 2 jointly issued patents and 5 individually issued patents.(Patent#'s 796,717 ;893,321 ;890,640 ;893,484 ;880,522 ;876,633 ;884,485)

In **1908**, The Gray brothers decide to sell their interest in the Atlantic Stamping Company sending the three brothers on different career paths. That same year (**1908**), Malcolm E. Gray founds Rochester Can Company.Brother; Daniel D. Gray decides to work with Malcolm as superintendant at Rochester Can Company. Rochester Can Company is founded to produce items under the IRON HORSE trade name that are in direct competition with Atlantic Stamping Co. The Rochester Can Company achieves recognition for the founding and implementation of the Five Day Work Week. This plan was first implemented by Malcolm Gray at Rochester Can Company in January 1922.The plan was studied by Henry Ford on a visit to Malcolm Gray's home and Ford liked the plan so much after observance at Rochester Can Company that Ford went back to Michigan and implemented the plan in his own factories. Due to Ford's national exposure it has been erroneously assumed that Ford was the originator of the plan.(See factual references for validation facts at end of this brief history contained herein).Rochester Can Company was known as the manufacturer of more hardware items than any other manufacturer of its kind at the time. Daniel D.Gray, superintendent of Rochester Can Company dies 8/29/30 after long illness. Malcolm E. Gray, founder of Rochester Can Company dies of pneumonia 11/7/32. Prior to his death, Malcolm turned over control of Rochester Can Company to his two sons in law, Rodney S.Hatch and William Easton, on April 25,1930.Rochester Can Company was eventually sold to outside investors in 1951 and within 8 years of being sold was declared bankrupt and liquidated by September 1959.This ended the entrepreneurial involvement of descendants of Malcolm E. Gray and Daniel D. Gray in the metal goods industry. This however is not the case of the descendants of William H.Gray.

In **1908**, after selling his interest in Atlantic Stamping Co, William H. Gray pursues a career path which leads him into another metal related trade. William H. Gray starts a contracting business dealing with the public as a sheet metal tradesman. William offers "Tin, Copper and Sheet Iron Work" specializing in "Furnace Heating a specialty". He offers service in general jobbing and repair, furnaces and stoves cleaned and repaired, conductor pipes painted and advertizes "all kinds of specialty work". William advertizes as an agent for underground garbage cans manufactured by

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Rochester Can Company. William buys out a competitor and continues as a contractor for approx. 18 years. William expands during this time into gutter related items and applies for patents related to stove pipe and gutter end cap. In 1921 and again in 1922 William is issued patents for his ideas. (Pat #'s 1,373,883 ;1,437,937). During the period beginning in the mid 1920's William operates his business under the name of William H.Gray & Son's along with his two son's William J.Gray(my grandfather) and Donald E.Gray. William H. Gray & Son's was manufacturing items at their 20 Beacon St. Rochester, New York location. Items manufactured include furnace elbows, nestable furnace tees, gutter hangers, gutter caps, gutter outlets, and sheet metal ductwork.

In May **1932**, Gray Metal Products, Inc. is incorporated. William H.Gray and wife Emma are majority stockholders with son's William J. and Donald E. as minority stockholders. William H.Gray sells the assets of William H.Gray & Son's to Gray Metal Products, Inc.for the price of \$1894.16 in order to start the company. The asset list includes 14 punch and forming presses, 1 new elbow machine, and 54 dies for gutter and furnace pipe items among other shop related items. Within the first year William H. and son William J.Gray apply for two patents resulting in one jointly issued patent and one individually issued patent (Pat#'s 1,848,947 ;1,903,861).

During **1941**, William H.Gray applies for and is issued two more patents, one for eave trough hanger and one for duct joint construction (Pat#'s 2,233,049 ;2,260,221).

During **1942**, William J.Gray applies for and is issued a patent for duct joint (Pat# 2,274,785).

During **1953**, William J.Gray applies for and is issued a patent for a snap lock for pipe (Pat# 2,264,761).

June **1953**, Donald E. Gray, essentially acting as a silent partner, sold his interest in Gray Metal Products, Inc. to the remaining stockholders.

Gray Metal Products, Inc.evolved as a full line pre-fabricated sheet metal air duct manufacturer. Gray Metal establishes a reputation for providing high quality air duct products throughout the New York, Pennsylvania, and New England regions.

William H.Gray dies **1955** leaving complete control of Gray Metal Products to son William J.Gray.

William J.Gray operates Gray Metal Products as a thriving duct manufacturer operating two locations, one in Rochester, N.Y. and one in Webster, New York.

In **1958**, Gray Metal Purchases the first Welty Way"Colatch Machine" for attaching collars to fittings automatically. This machine was delivered by Mr. Welty to Gray Metal in his pick-up truck and was the first machine sold by the Welty's whose company is now more commonly known as Iowa Precision.

Richard E. Gray Sr., son of William J.Gray, enters Gray Metal after receiving dual degree's from University of Rochester in **1966**. Richard first works at Gray Metal Products in sales capacity working the New York, Pennsylvania and New England markets.

In between road trips Richard Sr. develops his skills operating various machinery throughout the factory.

In **1969** Richard Gray Sr.realizing the need to expand and automate the factory, through much debate and persuasion, convinces his father William J. Gray to put a 10,000 sq.ft addition onto the Rochester location and purchases a 60" Welty Way Slear to process steel. This innovation transforms Gray Metal Products from a sheet fed plant to a coil fed plant, thereby reducing the material cost and positioning Gray Metal Products to compete with the larger manufacturers. This 1969 Slear is still in use today at Gray Metal's Avon, New York location.

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December **1974** William J. Gray dies leaving Richard E. Gray Sr. with complete operational control of Gray Metal Products, Inc. Ownership is split between Richard Sr. and his mother Marguerite S. Gray. Richard was driven by his unrelenting commitment to continue his father's life work in a fashion that would make his father proud, and he did.

In **1974**, when Richard assumed control of Gray Metal Products the country was in a recession, especially the home building industry. Richard diversified Gray Metal's product offering and grew the business in spite of the recession in sectors other than new home construction.

Richard's wife Carole worked by his side in the business beginning primarily in **1974**. There was nothing that Richard and Carole didn't do relative the various jobs at Gray Metal Products, Inc. Including running pipe, duct, loading and cutting coils, sweeping the floor, machine maintenance, running boot and fitting orders, customer sales calls and any and everything it took to run and grow that business. Richard had Carole's never ending support and they grew Gray Metal products, Inc. together, side by side.

In **1979**, Marguerite S. Gray dies leaving her stock to son Richard Sr. in recognition of his dedication to Gray Metal products, Inc.

In **1983**, Gray Metal Products, Inc. purchases a facility that increased their manufacturing/warehouse space from 45,000 sq.ft total to over 90,000 sq.ft total. The business is relocated to the new location from Carlton St. to Norman St. Richard Sr. continues to invest significantly in automation to make Gray Metal Products into one of the most automated factories in the industry.

Gray Metal Products, Inc. continues to grow significantly during the 1980's. Richard and Carole's children William, Marguerite, Richard Jr., Martin and Joseph all enter the business performing various jobs beginning mid to late 70's and all are active in the family business's currently.

Every one of Richard and Carole's children learn the different jobs in the factory the same way that Richard and Carole did themselves, by doing it.

August **1989**, William R. Gray founds Gray Flex Systems, Inc., a flexible air duct manufacturer, in a 3600sq.ft. room of Gray Metal Products, Inc.'s. Norman St. location. Richard and Carole, having confidence in son William, cosign a capital investment loan to help William start up. William's wife Carrie works with William from start up and is currently active in the business as Sec. /Treasurer.

**1992**, William R. Gray applies for and is issued his first patent for reinforced flexible duct core (Pat#5,526,849)

**1991**, The Gray Family acquires a small competitor by the name of Nova Industries of West Point, Virginia which occupies a 43,000 sq.ft facility at the time. Marguerite and Joseph Gray relocate to run this factory. The company is renamed Gray Metal South, Inc.

**1992**, Gray Flex Systems, Inc. relocates to North Carolina and enjoys rapid growth currently operating in a 190,000sq.ft facility in Coats, North Carolina.

**1997**, Gray Metal South sells their Virginia based location and relocates to Dunn, North Carolina enjoys rapid growth and currently operates in a 235,000sq.ft. facility.

**1997**, Gray Metal Products, Inc. relocates primary operations to Avon, New York while maintaining auxiliary warehouse location on Norman St., combined sq. footage of 280,000sq.ft.

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**1998**, William R.Gray founds Snap-Rite Manufacturing in Coats, North Carolina with brother Richard Jr. to manufacture insulated sheet metal duct items.

**1998**, William R.Gray applies for and is issued two patent's,one for vent screen and one for motorcycle warning device(Pat#'s 6,361,433 ;6,034,594)

**2000**, Snap-Rite Manufacturing, Inc. purchase a competitor named Automated Ductwork Manufacturing of Cleveland, Ohio, currently operating in a 110,000sq.ft manufacturing facility.

**2001**, Snap-Rite Manufacturing ,Inc. relocates from Coats, North Carolina to Lake Park, Georgia to better serve the Florida, Georgia and Alabama market place, currently occupies a 155,000sq.ft manufacturing facility.

**2002**, William R.Gray applies for and is issued patent for flexible duct packaging (Pat# 6,913,142)

**2002**, Richard Jr. leaves Snap-Rite Manufacturing to return to Rochester, New York working for Gray Metal Products,Inc . Richard Jr. joins brother Martin to assist Richard Sr. and Carole in the day to day operations so that Richard Sr. and Carole can spend time away from Gray Metal Products,Inc.

**2006**, Richard E.Gray Sr., dies unexpectedly leaving controlling interest in Gray Metal Products, Inc.to wife Carole where she remains active in the day to day operations of Gray Metal Products, Inc. Sons Richard Jr. and Martin active here as well. At the time of Richard Sr.'s death Gray Metal Products, Inc has grown by approximately 10 times the size it was when Richard Sr. and wife Carole took over in 1974.

**2007**, Joseph E.Gray, founds Gray Metal South Central,Inc.,a start up sheet metal air duct manufacturer located in Humbolt,Tenn. Currently operating in a 138,000sq.ft.facility.

**2008**, William R.Gray applies for several other patents relating to the air duct industry, all are currently pending.

**2008** The Gray family acquires the assets of Air Fab of New Jersey AKA Cheney Co. and absorbs equipment within multiple plant locations.

**2008** Snap-Rite acquires the assets of New Era of Michigan and relocates the assets between Cleveland, Ohio and Lake Park, Georgia locations.

All Gray Family Manufacturing locations have in house tool&die capabilities along with machine building and design facilities. This capability enables the Gray Companies to respond quickly to market changes that require constant improvement in manufacturing techniques. This capability also assists in the development of new product ideas.

*Factual references; The Utica Observer 11/8/1932;Encyclopedia of Biography;Gray,Malcolm Edward;Rochester Democrat&Chronicle Nov.8,1932;Special to The New York Times Nov.7,1932;Patent References-U.S.Patent and Trademark Office;Rochester Democrat&Chronicle Mar.22,1930;Rochester Democrat&Chronicle Nov.19,1904;Rochester Democrat&Chronicle Feb.21,1951;Rochester Democrat&Chronicle Nov. 2,1956;Rochester Democrat&Chronicle June 4,1930;Oswego Daily Palladium Apr.24,1915;Rochester City Directory Collection,1914,1915,1916;City of Rochester,N.Y. Proclamation Jan.2,1992*