MOORE-ADDISON

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF MOORE-ADDISON

MOORE-ADDISON, non-metallics, laminates, plastics, precision machining and general fabrication, was incorporated August 16, 1953 by Clarence Moore and Jim Holland. "It's a good idea." was the driving force behind the business' conception.

Clarence and Jim were both in their early 40's. Clarence had worked for Richardson in Stone Park, Illinois west of Chicago and Jim Holland for Taylor Fibre Company in Norristown Pennsylvania east of Philadelphia across from Valley Forge.

Clarence ran production at Richardson and knew how to get the work out. He was asked to leave when he got a little too vituperative with another manager. He had many friends in the shop that enjoyed working for him.

Jim Holland, everybody knew him as "Moose", was asked to open a Midwest sales office for Taylor Fibre in 1948. Mr. Taylor died in 1953 and his family members, who had a deeper understanding of how dad's business should be run, had no idea why they needed a Chicago sales manager. And what's more, he was constantly pestering them about customer's needs.

Moose knew Clarence because he was selling Taylor's product to him at Richardson. They decided to make some paper based phenolic material and punch small electrical parts. They were small pieces punched from strips with a series of holes into which were wired various electrical components that were connected by copper on the board. These "circuit boards" were cutting edge and made by the thousands. They were a high tech item that came to maturity in WWII. Because the components were automatically inserted into the holes, the holes had to be very precisely placed. Each stroke of the punch press was controlled by the operator to assure a part was properly punched.

As they were contemplating the manufacture of their own paper base phenolic, they came up against "intellectual property" infringements. They soon realized they could buy the material on the open market from about ten manufacturers and eschew the substantial expense of the equipment and chemicals to make the sheets in their own facility. Clarence had the machinists from Richardson and Moose and some of his other colleagues from Taylor had the sales.

Clarence knew how to make parts, but he didn't know how to manage money. The other salesmen became frustrated and moved on to other suppliers out of the Chicago region. Moose would not proceed with Clarence alone unless they set up

and operated as a business. It seemed like a pretty good idea.

They needed bylaws, a business lawyer and an outside accountant. Moose's brother-in-law did the business organization and Clarence provided Bob Roach as the accountant. The business was forged by a lawyer from Philly and a Chicago accountant. But Clarence understood about getting the work out and Moose knew where the business was.

At this point you have a two man business, one focused on production and the other on sales. You also had a business that defined itself as working only in plastics. They were also defined more narrowly as a punch press manufacturer of precision parts and the record keeping it takes to prove that it has been done correctly.

One of the gentlemen Clarence brought with him from Richardson was Al Hilgenberg. He considered himself to be a lathe operator and not merely a punch press foreman. He pleaded with Moose to get some turning. Why can't we make gear blanks?

Metal blanks you can cut from steel rod; phenolic blanks you have to cut from sheet stock so the gear data runs perpendicular to the laminations of the phenolic sheet. Moore-Addison already had a sheet grinder that could grind the news print off a news paper. You sand the phenolic sheet on both sides and eliminate the facing operations of individual gearblanks; a sheet yields several hundred gears. Also, the gear industry requires even more precision than the punch press industry.

Moose was surprised at how much gear business there was in the Chicago area. Moore-Addison soon became the focal point for all of phenolic gears in the Midwest. Chris Holland, one of Moose's three sons, came to work "at the shop" during his high school years. He hated working in the shop. He told Moose he'd contact every gear manufacture in the USA. The next summer Chris came back; he followed up; business ensued.

Circuit boards became more sophisticated; the punching industry contracted; more and more gearblank business was developed. And gears are made in more than just phenolic. Moore-Addison was now working in other plastics.

Moose in his last days at Taylor, was working with the Chicago Transit Authority to replace the wooden insulators associated with the third rail current collector assembly. Chicago was the most ambitious city in maintaining these assemblies rather than have the manufacturer refurbish them. It was the "keep the voters working" kind of thinking. Taylor Firbre couldn't keep up the project because they had fired their man on site. And Moose brought it home. Here again, these were precision parts. And, it turns out, there are other manufacturers that require high voltage insulation. Another market develops.

But this was work for mills as opposed to punch presses or lathes. About this time OSHA stopped by and was aghast at how the punch presses were running so close to people operating other machines. Clarence solved the problem. He gave away the machines and the work to a Richardson pal who set up his own shop a mile away. Both businesses were more successful interacting apart than under the same
roof. And they got some more mills and routers to produce the mechanical insulation parts.

Moore-Addison was now a full service precision machine shop with a pretty good reputation for full value: good price, accurate parts and on time delivery. And Clarence and Moose got old. Clarence had a son who worked at the shop from its inception. Moose had a son, Jim, who wanted to be an orchestral musician and have a family. Clarence hired him so things would be even. And three months later, Tom Champion, the son-in-law of one of Clarence's good friends in the shop joined the firm. He had been working in real estate, but the market took a dive in 1976. Jim and Tom worked their way through the shop: Jim rising in sales and Tom in production. Dan Champion joined his brother after working several years in a machine shop in their ancestral home of Fayette, Alabama.

Clarence's son was president for several years; the business did not flourish. Jim and Tom stepped up and made the business decision to do the precision machining Moore-Addison has always done but to do it more efficiently and to even greater accuracy and consistency. To that end, Tom and Jim have made a substantial investment in new machinery. And in the last decade, the sales and work force have almost doubled. Three recessions have been weathered. With this latest depression, Moore-Addison appears to have come out a bit more quickly than most. It was a good idea then; it is still a good idea.

In January 2024, Dan Champion and Drew Champion purchased Moore-Addison Co. Dan has 42 years of experience at Moore Addison and Drew has 15 years of experience during this time (April 2025). The business has been operating at an accelerated rate since then, and will continue to do so.

Dan Champion President

Drew Champion Vice President