

PIONEER PACESETTER

1946-1996

Pioneer's Golden Age of Growth, and Change

Reaching the half-century mark is an important milestone in any company's history. It is not only cause for celebration, but one for reflection as well. What were the historic ingredients which led to Pioneer's formation, and what factors have led to the company's continued growth?

The ground work for what was to become Pioneer, Inc. began in 1931, when Herman A. Shields, a Meridian, MS resident, formed his automotive parts sales agency. The Herman A. Shields Company took him to the automotive rebuilders and parts jobbers throughout the Southeastern U.S. during the pre-war years (long before Interstates, FAX machines, computers and WATS service). It prospered because of his dedication to personal, customer contact. Shields' company, with a sales force of 12 full-time men, gained the reputation among customers in Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida and

Tennessee for finding solutions to problems. Many of his jobber-customers of the time were rebuilding clutches, and he and his employees lent a close ear to their product-sourcing problems, and to find solutions.

That "can do" philosophy of providing the hard to find products was the bedrock

to anyone servicing the automotive market. The war made obtaining the basic civilian automotive parts extremely difficult. However, Herman Shields had the resources to secure these products, and that led to the formation of Pioneer Products. But it wasn't until 1946 that Pioneer Products

responsible for the entry of Pioneer Products into the engine parts market. While Pioneer Products was a growing entity, the Herman A. Shields Company was not standing still. The sales agency was not only a major factor in the clutch rebuilding market, it was a leader in the distribution of engine

PIONEER Inc 50 years

Automotive Products

Proud of the past...Committed to the future

upon which Pioneer, Inc. was formed, which continues today. Combined with employing the right people for the job (then and now), it served to build not only a solid sales agency, but also a progressive manufacturer.

It was World War II which was the catalyst for the formation of Pioneer. The war raised many challenges

became a separate business entity, with the arrival of Emmett Holcomb, Mr. Shields' brother-in-law, as co-manager. In 1948, Pioneer Products became incorporated.

In 1965, H. Alex Shields (Herman's son) joined the company, and became the General Manager in 1979. During that period, Alex was

parts in the southeastern U.S., as well. One of the lines represented at the time was Biltmore Products (Rochester, NY), and when the company was for sale, Pioneer Products acquired it, leading to a major growth in the engine parts product line.

Continued on page 3

J.H. Ward

President's Message:

I hope that each of you had a safe and happy holiday season. As we share the happiness of the season with our family and friends, one tends to reflect upon the events of

the past year, and to anticipate the opportunities of the coming year. The start of each new year also represents a chance to start again...a new beginning.

1996 will be a special year for all of us at Pioneer. Although we eagerly anticipate the next phases of our successful business

programs - 1996 represents another important milestone...our 50th Anniversary.

As we reflect back upon our history, Pioneer has much to be thankful for. We have experienced significant success over the years. We are a company that owes its roots, values and mission to our company's founder - the late Herman A. Shields. He was a visionary who initiated our basic, core value to provide excellent customer service, and who built Pioneer's reputation as "The Home For Hard to Find Parts." We are also grateful for the leadership provided by his son, Alex Shields, and Mr.

Shields' brother-in-law, the late Emmett Holcomb. These three gentlemen guided this company through its successful formative years in an ever-changing automotive aftermarket.

We have also been blessed to have outstanding owners over the years - beginning with the Shields family to the Barnes Group years, and today, U.I.S. We also would like to thank our business partners without whom none of this would have been possible: our loyal customers, sales representatives, suppliers, and our dedicated employees. Each of

Continued on page 2