

# LEACH

GUARANTEED QUALITY

## Celebrating 100 Years of Progress



### At the Beginning

When Elmer Leach began his company a century ago, his products were logging tools. Some of those simple hand tools are still in Leach's product line. But as the Leach Company's principal products, they have been replaced by the technologically advanced enclosed refuse collection bodies with which Leach began an entire industry...and with which Leach continues to lead the industry it founded.

In fact, since 1887 there are very few things which haven't changed. One of these is location: the Leach Company is where it's always been... in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Another constant is the company's commitment to the highest quality standards in everything it makes... and to innovation. This is as true today as it was in 1887. The final constant is the Leach family and its leadership. Because the story of the Leach Company is very much the story of the Leach family, its visions and its struggles to achieve those visions. It is virtually the American Dream come to real life.



**LEACH...taking a 100 year history into the future.**

**Waste**  
**Age**  
April 1987  
**SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT**

# LEACH

GUARANTEED QUALITY

## Leach Company... 1887-1987

### 4 Generations of the Leach Family have pointed the way to the future

It's hard to imagine today the vision that Elmer Leach had back in 1887, when he and his two friends began their tiny business. But it's certainly safe to say he didn't imagine a company that would be the world leader in the design and manufacture of refuse collection bodies! The first of these wasn't even invented during his lifetime. Yet Elmer Leach put in place the ingredients which would ultimately lead to success. A passionate dedication to quality and excellence. A devotion to his community and his country. A penchant for innovation, and an understanding of its importance. The guts and determination of the entrepreneur. And — above all — his family. For it has always been men named Leach who have led the company and carried it forward.

### A Tradition of Quality

With the very first shipment of logging tools to emerge from the fledgling company, the tradition of quality was born. And as other products, for other industries, came on stream, they all shared this common characteristic. The Leach name has always meant quality... whether the president's name was Elmer, E.C., Onnie or Dave. And there is now a fourth generation in place to assure that the tradition continues.

### From Logging Tools to Building Tools

Elmer Leach, the founder, saw his company through a period in history when industry passed from hand work to the beginnings of automation. In his lifetime, the company built logging and pole line tools, construction equipment, mechanical cement mixers...and effectively introduced the ready-mix cement industry. His flair for innovation not only saved his company, it became one of its building blocks.



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**Highway Equipment Company**  
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**Sanitation Equipment Corporation**  
Paramus, NJ

# 1887: A Century of Progress

## The Refuse Truck: From Gravity to High Technology

Under E.C., and later Onnie, Leach, still another new industry was born. Refuse truck bodies, successfully introduced in 1932, went from chain hoist and gravity feed to hydraulics and high technology. The first "Garbage Getter" gave way to the Packmaster ... gravity feed to hydraulic compaction and ejection. And under current president Dave Leach, the product line now includes refuse bodies regarded in the industry as state-of-the-art. A company that made simple hand tools has evolved into one whose products are recognized world wide as state-of-the-art in their field.

## A Fourth Generation Shapes Tomorrow

Fred Leach and David II, Dave's sons, have earned major positions of responsibility in the company. And with them have come more changes, higher technology. The 2-R Packmaster has become the 2-R II. The SaniCruiser has evolved into the SC II. Both use new designs; stronger, lighter metals, the latest manufacturing techniques. There is also a totally new machine: the Leach Alpha ... first of an entirely new breed. Since its introduction, it has won overwhelming acceptance, for performance and durability. There are several more new generations of Leach machines already on the drawing board, with a larger, even more sophisticated, engineering staff bringing them steadily closer to introduction. The future of the Leach Company is already in place. But this is treated very matter-of-factly by the Leach family. After all, they're just carrying on the tradition.

*The following pages tell the story of the Leach Company, from its birth in 1887 until today.*



**Bruce Municipal Equipment, Inc.**  
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**Arata Equipment Company**  
Burlingame, CA

**Sheehan Equipment Company, T.M.**  
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**West Virginia Tractor Company**  
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# The Early Years: 1887-1923

**Starting Boldly.** It was Tuesday, February 1, 1887. Over 22,000 people lived in Oshkosh, Wisconsin's second-largest city, when 26 year old Elmer Alonzo Leach joined Chris and John Nygaard and formed what would finally become Leach Company, a world leader in the manufacture of refuse bodies.



Elmer Leach, Founder 1861-1920

Leach was an Oshkosh native, born June 28, 1861. His father was prominent in the Oshkosh mercantile trade.

Elmer Leach followed in his father's footsteps. By 1883, the 22 year old Leach was a bookkeeper for Leach and Hough, a company partly owned by his father. In 1884 he took a clerk's position at Finney Dugan Company, a hardware dealer. A year later, he became secretary of the Sanford Manufacturing Company, in which he purchased an interest.

A note in the February 17, 1887 local newspaper said young Leach was considering buying an interest in the Garden City Chair Company. The attraction didn't last: on March 1, he appeared before the Oshkosh City Council to ask permission to erect a 30 by 60 foot building to house a company to make pickaxes and lumbering tools.



Oshkosh Logging Tools in use.

Elmer Leach was no stranger to the logging tool business; Sanford sold lumbering equipment to the booming logging industry. Lumber was big business. Oshkosh was built on lumbering; some sections of the city were marshy areas filled in by compressed sawdust from its giant mills. In 1887, Oshkosh was manufacturing 2,400 to 2,800 doors daily.

Leach's company was capitalized at a mere \$2,100, but he and the Nygaards almost immediately set about constructing their plant. By March 8, foundations were being set on a lot Leach had purchased for \$600.

		Tuesday Feb 1 1887	
Commenced business under the firm name of Oshkosh Logging Tool Co See partnership papers			
	Cash	3100 00	2100 00
	Elmer Leach		
Tuesday March 1 1887			
60	Expense	15 70	
10	Cash		15 70
Elmer's expenses to Chicago & vic See B. Carpenter's D.R.M.			
Friday March 4 1887			
60	Expense	5 60	
10	Cash		5 60
Elmer's expenses to Whittenberg for stocks			
Monday March 7 1887			
70	Building Acc	600 00	
10	Cash		600 00
Bought lot no 7 B. 9 on Pearl St from Mr Palmer			
60	Expense	5 00	
10	Cash		5 00
Paid M. D weed for drawing up partnership papers see papers for the council 100 Paid for Registering deed 100			
Tuesday March 8 1887			
75	Machinery and tools	60	
10	Cash		60
for 1 snow shovel water pit and dippers			

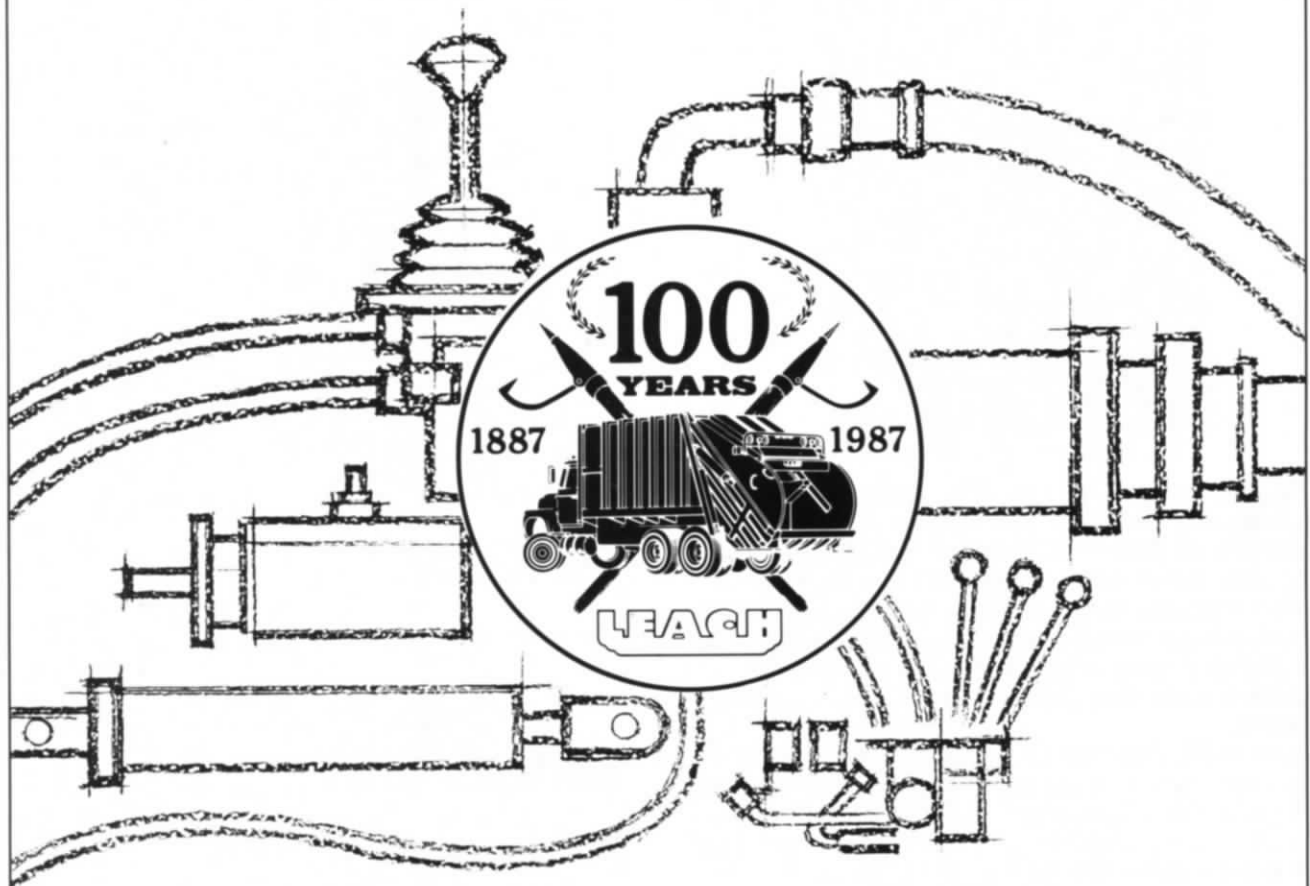
First ledger sheet

Leach's firm found immediate success; on August 4, 1887 a local journalist wrote: "[Oshkosh Logging Tool] has received enough orders to keep its factory busy for six months."

Continued on page 6



CONGRATULATIONS  
TO THE LEACH COMPANY  
ON 100 YEARS OF PROGRESS



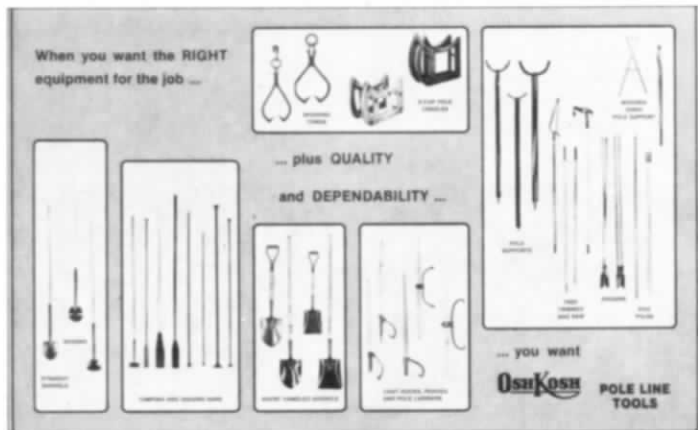
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By 1889, the Oshkosh Logging Tool Company's capital hit to \$60,000. On September 25, Elmer Leach married

ing of a blacksmith shop, wood shop, and warehouse-showroom combination. It was modern and large enough to let Elmer Leach increase his work force from the 75 men employed at his original location to nearly 300.



Oshkosh Pole Line Construction tools.

Mary Lee Curtis. On June 27, 1890, the couple's first son, Elbert C., was born. Their second, Elmer Leach Jr., arrived May 19, 1896.

In less time than one would imagine, Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota clear-cut themselves out of the timbering industry. Growth for Oshkosh Logging Tool could not solely depend on lumbering.

**New Products for a New Industry.** Leach saw an opportunity in the fledgling utility industry. In 1900, he expanded his product list and marketed Oshkosh Pole Line Construction Tools. In 1904, Elmer Leach became President of the newly incorporated Oshkosh Tool Manufacturing Company, boasting capital of \$250,000.

1904 was a year of some significance. Oshkosh almost became the capital of Wisconsin when Madison underwent



Forge Shop.

its trial by fire, an experience Oshkosh had suffered through five times in the 19th century. March 11, 1904, Elmer Leach was named president of yet another venture – the Manitowoc Clay Company.

Under its new name, Oshkosh Tool Manufacturing Company, the firm found better quarters. Begun in 1903, by 1905 Leach had built a 125,000 square foot plant. Nearly \$80,000 was spent for the three-building complex consist-



Product page from early 1920's catalog.

Oshkosh Tool Manufacturing got its new plant in full swing just in time for yet another change in Wisconsin's business climate. The number of households had increased rapidly as more people moved from farms to cities. Wealth was also increasing.

**Tools to Build America.** Leach began manufacturing construction tools. Home building was almost wholly a matter of custom construction. Moldings came pre-milled, but they still had to be cut and joined. The same was true for construction timbers. Doors and window frames were manufactured on site, and they required the labor and skill of a master carpenter.

Leach introduced his "Eveready Saw Rig" in 1906 – a motorized saw table that allowed the builder to add various attachments. It was one of the first all-in-one, multipurpose tools. The "Rig" speeded the process of constructing windows, doors, and other parts of houses.

To mark the changing character of the Company, it changed its name once more. In 1911, the firm became the



Connecticut Equipment Sales Company  
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MacQueen Equipment, Inc.  
St. Paul, MN

Stanton Equipment Company  
La Grange, IL



Fer-Marc Equipment Limited  
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Early Ready Mix truck.

Oshkosh Manufacturing Company. Leadership rested with Elmer and E. C. Leach, the son who began as a common laborer and was now treasurer.

**Creating the First New Industry.** In 1912, Oshkosh Manufacturing created an entirely new industry, a feat it was to duplicate twenty years later. Elmer Leach had begun making cement mixers for small contractors. But he found there was another market with the highway construction industry. It demanded capacity and speed, and that meant large equipment. Soon he was making mixers mounted directly on truck frames, drawing power directly from the truck engine: a first step toward a ready-mix concrete industry.

1912 was the 25th anniversary of Elmer Leach's business. Oshkosh Manufacturing was a force in the construction industry, and in lumbering and pole-line construction tools.

Since its new machines were neither easily returned to the factory nor readily done without for long periods of time, service had to be nearby and parts locally available. Suitable backup equipment had to be on hand to keep the contractor from losing precious time.

**Lasting Alliances.** It was time for Oshkosh Manufacturing to make alliances with people who could provide the needed service, serve as distributors and sell its equipment.

Two of those early distributor relationships have thrived for nearly 75 years.

Graybar Electric Company became Leach's biggest single outlet and ultimately its major distributor for pole line construction tools. It was one of the first employee-owned companies in the United States, and Oshkosh Pole Line Construction Tools was the first outside supplier to sign up with Graybar. It also became Leach Company's longest-term distributor.

Oshkosh Manufacturing built yet another long-lasting relationship, appointing two sales distributors of Oshkosh Manufacturing's mechanical product line: George C. Dodge in New York City and A.M. Anderson in Chicago.

Dodge had a link with Oshkosh Manufacturing Company that went back years: as president of Dodge and Dodge, he had distributed the firm's logging tool line along with products from other manufacturers. Andy Anderson oversaw a varied line of products. He travelled a great deal, and increasingly found himself running across Dodge in waiting rooms. Acquaintance grew to friendship and friendship to an idea. They were both waiting to see the same person; why not combine their businesses and save time?

Dodge had a business connection with American Tank

*Continued on page 8*

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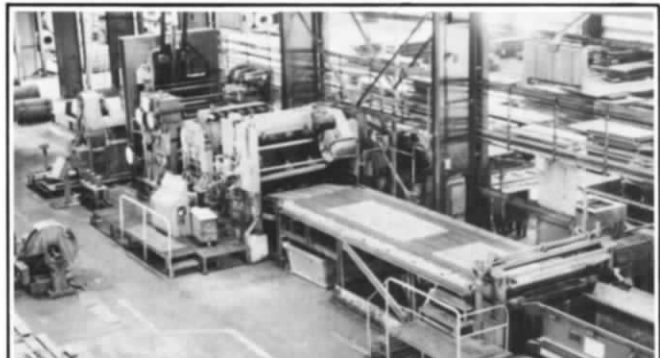


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and Tower Company of Elgin, Illinois, which manufactured municipal water tanks and a motorized street-sweeper; as the new firm's largest client, their name appeared in its title. Elgin Sales Corporation held its first corporate meeting on December 12, 1917. It took Oshkosh Manufacturing as one of its clients.



*George C. Dodge*



*Elbert "E. C." Leach*



*Elmer "Onnie" Leach*

### **Onnie Leach Joins the Team in Changing Times.**

In 1914, Elmer Leach Jr. (through his life, everyone knew him as "Onnie") joined his brother as an employee of Oshkosh Manufacturing, at the firm's thriving Manitowoc brick plant.

Elmer Leach Sr. seemed headed for success. But change was abroad. Unemployment hit 15% in 1915. Between 1914 and 1918, inflation was 50%. The production demands made by a growing war in Europe, America's preparations for defense, and the curtailment of immigration created labor shortages all over again.

The conflict severely affected Leach's firm. Rationing strangled home and highway construction. The demand for Eveready Saws and Leach's popular cement mixers stopped. Oshkosh Manufacturing's Power Line Tools went to war, and the wheels which supported giant logging carts were manufactured to carry caissons, guns, and chow wagons.

Onnie spent 15 months in World War I and returned in 1919. By then, the brick-yard was on the decline. A string of losses had begun in 1916; by 1919 it lost \$6,802; and in 1922 Leach Clay Products (its name had been changed in 1919) had total sales of only \$16,421.68 and lost a ghastly \$27,964, 10% of its total capital.

**New Hands at the Helm.** On August 30, 1920, 59 year-old Elmer Leach Sr. unexpectedly died. Leach collapsed at 3:45 p.m., while working. At the time of his death, Oshkosh Manufacturing was poised for a construction boom and the economic prosperity which was promised. E. C., Onnie, and Mary Leach were handed the reins of a major enterprise, with more than \$250,000 in closely held stock outstanding and employing some 300 men.

The hoped-for prosperity never came. 1921 brought a depression which looked small only in comparison to what 1929 produced. In 1920, Oshkosh Manufacturing paid total wages of \$153,842.54. One year later, they had dropped to a mere \$33,702.94.

In 1922, Onnie Leach came home to Oshkosh, taking the position of sales manager at Oshkosh Manufacturing. A year later, it finally became Leach Company.



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## Happy 100th Anniversary!

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# The Years of Struggling: 1923-1941

**A Contracting Economy.** On taking over the presidency of Leach Company on August 30, 1920, E.C. had boldly declared: "I am not interested in the past but in the future." E.C. had just turned 30. Onnie was 24.

Leach Company still had strong product lines. World War I had created pent-up demand. Leach's cement mixers and saws owned significant parts of the market. Its building products were noted for quality, productivity, and durability.

The Company's logging line and line construction tools provided a modest source of income. But the power and telephone industries had matured and mechanized. The market for logging and power line tools was no longer expanding.

The effects of a sinking American economy were beginning to be felt. The market for Leach Company's products began to shrink. Highway construction stopped and home-building was cut back. Leach had become dependent on the construction industry and felt the effect of its collapse sharply.

Leach Company tried to hold on to as many of its highly skilled, experienced people as it could. Onnie and E.C. went through their payroll each week, deciding who had the largest family to support and who was helping elderly parents. The little money that was there to pay workers would go to

them first. The rest would have to settle for partial wages.

Leach Company did not accept its deteriorating financial position passively. A spate of new products sprang up in the late 20's, each an attempt to plug the hole created by the lost sales of its heavy machinery.

**Survival Through Innovation.** Innovation became the hook on which E.C. and Onnie hung the survival of their Company. Their inventiveness (and desperation) is reflected in the long list of patents they applied for in the 1920's and 1930's.

Leach Company received patents on a machine for making super-tough chain links (1925); a power-broom swinging mechanism, possibly for the Elgin Street Sweeper (1925 and 1927); road pavers (1928); peavy sockets (1930); a pike-pole guard (1931); a mortar mixer (1931); a special axle mounting (1932); a two-wheeled mixer frame (1932); a folding manhole-barricade (1932); a new form of extension ladder (1933); and a truck-mounted mixer (1934).

A coal stoker, aimed at the housing industry, took its own place on the assembly line and won for itself a modest but continuing success.

But energy and creativity were not enough. The days came when Onnie and E.C. were not sure their company could continue to open its doors. They were saved from

## The Tradition



We're proud to be part of this 100 year tradition of excellence.  
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★ Scott & English (Malaysia) SDN, BHD  
Petaling Jaya, Malaysia

financial ruin once by the last-minute arrival of a federal check, just before a local bank was about to call in its loans. Somehow they kept Leach Company patched together.

**First Look at the Future.** Elgin Corporation, distributors of Leach Company's concrete mixers and saws, was not spared. It took the same tack Leach Company had, looking for new products to beef up its sales line. In 1930, Dodge and Anderson were given a chance to sell a truck-mounted garbage body named the "Collecto." The sales franchise for the machine was theirs if they sold 20 Collectos in a year.

By 1930, waste disposal was a large problem. As greater numbers of people moved to cities and convenience packaging took over, it was necessary to provide regular and effective sanitation services.

Originally, horse drawn wagons were used to carry the trash away. Behind the driver's seat a sodden and stinking pile grew. A crew walked alongside the wagon. The garbage men heaved barrels crammed with refuse or burdened with ashes to shoulder height. Often, a man would be assigned to stand inside the wagon bed. His job was to grab the containers and dump them, to march through the garbage, breaking it up, compressing it, levelling the load. The wagons moved down the streets, trails of evil smelling fluids dripping off their tail ends, the harmony of a choir of bluebottle flies. Stray dogs and cats, and occasionally less



Early refuse collection equipment, pre-1932—  
Philadelphia, PA.

domestic and more dangerous animals, were attracted to this stinking movable feast. Enormous colonies of rats ruled the dumps, endangering the crews which brought in new loads, foraging in the community, and forcing cities to develop extermination programs.

When the weather was dry or when ash was being collected, a cloud of dust hung around the wagon. When it rained, the refuse became a noxious swamp, and the stream the wagon trailed behind was constant and malodorous. And so the "swampers," as the crews who collected the garbage came to be called, tied a tarpaulin at the front of the wagon, stretching it over the load as the wagon bed filled.

In larger cities, a filled wagon would be dragged off to a central collection point and parked. It would be exchanged for an empty wagon. Loaded wagons would be assembled into trains of five and six, and towed to the disposal site.

Mechanization brought little change, except to replace the horses with an internal combustion engine. The leaking

*Continued on page 12*

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bed, the swampers, the injuries, the odors, and the flies stayed.

The Collecto garbage truck was intended to address some of these problems. Dodge and Anderson thought they would have no trouble meeting the sales target of 20 machines in 1931. The Collecto was a tremendous flop. In 1931, after an 18-month trial period, Dodge and Anderson had sold exactly 5 Collectos, a quarter of what was required. The manufacturer cancelled their sales contract.

**Defining the Need.** Dodge and Anderson believed there was a market for a refuse-body. They needed a machine that was sturdy, low-priced, and utterly dependable. George Dodge called E.C. Leach, explaining that he had an idea. E.C. and Onnie hot-footed it to New York.

Dodge, Anderson, E.C. and Onnie looked over the demonstrator model of the Collecto, and Dodge explained his idea: if the brothers could make a garbage truck that did what this one was supposed to do but do it right, he thought that the unit would sell.

E.C. and Onnie returned to Oshkosh with some broad requirements in mind. The machine should be designed for a single function: collecting refuse. It had to solve the problems of leaking fluids and blowing dust. It had to offer the least possible hazard to the swampers; no one inside the truck; as little lifting as possible.

**Birth of the "Garbage Getter".** The result was the one part genius and one part sheer madness that was to be expected when Otto Manthie, Leach's improviser supreme, turned his hand to a problem. When it came to mechanics, Manthie was nothing short of brilliant; his solutions were often radical and always ingenious. Still a fairly young man in 1932, Manthie had a lengthy list of patents to his name. He was a self-taught engineer and a compulsive tinkerer; if Leach Company could be said to have an engineering and design department, Manthie was it... all of it.

The first Leach refuse collecting machine was assembled by the honored American engineering method: cut and try. Ideas that didn't work were tossed out for something that might. Features were added as they sprang into Manthie's head. At times that meant backing up and changing something that had already been worked out. It was open season on suggestions, and dozens of Leach Company employees contributed their ideas to the machine as it was being shaped.

George Dodge claimed it took only 90 days from the time the idea of the refuse-body came up until the pro-



The Leach 1932 Refuse Getter which revolutionized the refuse industry.

Continued on page 14



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prototype was ready for testing. Onnie and E.C. called the machine their "Garbage Getter".

The truck-mounted prototype supported a closed body made of welded steel, so no fluids could seep out. At the rear was mounted a hopper as wide as the truck. A swamper could pitch refuse into it at hip-height: no more lifting of heavy containers above shoulder level. A system of chains, tracks, and sprockets took power from the truck's engine and lifted the hopper to the top of the garbage body, where it dumped its contents inside. An automatic sliding door covered the slot into which the refuse was dropped, so blowing dust and paper were eliminated, as were some of the odors and flies. The vertical height of the body allowed compaction by gravity to take place. Corners were rounded so that full use would be made of the available space and the machine could be flushed out with a hose.

The machine was straightforward and sturdy. And it worked like a charm. Dodge and Anderson were enthusiastic. They *knew* they could sell this product. All they had to do was hop in the cab, crank the first of the Leach Garbage Getters to noisy, vibrating life, and start selling.

There was one hitch: no one had taken the time to see that a mechanism introduced with a "let's see if this will work" was translated to blueprints or even measured. The first Leach Garbage Getter was nothing more than the Company's own rolling blueprint. If it was to be duplicated, it would have to be taken apart, measured, drawn up, tooled for.

**Bringing a Dream to Market.** On September 1, 1932, Elgin Corporation issued Confidential Bulletin Number 805-A to its sales personnel. The prices listed for Leach's new machine were moderate. The 6-R (six cubic yard) Garbage Getter, mounted on an International Harvester truck with a 136" wheelbase, cost \$2,284 and weighed 7,200 pounds. It could be purchased on a slightly smaller Ford AA truck chassis for \$1,903. In both cases, the purchaser received dual pneumatic rear wheels, a bumper, automatic windshield wiper, and rear-view mirror at no extra cost. For an extra \$140, the buyer could get a rubbish-rack which mounted over the truck's cab and allowed loading larger objects such as chairs and mattresses.

George Dodge did not overstate the issue when he said that by January of 1933 his men had sold a "few" Leach trucks; the Elgin Corporation's sales records show that a total of nine Leach garbage trucks were sold that year.

But the market developed along with the Garbage Getter. Hydraulics took over the job of the mechanical parts. Manthie kept improving the basic machine, in the process developing two new models — the Chief and the Compactor.

On January 1, 1937, George Dodge was able to tell the stockholders that the Elgin Corporation had turned its first profit since 1931. Of the 112 units the firm had shipped, 24 were "Refuse Getters".

**Success at Last.** Leach's new product had found a market. In 1938, five years after the product was introduced, 63 Garbage Getters were sold. The six cubic yard waste body had been joined by a larger, 8 yard brother, and a host of modifications to the mechanisms had been made.





Leach Company on the banks of the Fox River.

But there were still some problems. Unloading the machines sometimes caused embarrassment: if the load was really heavy and the ground soft, the weight shift caused by tilting the whole refuse body would pull the cab, engine and front wheels upward, leaving the Garbage Getter lying on its back like some gigantic steel beetle. It would be nearly a decade before the refuse industry would find a solution to the difficulty.

To the manufacture of lumbering and pole line tools, chain, saws, mixers, stokers, and manhole guard-rails, Leach added an increasing number of Garbage Getters.

This mixed bag of products did not find a comfortable setting in a factory designed primarily for the production of logging and pole line equipment. Only a bit over 20 years old, the plant began to show strains. The success of the Garbage Getter was not without its dark side: Orlie Morlach was crushed beneath the body of a partly assembled Garbage Getter as it was being lowered onto a truck chassis.

Despite the difficulties, the Garbage Getter was turning into a major success. In 1939 a new, larger-capacity model called the "Chief" rolled out the doors of the Oshkosh factory.

Leach Company had begun to recover from the doldrums. Total plant employment by 1938 had reached 200. Admittedly, the Leach plant was still working a single shift and a 40 hour week, but employment and sales had both rebounded nicely. Sales of Garbage Getters jumped 40% in 1940, reaching 80.

George Dodge's delight in Leach's and Elgin's success was lessened by the death of A.M. Anderson, his friend and long time partner, on November 21, 1940.

1941 saw sales of Leach Garbage Getters take off, with Elgin Corporation moving 151 of Leach's machines out its doors, nearly twice what the firm had sold the year before!

It looked like the struggle was over.



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# Growth and Maturity: 1941-1953

**Leach Company Goes to War.** The dream of the Garbage Getter as the source of Leach Company's new economic strength would have to be deferred; December 7, 1941 pushed Leach Company into the Second World War.

Sales of the Garbage Getters did not stop. In 1942, Elgin sold 126 Leach Garbage Getters, only 25 fewer than the year before. In 1943, 110 more were sold. But these machines did not flow into the civilian market. Like the bogie wheels for tanks which Leach Company made, or the fuse bodies and mortar parts it manufactured under a subcontract to Bell Corporation of Oshkosh, the Garbage Getters were war material.

E.C. and Onnie were asked to make a surprising variety of war-related materials. Their company manufactured large steel buoys, some running 22 feet in diameter. They were used to hold up steel netting protecting fleet anchorages from submarines and manned torpedoes.

The firm also produced a large, gasoline-powered drum which was mounted inside the body of a Jeep and used to lay and take up communication lines in the battlefield. The RL-26 reel was the major product Leach built in support of the war effort and took the greatest portion of the company's manufacturing capacity. Onnie managed this sector of the business; the rest of the war contracts were supervised by E.C.

The RL-26 had a smaller brother, a powered reel which

was mounted inside B-17 and B-25 bombers. Antennas were trailed from them, keeping the planes in communication with their home base. They were pulled back inside the plane when they were not needed.

Leach workers produced large numbers of wooden pontoon bridges for fording small rivers and streams, depth-bomb releases for U.S. Navy destroyers, even landing barges. E.C.'s daughter, Pat Stearns, remembers that he had a landing barge at home that he used as a skiff. She makes mention that E.C. also had a Leach product "that looked like an airplane but didn't fly." Nowhere in the Company's records is there any reference to such a product, but the National Archives finally managed to clear up the mystery: Leach secretly built some sort of bomber trainer.

**Material for Russia.** As if they were not busy enough, Onnie and E.C. started a second firm during the War, putting part of the ownership in the names of their four children — Mary and David on Onnie's side, Pete and Pat on E.C.'s.

Leach Brothers specialized in manufacturing material for export, and its birth had an interesting origin. As Onnie and Rufus Shreiber, president of United States Motors, were walking back from lunch in 1942, Shreiber said his firm had been invited to bid on a Lend Lease project, but U.S. Motors was swamped with work.

*Continued on page 18*

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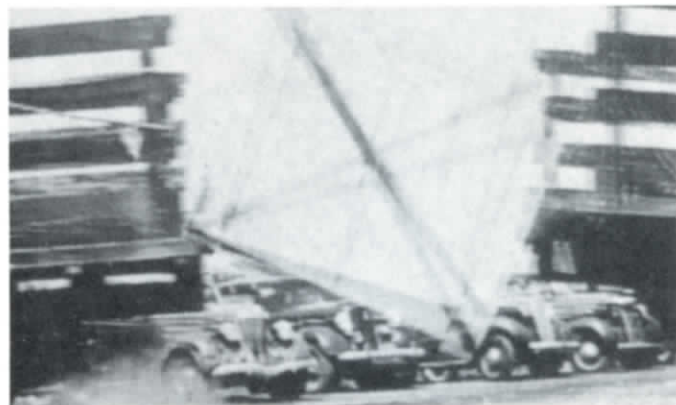


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The product, battery recharging stations, was to be used in recharging the batteries of tanks, mobile cannon, and railroad-car mounted heavy artillery. They were to be completely self-contained. Field tents, wiring, chemicals,



*Testing Battery Recharging Station for shipment.*

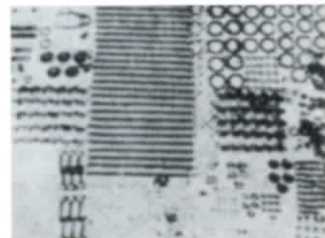
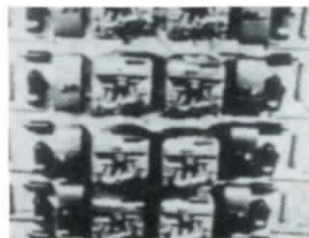
generators, distilling equipment, acids, control panels, all had to be crammed in sturdy packing crates which would prevent breakage under the most hostile battlefield conditions, including being parachuted from airplanes. They were destined for Russia.

Never one to ignore a challenge, Onnie asked Shreiber whether he might take a look at the plans and specifications. The State Department was looking for someone to manufacture the electrical control panels, do the wiring, and finally purchase, assemble, and package the hundreds of individual items which would become the field station. E.C. and Onnie finally decided to submit a bid.

Leach Brothers was one of only two corporations seeking the contract. The other was International Telephone and Telegraph, one of the most respected and powerful firms in the nation. The total bid was valued at around seven million dollars. Leach Brothers underbid ITT by \$1.2 million, some 20%. Since the capacity of the main plant was fully absorbed by existing war contracts, Leach Brothers leased a facility and modified it for production.

The charging stations came in two sizes: 1.5 and 5 kilowatts. The larger model contained 985 pieces. Leach Brothers' volume of production was much larger than might be imagined. A former warehouse had been turned into a factory which was producing more than \$10 million worth of stations per year, and 10,000 engines and 6,254,000 parts were being used each month.

Contracts for the battery charging station were renewed throughout the course of World War II. Eventually, Leach



*Some of the 16,500 spare parts accompanying each shipment.*

*Continued on page 20*



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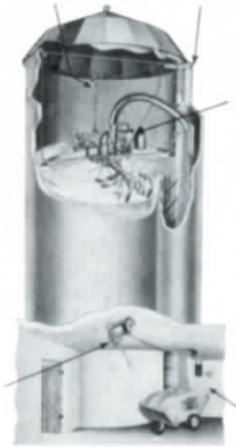
Brothers built many thousands of them.

With all the war material being manufactured by Leach, Garbage Getter production lines nearly ground to a halt. The company's records show that only 32 refuse bodies were built in 1944. By 1945 the war was winding down, though, and the Elgin Corporation sold 195 garbage collecting units, more than at any time in the company's history.

**Automating the Farm.** Logically, Onnie and E.C. should have seen the impending end of World War II as their chance to consolidate production, shedding some products so they could specialize in manufacturing the Garbage Getter. But in 1945 they were ready to take on yet another American institution, the family farm.

Mixed in with production of Garbage Getters, line tools, and lumbering equipment would be two new products. The engineering department was at work designing two products which Leach could market to make the dream of the automated farm a reality: a silo unloader and a barn cleaner.

The silo unloader came first. In 1946, 60 experimental models were built, based on a design by Cyril Gollnick. Leach's machine was a true original, the first silo unloader on



*Advertising cutaway of Leach Silo Unloader—1946.*

the market. The machines (the three horsepower) hung inside any round silo that was 14 to 20 feet in diameter, from a three point suspension controlled by a winch. A rotating boom bitted with scrapers revolved to loosen the top layer of silage, which was moved to the center of the rig, picked up by a blower, and moved through a chute which led to the ground. The farmer could control the depth to which the machine cut by adjusting a ratchet and setting a timer, both from the ground.

The second "push-button farm" product was less notable. It went into design and testing in '49 and '50. But the Leach barn cleaner, unlike the silo loader, was not an exclusive product. It was reasonably simple: logging chains connected by wooden slats ran in a trough which ran behind each cow, automatically scraping up the manure and dumping it in a pit. There it moved up a conveyer and was dumped directly into the manure spreader.

Ultimately, the problem Leach Company faced with its push-button farm equipment involved infringements on its patents. In 1952, Jamesway Manufacturing purchased the rights to the Silo Unloader and Barn Cleaner (Jamesway never used the latter).

**More New Ideas.** Pole line and lumbering tool manufacture had never slacked, and the brothers' commitment to its continuation never flagged. But several new and fascinating products also showed up.

One was a gigantic rotary snowplow. Two prototypes were built, the largest weighing 24 tons and the second not much less. The rotaries were mounted on heavy duty Oshkosh Truck frames. Pictures from the time show evil-looking devices, wicked metal teeth at the front. Two engines drove the plow, a 210 horsepower plant to turn the rotary blower and another to propel the truck itself.

Testing the big machines revealed problems. The main one was that the rotary plows were very difficult to maneuver. Since the rotary gear was independently powered and ahead of the steering, the plows tended to pull themselves along by their teeth: they wanted to go in a straight line and



*The Leach Snow Blower.*

had to be wrestled through turns. Gollnick's prototype proved itself able to chew through drifts as deep as 18 feet. There was no question of the machine's power and effectiveness, but the more they thought about it, the more E.C. and Onnie saw the rotary plow as a product that would be a poor manufacturing choice for their Company.

**Birth of the Packmaster.** But Leach would continue to aggressively and successfully exploit the lead it had in mechanical garbage collection devices. That would be its strength. Cyril Gollnick had joined Leach Company on October 2, 1942. Some years later, Onnie and E.C. asked him to take on the task of modernizing the Company's garbage body. Gollnick started with a clean sheet of paper and was able to turn it into the most radical and effective refuse machine Leach Company was ever to sell.

The first designs of what was to become known as the Leach Packmaster took about a year. By 1947, the first Packmasters were ready for sale.

The Packmaster was an all-hydraulic machine. It could compress waste into a much tighter, more compact load than the versions which used mechanical packing blades. The new truck also had unbelievable power; it could readily cut 2 x 4's.

*Continued on page 22*



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*An early Packmaster Model.*

It offered users substantial load size: 10, 13 and 16 cubic yards. The larger capacity meant longer routes and higher efficiencies. The bodies themselves were not overwhelmingly large, since the Packmaster could compress waste on a five-one ratio: the 10 yard body could hold 50 yards of materials.

The Company's sales record immediately after the War's end was testimony to the assertion that there would always be garbage, and there was enormous pent-up demand for Garbage Getters to move it. The 195 units George Dodge sold in 1945 had been an enormous increase from the 39 of a year before, but in 1946 that sales total leaped to 341.

1947 proved a disappointing year. Sales of Leach's product dropped by more than 30%, to 207 trucks. The slide in sales which began in 1947 continued through 1948: only 181 Leach garbage bodies were sold. 1949 saw a slight recovery, to 209 units.

**A Need for New Quarters.** By 1950 the Leach Company plant had become marginal. In a few more years it would be totally inadequate. The assembly line moved vertically. Basic assembly took place on the first floor and was completed on the fourth. Bodies were painted on the third floor, brought back to ground level by an ancient, cramped elevator, and towed to the assembly building for final mounting. But manufacturing was continuing, despite the problems, and the nearly half-century old plant would do for a while. Still, it was an important factor in the cost of the Packmaster.

**Omens of Change.** No one knew it, but Leach was also finding a new future. The foundations were being laid for the largest changes the firm was to undergo since Elmer Leach Sr.'s death.



*David C. Leach*



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Motor Trade Company, Ltd.  
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# The New Leach Company: 1953-1962

**Poised for New Growth.** After 33 years as president of Leach Company, E.C. had decided he wanted out: Leach Company would be sold. Onnie expressed an interest in buying the Company and E.C. seemed willing to sell it.

When David Leach returned from his Army service in mid-1953 he found his father trying to raise the necessary funds to purchase E.C.'s interest. On January 1, 1954, Onnie completed the purchase of Leach Company.

In addition to his formal title as secretary to the Company, David was made Sales Manager for Oshkosh Logging Tools and Oshkosh Pole Line Construction Tools. Cyril Gollnick was chief engineer. Ernest Lisek, Sr. continued to serve as Superintendent in Charge of Manufacturing, and Urban Janssen was Purchasing Agent.

Onnie had bought a firm that was poised for growth. The market for the Packmaster was strong. In 1953, 360 units had been sold and the general trend was on an upward curve.

**Leadership Through Quality.** While Leach Company did not lack competition, it had the ability to sell its products because of its reputation. Leach's strongest selling point almost always took the form praised by Graybar Corpora-

tion – distributors of Leach's power line tools. Graybar emphasized that Leach equipment sold because the tools were "products of the highest quality."

Onnie had always had an interest in engineering, and when he took over as president he naturally began to take yet another close look at his product. The original Packmaster had developed considerably, and was available in 10, 13 and 16 cubic yard sizes. More than 1,000 small modifications had been made in the course of nearly nine years of its manufacture.

But conditions had changed considerably between 1946 and 1954. Leach's response was to revise the Packmaster, increasing its size to accommodate longer routes and bulkier materials. The redesigned Packmaster carried bodies of 17, 20 and 25 cubic yards.

**Changing Needs – Creative Solutions.** A new Leach product addressed another growing problem. As urban centers had grown, space for the storage and pickup of garbage had evaporated. Fast food restaurants and supermarkets were being built on very expensive land,

*Continued on page 24*

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and there was little desire to use space for waste containers or for trucks to make pickups, despite the large volumes of material generated by the operations. Swampers ended up hand-carrying the materials from behind the establishments to the main roadway. The backbreaking drudgery had returned, and so had the risks of injury the original Garbage Getter was designed to eliminate.

Mr. Harold Van Der Molen, a Chicago contractor, brought the problem to the attention of Onnie and Gollnick, and they found a creative solution. Leach Packmasters would be adapted to handle and dump mobile containers. Welded-steel covered boxes, mounted on casters, would hold the garbage; all the swampers would have to do was push the containers out to the street, hook them to a powered lift system, and the Packmaster would raise and dump them in the compactor body. Leach's containers were adaptable. Their size grew to meet the needs of larger customers. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 yard receptacles came out of the Oshkosh



Dumping a 1-yard Leach container.

factory. 10 yard monsters, nearly twice the size of the first Garbage Getter, found a market. There were containers with push-in, spring loaded covers for picnic grounds. Some had hitches welded on, permitting them to be linked in trains and snaked through a factory. Leach's idea was a good one, simple and creative.

While it was possible to prevent commercial competitors from infringing on the patent, Leach had come up with an idea so fundamental that anyone with a bit of welding skill could (and did) knock off copies of the container system.

In 1955, Onnie's first full year as president of Leach Company, 541 Packmasters were sold through the Elgin Corporation, 30 percent more than the year before. The next year, distributors sold 936!

In 1956, Elgin delivered its 5,352nd Leach unit. Twenty five years earlier, in the depth of the Depression and with both firms teetering at the edge of insolvency, E.C., Onnie, Andy Anderson and George Dodge had taken a gamble. Quite clearly, the risk had paid off.

**A Quantum Leap.** The refuse-collecting business was changing, however. Carrying capacity meant economy of scale but it also required size. It might be feasible to weld up a 100 cubic yard machine and to find a truck powerful enough to tote the contraption around, but the guy who





bought one had better be prepared to specialize in picking up garbage only from the middle of the largest parking lot in town.

Leach gained the added capacity in another way. Cyril Gollnick presented Onnie with what engineers call a "clean sheet of paper solution," a machine which took a new approach to the refuse body.

The word powerful was an understatement when it came to the new 2-R; the machine was a quantum leap ahead for



Cyril R. Gollnick

the industry. The old Packmaster could pack a payload of 500 pounds into a cubic yard, and the 25 yard version would lug away over 6 tons of waste. It could snap a 2 x 4 like a toothpick.

But the 2-R was a monster. It was designed to pack 800 pounds in each cubic yard (by the time it hit the streets, it actually compacted 1,000 pounds per yard). 2 x 6s and 4 x 4s were readily broken up and compacted. If anyone at Leach Company had any doubt what Gollnick had wrought, it must have vanished swiftly. Just as a test,



The FAMOUS Leach 2-R.



The 2-R will take anything.

Continued on page 26

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the Chief Engineer tucked a Karmann-Ghia designed Volkswagen sports car into the hopper of a 2-R. The machine ate it without effort.

The soaring market for the Packmaster and 2-R was a delight for Onnie and his team, but Leach Company had not lost interest in its two original products, logging and pole line construction tools. Seeking to strengthen its position in the market sector and to expand to a related product, in 1959 Onnie decided to purchase the American Crossarm and Conduit Company, a firm which manufactured the horizontal wooden bars on which insulators and power lines are mounted.

By the late 1950's, the sales of Leach Company products were on an upswing. Though 1958 saw a drop (only 758 garbage trucks were sold), recovery was immediate, with 960 units produced and sold in 1960.

**Time to Build.** The popularity of Leach's trucks had brought a pressing problem into sharp focus. The old South Main Street plant, strained years earlier by the demands being made on it, wasn't adequate. The 2-R simply would not fit the elevator. That ancient device, 10 by 30 feet, had a maximum capacity of 16,000 pounds, dangerously near the 12,000 pound weight of the 2-R body. As a consequence, after it was completely assembled in the fourth floor shop and all parts had been fitted, the garbage body had to be disassembled into two pieces so the elevator could move it.

The sheer volume of garbage bodies Leach was beginning to sell added to the problem. Sales were nearly 1000

annually, requiring the completion of nearly three machines a day.

Leach entered a contract with the Austin Company of Cleveland, Ohio, for the design of a new plant which combined office and manufacturing space. Austin came up with a design which replaced the old South Main plant's seven acres and 125,000 square feet with a million dollar complex having 203,000 square feet of factory space and another 9,600 for offices. Over the years, expansions brought total plant size to nearly half a million square feet.

The Austin Company worked with extraordinary speed in



*Official ground breaking—left to right—David C. Leach, Elmer "Onnie" Leach, Leonard Pollack, Harold Schabloski, Paul Staehle, Ernst Lisek, Jr., Chet Skoner.*



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designing Leach's new plant. At 9 a.m. May 15, 1961, three of the Company's most senior employees broke ground to begin construction.

Fluor Brothers Construction Company was the general contractor. It had said the plant would be done and ready for occupancy by February 15, 1962, just about in time for the 75th anniversary of Leach Company. The builder exceeded the promise, turning the keys to Leach's new factory over to Onnie and David on February 1, exactly 75 years after Elmer Leach Sr. had founded his fledgling company.

**An Old Problem Solved.** With all the hubbub of building a new manufacturing facility, it might have been thought Leach Company would simply try to hold the line at its soon-to-be-abandoned South Main plant. On the contrary, the inventive Cyril Gollnick was confronting a long-standing challenge, solving the tipping problem of its refuse-collection machines. Unloading the trucks had always been exciting. All the advances made over the years had actually intensified the problem. Loads were larger: the Packmaster was crunching 100 cubic yards of waste down to fit a 25 cubic yard container and that meant lots of weight. The rear loading gate had reached nearly 2.5 tons. When it was hydraulically raised up for unloading and the dumping body was shifted upward, the truck's cab and motor were a perilous counterbalance. All Gollnick did was free the front of the garbage body from the sides, attaching a hydraulic ram directed at pushing to the rear. To unload the truck, the rear was still swung up and out of the way, but there was no need to tilt the heavy load; hydraulics pushed the front wall backward, and the compacted refuse was smoothly ejected.

**Moving Day.** The weekend of February 17 and 18, 1962 was targeted for the completion of the move of Leach Company to its new quarters. Friday, February 16, the old Main Street factory was shut down, and records and the remaining materials were boxed and packed. In a flurry of organized effort, a stream of trucks emptied the 58 year old building that had seen so much growth and change in the firm.



*Aerial view of present Leach factory.*

The year the new plant was begun, 1309 units were sold, nearly 50% more. Sales were still cyclical, but the envelope was stretching; the highs were getting higher and so were the lows.

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# An Industry Leader: 1962-1987

**Factors for Growth.** The swift increase in the market for Leach products could be attributed to a number of factors.

The Company had built a very solid reputation; its machines were noted for power, high quality and durability.

Additionally, George Dodge had built a very strong and effective sales force for Leach products. Sales representatives fed back buyer recommendations to Leach, and the Company improved its machines based on those real-world experiences.

The third element in Leach Company's growth was the strength of its foreign sales: at one point, nearly 30% of the factory's total production was being sold abroad. George Dodge's brother, Harold, had set up a small firm called ELINCO to sell overseas. It was replaced by Vreeland International and later the foreign marketing division of the Elgin Corporation.

Demand for Leach products was so strong that Onnie and David actually gave serious consideration to purchasing a second plant on the East Coast.

**Optimism...and Sadness.** The new plant was a fresh lease on life for the Company, and soaring sales fueled the

sense of optimism. In 1963, George Dodge suggested to Onnie that the close relationship between their two firms would be better reflected if a name change were made. And Elgin Corporation became Elgin-Leach Corporation.

It should have been a happy occasion.

It was not. Onnie Leach was diagnosed as having cancer. On June 12, 1963, Onnie died at Mercy Hospital in Oshkosh. He was 67 years old. Surviving him were his

*Continued on page 30*



*Three generations of Leachs—  
Onnie, Fred, Dave  
and David, Jr.*

## The Tradition



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wife, Lucile; David; Mary; five grandchildren (Frederick and David; and Mowry, Curtis and Onnie Leach Smith); and his brother, E.C.

The most moving farewell to Onnie came from his long-time friend George Dodge. "Here was a man with great depth and breadth of love..." "His patience was of the measure that brought him to defend and uphold past the time when man would have brushed another aside." "It was a pleasure, a privilege to work with him."

**The Great Popcorn Demonstration.** David Leach became the new president of Leach Company. David's humor could take a highly personal form, like Onnie's. Size had always been a competitive issue in selling garbage truck bodies, increasingly so in the 1960's. But the shapes of bodies and hoppers are highly irregular; it is not always easy to tell how large a hopper is. Leach was claiming that its trucks had the largest hoppers in the business. Competitors denied it, so David set workers to making plywood mockups to the exact dimensions of the competitors' hoppers. And David went to every movie theatre in Oshkosh, asking them to work overtime making popcorn: 5 cubic yards of it. He thought of this as "simulated garbage" but what it proved to be was an actual sensation. David claims it was the first—and last—time he made a sales presentation while eating popcorn. And Leach could honestly offer the prospective buyers at the trade show all the garbage they could eat.

**Innovation: the Transfer Station.** One of Leach's responses to the long-hauls of waste materials was the creation of transfer stations and transfer trailers. Loads of refuse would be brought in to a central point. There they would be compacted even further. The resultant pack would be loaded into a special semi-trailer and transported to the disposal site. The refuse trailers were enormous, holding some 75 cubic yards of waste. A push out plate, similar to the one Leach used to empty its garbage bodies, was used to eject the load in a sanitary landfill.

By the end of the 1960's, Leach Company was the major force in the waste collection industry, with annual sales far exceeding Onnie's wildest dreams.

**Widening the Line.** Leach Company also faced new changes in the marketplace. As products became more sophisticated and the possibilities of customizing the waste collection machines increased, a demand for different



*A Leach Transfer Trailer unloading.*

ranges of products appeared. It wasn't only a matter of size but of power. Leach responded with three models. The original Packmaster became the firm's low compaction model, the most economical to purchase. Leach Company completely redesigned the basic machine, increasing the hopper size, adding to the power of the hydraulic system, and adding the push-out unloading feature. The new machine, a mid-compaction model, was dubbed the "SaniCruiser". The Cadillac of the Leach line became the high-compaction 2-R Packmaster, the most efficient and popular waste pickup body in the industry.

The Packmaster 2-R had a large slice of the market, but it came in only two sizes—20 and 25 cubic yards. The larger body became the predominant one, and the responses coming back from Elgin Leach's sales force suggested there was a market for even larger sizes. Leach Company came up with a 31 cubic yard machine, the largest it could make without exceeding gross weight laws on roads and highways. The new model was a striking success.

The firm's sales were on an upswing. By 1972, annual sales of Packmasters, SaniCruisers, and 2-R's surpassed the economical production capabilities of the plant. The Company again needed to expand its manufacturing facility.

**Protecting Its Patents.** The popularity of Leach machines created several problems. Other competitors saw the advantages of the 2-R and began building very similar equipment. Leach Company took to the courts to protect its patents. Deciding that a victory had more meaning if it was major, Leach sued its largest competitor. Extensive pre-trial discovery made two things clear: Leach's patent had been violated; and the competitor had no other refuse body to offer that would be reasonably competitive with the Leach system. A large cash settlement made up for the patent infringement... and then Leach sold the firm manufacturing rights under its patent.

**Expansion Again.** In 1975, 72,000 square feet were added to the original factory and additional space was gained by moving research and development to another site.

**An Era Passes.** On June 8, 1979, Elbert C. Leach died at age 89. His wife, Caroline, had preceded him in death, passing away on August 8, 1970.

On July 10 of the same year, E.C. and Onnie's long-time friend, George Dodge, died. He had left behind an amazing legacy of business success in Elgin-Leach, a company which had thrived on cooperation.

The last member of Onnie's family, his wife, Lucile, survived until January 31, 1979.

An era had passed.

**Creative Financial Solutions.** As Leach Company's products grew in complexity, size and price, obstacles appeared. Lending institutions were reluctant to finance highly specialized equipment. If the buyer were to default, the machines could prove difficult to sell. In 1972, a wholly owned subsidiary, Leach Credit Corporation, was created to assist purchasers of the Company's refuse bodies.

By 1978, the initiative in lending offered through Leach Credit had driven demand to a very high level. Refuse bodies were produced and sold at a record rate. Some



work was being subcontracted, and work went forward three shifts a day.

Over the 15 years since Onnie's death, Leach Company had shown surprising growth and had won a dominant role in the refuse-body market. About 80% of Leach's production effort was going to manufacturing garbage-collection bodies, another 10% to its pole line construction and logging tools, and 10% to its credit operations. In high-compaction machines, it had (and has) a market share in excess of 50%. Leach also had taken over 35% to 40% of the rear-loading market and, according to Frederick Leach, some 25% of the total refuse industry.

**A Force for Excellence.** More than a hundred distributors keep Leach Company a force for excellence in the sanitation field. They do it out of pride. Sometimes they receive symbolic recognition, like the annual George C. Dodge Special Achievement Award, a major honor, though it carries with it only a silver platter and a maroon jacket with a crest. They all refer to it with a quiet sense of pride and appreciation that the people they work with chose to recognize their accomplishments.



*EL Industries—Leach Marketing Group.  
George B. O'Connell, Vice President—Leach Marketing;  
G. Dodge Ferreira, President; Donald L. Heling,  
Manager National Accounts.*

Throughout this history, one organization has appeared again and again. Whether called the Elgin Corporation, Elgin-Leach, or EL Industries, the firm founded by Andy Anderson and George Dodge has been a constant companion in Leach Company's growth and success. Its sales staff and leaders like Arch Gott and Dodge Ferreira have shared in Leach's lowest moments as well as its highest. The sense of friendship which has cemented the relationship between the two organizations has been unusual in the business community.

**Dedicated People – Exceptional Results.** Leach's dependence on its skilled work force, and management's clear respect for them, also remain. Machine tools became increasingly sophisticated and crucial to holding the line on quality and price. But machinery never made up for commitment at Leach Company. Strange things are capable of happening—and being handled—when a firm is changing its production line from one rear loader model to another every 20 days or so in a batch system, as 200 2-R II's are followed by 240 SaniCruisers (SC II's) and those by an equally large batch of Packmasters. When pressure to manufacture for sale or stock is high (Leach tries to keep some 600 bodies stored in the yard ready for final painting and mounting) employees have sometimes found themselves

*Continued on page 32*

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chasing railroad cars down the siding as an occasional errant engineer has tried to make off with the steel they need for production.

Now and then, Leach Company found itself once more stretched beyond the limits of its capacity. For example, during 1980-1981 David again found himself renting an empty building on Ceape Street in Oshkosh; there men built 31 cubic yard body shells for shipment two miles back to the factory.

**The Fourth Generation Signs On.** Extraordinary expectations meant exceptional demands on people, and that extended well beyond the assembly force on the factory floor, the clerical and engineering staff in the office. David's oldest son, Frederick, joined the Leach staff in 1976, at age 21. In 1980 his younger brother, David II joined him: he had spent his college summers in what his father likes to refer to as "field research and development". While the phrase suggests white shirts and deep pondering, David II got his share of hands-on experience, acting as garbage man on Leach's experimental side loader. The fourth generation of Leaches had joined the company, continuing the family commitment to the company and the community.

As they grew in skills and ability, both Fred and David II moved upward in the Company's management, Frederick becoming Executive Vice President and David II carrying two titles: Assistant to the Vice President of Manufacturing and Assistant to the President. David Leach Sr. pulls no punches about his feelings on having his sons join the firm,

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writing simply that it was the "happiest day of my life."

David, Frederick, David II and Allen D. Beuth, the firm's Vice President and Treasurer are the Company's executive committee. Stuart Bachner, Vice President of Engineering, follows the Company's long line of master problem solvers.

**Talented Managers.** This policy group is supported by an extraordinarily talented group of managers: Sheldon Brandtjen, Director of Product Engineering; Larry Verzal, Director of Purchasing; Dan Schloss, Director of Service; Karl Schulz, Director of Product Safety and Quality Control; Chuck Waters, Director of Data Processing; Larry Phiel, Director of Industrial Engineering; Phil Resto, Director of Production and Inventory Control; Les Heruth, Director of Personnel; and George Riggan, Vice President and Manager of Leach Credit Corporation.



Frederick E.  
Leach



David C.  
Leach II



Allen D. Beuth



Stuart Bachner

**A Record of Success.** By 1982 the humble Leach Garbage Getter had spawned over 50,000 successor garbage-collection machines. The 50th anniversary of the original machine was marked by modest articles in the Oshkosh Northwestern and Milwaukee Sentinel. A prim little picture accompanied each article, with the now-tiny

*Continued on page 34*

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looking forward with  
confidence to the  
excitement and success  
of the second hundred  
years!



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Garbage Getter perched in front of a house which probably fetched \$2,500 in 1932 and would have been on the real estate market for 30 times as much 50 years later. The single dealer organization and two salesmen of 1932 had grown to EL Industries and 70 U.S. and Canadian distributors, 80 international distributors, 1,000 salesmen



Leach Company Executive Staff—February 1, 1987.

and more than 1,500 parts and service representatives. The original 1946 Packmaster had undergone 3,209 technical improvements. Leach Company and its 375 employees – it was a down year in the cycle; in 1987 the number of workers had climbed to 450 men working three shifts – offered 15 rear loading refuse collection bodies in capacities running from 13 to 31 cubic yards. There were also three front loaders, ranging from 25 to 35 cubic yards.

**New Designs – New Market Shares.** Leach has re-examined its product line since 1982, making significant revisions in its high-, mid-, and low-compaction machines. In the summer of 1984, David Leach II was given the task of

leading an effort to upgrade the SaniCruiser and 2-R. The improved machines became the SC II and 2-R11, higher quality, tougher, more durable machines which have won themselves not only praise from buyers but a new share of the market.

A more radical design, the Alpha Project, grew out of a survey Leach had conducted through its customers and distributors in 1983. David decided that if Leach wanted to keep its market lead, it needed to clean the slate and create a new refuse body. There was an element of gambling involved. Sales had been severely hurt by the economy. Yet Leach Company went ahead, tripling the size of its engineering area with a 4,200 square foot addition and



Leach 2-R II.



Leach SC II.

adding a dozen new engineers to its staff. The Alpha was to be a mid-compaction machine, falling right between the SC II and 2-R11 in the product line. It would be shorter and lighter, but the hopper would be large and it would operate faster.

Eleven prototypes were built, 10 for customers and one for Company use. The users were offered a deal: try the

*Continued on page 36*

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Alpha for a year and then come back to the factory. If you don't like the new machine, we'll give you any one of our models to replace it, at no extra cost. In October of 1985, the 10 critics came back to the factory. They talked about their experiences, suggested some minor changes ... but not a single one of them would give up the Alpha. The new machine was introduced in Spring of 1986 in New Orleans. With a nice sense of symbolism, the first customer for the new Alpha was a city which had bought one of the earliest Garbage Getters: Oshkosh Wisconsin took delivery of its Alpha in the Fall of 1986.

**"A Good Base for the Next 100 Years"**. David II and Frederick agree, in the latter's words, that Leach Company "has built a good base for the next 100 years."

Leach Company had 100 years to build itself a history and the same amount of time to build itself a reputation. Be-

*Continued on page 38*



*Frederick E. Leach, David C. Leach, David C. Leach II,  
May 1986.*

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*A Leach Operator Reports:*

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”  
**Bill Shields**  
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We're proud to report that Bill Shields is celebrating his 40th anniversary in business, along with our 100th anniversary. His first vehicle was a Leach Refuse Getter, back in 1947. And ever since, he's operated Leach units. And that says a lot more about Leach performance and profitability than we ever could!

The best way to appreciate the Leach Alpha is a live demonstration. Your local Leach distributor will be happy to arrange one for you... and to take your order when it's over.



Bill Shields attaches the Leach Centennial plaque to his new Alpha.



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# Into a Second Century of Leadership



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The Leach Company's second century is one in which everything will be technology-driven. And Leach is in the vanguard, with its commitment to

superior engineering, innovation and product quality. The first results have already emerged in the Leach 2-R II Packmaster and the Leach Alpha. They have been confirmed by Leach's selection as the preferred equipment of most of America's waste contractors. Leach leadership was never given... it was earned. Leach will keep on earning its position of leadership every day.

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