

THE BEGINNING



Wayne Brock (left) and George White's (right) chemistry backgrounds made for a good partnership in starting Brock White Company. photo circa 1966



In 1953, George White said to Wayne Brock, "If you and I can get together and start a company distributing these concrete and masonry specialties coming along, we can really develop markets like nobody else because we know the chemistry and applications involved."

The two men had studied chemical engineering at the University of Minnesota and graduated in 1944. After college they served as naval officers.

After leaving the service, George White worked for his family's building products distributing company along with his three younger brothers. He knew the company could not be split among four brothers so he wanted to go out on his own. Wayne Brock had gone to work for General Mills. Both shared the dream of starting their own business.

So Wayne Brock borrowed \$20,000 from his mother-in-law. George White brought his expertise, customer list, and about \$10,000 worth of concrete specialty products - his share of his dad's company. That is how Brock White Company started in 1954.

GOOD QUALIFICATIONS

With chemical engineering backgrounds, Wayne and George understood the chemistry of products. They knew how they worked and what worked best in a given situation. From the beginning, they recognized their value was in finding the right product for a specific application.

“In time we became regarded as a good source of information for specialty materials and how and where to use them in the design and construction of buildings,” said George.

The early focus on informing and giving services has not changed in Brock White’s 50 years of doing business. Today the staff is just as customer-focused, offering product lines covering commercial, residential, road and bridge, and erosion control plus mechanical insulation and roofing in Canada.

LEAN START

From the beginning, Wayne and George did everything themselves along with two employees. Their wives pitched in on year-end inventory. The early years were lean; and between the two men, they had nine children to raise.

When George White Jr. was asked what his dad did back then, his mother reports seven-year-old George said, “My dad delivers things out of the back of the station wagon.”

Wayne recalled that “George and I talked about rotating leadership responsibilities, but we decided it was impractical. He was president and I was secretary-treasurer as long as he was with the company. We divided sales territories with George doing Minneapolis as well as northwest and southeast Minnesota and North Dakota, while I did northeast and southwest Minnesota

and South Dakota. George managed the operations, warehouse, purchasing, and inside sales, while I managed outside sales as we grew and hired sales people.”

LEADERSHIP IN THE INDUSTRY

The strategy to grow the business was to call on design professionals to get them to specify Brock White products for a job. “If an architect called with a problem, we consulted and solved it. We were recognized for that ability,” said Wayne. Architects were confident about specifying a product if they knew it was stocked locally, and they could get technical back up from Brock White.

While Wayne and George were building their own business, they were contributing to the growth of professionalism and quality in the fledgling construction distribution industry itself.

They joined the Minneapolis Builders Exchange where architects brought job plans. “We’d look over the plans there and see what was specified,” said Wayne Brock.

Over the years, Brock White gave back to that organization. In 50 years of membership, four company people have served as president – Wayne Brock, George White, Vice President of Sales and Marketing George White Jr., and President Rick Garland. Today Rick Konkler, sales manager of the St. Paul branch, is on the board of both the Minneapolis and St. Paul Builders Exchange.

The company has a 50-year history with Associated General Contractors of Minnesota. Wayne and George were active in the founding of the Associated Construction Distributors International. In fact, one of the early planning meetings was in Minneapolis. George served two terms as president and Rick Garland has served one term.



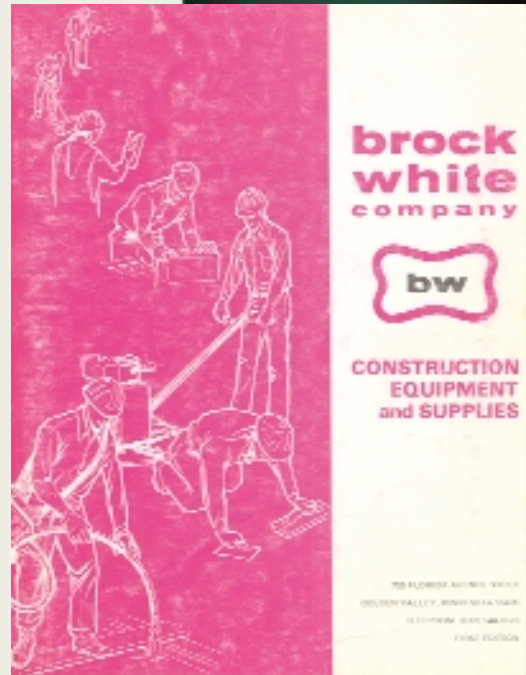
Original Brock White Company location at 204 Humboldt Avenue North. photo circa 1963

Despite early dire predictions from some corners about the company's success, Wayne and George nurtured key relationships and made it possible for the company to succeed in the early years. Construction leaders at Borson, McGough, Rauenhorst (now Opus), Knutson, Adolfsen & Peterson encouraged them. Sonneborn was one of the first vendors along with W. R. Meadows, Master Builders, Dur-O-Wal, and Dow Chemical.

PIONEERING THE CATALOG

By the late 1950s, Brock White was issuing a product catalog every other year. It condensed manufacturers' literature and was up to date. According to George, it was used religiously by both architects and contractors. It received even higher marks when the format was changed to follow the specifications format of the Construction Specifications Institute (CSI).

Brock White had joined the CSI and has since been active in the organization both at the local and national levels. As a director, treasurer and vice president of membership for the national organization, Wayne traveled the country visiting chapters to discuss construction industry issues. He was also awarded Fellowship status in the CSI. In subsequent years, George White Jr. served as director and vice president and was also awarded Fellowship status.



Early Brock White Company catalog.
Late 1950s

GROWING PAINS

In the Twin Cities, Brock White had earned a reputation for bringing technical expertise to the construction trade. Why not expand to another market?

In 1961, against the advice of their attorney Horace Hitch, George and Wayne purchased a construction supply business in Orlando, Florida. As time went by, the manager was not meeting their expectations. George had taken his family there to live for six months; but in the end, neither Wayne nor George wanted to relocate to the area to manage the business. They gave it up in 1964.

“We closed the branch just as rumors began circulating in the area of a tremendous land buy-out in the surrounding orange groves. It turned out that this was the beginning of Disney World and that we had timed the closing at precisely the wrong time,” said Wayne Brock.

The Florida endeavor didn't slow the company down. By 1967, it had reached \$2 million in sales. By 1970, it had moved twice from the original location at 204 Humboldt Avenue North to accommodate its expanding inventory.



photos circa 1966

CHEMICAL CREATIVITY

Those in the construction distribution business make a business out of bringing manufacturer's products to the end-users. Chemical engineers Wayne and George also identified needs in the market and created some products of their own.

BUY WISE
At this **LOW LOW LOW LOW LOW LOW LOW LOW LOW LOW LOW LOW**
SALE PRICE \$5

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“We were not happy with the resin and wax-based curing compounds present in the market in 1965 because of the waxy, slow-drying film they left on the concrete. We investigated the use of acrylic resin in solvents as a material that would both cure and seal concrete,” said Wayne Brock. With some adjustments they came up with a formulation for BW Crete Seal, which was trademarked and became (and still is) a long-time, best seller for the company.

When Brock White started, the standard material for caulking was oil-based. It shrank and dried out after five years. Thiokol® had been invented as a carrier for rocket fuel, and one of the research chemists realized the non-shrink elastic nature of the product made it a natural candidate for caulking. Caulking came to be called sealant to differentiate it from the oil-based material. Brock White was one of the first to promote it to the design profession as a way to obtain long-term sealant performance in quality construction. Thiokol® was expensive and messy to install, but it performed well. The urethane sealants that are a standard in the industry today are evolved from this technology.

In 1975, the curing blanket widely used for concrete construction had a polyethylene film cover with a soft fiberglass fill. It was better than the hay and canvas it replaced, but it would tear easily and the insulation would become saturated and impossible to dry out and reuse. Wayne Brock produced an effective waterproof concrete curing blanket with a closed-cell foam core for cold weather concrete work.

“I got the idea from the bubble pack packing material which was new on the market at that time,” said Wayne. “I tested my idea at Twin Cities Testing.”

Wayne was able to obtain a patent #03420022 on the assembly. The idea got wide acceptance and was copied extensively. A high point early on was a shipment of two carloads of these blankets to a winter project in northern Alberta in 1978. Wayne’s formulation of the curing blanket is still an industry standard today.

Winter enclosures were another area where better products were needed. Canvas had traditionally been used for winter enclosures but its big drawbacks were its tendency to catch fire from the heaters and its inability to transmit sunlight. When polyethylene film was introduced, Brock White was among the first to promote its use for winter enclosure. It was lightweight, easily attached to frames, and passed the light and warmth generated by the winter sun. It was not fireproof, but the film was not as flammable as canvas.

This little guy has been rolling up the same blanket for over five years now -
IT MUST BE AN INSULATED CURING SHIELD!

A curing blanket that lasted year after year and sold for the “astronomical” price of 50¢/foot seemed radical when we first came up with the idea for Insulated Curing Shields over five years ago. But it really *has* been right, because, since then, contractors have bought literally millions of feet.

So, naturally, the price has inched up a few pennies over the years. We even found some competitors trying to imitate us.

But then again, only Brock White has continued refining the closed-cell foam core blanket to make Insulated Curing Shields even more durable and an even better value.

More durable than any competitive product - and a better value for you!

Sign the name Brock White on all orders for Insulated Curing Shields. It's yours for the life of the blanket.

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Vintage product ads.

GROWTH BY ACQUISITION

Wayne Brock and George White made a plan in the ‘60s to grow by acquisition. They started courting prospects in the markets where they wanted to expand.

In 1970, Brock White bought the Otto N. Esch Equipment Company in Roseville. With the leadership of Mike Esch, it entered the light equipment, tool and job supply business. A year later, Brock White bought the Milwaukee branch of Contech, Inc. (It was sold five years later and still carries the name of Brock White Wisconsin.)

In 1971, Wally Sels and Al Paul put together a forming division for Brock White. For 18 years, the company had been contracting out the wall forming business. In 1978, a concrete forming company, FormAll, was started. It was sold in 1980.

In 1980, the purchase of Conpro, Inc. brought complementary lines of product plus excellent contacts in the stucco and plastering trades and concrete repair.

Brock White entered the North Dakota market in 1982 with the reacquisition of FormAll in Bismarck. In 1986, Brock White opened a branch office in Fargo.

Brock White moved to its current facility on Kasota Avenue in St. Paul in 1983.

By 1986, Brock White had 50 employees and \$15 million in sales. A year later, the Rochester branch opened.

In 1986 through 1988 Brock White opened satellite branches in Eden Prairie, Bloomington, Plymouth and Fridley. The remaining satellite offices were closed in conjunction of the opening of the Eagan brick and stone showroom and distribution center in 1997.

An attempt at diversification with the 1988 purchase of R. L. Gould Lawn & Garden proved unsuccessful.



Key acquisitions brought Brock White into the brick and stone business. Left to right: Linus Koopmeiners of Gran-A-Stone, Wayne Destree of Zoll Stone & Brick, and Dick Whitney of Standard Brick. Not pictured is Dick Chambers of Elk River Brick & Stone.

In 1989, the company purchased Standard Brick & Supply in Duluth, and five years later, Gran-A-Stone Company in St. Cloud. These acquisitions were fortuitous. They introduced Brock White to the advantages of the brick and stone business. They also provided growth in the residential market, an area the company had previously intentionally avoided.

The acquisitions also provided leaders in the field for Brock White. Wise counsel from Dick Whitney, owner of Standard Brick, Linus Koopmeiners, owner of Gran-A-Stone, and later by Dick Chambers, owner of Elk River Brick and Stone, and Wayne Destree, owner of Zoll Stone and Brick has made Brock White the region's first choice supplier of brick, stone, cut stone and manufactured stone.

Brock White entered the Canadian market with the acquisition of the Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Regina branches from Steels Industrial Products in 1994. Access to the Canadian market and product lines grew with the purchase of Gilmar Supply in Thunder Bay in 1995.

Growth continued with the acquisition of Spec Materials in 1996. This purchase led the expansion of highway products including various pavement repair products and added to Brock White's strong geotextile business.

TIMELINE OF BROCK WHITE GROWTH

1954

George White and Wayne Brock form Brock White Co.

1960

1966

1971

Contech, Milwaukee purchased. Forming Wall Division created

1979

25th Anniversary of Brock White; \$8 million in sales

1982

FormAll repurchased in Bismarck

50 employees; \$15 million in sales

1987

Rochester branch opened

1989

Standard Brick & Stone in Duluth purchased 70 employees; \$18 million in sales

1995

Gilmar Supply, Thunder Bay purchased

1997

Central Contractors Supply, Willmar & St. Cloud purchased

2004

50th Anniversary of Brock White with 235 employees and approaching \$100 million in sales

1970

Purchased Otto N. Esch Equip. Co., Roseville

1977

Intro of curing blanket

1978

FormAll started

1980

Conpro Inc., purchased; FormAll sold

1983

Brock White moves to current location on Kasota Ave. in St. Paul

1986

Fargo branch opens

1988

Purchase of R.L. Gould Lawn & Garden; 3 branches opened in Twin Cities: Bloomington, Plymouth & Fridley

1994

Purchase of Gran-A-Stone in St. Cloud & Steels in Winnipeg, Saskatoon & Regina

1996

Purchase of Spec Materials, Vadnais Heights

2001

Purchase of Elk River Brick & Stone & Lakehead Insulation in Thunder Bay

2002

Zoll Stone & Brick, Green Bay, purchased



Training and seminars are offered to Brock White customers.

In 1997 Central Contractors Supply of Willmar, with offices in Willmar and St. Cloud, was purchased and later integrated into the St. Cloud branch. In 2001, Elk River Brick & Stone was added along with Lakehead Insulation in Thunder Bay. Zoll Stone & Brick in Green Bay, Wisconsin was acquired in 2002, further expanding masonry products.

SMOOTH TRANSITIONS

With more than a dozen acquisitions of existing businesses, product lines grew aggressively. Brock White became a one-of-a-kind company. Today it has depth and breadth in product lines that are unique to the construction distribution business. A good one-quarter of Brock White's business is in construction specialties that are specially sourced for individual project needs.

The 13 locations in Minnesota, North Dakota, Wisconsin and Canada give customers access to products, training in construction practices, and service close to construction sites.

Brock White made a commitment early in its history to educate customers about new products and how to use them. Brock White's sales representatives and product managers frequently present training and seminars on a wide area of topics.



Brock White has long been considered the First Choice supplier and distributor of "core construction products."

QUALITY PEOPLE AND PRODUCTS

Experienced employees with expertise to find the right product for a specific application and help introduce the product category to the market came with each business acquired by Brock White.

Brock White has long been considered the First Choice supplier and distributor of "core construction products" in its market largely due to its many quality employees. Brock White's branch managers and sales staff strive to know the local market and the best sealants, concrete and masonry accessories, concrete repair products, tools and accessories, coatings, insulation products and fasteners to do the job right the first time.

Along with the many quality lines of brick and stone picked up with business acquisitions, some very good, dedicated employees who knew the business and had long established relationships with builders, architects, designers and masonry contractors were added. This sales staff and its support team of yard employees and delivery personnel have long been dedicated to performing First Choice service to Brock White's customers.



The acquisition of brick and stone companies has given Brock White customers more choices.

Dave Stulen, product manager for ICFs, is a great example of a Brock White product specialist. Dave has been selling insulated concrete forms (ICFs) since they came on the market nearly 20 years ago. Early on, they were considered an alternative construction method. Today ICFs are in the third generation and they are considered a viable type of construction, adaptable to today's home styles with many benefits to homeowners. Sales of ICFs have been growing 10 to 15 percent a year.

With at least 70 ICF systems in the marketplace, Brock White is a distributor of Nudura, Lite-Form and Eco-Block ICF systems and has helped bring ICFs to the forefront of the marketplace. During at least six training sessions a year, Brock White improves contractors' skills with ICFs and offers on-site, hands-on training that few other companies provide.



ICFs were a great addition to Brock White's product line with sales growing 10 to 15 percent a year.



Brock White has become a leader in highway and pavement maintenance products.

In the highway and pavement maintenance product category, product manager Kevin Ageton and sales representative Arlan Burggraff have a combined 40 years of experience, starting with Spec Materials, a company Brock White acquired. Identifying a great product like Crafcro crack sealant and making Brock White the exclusive vendor in the region

is one example of leadership in this product area. Under Kevin's lead, Brock White is positioning itself to capture the emerging business in truncated dome surfaces. ADA requirements in urban paving projects require these special pavement surfaces to aid those who are not able-bodied.



Brock White is in the forefront offering truncated dome surface products for new ADA requirements.

Steve Madaus has long been recognized as an industry expert in the geosynthetics and erosion control market. He and Dan Larsen, formerly with Spec Materials, are co-product managers of the US Geotextile and Erosion Control business. Steve, Dan and Canadian Geo Product Manager Garry McFarlane have helped Brock White become known as the leader in this ever-growing market along with the 13 Brock White branch office employees with whom they work.



Brock White continues to be First Choice in supply when it comes to erosion control products and in providing ongoing training for new and existing products.

New emphasis on EPA and NPDES Phase II rules are pushing awareness and use of a large variety of manmade materials such as turf blankets, coir logs, and mulch that provide sediment and erosion control. Steve, Dan and Garry do considerable training and teaching throughout the year on new applications of existing and new products.

Their expertise has grown through the partnership Brock White has built with contractors, engineers and architects and the manufacturers offering new products. These are the same kinds of relationships Wayne Brock and George White built starting 50 years ago.

EXPANDING INTO CANADA



President Rick Garland was interested in moving into Winnipeg, a population center north of the other Brock White operations. In discussions at trade association meetings, the owner of Steels Industrial Products learned that Brock White wanted to enter the Canadian market. Steels is headquartered in Vancouver with business concentrated in British Columbia and Alberta. Its branches in Winnipeg, Saskatoon and Regina were the smallest and most eastern branches in its operation.

A deal was struck in 1994 and the three branches were purchased. With these acquisitions, Brock White broadened its insulation and concrete supplies business and added roofing products and industrial pipe insulation.

The next year Brock White learned that one of the owners of Gilmar Supply in Thunder Bay, Terry Garrity, was planning for his retirement. After Terry retired in 2001, his previous partner, Bernie Pechiwa became the new branch manager. In 2001, another Thunder Bay opportunity came up when the owner of Lakehead Insulation retired. The acquisition of the Thunder Bay businesses moved Brock White more heavily into industrial pipe insulation.

Jeff Leech was named Brock White Canada's general manager in 2000 to oversee the day-to-day operations of this wholly owned subsidiary of Brock White Company, LLC.





Brock White Company's management team: (left to right)
Ted McArthur, Vice President of Finance
George White Jr., Vice President of Sales and Marketing
Dale Williamson, Vice President of Operations
Rick Garland, President.

MOVING INTO PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT

Many small companies never make it from the first generation to the second. Wayne Brock and George White knew the death or early departure of one of the partners could threaten the very existence of the company so they planned for transition.

Over the years, both Wayne and George had served on the board of Contech along with business executive Dick O'Leary. O'Leary was invited to become a director and officer, and he helped structure Brock White's planned transition from a very closely-held, family entrepreneurship to a well capitalized, professionally-managed company in 1981.

George White retired in 1984, 30 years after starting the company. At this point sales were \$6 million. In the same year Rick Garland was hired as general manager and later became president of Brock White.

Dick O'Leary made a controlling purchase of company stock in 1988. Wayne Brock moved into a consulting position in 1989 when sales were \$18 million and the company had 70 employees. Wayne Brock is chairman of the board today.

QUALITY LEADERSHIP

In this 50th anniversary year, President Rick Garland underscores the valuable leadership of the founders.

"Brock White is fortunate to have had outstanding founders who laid the foundation of the company. George White's leadership on the importance of training employees and searching out needed and superior products for the construction industry remains instilled in the company philosophy today. Wayne Brock's career with the concrete construction industry embraces the same commitment to technical assistance and service and includes concrete industry product innovations.

They committed to nurture and grow a company from a start-up into what is now an enterprise with 235 employees and sales approaching \$100 million. Product expertise and customer service fueled the growth along with the loyalty and partnerships the company has enjoyed with its suppliers and customers.

The values of the founders remain in the people of the company today. Brock White will continue to be a pioneer, a product innovator, and a leader in education and service in the construction distribution industry in the future."



United States Locations:

Duluth, MN
 Eagan, MN
 Elk River, MN
 Rochester, MN
 St. Cloud, MN
 St. Paul, MN
 Fargo, ND
 Bismarck, ND
 Green Bay, WI

Canada Locations:

Thunder Bay, Ontario
 Regina, Saskatchewan
 Winnipeg, Manitoba
 Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

www.brockwhite.com

