

SPEAKMAN COMPANY

1869

Allen Speakman moved to Wilmington, DE to join his brother, Joseph, and to form a business partnership, Speakman Brothers, gasfitters, steamfitters, and plumbers.

1880

Allen took over the business and employed 10 assistants

1898

First recorded manufacturing operation on second-hand machines

1890

The firm began to be listed as a plumbing supply house, the emphasis of the business had shifted from general contracting to plumbing and from performing direct services for customers to the middleman's role of wholesaling. With this change in the character of the business came a change in its form through incorporation under the name Speakman Supply and Pipe Company in 1889

1906

- Bought Wilmington Dental Co. building at 30th and Spruce St.
- The first Speakman patent to Willard A. Speakman for a mixing faucet.

1914

Willard A. Speakman patented the mixometer, a shower based on a single control mixing hot and cold water.

1918

- Reorganized under the name of The Speakman Company.
- Common and preferred stock were sold

1925-1945

At the Height of the Depression the company suffered the loss of its President, Willard A. Speakman. Fortunately when it was most crucial that the administration be conducted smoothly, Willard A. Speakman Jr., who had worked in different company departments since 1916 was able to carry on the policies of this father.

1936

Willard A. Speakman deceased

1870-1902

These years are considered a period of experimentation and innovation in the design of plumbing facilities. Showers were offered in an endless combination of spray patterns, and many varieties of inexpensive portable showers and tubs were popular.

1889

Name changed to Speakman Supply and Pipe Company and acquired a warehouse at 113 Market St.

1895

The lavishly illustrated catalog was a brave gesture in the face of the poor business conditions that disillusioned American enterprise after the panic of 1893. The company has been able to weather periods of a major recession relatively better than many firms with larger resources

1901

Had 42 production employees and ran a factory

1911

Started in various forms sharing profits with employees

1922

Placed ads in the National Geographic, House Beautiful, and Home and Garden

1917

Willard A. Speakman patented a novel shower head in which moveable pins automatically kept the holes in the head free of blockage.

1927

- Ads placed in the journals of the trade
- Developed the Anystream showerhead, perhaps its most important single product and one which is still widely imitated. It became a witness to the quality and durability of Speakman Company.

TIMELINE

1942-1945

WWII produced components for torpedoes, aircraft fire extinguisher systems and flush valves for type T-2 oil tankers.

1940

Speakman workers voted to join Brass and Chromium Workers, Local 507, International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workmen, CIO.

1939

- Development of safety equipment such as deluge showers. Emergency eye wash fixtures were a natural addition to the new safety line.
- Harry Speakman deceased.
- Willard Allen Speakman Jr. became third president

1937

The Speakman Company Employees Union was formed.

1960's

- The central position of product development in the growth of the firm was stressed with the creation of the Research & Development department as a distinct administrative entity
- Recent innovations have also reestablished the company's reputation of product leadership in the industry. An important Speakman development was the marketing of serrated eye washes. Expansion in the stall shower line reflected the company's continued strength in the shower field and its responsiveness to the demand and needs of the construction industry.
- The modern outlook of the Speakman Company is perhaps most completely typified in the slogan with which the company faces the world. "Speakmanship" means both people and products. It symbolizes the aggressive marketing and quality products of the company, and it summarizes the total modern concept of water management and conservation.

1968

Willard Allen Speakman III becomes fourth president and Chief Executive Officer

1964

Establishment of the Marketing Department

1969

Employed close to 500 people in a complete manufacturing facility.

1986

Changed from compression style controls to ceramics. Began sourcing components overseas in order to remain competitive. Foundry had been sold. Other manufacturing operations shut down or downsized dramatically over the next 10 years

2002

Rod Ward joins Speakman as its fifth president.

1999

Majority of material now purchased. Facility assembles, test and packages.

2008

Tom Stoddard retires after 80 years of service with Speakman

2006

Willard (Bill) Allen Speakman passes away

2009

Speakman celebrates 140 years!