

160

YEARS of INNOVATION
in AMERICA



1852 - 2012

Blackinton[®]



Blackinton® employee photo taken November 12, 2012, in front of the manufacturing facility.

160 YEARS OF DEDICATION

“Blackinton® has always been a family owned and operated American manufacturer for all its 160 years, and we fully intend to continue this for many decades. I’m proud to lead this organization. Our greatest asset has always been the Blackinton® employees.” Stated Peter Roque, President & Chief Executive Officer.

This historical glimpse into the last 160 years is dedicated to the Blackinton® family of employees, both past and present, whose dedication, skills, and ethics are a major contributing factor to the success and longevity of Blackinton®. And to our distributors, for their undeniable loyalty and support in building a partnership based on mutual trust and collaborative knowledge.



Peter Roque, President & CEO

We offer great thanks to Nancy Campbell, Historical Researcher and Archivist, who gathered the facts contained within this historical write-up, 2012.

HISTORY

160 YEARS

A HISTORICAL LOOK BACK AT THE PAST AS BLACKINTON® TAKES HOLD OF THE FUTURE

THE EARLY YEARS

Versatility, creativity and a local commitment to fine craftsmanship are the values upon which Blackinton® has successfully sustained 160 years of manufacturing excellence in the United States.



Blackinton® Facility 1857-1982, 140 Commonwealth Ave.

Through the years, Blackinton® has had surprisingly few changes in leadership. From Virgil Henry Blackinton, whose name we proudly carry, to today's local shareholders led by the Roque family. These local leaders have shared the same commitment and dedication from employing local residents and supporting the community to keeping Blackinton® where it originated in Attleboro Falls, Massachusetts, *once the jewelry capital of the world*. The fluctuating economy and international competition has led to many manufacturing closures and relocations in our area. Blackinton® is one of the few remaining manufacturers from the 1800's still proudly calling Attleboro Falls home.



Blackinton® Facility 1982-present, 221 John Dietsch Blvd.

What started in 1852 in an old dance hall quickly became a booming business known as V. H. Blackinton & Co., Inc. In 1857, the growing business moved 1/4 mile down the road to a two story, 30 x 80 square foot, steam powered school house - a building that served the company

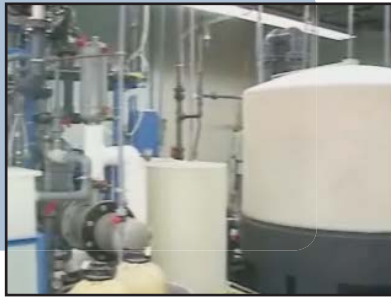
160 YEARS TRADITION

well for over a hundred years. Deterioration of the aging building and the need for additional space prompted Blackinton® to build a new facility. In 1982, Blackinton® left the charm of the old school house behind and moved into a modern, sprawling facility of 55,000 square feet, at 221 John L. Dietsch Boulevard.



*Tooling department: at left Willard Robinson, Amos Pelletier
Right: Ken Swaine, Donat Gamache, and George Ogilvie.*

The new location opened up tremendous opportunities for the company. Blackinton® set out to gain greater manufacturing efficiencies in the new facility. The one level expansive manufacturing floor was designed to facilitate a smooth production flow from department to department thereby speeding production and reducing material handling. A waste water treatment plant was installed in the building, a truly unique undertaking. Today, the company proudly reports recycling 100% of the facility's waste water, doing its part to keep the environment clean for current and future generations.



Waste water treatment plant

The new building offered a safer working environment for employees, as the company upgraded machinery and developed safety rules and regulations. Management's commitment to the well being of its employees is evident in its safety record. Blackinton® received the OSHA

SHARP Safety Award in 2001 making the company exempt from regular scheduled OSHA inspections.

BLACKINTON® PRODUCTS

As is true with many manufacturers, technology, a changing market place, and demand all work together in the evolution of a product line. Blackinton® has manufactured an extensive range of products over its lifetime, with badges not always



1852 glass buttons & 1857 jet jewelry

160 YEARS LEADERSHIP

at the forefront. In fact the early days, in the 1800's, were spent manufacturing primarily buttons, earrings, and broaches. It wasn't until the Civil War that Blackinton® shifted its business focus from jewelry to military insignias - setting the stage for a prosperous future.

The company's reputation for artistry in metal catapulted it into the production of hand-forged swords equalling the high quality German metalwork of the time. Blackinton® was also commissioned to produce military insignia that distinguished ranks and regiments during the Civil War.



1885 constable badge & 1865 sword hilt

The end of the war brought a demand for identifying jewelry and insignias. The shield, a symbol of protection from the days of "knights in armor," took on added meaning as Blackinton® began to design badges and insignia for police and fire departments, a tradition that continues to this day.



1956 Hi-Glo® ad in Police Chief Magazine

In 1948, co-owners Gordon Johnson and Walter Lyons made two large moves shifting the fate of Blackinton®. First, the company enhanced its offerings to the gun and skeet shooter clubs with the development of trophies, medals, and medallions. By 1952, 75% of the trophies awarded by shooting clubs in the country were made by Blackinton®.

Second, and foremost, the production and promotion of badges became the strategic focus of the company. The team put forth an

extensive advertising and marketing campaign to strengthen the growing Blackinton® badge line. In 1956, Blackinton® introduced their trademarked Hi-Glo® finish and set forth on a landmark journey to become the largest and most renowned badge manufacturer in the United States.



Polishers: Howard Hawes, Henry McCracken, Francis Wagstaff, Jimmy Kay, and Ray Gagnon

160 YEARS COMMITMENT

TECHNOLOGY

The leaders of Blackinton® recognized early on that technology would be a key element in the company's success. In the latter half of the nineteenth century Blackinton® introduced, to the jewelry world, the historically-renowned material called Japan. Japan was a black finish that gave an item a liquid appearance. It was highly resistant to rust, friction and abrasions. Until the 1920's, when modern lacquers and enamels began to appear, Blackinton® sold Japan by the barrel load to other companies for their use in shoes, hardware and much more.



*Lettering: Ben Razee, Jim Walsh
Annie McGowan from the
1950's and today David Plante*

A walk through the Blackinton® factory is a surreal experience, exposing one to the technical advancements of the 21st century against the nostalgia of old-world craftsmanship that put Blackinton® on the map. Badge lettering, once handled by a long row of men with hammers, is now almost exclusively done by computer controlled engraving machines. Even so, we still have one Stenciler available for intricate pieces, or simply for customers who desire the old-world look of a stenciled badge. Each badge is a personalized, unique item requiring individual attention and care. Computers and technology help design, engrave, cut, and stamp metal, but hard working dedicated employees make Blackinton® badges the unparalleled gems that they are.



Computer controlled engraving

Enameling is another constant that has nonetheless evolved. Japan is no longer used; modern enamels with limitless color options are instead. Color is not applied by a machine; it is hand-applied with care to each individual piece. In 2009, Blackinton® applied technology to color, by introducing the public safety market to a color shifting enamel called SecureShift®. This enamel shifts when slightly moved providing visual authentication of a badge



160 YEARS STRATEGIC

helping the law enforcement community fight impersonators and counterfeiters. Blackinton® remains the only badge manufacturer in the world authorized to sell SecureShift®.

The willingness of Blackinton® to embrace technology has helped shape the company into an industry leader, exemplified by its 2008 unveiling of SmartShield®. SmartShield® is a traditional Blackinton® metal badge with smart technology - an embedded RFID chip. This high-security U.S. patented badge solution is opening untapped markets for Blackinton®. As the company looks to the future and continues to develop and expand the SmartShield® technology one thing will always remain constant - the hand-crafted quality metal badge that holds the embedded chip.



*SmartShield® badge with RFID reader
Patented process & parts, US7522056B2*

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

As Blackinton® looks toward the future, a number of things are certain. Blackinton® will continue to manufacture its products in the United States, employing close to 200 of their local friends and neighbors. In the words of Chief Operating Officer, David



Long, *"Our employees are such an enormous factor in the success and longevity of the business. We are so fortunate to have employees with 20, 30, and 40 years of experience. That institutional knowledge is irreplaceable."* As new personnel join the Blackinton® family they are challenged with absorbing and understanding decades of knowledge to ensure this valuable asset is carried on.

Technology will remain a dominant force in shaping the future of Blackinton®. The company is well on its way to establishing another 160 years of revolutionary products and services. Quality is a timeless trait, one that has kept Blackinton® at the forefront of its industry, and one that will never be sacrificed. The 900 dealers who make up the Blackinton® Nationwide Dealer network will benefit as the inter-connectivity of the internet takes ordering methods to new heights. Blackinton® has just begun to embark into the International market. Exciting new sales expanses in Latin America are creating new business opportunities for the company to market its world renowned products. *The past defined our purpose, the present defines our future, and the next 160 years look bright!*



160 YEARS

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“V. H. Blackinton... is an indestructible institution solidly cemented to its friends and customers... the policy of binding customers and company together, began a long time ago and succeeding generations continued these traditional principles... We who are entrusted with the reins of authority will adhere to those same principles. Here are the controls, the company is stronger now than it was when we were privileged to take it over. If you are mindful of the Company’s purpose, you too will see it prosper.”

Gordon Johnson and Walter Lyons,
100th anniversary message (60 years ago)



Blackinton®

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