

Connersville Mirror Works, Incorporated

Founded: 1894

Location: Fifth and Eastern Streets, Connersville (1894); 1008 Grand Avenue (1894–1907); 321–327 East Charles Street (1907–95); 319 East Ninth Street (1996– )

The Connersville Mirror Works began by making glass paperweights and advertising materials. Some of the earliest products included materials for William McKinley’s 1896 presidential campaign, Havana Cigars, and Procter & Gamble products. The company also produced plate-glass mirrors, shelves, and tops for Connersville’s expanding furniture trade. John L. Heineman started the company on the second floor of a family grocery store on Fifth and Eastern Streets, soon moving the business to Grand Avenue.

When the automobile craze hit the town and made it the “Little Detroit” of Indiana, Connersville Mirror Works started manufacturing plate-glass mirrors and the glass for the successful “Rex tops” for automobiles. The company also produced post office boxes for the Keyless Lock Company of Indianapolis. By the end of the 1920s the company employed about forty people. In the 1930s the glass company shifted to specializing in rearview and sunvisor mirrors as well as glass inserts for hood ornaments, while continuing to make mirrors for cabinets and dressing tables. George Heineman took over from his father in 1930, steering the company toward specialization.

During World War II the company did precision metalwork for various local industries. By the 1960s plate glass, automobile windshield and door glass replacement, and storm sash and window glass replacement topped the company’s interests. The company continued its manufacture of mirrors for the furniture business.

In 1978 George Heineman sold his father’s company to Robert and Carolyn Puckett. In 1981 the company purchased the Bowen Windows & Doors Company, a leader in the supply of

storm windows and doors. The Connersville Mirror Works also began a popular custom framing business after the Pucketts bought the enterprise. Five years after the first acquisition the company grew again to include the AAA Lock Shop, a company providing residential, commercial, and industrial locksmith services. In 1987 Richard Lemen, Sr., a longtime employee, and his wife Anita bought the business. The Lemens expanded production at the plant and hired several new employees. Richard's brother, John, another longtime employee, served as the plant's assistant manager. In 1998 the company continued to produce glass products for the automobile and furniture industries as well as to provide service for the installation and repair of insulated entrance doors, garage doors, and windows.