

## Crescent Oil Company

Founded: 1893

Location: 34 East South Street, Indianapolis (1893–99); 514–530 West Wyoming Street (1900– )

Harry B. Smith and Benjamin F. Howard founded the Crescent Oil Company in 1893, which specialized in the blending of lubricating oils for industry. Smith was president, and Howard served as secretary and treasurer. Between 1899 and 1900 the company moved from East South Street to West Wyoming Street. Between 1907 and 1908 John W. Staub purchased an interest in Crescent Oil and assumed the presidency. Howard continued as secretary and treasurer. Staub, born in Indianapolis in 1858, operated a tailoring business with his father (Staub & Son) prior to joining Crescent Oil. He also served as president of the Indianapolis Oil Company. During World War I Crescent Oil was one of the few industrial oil manufacturers to develop water soluble oils for industrial metal forming with aqueous emulsions.

The company grew slowly during the 1920s. In 1927 Staub died, and Benjamin Howard assumed the presidency. During the Great Depression, Crescent Oil experienced financial difficulties, but it returned to profitability by 1936, after John E. Burns joined the firm. Burns, originally from Connecticut, ran Crescent Oil as well as Burns Laboratories. Burns and chemist Raymond W. Dawson developed a wide variety of effective industrial oils. Burns's and Dawson's major achievement was the development of an oil-soluble additive that improved the effectiveness of metalworking oils. Eventually the company formed a marketing unit specifically to handle this additive. The company grew steadily in the postwar period; in the mid-1950s it merged with Burns

Laboratories. In 1959 John Burns II became president. He was followed in 1982 by John Burns III.