



Quality Food Processor

Cut Green Beans • French Style Green Beans
Tomatoes • Stewed Tomatoes • Diced Tomatoes
Flavored Diced Tomatoes • Tomato Juice

History of The Beckman & Gast Co.

Our history begins a few years prior to owning a canning operation. November 6, 1919 Ms. Leona Beckman and Mr. Lewis Gast are married, and hence a partnership is formed that would forge the lives of many throughout the next century. Three short years later another partnership is formed and The Beckman and Gast Co. is born. In July of 1922 Henry Beckman, Luke Beckman (Leona's father and brother) and Lewis Gast purchase a dry goods store in downtown St. Henry. Just six years later the partnership would be canning tomatoes.

In 1907 Mr. Leatherbury of Circleville, Ohio builds and operates the Pioneer Canning Co at our current location. The canning factory packs 35,000 cases of tomatoes the first year. The following year Mr. Warvell joins the operation and introduces "Warvell's Wheat". The company changes hands over the next several years settling with the B. H. Macke Canning Co. In the early months of 1928 a deal is struck and the Beckman and Gast partners are proud owners of The Beckman & Gast Canning Co.

On February 4, 1928 Luke Beckman and Lewis Gast opened their new company for business. The duo turned their attention to operating their new canning company. In the fall of 1928 the company processed tomatoes, tomato juice, red beets, carrots, pumpkin, and dry beans. Later that year they purchased a glove factory to facilitate the sale of their dry goods store. In 1930 they sold the dry goods store to a local businessman and purchased a 160-acre farm in Cranberry Prairie. This purchase marks the beginning of our vertical integration of farmer and processor.

July 12, 1931 Luke and Lewis incorporate the business as "The Beckman & Gast Co., Inc." Things are going well for the new company until the onset of the great depression. The company struggles through the hard years and is fortunate to remain open. In 1935 a stroke of luck comes their way. The Beckman & Gast Co. enters into a contract to can, sell, and distribute "Schnell's Genuine Turtle Soup." This product line paved the way for our company well into the 1960s. Beckman & Gast also packed soup under their own name as "Beckmans Turtle Soup" and "Beckmans Friday Chili". The US Bureau of Fishers titles Beckman & Gast as the largest packer of turtle soup in the United States in the 1950s. Production was as high as 30,000 cases per year. Beckman & Gast continued to pack tomatoes and other products and the business continued to grow. In the late 1950s total production surpasses 100,000 cases per year.

The 1950s was a period of great change for the company and the partnership of Luke Beckman and Lewis Gast. In 1943 Luke and Lewis purchase the Minster Canning Co. as a partnership, they also purchase a canning factory in New Carlisle Ohio in 1946. The New Carlisle plant was sold in 1948 and in 1950 Lewis Gast sold his interest in the Minster Canning Co. to Luke Beckman. Also at that time Luke Beckman sold his shares of The Beckman & Gast Co. to Lewis Gast and Sons. Lewis and his sons opted to keep "The Beckman & Gast Co." as the corporate name. At that point Luke Beckman and his family are operating the Minister Canning Co. and Lewis and his sons are operating the canning factory in St. Henry. The families mutually agreed this was for the best. Lewis and his sons finish out the decade purchasing a facility in Osgood, Ohio and begin canning green beans. Today green beans are a large portion of our business.

By the 1960s the second generation of the Gast family control the day-to-day operation of the canning company. Lewis and Leona's four sons (Jim, Bob, Bill, & John) and son-in-law (Jack) all play major rolls in the operation of the company. Once again things are going well for the company. Early in the 1960s the firm purchases a farm to grown more of its own vegetables. Until this point the company relied heavily on local farmers for vegetables. Today Beckman & Gast manages a large farm operation and has a few local growers for vegetable production.

Through out the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s management progressed from the second generation to the third. Bob and Bill's family members began to acquire ownership of the company. (Irish, Nick, Bo & Gary) The company continued to grow. New products, new production lines, new warehouses, new ideas and old values were the all part of life for the Beckman & Gast organization. By the turn of the century the third generation was in complete control of the company.

Today our company, over 75 years old, is as strong as ever. The third generation is preparing members of the fourth generation to carry-on the values and principles handed down to them. New products, equipment, and facilities are an everyday challenge for us as we surge forward. Luke Beckman and Lewis Gast built the company around consistent quality, low price, and great customer service. Those same values still hold true today.