

# FROM THE PAGES OF HISTORY

## Crawford Door Company



A sign used in Pittsburgh, 1955



Hoover Road Plant in Detroit, 1953

President Bob Hackathorn (right) along with Dave Crawford (left) received the Distinguished Merchandising Award Plaque from Harold Mann of American Builder Magazine, 1954.



Crawford Door's 1953 Conference

### Milestones

- 1930 Crawford Door is founded by Fred Crawford and three or four other investors from Thompson Products of Cleveland. The company begins to make garage doors in "a back alley operation" in Detroit, Michigan.
- 1934 The Model SC sectional residential door with torsion spring becomes the standard item. Prior to the SC, the company made one-piece doors and some bi-fold doors. Crawford is recognized as the first to develop the torsion spring door.
- 1937 The company moves into a 12,000-square-foot plant at 5300 St. Jean Street in Detroit.
- 1940 Seeking better shipping facilities, the company moves to a plant at 401 St. Jean.
- 1942 Production is converted to making aircraft parts during the war, ca. 1942-45.
- 1947 Crawford holds their first national sales meeting with 52 distributors in attendance in Detroit.
- 1947 The Magician is first used as the company trademark, and the name of "Marvel-Lift" doors is coined.
- 1949 Crawford's first Distributor Advisory Board is appointed to advise the company's president, Bob Hackathorn.
- 1950 Crawford acquires a plant at 20263 Hoover Road, but doesn't make doors there until 1953.
- 1954 A plant is added at Phillipsburg, New Jersey, to handle eastern hardware shipments.
- 1950s Crawford is widely recognized as the second largest garage door manufacturer behind Overhead Door.
- 1955 The company has 95 distributors in the U.S. and Canada.
- 1959 Fred Crawford retires after creating TRW in 1958, a merger of Thompson Products and Ramo & Wooldridge. TRW became one of the nation's premier defense companies.
- 1960? Crawford builds a plant in Gottenborg, Sweden, and eventually builds a large international presence. Today, Crawford Door is a company in the Swedish Cardo Door Group, operating in more than 30 countries in Europe and Asia.
- 1962 Fred Crawford sells the domestic operations of Crawford Door to Jim Walter Company.
- 1964 Jim Walter Company moves production from Detroit to Ecorse, Michigan.
- 1974 Crawford headquarters moves from Detroit to Tampa.
- 1978 Crawford door manufacturing in Michigan ends.
- 1983 Wayne-Dalton purchases Crawford Door Co. from Jim Walter Corp.
- 1994 Fred Crawford dies at the age of 103.

Sources:  
 "Crawford Door Company Celebrates Twenty-Five Years in Garage Door Business," Crawford Door Folks newsletter, Vol. 7, No. 1, Feb. 1955.

Bill Hughes, owner of Crawford Door Sales of Detroit, former vice president of marketing & sales at Crawford.