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April 22, 1986

Mr. Ray A. Kibort,  
Region VI Historian  
Barber-Coleman Company  
323 North Second Street  
Rockford, IL 61107

Dear Mr. Kibort:

SUBJECT: GOLD RIBBON & LOG BOOK OF TIME AWARD  
4th ENTRY - HISTORY OF A SYSTEM

I am enclosing the La Crosse Area Chapter, 4th Entry, for the Gold Ribbon and Log Book of Time Award. Mr. Harold Sargent was a La Crosse area pioneer who masterminded the cooling system explained in the report. We feel that this is a worthwhile system report.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me. Thank you.

Very truly yours,

James M. Ritter, P.E.  
Chapter Historian  
La Crosse Area Chapter

JMR/mls

Enclosure

## THE HISTORY OF A SYSTEM

In the early 1940's, the art of refrigeration left much to be desired. The technology was really not available, except for a few curious and determined pioneers who would not accept the state of the art that existed at that time.

One such pioneer was Mr. Harold Sargent. He attended various refrigerations schools that were available at that time and he was really the only refrigeration expert in the La Crosse area. Harold Sargent was involved in the refrigeration business in 1932, such as it was. He was president of the local chapter of RSCS and he was an instructor at the Western Wisconsin Technical Institute. He had seen the method of refrigeration that was used by most homes and many commercial markets. The "ice box" was a method of refrigeration in which blocks of ice, cut from the local rivers in the winter time and stored in "ice houses" for delivery in the warmer season, were used for food cooling and preservation. Control was very crude and supply was limited.

Harold Sargent began to experiment with tubing, coils and various methods of refrigerant applications. He tried to develop a method of longer periods of controlled cooling. If this could be done and the refrigerant reused in a closed loop, the future looked very bright.

Mr. Bill Rudy obtained the franchise to sell A & W Root Beer in the La Crosse area in 1947. Part of the process was to mix the Root Beer syrup in an ice filled tub to a temperature of 32° F. If it was warmer, it would be too foamy when mixed with CO<sup>2</sup>. Harold Sargent developed a method of mixing the Root Beer syrup with CO<sup>2</sup> and by means of a refrigerated sheet metal container, he was able to exactly maintain 32° F. By adding cooling

and removing cooling, he was able to refrigerate the syrup - CO<sup>2</sup> mixture so that when it was discharged through a fountain it would have the world famous foamy taste. Mr. Bill Schomberg helped Harold build a few units. Improvements were made on each unit and eventually every A & W Root Beer Stand in the Mid-West could provide the delicious foamy Root Beer which had excellent taste, attractive appearance, and ice cold qualities.

Mr. Sargent has passed on, but this pioneer from La Crosse, who was president of Sargent Refrigeration from 1947 until 1966, provided millions of people with a cold, foamy A&W Root Beer on a hot, humid day.

In the future, when you taste one of these frosty mugs of excellent brew, give a thought of thanks to Harold Sargent, a true pioneer in the art of refrigeration.



Respectfully Submitted  
James M. Ritter, P.E.  
La Crosse Area Chapter Historian