

1930—1940

The Beginning

1930

1801 N. Washington Avenue, Minneapolis, MN



Founding Fathers (from left to right):
Rollie Demeules, Zez Demeules,
Heine Demeules, Chuck Demeules

Standard Iron and Wire Works' first location was at 1801 North Washington Avenue. Here, Standard Iron found its niche in the construction market fabricating metal products for the building construction industry.

The location had been a saloon before prohibition. It wasn't very large and there were no partitions between the office and shop, so when the phone rang production had to stop.

Pappa Auguste Demeules, editor and publisher of the French language newspaper, Echo de L'Quest, in northeast Minneapolis, couldn't encourage his sons to follow the printing craft. Instead, on March 1, 1930, his three sons, Rollie, Zez and Heine Demeules, started Standard Iron & Wire Works. Why did they decide on that name? They checked the telephone directory and at that time there were very few companies listed with the name Standard.

How did these brothers take their dream of starting a metal fabricating business in the midst of the Great Depression and turn it into a multifaceted, hi-tech corporation that continues to thrive three generations later? For the Demeules brothers, the key to continued success was change—the willingness to adapt their business in response to the changing needs and demands of the customer, the industry, and the times. And there have been more than a few changes since the brothers first set up shop in north Minneapolis back in 1930.

1933

1329 S. 6th Street, Minneapolis, MN



After a couple of years at the Washington Avenue address, Standard Iron moved to another former saloon. This building was fifty percent larger and a room that had been used for off sale liquor business was used for an office.

1935

1900 Third Street NE, Minneapolis, MN



The turning point for Standard Iron was in 1935 when the company moved to 1900 Third Street NE in Minneapolis. The building, a used brewery, was more suited to manufacturing metal products. The building was originally 50' x 100', but the size was doubled after a couple of years.

Standard Iron was able to obtain contracts for miscellaneous metals for small post office construction. Most manufacturing businesses didn't want to work on them because they were so different from ordinary building plans. Standard Iron furnished materials for projects as far away as California, Texas, and New York.

By this time, the youngest Demeules brother, Chuck, had joined the business as the fourth partner.