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Charles M. Higgins, Founder of Charles M. Higgins & Co., Inc.

Charles M. Higgins was born in County Leitrim, Ireland, in 1856. He came to this country at the age of six with his parents. As a young man he was employed by the F. W. Devoe & Co., paint house, later known as Devoe & Reynolds. He was of an inventive mind and secured a patent on a leather screw pegging machine at the age of nineteen. He became a draftsman, largely self-taught, and secured a position with S. H. Wales & Son, publishers of the Scientific News, now extinct. While working for this publisher he met many famous inventors.

Mr. Higgins was versatile, and at one time his drafting ability inclined him to take up architecture and at another time law. He worked arduously at the patent soliciting business and eventually opened his own office in New York. In the evenings and spare time he conducted experiments in ink making. The result was the waterproof Higgins American India Ink, also the Higgins Eternal Ink.

The inks Mr. Higgins had invented, which included colored inks as well as black and India, sold very slowly for the first few years, so that he manufactured it at his own home and continued to conduct his patent soliciting business.

In 1885 Mr. Higgins took in his brother-in-law, Mr. John Gianella, Sr., forming the Charles M. Higgins & Co., which was dissolved only by

Mr. Gianella's death in 1914. In 1888, the patent business was sold and Mr. Higgins devoted his entire time to developing his ink business. About that time their first factory was started at 168 Eighth St., Brooklyn, New York, with John E. Gavin as manager, who remained with the company until 1923. In 1923 they began selling direct to the trade, which brought about a great expansion of the business. Between 1890 and 1900 Mr. Higgins was granted twenty-one new patents relating to inks and adhesives.

By 1900 the company had developed into a model American manufacturer of inks and adhesives. It was about that time that Mr. Higgins began to devote much of his time to campaigns for public good. He became interested in many and varied civic campaigns.

In 1929, at the age of 75, Charles M. Higgins passed away. He was survived by his wife and three children. In 1930 the heirs incorporated. The general offices are located at 271 Ninth St., with the factory building in the rear.

The founder's son, Tracy Higgins, is now President and General Manager and John Gianella, Jr., son of the original partner, is Vice-President and is in charge of production and is responsible for maintaining the unvarying high quality of the Higgins products.

Little could Mr. Higgins visualize during these early days the mighty structures that were to develop from his inks.