

---

# The Walsworth Brothers Walsworth Publishing Company

By M. Karen Hubbard

In 1937, three brothers, Don, Ed, and Bill Walsworth started the Walsworth Brothers Company in Marceline, Missouri. At first, the company sold ads for playbills (for plays being produced around the neighboring states) which they printed with a borrowed typewriter and a mimeograph machine. Soon they printed cookbooks, and then memorial books to honor those who had served the United States after World War II.

In 1947, the company began to publish yearbooks which has been their main business ever since. In 1956, soon after adding yearbook publication, the Walsworths decided to change the company's name to Walsworth Publishing Company, Inc. Spring was their busy time of year because yearbooks were produced and distributed to the schools. After spring, there would be a slow down in production and employees would be laid off. To keep their company going during the slow times, they persuaded some schools to have their yearbooks delivered in the fall. This enabled the company to keep their employees busy in spring and fall.

One of the founder's sons, Don Walsworth, began working with the company in 1957 and became president 10 years later. There were still slow times, when the company would layoff skilled employees and the company's valuable equipment would sit unused. These slow periods troubled Don.

To solve this problem, the company started a commercial book division in 1974. This division published textbooks, catalogs, magazines and other specialty publications. It enabled the yearbook people to serve their customers by concentrating on their schools while the commercial people concentrated on customers with different printing needs.

Walsworth Publishing Company employs more than 1,400 people all over the world. More than 600 of these employees have attained the status of Master Printer of America, and more than 90 employees have 20 or more years of service to the company. This company is the only family-owned yearbook company in the world and one of the top printing companies in North America.