



Our History

There are more than 135 years of experience behind Walker Industries Holdings Limited and our company has been strengthened by tradition while dedicated to progress. Company founder, John Walker, came to Canada from Scotland in the 1840's to seek a future in the New World. He trained and worked as a marble cutter, contributing his energy and skill to the building of the Niagara Peninsula. In 1875, John Walker started his own stone cutting business in the town of Merritton. Cutting stone with chisels and sheer strength, he helped construct the Merritton Town Hall, now a designated heritage building. In 1882, John Walker expanded the business into a family enterprise, bringing in his sons - William, John G. and David. The company was renamed John Walker & Sons and the legacy of Walker Industries began. In 1887, John turned the business over to his sons who acquired their first limestone quarry that same year, Walker Brothers Quarries, on leased land in Stamford Township.

Cutting and quarrying construction stone was extremely hard, muscular work and its movement was difficult. Stone from the quarry was transferred via the Welland Canal to help build armories, churches and government buildings across Ontario, Quebec and New York State. Early on, construction stone was hauled by horses and cart across to Niagara Falls, New York for a meager 40 cents a ton.

No matter how carefully construction stone was cut, wastage through cracks was inevitable, however an important use for this limestone waste was found in paper mills that used the sulphite process. Canada's first sulphite mill was built in nearby Merritton, then a separate town in Niagara and the company began shipping "one man rubble", pieces of stone a man could carry, usually weighing between 50 to 70 pounds in weight. This product was used to provide the solution in which wood was cooked, to free fibres for papermaking.

By 1905 the company progressed to supply a new and expanding market: crushed stone to construct efficient roadways. The company's first crusher, powered by steam and with a daily output of 200 tons, was completed that same year. It processed stone too small for paper mills and involved intensive, hard labour. Stone chips were loaded onto rail cars manually, at a rate of 19 cents per ton. The oldest ledgers for the company date back to 1905, when crushed stone was sold to Newman Brothers of St. Catharines, a notable customer of Walker Industries to this day.

Cars had caught the popular imagination and by 1911 there were 12,000 registered in Ontario. Drivers were demanding better roads and better roads meant a need for more stone. John Greenhill (Jack) Walker and Donald Walker became the third-generation owners in 1929. A second stone crushing plant was designed and put into operation that same year, raising the crushed stone output to 400 tons per day and helping to build the Queen Elizabeth Way, North America's very first super highway which opened in 1940. As greater mechanization was introduced, the crusher moved onto the quarry floor enabling an increase in production to 600 tons per day. The first fully mechanized crushed-stone plant, with a 250 ton per hour capacity, was built at Walker Brothers Quarries in 1947. In 1957, the company embarked on an expansion program, which involved the purchase of 115 acres of land on top of the Niagara Escarpment, and shortly thereafter a new crushing plant was built in St. Catharines. Throughout the forties and fifties the company certainly blossomed under the



leadership of Jack and Donald Walker. When ownership of the business was transferred in 1967 to Norris and John Walker, the fourth generation, their father John continued to maintain an active role in the business. He purchased Vineland Quarries in Vineland, Ontario in 1969 and designed the first automated stone crusher in the Niagara Peninsula, complete with remote controls and electrically operated product mixing. This crusher began production in 1974, one year after another business, Ridgemount Quarries in Fort Erie, was acquired.

Under the leadership of Norris and John, the company steadily expanded and diversified. With a strong background in quarry operations and crushed stone production, innovating and expanding into road construction and resurfacing was a natural next step. In 1974, combining the names Norris and John, Norjohn Limited was formed and has since been active in building highways, secondary roads, plaza parking lots, and airport landing strips. To this day, Norjohn Limited continues to research and develop advanced emulsions for road construction and resurfacing purposes that provide superior durability. Results of this research have been instrumental in positioning Norjohn as a leader in this highly specialized field.

The Canadian climate limits asphalt emulsion research to between March and October each year, so the company began to explore other emulsion chemistries that would provide a good mainstay for this production facility year round. Norjohn Limited (Emulsions Division) was established in 1983 and soon became a leader in the area of industrial emulsions of wax, gypsum, wood, paper, and more. At a point it became clear that Norjohn Limited was performing two distinct functions and so while the emulsions business retained the original Norjohn Limited name, Norjohn Contracting and Paving Limited was created in late 2006 to better reflect the distinct business it provided in road building and construction. These two companies continue to work closely to the present day however Norjohn Limited has also branched out to provide unique emulsion products and services to companies in the United States as well as overseas.

In the early 1970s, John Walker formed a partnership to create Willinger Systems, a new Walker venture specializing in the transport, containment and disposal of liquid and hazardous wastes. In 1978, John fully acquired it and the company became Woodington Systems, named for the street on which he lived. Woodington continued to handle the safe and orderly disposal of liquid and hazardous wastes by arranging containment and transportation to registered sites qualified under the Ministry of Environment. Woodington ultimately grew to support Niagara Waste Systems, established a few years later.

Due to urban pressures, Walker Brothers Quarries moved to provide a secure and convenient solution to the critical issue of waste disposal. Niagara Waste Systems was introduced as a purposeful use for worked-out areas of the quarry and subsequently developed into a complex and tightly controlled landfill operation in 1982.

By the early 1990s, Walker Environmental Services was the umbrella under which Woodington Systems, Norjohn Transfer Systems, Walker Laboratories and Niagara Waste Systems operated. Walker Properties and Strategic Alliances encompassed Integrated Municipal Services, Walker Community Development Corporation and the Maitland Group. In 2007, these divisions joined forces and began operating under a merged Walker Environmental Group (WEG). WEG is a comprehensive environmental service provider in the areas of waste transfer, haulage and disposal and operates composting, biosolids, waste drop-off and soil depot facilities as



well as providing land development, site management and construction functions. The following companies are more recent affiliations with WEG and demonstrate unmatched diversity and synergy: Norjohn Business Park (an industrial complex located in Burlington, ON), Infrastructure and Development Management (IDM), Niagara Biosolids Corporation (NBC), Integrated Gas Recovery Services Inc. (IGRS), Glenridge Gas Utilization Inc. and PowerTrail Inc. (two electrical generation facilities).

By 1998, Walker Industries fully acquired the Duntroon Quarries and Edgar Pit, and a few years later, Severn Quarry, all in Simcoe County and began operating as Georgian Aggregates & Construction due to the road building and construction company that was part and parcel of that business. In 1999, Springcreek Aggregates was added to the holdings in Vineland, Ontario. In order to unify and fuse similar functions company-wide, Walker Aggregates Inc. was born in 2007 as the umbrella company for all of the Walker quarrying and northern road construction operations.

In 1999, Norris and John Walker hired Walker Industries' first non-family-member President, Bill Costello, whose role expanded to president and CEO in 2001. In 2005, Norris and John Walker retired, leaving Walker Industries to the fifth generation of the Walker family, consisting of Geordie, Dave, Ian, Jennifer, Wendy, Liz and Sheila. After Bill Costello's retirement in 2007, John Fisher became president and CEO of Walker Industries rising from his former position with the company as Vice-President Environmental.

From a modest, single cut stone quarry to today's modern, diversified enterprise, Walker Industries remains a company that is firmly rooted in its dedication to its employees, suppliers and customers, and its commitment to the community, environment and tomorrow's generations. With that in mind, Walker Industries continues to look for innovative solutions for its customers and communities and will carry on meeting challenges, confidently changing with the times and keeping pace with future demands.