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CARRIER: HISTORICAL ANECDOTES

We may have grown accustomed to cool, comfortable air in our homes, cars, offices, shopping malls, public transportation and movie theaters, but the air conditioning industry continues to solve perplexing problems with comfort in much the same way Willis H. Carrier did when he introduced the first modern air conditioning system in 1902. Today, the air conditioning industry continues to improve human comfort.

Early Development

When Willis Carrier was a child he had trouble understanding the concept of fractions — until his mother sat him down at the kitchen table in their farmhouse in western New York and cut an apple into halves, then quarters, then eighths. From then on, Carrier said, he worked on any complex problem the same way, by reducing it to its simplest form and then solving its component problems one by one.

Dr. Willis Carrier is credited with submitting the design for the first mechanical air conditioning system on July 17, 1902. The first modern air conditioning system was installed at a Brooklyn, N.Y. printing plant in the summer of 1902, to help stabilize the temperature and moisture in the air so that the dimensions of the paper would remain constant and the different color inks would line up correctly. Since then, the technology has changed our lives in both dramatic and subtle ways.

Dr. Carrier unveiled the first centrifugal chiller on May 22, 1922. This significant development made available indoor climate control for human comfort, freeing business from the limits imposed by summer heat and humidity. For example, large buildings no longer required center courtyards and open windows for cross-ventilation during heat waves. Central refrigeration and air distribution systems made large, permanently enclosed work spaces cool enough to be productive. Even high-rise glass structures in direct sunlight could be kept comfortable inside. The results are evident in cities such as Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, Singapore and Sao Paolo.

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Prestigious Carrier air conditioning installations include the U.S. Capitol, the White House, the Kremlin, China's Great Hall of the People, the Sistine Chapel, the Sears Tower, presidential palaces the world over and the world's largest airport, being built in Hong Kong.

Among the first to take advantage of the new centrifugal machines were candy makers William F. Schrafft of Boston and Whitman & Sons of Philadelphia. The new technology allowed them to cool both the candy manufacturing process and factory floor workers.

Movie Industry

It's safe to say there'd be no summer "blockbuster" without the advent of air conditioning, as movie theaters were the next to realize the benefits of air conditioning to their industry. By promising "air conditioned comfort," production studios and theater owners were able to improve summertime box office receipts. The first theater in the world to provide air conditioning was Grauman's Metropolitan in Los Angeles.

The biggest opportunity to make a public impact came Memorial Day weekend, 1925, at the Rivoli Theater in New York's Time Square, where Paramount Pictures chief Adolph Zukor was among the viewers that evening. After a somewhat slow start, the system performed flawlessly and Zukor remarked tersely, "Yes, the people are going to like it." For many years after, people sought relief from the summer heat by going to the movies.

Air conditioning also played a role in the development of "talkies," as Hollywood sound studios such as MGM could keep their doors closed, eliminating outside noise, while keeping actors cool and refreshed despite the intense heat of powerful Kliegl lights and the arid Southern California climate. Today, Carrier systems air condition the new DreamWorks SKG animation studio in Glendale, Calif.

Department Stores

The first application of air conditioning for department stores occurred at J. L. Hudson's in Detroit in 1924. There, store owners wanted to keep their popular "bargain basement" sale days going during the summer months, but the frantic pace of shopping in the heat caused many shoppers to faint. Soon the air conditioning system was expanded to serve the first three floors, and eventually the entire sales space.

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Macy's New York installed an air conditioning system in 1929, using it as a drawing card for patrons who wanted to shop in comfort. They even ran a tongue-in-cheek advertisement telling people they couldn't spend the night in the store.

Cooling For The Masses

More than 4 million visitors enjoyed the "Carrier Igloo of To morrow" at the 1939 New York World's Fair in cool, cleaned, moisture-controlled air. Cooling of many of the exhibits at the Fair was designed by Dr. Carrier himself.

In 1955, William J. Levitt, America's leading home builder at the time, and the virtual inventor of the suburbs, predicted that air conditioning would soon become a basic feature of American homes. In 1965, 10 percent of American homes were air conditioned, about three million. The U.S. Census Department reported recently that more than 75 percent of American homes are air conditioned, and there are some portions of the South in which 90 percent of homes have comfort cooling.

"Preservation Cooling"

In April, 1998, Carrier announced donation of two air conditioning systems to help preserve George Washington's Mount Vernon. The installation of a climate control system in one of the nation's most revered historic homes will enable its treasured collections to be preserved for future generations.

In 1996, Carrier created a one-of-a-kind refrigerated display case for the 500-year-old frozen, mummified remains of an Inca girl found on top of a 20,000-foot Peruvian volcano. Our engineers modified an existing product used to cool hotel and motel rooms and applied it to a sophisticated glass case that preserves the mummy at 0°F and 95 percent relative humidity, while still allowing her to be viewed by Peruvians wanting to see a fascinating part of their history.

In 1992, Pope John Paul II dedicated a Carrier air conditioning system at the Sistine Chapel to help preserve the restored frescoes of Michelangelo. The technology is well hidden so it doesn't detract from visitors' views of the artwork, while providing stable temperature and humidity for the frescoes. There were so many technical puzzles to solve, and the stakes were so high, it took longer to design and install the system than it took Michelangelo to paint the chapel's ceiling.

Other Notable Installations

Air conditioning systems made possible theme parks such as Disney World and EuroDisney.

The 1940s-50s saw air conditioning systems shrink in size, allowing the cooling of ocean liners, buses, railcars, automobiles and even a traveling display for Gargantua the gorilla that amazed audiences in the U.S. and Europe.

We take the fresh fruits and vegetables in our grocery store for granted, but if it weren't for transport temperature control, those fragile bananas would look a lot different than they do. Climate-controlled shipping containers allow banana shippers on shore to monitor and control the temperature of their perishables by satellite if they want to.

For more information on the history of Carrier, please visit the company's website at: www.carrier.com. Carrier Corporation is the world's largest manufacturer of heating, air conditioning and refrigeration systems and equipment. It is a subsidiary of United Technologies Corporation (NYSE:UTX), provider of a broad range of high-technology products and support services to the aerospace and building systems industries.

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