

and "Improve Darling's feed door, also loosen her patterns, she's cracking," suggestions all gently given and kindly taken. But when stoves are Estate A, B, or X, Y, Z, their qualities are merely business propositions.

**I**N 1905 the company decided to incorporate, in order to include the sons who had come and were coming into the business. Since they wanted a name which would not be exclusive, and because the company was popularly referred to as the Estate Company, because of the superior and popular stoves by that name, the company was incorporated December 31, 1905, under the name of The Estate Stove Company.

In the fall of 1886 the company's first gas ranges were put on the market. Gas was beginning to be available for domestic use throughout the country, and Lazard had been experimenting since 1883 with gas cooking appliances. Although exact dates are not available, it is generally recognized that Estate was one of the first three concerns to go into the gas range manufacturing business. Shortly thereafter Estate offered its first line of gas heating appliances.

We shall not attempt to outline in this narrative the development of all the various models of cooking and heating appliances through the years. Previous men-

tion has been made of Lazard Kahn's deep interest in the art of stove building, of his constant effort to devise improvements which would make for greater durability, greater economy of operation, greater convenience for the user. We shall mention just two of the products of his inventive genius because of their tremendous effect upon the success of the company.

On April 12, 1892, The Estate Stove Company was awarded a patent on a jointless ash box construction for Estate Oak Stoves. This was the fruition of lengthy study and experimentation designed to produce a stove with a base which would be permanently airtight. It was one thing, however, to work out the designs for the Patent Office, quite another thing to devise a practical method of building a jointless ash box as a commercial proposition. The practical problems presented were difficult ones, results from the early efforts were discouraging.

With perseverance, however, under Lazard's determined supervision Estate molders found a way to cast the patented jointless ash box, and in conjunction with it there was worked out a method of grinding the ash box door to a paper-tight fit. The jointless ash box of the Estate Oak may reasonably be said to be the cornerstone of Estate's success in the heating stove field. It was the big talking point in the Estate Oak line, was continued in the Estate Oak's successor, the Estate Hot Storm, and is today one of the important exclusive features of the Estate Heatrola.

Six years later, in the year 1898, the Estate Stove Company brought out an improvement in gas range oven design which was considered relatively as important as the jointless ash box in the heating stove line. This was the embodiment of another idea on which Lazard Kahn had worked long and hard. It was his idea that the products of combustion from the gas burner should be excluded from the bake oven, that baking should be done with heated fresh air. It seemed impractical to embody this construction in the old ranges of all-cast-iron construction, but, when in 1898 the first gas ranges with sheet-steel oven linings were placed on the market, the Estate ventilated oven, now known as the Estate Fresh-Air Oven, came into being. Today, as in 1898, Estate places major emphasis in all of its gas range selling talk on its fresh-air oven.

Progress in the development of new designs and continued growth and expansion of the company's business necessitated, of course, frequent additions to the plant. First additions were made in 1889 and 1890. Others followed at intervals of several years. A plat of the buildings in the superintendent's office shows major construction projects in the years 1913, 1914, 1917, 1919, 1920, 1921 and 1929. It was in 1929 that a large addition to the foundry was built and the foundry was completely re-equipped with modern, automatic molding machinery.

IT IS impossible for the historian to fix the exact date, or even an approximate one, at which the responsibility for the management of the company and the shaping of its policies passed from the older to the younger generation. Dave, eldest of the "boys," and senior also with respect to length of service with the company, became the natural leader in revamping and modernizing the company's sales plans and policies. He it was who first recognized that progress would be too slow if the company continued merely to build good stoves, to sell them to the dealer and to depend upon the word-of-mouth method to spread the fame of Estate stoves throughout wide areas.

It was due to Dave's insistence that the company established in 1910 an advertising department, whose function it was to devise and distribute materials designed to help dealers sell Estate stoves at retail. And he it was who, in 1921, convinced his father and uncles that the time had come for the company to apply the power of national advertising to the promotion of business on a nation-wide scale.

For several years the company had been running small-space ads in farm journals, but early in 1921 a contract was signed which called for the insertion of thirteen full pages in *The Saturday Evening Post*, to appear at regular four-week intervals. It is doubtful whether the three brothers who had brought the business up from its infancy approved in their hearts of a

single year's expenditure for advertising which was more than three times the original purchase price of the company, but with characteristic tolerance they yielded to the ideas of the up-and-coming younger generation.

Meanwhile, Bert, who had quickly dispelled any doubts which, because of his youth, his elders may have held as to his ability to head up the engineering department, was turning out new designs and refinements of old parts and products at a rate which fully kept pace with the new tempo set by Cousin Dave in the selling end of the business. Like his father, Bert was (and is) a dreamer, but a practical one. Sitting at meals, his food was likely to grow cold while he sketched on menu card or table cloth the outlines of a big new idea for a product or for new time-saving machinery.

Albert, Dave's younger brother, made his debut with the company in 1909, shortly after graduation from the engineering department of Cornell University. He devoted two years to "learning the business," then packed a grip and put in three years on the road before settling down to executive tasks in the home office.

In 1911, Bert's younger brother, Lucian, joined the organization. Lucian, however, did not come direct from the halls of learning as did his Cousin Albert. Satisfying a lust for adventure, he abandoned his studies in the University of Cincinnati and spent three

years in the great open spaces of the West. Within these three years he worked successively in a lumber mill in the state of Washington, in silver and lead mines in Utah, in a gold mine in California. Conditioned as he was to the rugged life of the West, it seems quite fitting that Lucian's first assignment with the company was a road job in the wild and woolly State of Texas.

Thus, two pairs of brothers, representing the two older members of the original Kahn brothers triumvirate, became established in the business. But there was one more to come, to complete the quintet of brothers and cousins who now preside as officers and directors of The Estate Stove Company. In 1921, Sam's only son, Myron ("Mike," to us) appeared on the scene, after graduation from Harvard followed by a year of post-graduate work in the Harvard School of Business Administration. Three years on the road, first in Ohio, then in New York state, followed by training in the credit department, then at a sales correspondence desk, was Myron's preparation for the responsible job of sales manager which he holds today.

Myron came into the business when his father died suddenly in 1921. Sam was the youngest of the three brothers, only sixty-two at the time of his death, and those who knew him best felt that his health had been undermined by the tremendous energy which he poured into his work at the factory. Felix was still

president of the company, and was actively concerned with its activities until the time of his death in 1924. He was seventy-six at the time of his passing, had been at his desk only a week before he died. Lazard's death in 1928, at the age of seventy-seven, marked the passing of the last of the older generation. The passing of these three men was mourned, not only by their families and associates, but by great numbers of their employees who valued them as personal friends, counselors and benefactors.

We have already mentioned the year 1921 as the time when the company boldly stepped forth and appropriated a large sum of money for its first venture in the field of national advertising. 1921, it will be recalled, was a year of mild business depression, but for The Estate Stove Company it was a successful year and the beginning of a new epoch in the company's history. It was in that year that Estate brought out the Heatrola—a brand-new type of heating appliance, which quickly, as predicted in the company's advertising, "changed the heating habits of the nation." It was in that year that the company deliberately reached out for new markets, added greatly to its traveling sales force, and proceeded to establish nation-wide distribution for its products.

The Estate Stove Company has broadened its distribution of other products, so that today not only Heatrolas, but Estate Gas Ranges and Estate Electric

Ranges, are nationally distributed, nationally known. The company which began so modestly in its little foundry on the banks of the Ohio River, with its offering of cast-iron cooking utensils and stove repair parts, is today one of the country's big manufacturing concerns, with a plant covering twelve acres, the most modern mass-production methods, a nation-wide sales organization, and a line of products which includes cooking and heating appliances for coal, wood, gas and oil, plus a complete line of electric ranges.

**W**ITH all this expansion, The Estate Stove Company is still a family—a happy family—affair. Unlike so many corporations of today, there is no absentee ownership. Except for a brief interlude during the World War when three of the boys were in military service—Bert as a lieutenant in the Engineering Corps, Albert in the Motor Transportation Corps, Lucian as a Captain of Infantry—all five of the present officers of the company have given undivided time and attention to their jobs since the time they entered the company's employ.

As president and general manager, Dave gets from his associates the respect and deference which are his due. While still young in years (fifty-nine, as this sketch is written), he has had four decades of experience in the business. He is noted for his ability to think fast and make quick decisions.



LUCIAN L. KAHN  
Treasurer



MYRON D. KAHN  
Secretary

OFFICERS OF  
THE ESTATE STOVE COMPANY  
1937



DAVID F. KAHN  
President



BERTRAND B. KAHN  
First Vice-President



ALBERT M. KAHN  
Vice-President

Of course, he is well known and liked throughout the stove industry, and his judgment and help in the handling of industry problems have been eagerly sought. He has been president of the Western Central Association of Stove Manufacturers, chairman of the Manufacturers' Section of the American Gas Association and a member of the National Advertising Committee. As one of the trustees of the Cooking and Heating Appliance Manufacturing Industry, he ably presented and defended the industry's code, in the days when N. R. A. codes were being formed, before the administration authorities in Washington.

Bert is first vice-president and is in complete charge of product engineering and factory management. His personal contributions to the company include the conception and designing of the world's first cabinet heater—the Estate Heatrola—and the world's first table-top gas range, in addition to the invention of mechanical features too numerous even to mention in this sketch. It is said of Bert, and is probably true, that he can personally operate every machine and other piece of equipment in the factory. His contact with the shop organization is a close one, and it naturally falls to him to handle all labor relations on behalf of the company. Outside of his own company, he is first vice-president of the Manufacturers' Protective and Development Association, an association of stove manufacturers which negotiates with the Iron Mold-

ers' Union, and for many years he has been one of the conferees in the annual conference of these two groups. For fifteen years he has been an active and valued member of the General Requirements Committee of the American Gas Association and a member of the sub-committee on gas ranges.

Albert's official title is vice-president. If higher sounding titles were used, it would be vice-president in charge of production. Supervising the production program is a man's-size job in itself, but Albert finds time for numerous other executive functions. He has been the chief sponsor of the company's electric range development program, and in this connection has been active in the range section of the National Electrical Manufacturers' Association.

Lucian is treasurer of the company, an important position but one in which he chooses to delegate much of his authority. Scorning the easy comfort of a desk chair, Lucian travels extensively, contacting important accounts. He enjoys what is probably the largest first-name acquaintance with dealers and utility people of any stove man in the country. Like the others, his services are in demand and he has been generous in extending them to industry problems. At the present writing, he is president of the Central Association of Stove Manufacturers and a member of the Domestic Range Committee of the American Gas Association.

Myron, youngest of the brothers and cousins, is officially secretary of the company, but his job is the important post of general sales manager. A keen student of modern sales and merchandising methods, he gives skillful direction to the efforts of a force of some forty traveling representatives who cover the length and breadth of the United States. Myron is not the dynamic, go-getting type of sales manager; he is, in fact, quite the antithesis. He wins the respect and affection of the sales force and gets their best efforts by a sound and sympathetic understanding of each man's problems, by giving them credit for intelligence and ability, for being able to plan their work effectively without constant home-office supervision.

**P**ERHAPS the finest tribute to the character of the five men who direct the affairs of The Estate Stove Company is the exceptionally small percentage of turnover among the key men in the office and shop as well as in the traveling sales force. We have already mentioned Hal Stokes, Frank Draper and Clark Knox—three veteran “drummers” who have been on the job forty-two, thirty-one and twenty-eight years respectively, and Dave Black, who for thirty-one years, has been general superintendent of the factory. Walter Rowe, merchandising and advertising manager, has just rounded out a quarter

century of service. Bill Schroeder, credit manager, has been putting his "O. K." or "N. G." on orders for approximately the same length of time. In July of this year, the company gave a testimonial dinner — and gold watches—to ten shop employees, each of whom has been with the company for fifty or more years. Many other men will soon be eligible for membership in Estate's 50-Year Club.

SIX YEARS from now, The Estate Stove Company will have occasion to observe the centennial of its founding. If the record of the past is a fair measure of what may be expected in the future, it would seem that the company will have, in 1942, good cause to hold a rousing celebration.