



120 YEAR

ANNIVERSARY

*Hardware Reimagined™*

EST. 1901

120 YEARS OF HARDWARE REIMAGINED



To Our Customers,

National Hardware turns 120 this year, so why is this a milestone we should all celebrate?

National Hardware's history isn't just about hinges and hooks, hasps and hangers, it is about the first-hand experience we have had in our nation's rich history.

Through it all we've supported some of the biggest ideas in US history:

- Pioneering accessible hardware for suburban dwellers and fostering the DIY-er.
- Developing construction materials for new cityscapes during our nation's rapid expansion.
- Shifting production for what our country needed most in World Wars I and II.
- Raising the stakes in employment by hiring women in 1905 and never laying off an employee during the Great Depression.
- And paving the way for progressive solutions to protect the ever-changing world around us.

Great products are the result of great doers, builders and adventurers and we endeavor to make our products worthy of the projects you accomplish. While the next 120 years won't look like the last, National Hardware will be there to help you make your mark along the way.

120 Years of Hardware Reimagined.

Sincerely,

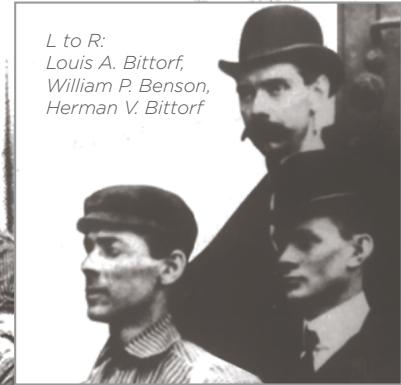
***The National Hardware Team***



# 1901

## REIMAGINE HARDWARE

One autumn day, three men purchase a two-story wagon factory. Within a few months, the men quickly begin manufacturing hardware and National Manufacturing Co., is born on October 12, 1901 in Sterling, Illinois.



*L to R:  
Louis A. Bittorf,  
William P. Benson,  
Herman V. Bittorf*





# 1905

## REIMAGINE OPPORTUNITY

Mary Bittorf, joins the company in 1905 and becomes one of the first women in manufacturing. For nearly six decades, Mary is the head of the women's department and National Manufacturing becomes pioneers for the workforce for women.



# 1907

## REIMAGINE CONSTRUCTION

National Manufacturing expands into a second building. While barn door hardware is a top seller, National Manufacturing works hard to create simple solutions for city-life and professional builders and introduces readily available metal shapes and angles.



*The white cottage is the office. Towering behind it is National's 1907 factory addition.*



*The Gasworks and the Empire Building. The shipping boxes in the box car read, "Big 4."*



*The*  
*Improved*  
**"Big 4"**  
*Hanger*

*See those humps?*

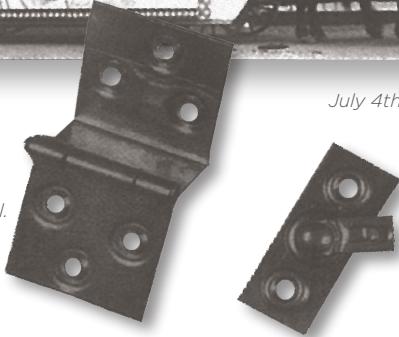
**ALREADY** the leader of barn-door hangers, we have still further improved this one by corrugating the steel hood, by giving it a couple of stiffening crimps.

*The Big 4: Unlike other flexible hangers, The Big 4 didn't vibrate. The offset hinge strap made the door hang still, yet allowed the door to be lifted outward. The hook at the bottom of the bonnet kept the wheel from jumping the track.*



*July 4th 1916, National's 'First Place' Float.*

*Hinge  
and  
Swivel.*



# 1929

## REIMAGINE FAMILY

The Great Depression rocks the nation as businesses struggle to stay open. National Manufacturing founders take pay cuts, reduce hours and find non-production tasks for employees to avoid any layoffs. Employees later recalled that some parts of the plant received several coats of paint.



# 1916

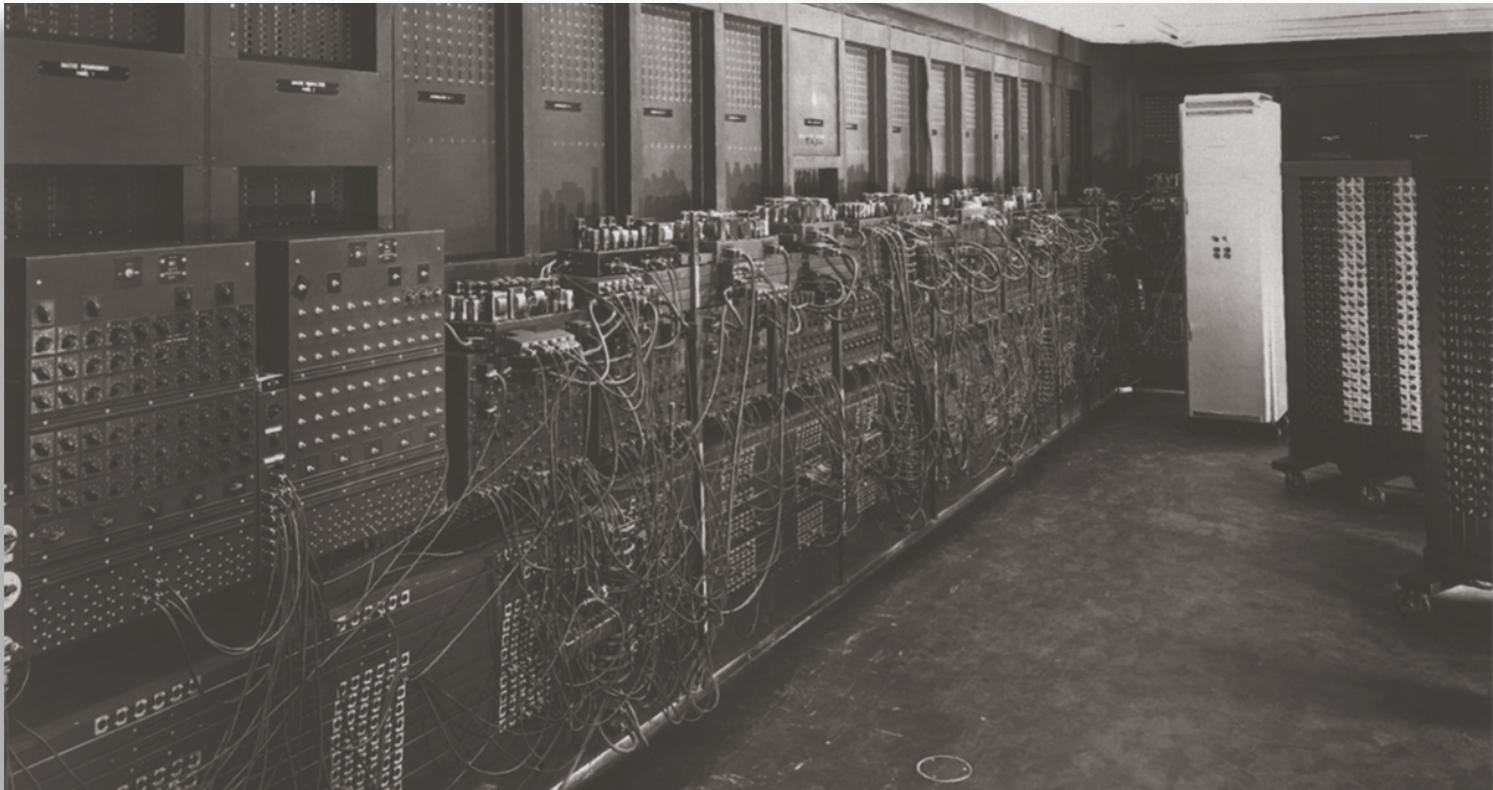
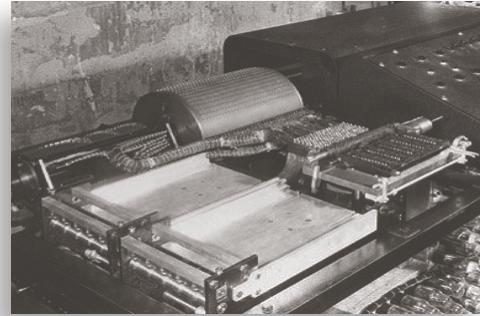
## REIMAGINE SUPPORT

National Manufacturing receives a commendation from the War Department for production of ammunition box hardware during World War I.

# 1941

## REIMAGINE TECHNOLOGY

National Manufacturing becomes the first company in the Twin Cities to install IBM equipment.



# Home planning should be geared to the needs of the future

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

It is with this in mind that we have designed and manufactured over 300 different products for our line of Builders' Hardware.

We have taken into account the need for hardware that will harmonize with the architectural theme of the home of today, the importance of installation and operational simplicity.

National hardware embodies many exclusive features that help promote long, uninterrupted, smooth performance even under strenuous daily use.



NATIONAL MANUFACTURING COMPANY . . . STERLING, ILLINOIS

1955, National Manufacturing Ad: "Home planning should be geared to the needs of the future."

# 1955

## REIMAGINE INNOVATION

National Manufacturing helps develop the do-it-yourself market and implements Psion Technology to increase speed and order accuracy. This large advancement in merchandising causes sales to skyrocket in post-war marketplace.

# National

MANUFACTURING COMPANY

1955: National's new letterhead, new energy.

# 1956

## REIMAGINE MARKETING

On October 12, 1956, its 55th Anniversary, National Manufacturing introduces visual packaging and View Pac panel display assortments quickly follow. These new systems of self-merchandising are still used today by many competitors.

Introducing the new **VISUAL PACK**  
for *National Builders' Hardware*



**You can see at a glance  
the actual hardware with  
all component parts!**

This modern method of packing our hardware makes it easier to shop—just make your selection and note how fresh and clean the merchandise is delivered into your hands. The style, the finish and even every screw required for the hardware installation is clearly in view.

No. 679 Cabinet Knob  
No. 442 Cabinet Hinge

*October 1956: On it's 55th anniversary  
National introduces new Visual Pack.*



*1956: At the urging of traffic manager Joe Conneely, National becomes the first hardware manufacturer to switch from wood to cardboard boxes. Shown from L to R: Hugo Weyrauch, Joe Conneely, and George Behrens.*



*View Pac Panel Display Assortments.*



*National at the National Hardware Show in Chicago.*

# 1987

## REIMAGINE TEAMWORK

With over 800 employees and two new plants, National Manufacturing pioneers the two-prong sales approach for the industry. A field sales team for the co-operatives and national account team for the warehouse.



*1987 Ad: The industries largest and best sales force.*



*National's First Million Dollar Sales Day.*

# 1994

## REIMAGINE TERRITORIES

National Manufacturing becomes one of the first US builder's hardware companies to expand globally with a new sales force in Canada and Latin America. National Manufacturing also diversifies at home, adding a new line of decorative exterior hardware called Exterior Visions.



*National is also international, with hardware divisions in Canada and Mexico.*





# 2015

IT'S THE *Little Things*™

## REIMAGINE STYLE

As a nod to the first product, the "Big 4", National Hardware launched an interior line of barn door hardware. As an expert in barn doors, National Hardware was one of the first to introduce a complete line of interior door hardware applications that merged function and style for the do-it-yourself consumer.



*National launches a line of decorative interior barn door hardware.*



# 2021

## HARDWARE REIMAGINED

While the last 120 years, won't look like the next, National Hardware will be there to help you make your mark along the way. From smaller changes and repairs, to large transformations and expansions, National Hardware celebrates 120 years of Hardware Reimagined™.



*National inspires DIY-ers.  
#ItsTheLittleThings*



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[www.national-hardware.com/120](http://www.national-hardware.com/120)