

## **A Short History**

We are proud of our history and believe that with our current employees we continue to build on the integrity, the determination and the creativity of the people who began this company.

Our company stands in the unique position of being able to trace its roots to one of the most devastating historical events the world has ever witnessed. The Berger family begins its history in pre World War II Transylvania. Bob Berger's grandfather was a specialist in the dyeing of cloth, his son, Charles, was trained in agriculture.

As war approached, the family too clearly knew that in order to survive they would need to find their way to Palestine. There the elder Mr. Berger published a Hungarian newspaper, while his son, Charles, served as an RAF gunner during the war and later in the Israeli army.

After the war, Charles did what so many men and women did; he decided to begin his life anew in another country. He chose Canada. On arriving in Vancouver he found employment as a dock worker. His story is one that demonstrates how hope and determination can lead to success.

After some hard time, he found work as a weaver for West Coast Woollen Mills. Because Charles was fluent in no less than seven languages, his ability to adjust to new circumstances was unparalleled. While working as a weaver, he studied to become a weaving engineer through correspondence courses. This opened new opportunities for him as a sales agent in central and eastern Canada.

When his father later came to Canada, the two men opened their own business in Montreal by importing fabrics from Italy. In time, they saw they had the expertise, and the creativity to open their own weaving mill.

They began in a small space in the east end of Montreal with few employees, but employees who believed in the vision both Mr. Berger's carried. On their own, and with employees who were willing to dedicate themselves to the company, MW Canada began its history -- a history that continues to be based on the long and dedicated service of its employees; a proud history indeed.

In 1974, the plant here in Cambridge was purchased and then in 1977, when political conditions in Quebec made running a textile plant difficult, Charles Berger transferred his operations entirely to Cambridge. Remarkably, many of the people from the Montreal plant chose to make the dramatic shift and move with Mr. Berger. Here, they joined with the people of Cambridge to make this an astoundingly innovative and skilled work environment.

Charles Berger continued to provide this company with the inspiration that came from

his indomitable spirit until his death in 1997.

Charles had prepared his son well for the business. While Bob never imagined that he would someday be holding the mantle, his training began early. As a teenager all of his holidays were spent working in the plant. He learned every corner of the business doing whatever his father, grandfather, or his father's managers assigned. In later years he became a yarn buyer and then a salesman for many of the territories.

Eventually Bob knew that if he was going to make a sound contribution to the business he needed more formal training. Bob graduated from the University of Philadelphia with a Bachelor of Science degree in Textiles Engineering in 1976. He worked alongside his father for 20 years, learning the business and developing values that he holds sacred.

Included in these are: always apologize when you're wrong, build relationships with everyone, be humble, be a creative thinker, look after the business carefully and always be respectful.

These values continue to frame Bob's commitment to the people at Montreal Woollens.