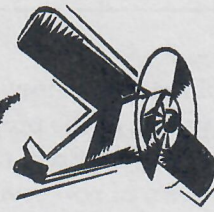


The Sidwell Flyers



Volume 3, Issue 1

Spring 1997

Looking Back: 70 Years in the Mapping Biz

This year Sidwell celebrates its 70th anniversary, and much has changed since the company's inception. When Joe Sidwell began his mapping company back in 1927, Calvin Coolidge was president, the country was in the midst of the Prohibition era, and Du Page County was more than half way through a decade in which its population more than doubled—growing from 42,120 residents in 1920 to 91,998 in 1930.

Although Sidwell's core business has focused on mapping over the years since the company was established, production techniques and markets have certainly changed. In its early years the company made maps in connection with real estate

development, and maintained county atlases and village maps. The company continued to grow and expand its product offerings, pioneering the field of legal descriptive atlases.

Former company President Bill Barg, who started working at the company as a youth in the 1940s after he was hired to work with the blueprint machine (and to help with Joe Sidwell's "Victory Garden!"), remembers the days when the company operated out of the Green Valley School in Lombard. The school's gymnasium, he recalls, served as a place to dry blue prints. Louis Coulombe, another retired long-time employee who began at Sidwell in the 1940s, also remembers when the company performed work in the school. "We had four great big classrooms and four employees—that gave everybody an office!"

Later, the company facilities were moved to the Prince Crossing site in West Chicago, where, Bill recalls, the rent was \$50 a month! In those days, when businesses in the area were few and far between, Louis recalls that the company served as a welcoming stop for customers,

and that staff looked forward to customers coming in for visits. "This was a very, very rural area, and of course, we didn't really need the ability for people to get to our office; almost everything was done by mail or by phone," he says. But, he adds, the company provided "a place to stop and get a cup of coffee!"

Between 1947 and 1955, Sidwell grew steadily, becoming firmly established as a leading legal descriptive map making company. Thirty years after the company's founding, it was selected to implement a mapping and parcel numbering system for Cook County—a project which to this

(Continued on page 2)



Kite Day 1997 A Success!

The weather cooperated and a good time was had by participants and spectators alike! Among those in attendance: Don, Jim and John Dieckmann, Russ and Sam(antha) Donovan, Betsy, Karly and Kaity Romine, Mark and Elissa Dupree, Joy Gustafson, Tracy Engel and Carol Miller. Thanks to event organizers Tracy and Carol for their efforts. We're looking forward to the next event!

Milestones



Milestones has no significant service anniversaries to report for this issue—however, congratulations and best wishes are still in order to all employees celebrating anniversaries in other increments of time!

Welcome, New Employees!

The most recent additions to our Sidwell staff include Anne Berry and Raj Chavda (GIS-M), Jennifer Graham (Compilation II) and a special welcome to returning employee Steve Lingenfelter (Compilation I). Glad to have you all here!

(Continued from page 1)

date is still the largest the company has ever performed. "That made this place!" says Bill, of the project, which encompassed preparation of nearly 8,000 maps and a parcel numbering system covering approximately 1.3 million parcels of real estate. Gearing up to carry out the work "at least quadrupled the staff," he recalls.

In 1960, Sidwell acquired the equipment and personnel necessary to enter the aerial survey field, and moved to the company's current location. By 1966, the company obtained a stereoplotter and has since completed more than 2,000 topographic mapping projects. In 1982 Sidwell invested in a computer-aided design/drafting system, marking the company's entry into the world of automated mapping and, subsequently, GIS. Recent years have witnessed entrance into the field of digital orthophoto mapping and the development of new mapping applications, such as for 9-1-1 dispatching.

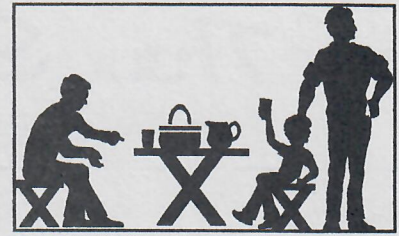
Bill attributes the company's success over the years to the ability of its leadership to survey available technologies and apply them to the business to become more efficient, modern and competitive. "We had the people within the organization who could look at a technological advance—in the area of film or diazo printing or whatever it was—and say, 'Hey that's great; we can do that; and then we'll have a better product to offer, [or] service, and probably for less money.'"

Says Louis of the company's ability to sustain success, "I would credit it to two things: First of all, I and all the people I knew and worked with had a very deep commitment to do a good job. The other thing was that as problems would come up we would solve problems, but we would also develop new and better ways to do things. For instance," he explains, "[Originally] photographs were uncorrected; it might not sound bad, but if you had to work with them you'd know that this photo didn't fit that photo and things just didn't connect. We found ways to correct the shape and the size so they were much more realistic. And then, of course, when you could build that accuracy in, that made the mapping easier; all of a sudden things started to come together that wouldn't come together before."

In addition to maintaining technical competence, Louis sites as key in the company's evolution its responding to the advent of the digital age by adapting map products to conform with new technology. "We had to tie the mapping in with the new computer systems," he says, adding that although by virtue of having "grown up" in the business he expected such changes to occur, "You see it being done and you say, 'Never in my wildest dreams! I wander through here now and see some of the things that are being done and it just amazes me!'"

But one thing seems to sum up Louis' experience at Sidwell. In looking back over his years at the company, he says with fondness, "This was a nice place to work."

"We had four great big classrooms and four employees — that gave everybody an office!"



Plans Underway for Sidwell's 1997 Picnic

Mark your calendars—the date has been set! Sidwell's 1997 Company Picnic is scheduled for Saturday, September 6, 1997. This year's picnic feast will again be catered by All-American Picnics, and will include hot dogs, hamburger, brats and many other goodies.

Stay tuned for further information regarding times and activities for this fun-filled annual event!

So you think you're computer illiterate? Check out the following excerpts from a *Wall Street Journal* article by Jim Carlton:

Compaq is considering changing the command "Press Any Key" to "Press Return Key" because of the flood of calls asking where the "Any" key is.

An AST customer was asked to send a copy of her defective computer diskettes. A few days later, a letter arrived from the customer, along with photocopies of the diskettes in question.

A Dell customer called to say he couldn't get his computer to fax anything. After 40 minutes of trouble-shooting, the technician discovered the man was trying to fax a piece of paper by holding it in front of the computer monitor screen and hitting the "send" key.



Did you know...

Of our current complement of 84 employees, that 71 are right-handed, 8 are left-handed, and 5 are ambidextrous?