

# The History of MidwayUSA Part 3

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #93 —

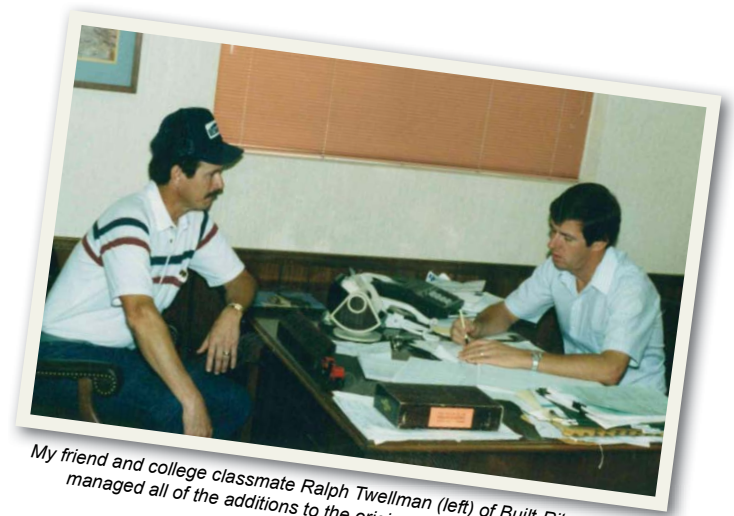
It was an interesting year of transition – 1985, as we had just closed the gun shop. The phones rang, the mail came, we processed the orders and the little brown truck (UPS) took the packages away each day. It was a much easier business to run, but we missed the walk-in Customers. As the year began, our principle product was Starline handgun brass – ten different calibers, bearing the Midway name; but then our first shipment of Winchester rifle brass arrived in mid-January. We didn't have a loading dock, so we unloaded the truck by hand, one cardboard drum at a time, and carried them through the front door.



*This is the final configuration of our first building at 7450 Old Highway 40 West. The original 1,536 square feet had been expanded to 10,000 square feet. The original front door is under the awning.*

The Winchester deal was a game changer; imagine a small company, that didn't even have an account with Winchester until the previous July, being 'first-to-market' with Winchester bulk-packed rifle brass. It had never before been offered and our Customers loved it. Remington, not to be left out of this new market, began selling us bulk brass in 1987. Lee Precision was our first major reloading product line, also in 1987. Midway was running full-page ads in Shotgun News and was beginning to look a lot bigger than we actually were.

Harold Volkmer was our local U.S. Representative and James McClure was a U.S. Senator from Idaho. Together, with encouragement from the NRA, they sponsored what became known as the Volkmer/McClure act, passed in 1986. This new law amended the 1968 Gun Control Act,



*My friend and college classmate Ralph Twellman (left) of Built-Rite Buildings, managed all of the additions to the original building on U.S. Highway 40.*

allowing consumers to buy cartridge cases and bullets for reloading – by mail order, without the need for a Federal Firearms License. We also began to sell directly to the end user, and the orders really picked up.

Computerization of Order Processing was our first real step into the computer world. In January of 1987 we started processing our invoices via the computer and began networking multiple computers together in March. This was a giant, giant step.

**"...a game changer..."**

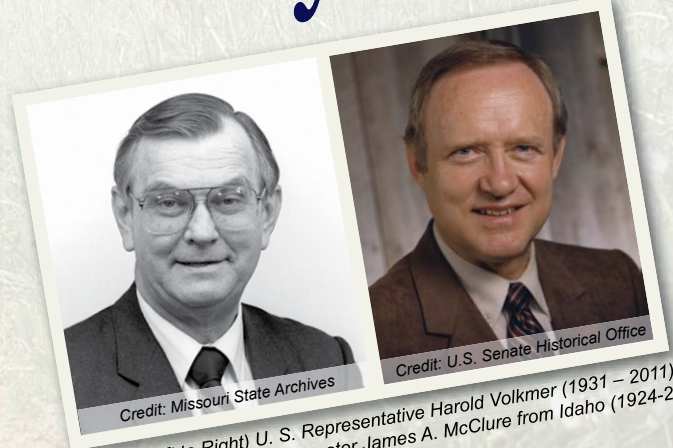
We almost always had a building project going on – more space for storing inventory, taking orders and preparing shipments. In the end, our one acre lot was completely consumed by parking lot and the 10,000 sq. ft. building.

In December, 1988, our new 30,000 square foot building on Van Horn Tavern Road was completed, and we moved just over a mile to our new campus. Many important events had driven our growth, since closing the retail store just four years earlier.



Larry Potterfield

7450 Old Highway 40 West  
Columbia, MO  
December 31, 1988



*Credit: Missouri State Archives*

*Credit: U.S. Senate Historical Office*

*(Left to Right) U. S. Representative Harold Volkmer (1931 – 2011) and U.S. Senator James A. McClure from Idaho (1924-2011).*