

## C.J. LANGENFELDER & SON, INC.

Conrad John Langenfelder was born about 1877. He grew up on a farm and became a farmer in Baltimore County. To get more income he rented out horses and wagons. In the early 1900s he started buying trucks and then he rented them. This business grew very fast. He then started buying heavy equipment and began getting contracts.

Son George was born in 1904. George went to work in his father's business around 1920. In 1925 they started work at Sparrows Point. They used a lot of shovels and trucks. Back then there were no big loaders. Whatever Beth Steel needed, C.J.L. supplied it.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, they did a lot of work for the government, such as building runways and taxiways at Andrew Air Force Base and the air field at Aberdeen Proving Ground. During and after the war there was a shortage of coal. In the 1960s they bought two Lima 2400B and got into strip mining in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. They did manganese mining for the government.

C.J. retired in 1945 but was still active until his death in 1948. George took over, J.W. Ruth and Gilbert Nolte were taken in 1945 as partners and the company was incorporated in 1946.

They bought a DC3 airplane which they used to fly to the many jobs around the world. In 1957 George took a group of people to the Kentucky Derby. When they got back there was a bad rainstorm, when the plane landed at Harbor Field it aquaplaned into Colgate Creek. No one was injured but they did get wet. The plane was totaled. Later they bought a newer plane and move it to Martin's airport.

C.J.L. did many jobs including road jobs, dams, military bases railroads and they dug tunnels in Penna, CA and WV. They did a lot of work on a big damn job in Pakistan. One job C.J.L. did was Dulles Airport. They cleared the land and put in two long runways. They took over a stone quarry and crushed the stone for the runways. There were a lot of local 37 men on this job. C.J.L.'s plane was first to land there.

C.J.L. had a contract with Walt Disney to do the excavation work at Disney World in Florida. Walt requested only new equipment be used on his property. C.J.L. complied and the work was completed in 1961.

By 1970 they were among the largest heavy equipment contractors in the world. They had 19 project managers, 28 supervisors and an engineering staff of 19 people.

They had 350 cranes, dozers and loaders. Along with this they had 418 trucks. C.J.L. had a marine division with 6 large suction dredges and many barges, tug boats and several crew boats. They had all kinds of construction equipment along with 2 locomotives and a F27 airplane.

George passed away in November 1974. After that, the company became very conservative in their bidding for jobs. It seemed they were satisfied with the money they were making at Beth Steel & U.S. Steel. Lawyers were running the business. I think George's heirs were ready to sell out. They were 3<sup>rd</sup> generation family and were not interested in growing the company. This once-great company sold most of the business and properties in 2001. They had employed thousands of people and as far as I know they always used union people. They had several subsidiary companies that did not work union. C.J.L. still maintains offices in White Marsh and Florida and operates mostly under the name Environmental Engineering.

## C.J.LANGENFELDER at Sparrows Point

C.J.L. started working at the Beth Steel plant in 1925. Most of the work at the plant was hour work up to the 1980s. For many years they were the largest employer of Local 37 people. In the late-1970s, C.J.L. started loading the wire barges with all Local 37 men. They also loaded and unloaded ships and barges at the Penwood pier. In the 1980s they started doing work by the ton. Richard McFadden, a C.J.L. superintendent was very active in getting this work. He always consulted older operators on how to do this work more efficiently. We were screening and blending iron ore, breaking iron with a 2400B with a 9 ton magnet and a 20 ton ball.

I think they made more money working tonnage then they made working by the hour.

In the early 1990s Beth Steel supplied over 40% of C.J.L. income.

In the mid-1990s the steelworkers wanted our jobs and C.J.L. rented equipment to them without a Local 37 operator. Every day when a steelworker brought a picker or a gradall back to the crane shop, I would check it over for damage. I wrote up a lot of work orders Beth Steel paid for the damage. Dink put 4 clutches in one gradall. The crawler cranes I checked often. They even tried to operate the 2400 handling 50 ton slabs. The abuse this crane took was unbelievable. I complained often to the equipment super. He was more concerned with the rent they were getting.

In the late 1990s the main shop began selling equipment. I think they were positioning for a sellout. I retired in July 1998. I am grateful for the steady employment and with the overtime I worked, my wife was able to stay home and raise our 2 kids. I have 8 grandkids and 3 great-grandkids. They are all doing very well.

I am really amazed how well the Local has grown and the improvements that were made in the last 20 years (without a steel mill).

Contributions to these stories: Clarence "Junior" Boston, Bill "Jake" Jakum, Howard "Dink" Garrett, Charles "Slick" McGee, and my lawyer, Kelly Albright Glaze.

P.S. Kelly is my granddaughter and edited these stories for me, pro bono.