

Highlights from our history...

The history of the E. B. Atmus Company is woven into the history of its home city of Springfield, Massachusetts—and also intertwined with some of the most important industrial innovations of the city—the country—the century.



First, a little about our home city...

Springfield is the largest city on the Connecticut River with a population of 153,060 as of the 2010 United States Census. However, the greater Springfield Metropolitan Area (which includes 3 counties and 48 towns) has an estimated population of 698,903.

Springfield has several nicknames — *The City of Firsts*, *The City of Homes*, (due to its often spectacular Victorian residential architecture), and *The Birthplace of Basketball*.

Springfielders produced many of America's "firsts," including the first American-English dictionary (1805, Merriam Webster); the first gasoline-powered car (1896, Duryea Brothers); the first successful motorcycle (1901, Indian Motorcycle); America's first commercial radio station (1921, WBZA); America's first UHF television station (1953, WWLP); and most famously, the world's 2nd most popular sport, basketball (1891, Dr. James Naismith.) To learn more about Springfield, visit the newly opened [Lyman & Merrie Wood Museum of Springfield History](#) as well as the [Basketball Hall of Fame](#).



The birth of E. B. Atmus Co.

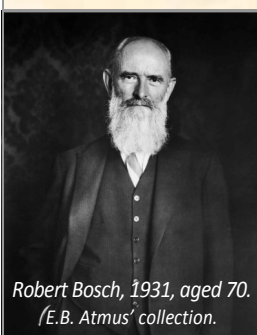
"I remember that my mother was in the hospital delivering my brother, Rudolf, when my father, **Emil Berthold Atmus**, told her he wanted to buy a business. This was in 1919." *Interview with Dorothy Atmus Mulvey, 2011.*

At that time, E. B. Atmus was working as a plant manager for American **Bosch** – later Bosch Automation. Bosch made a name early on in the up-and-coming automotive industry as an innovative manufacturer of high-voltage magnetos and spark plugs. In the 1950s, Bosch merged with Rexroth – a German company. Today the enterprise is known as [Bosch Rexroth](#) and is a manufacturer of products and systems associated with the control and motion of industrial and mobile equipment.



To this day, E. B. Atmus Co. still represents Bosch Rexroth products and counts it among its valued suppliers.

A little more about Bosch in Springfield...



Robert Bosch, the founder in 1886 of the Germany-based **Bosch Magneto Company**, built its Springfield plant in 1911. Early photographs of the factory interior show lab-coated machinists producing parts for the emerging automobile and truck industry.

By 1920 the plant employed 3,000 workers and turned out 50 percent of all of the electrical starter parts required by the U.S. vehicle industry. The outbreak of World War II led to the rapid expansion of the plant. In 1941 the U.S. Office of Production Management authorized Bosch officials to build a \$700,000 facility for aircraft magnetos. The Federal Defense Plant Corporation provided \$400,000 worth of new machine tools for the expansion.

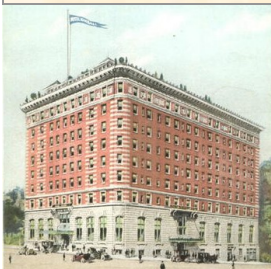


Learn more about Bosch in Springfield—as well as the overall decline of manufacturing in the city and region—check out Robert Forrant's book, *Metal Fatigue: American Bosch and the Demise of Metalworking in the Connecticut River Valley*. (Baywood Publishing, 2009). Reviewed in the [Valley Advocate](#) newspaper.

Here in Western Massachusetts the American Bosch building was a landmark and over 100 yrs old when, on December 17th, 2004, the building caught fire. More than 135 firefighters from thirteen communities fought the blaze but due to hydrant malfunction, structural deterioration, and other factors, there wasn't much they could do but watch it burn down.



Back to E. B. Atmus Co...

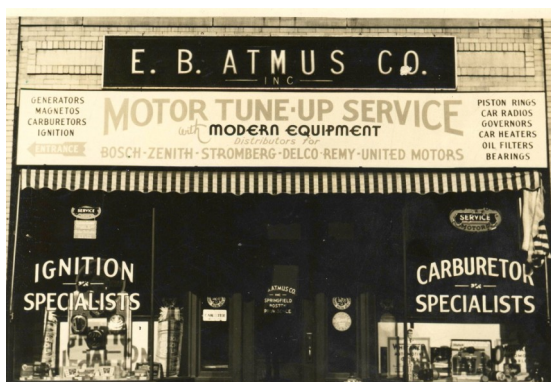


The business that E. B. Atmus bought in 1919 was called **Motor Parts Service** and it was located on the corner of Winter and Chestnut Streets in Springfield, across from the **Kimball Hotel**.

Built in what was the affluent residential neighborhood of Chestnut and Bridge Streets, the Kimball offered 309 rooms, a dining-room capacity for 450, a 22-foot-high banquet hall for 350 guests, and, in 1912, room rates from "\$1.50 to \$3.50 per day".

Between 1925-1927, soon after the name was changed to **E. B. Atmus Co.**, the fledgling enterprise moved to a new location on Chestnut Street across from the YMCA.

Despite the name change, the product line remained much the same: motor (car) parts, primarily sourced from **United Motors/GM/ACDelco** engine parts. For the most part, E.B. Atmus' customers were car dealers and gas stations/garages throughout New England. The company added branch offices in Boston, Providence and Hartford during this period as well as kiosks in various locations.



Delco and the start of the automotive era...



Delco Electronics Corporation was the automotive electronics design and manufacturing subsidiary of **General Motors** based in Kokomo, Indiana. The name Delco came from the Dayton Engineering Laboratories Co., founded in Dayton, Ohio by Charles Kettering and Edward A. Deeds in 1909.

Delco was responsible for several innovations in automobile electric systems, including the first reliable battery ignition system and, in 1911, the first useful **electric starter**, adapted from a cash register motor. The starters were first installed by Cadillac on production models in 1912.

Delco began producing the first dashboard-installed car radios in 1936. By the early 1970s, Delco had become a major supplier of automotive electronics equipment. Based in Kokomo, Indiana, Delco Electronics employed more than 30,000 at its peak. Although Delco Electronics no longer exists as an operating company, GM still retains rights to the Delco name and uses it for some of its subsidiaries including the ACDelco parts division.



E. B. Atmus Co. in the Great Depression and beyond...



Although E.B. Atmus struggled along with the rest of the country (and the world) during the 1930's, closing the branch offices and consolidating operations in Springfield, a steady demand for motor parts and service as people repaired their cars instead of replacing them with new ones kept them going at a time when many small businesses failed.

The World War II era, with the tremendous growth it brought to the manufacturing sector in Springfield, particularly at the Springfield Armory, was a successful one for E. B. Atmus. It was during this period that the company moved to a new location on Dwight Street where they would remain until the mid-1960s when they purchased and moved into their current location on Main Street.

A word or two about guns and Springfield...

During the 1770s, George Washington selected Springfield as the site of the National Armory. It produced the first American-made musket in 1795. By the 1780s the Arsenal was a major ammunition and weapons depot. The term Springfield Rifle may refer to any sort of arms produced by the Springfield Armory for the United States armed forces. Later, the M-1 rifle was invented in Springfield.



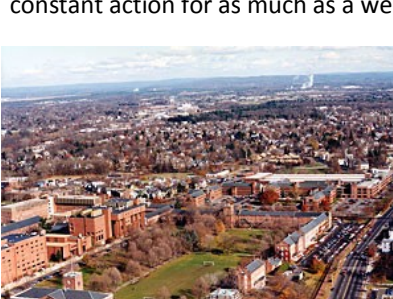
John Garand came to the Springfield Armory in 1919, where he strove to develop a semi-automatic rifle. Over the next five years many designs were submitted for the rifle, but none met the army's rigid specifications.

John Garand (left) demonstrating the M1 to military brass.

In 1924, a design was approved for further testing — the famous **M1**, or "**Garand rifle**" as it became known after the name of its inventor. The Army adopted the rifle in 1936, and production began in 1937, beginning the greatest production effort in the history of the Springfield Armory. During the entire production history of the M1 rifle, Springfield Armory produced over **4.5 million** of them.



The M1's accuracy and durability in battle earned it high praise. General Douglas MacArthur reported on the M1 to the Ordnance Department during heavy fighting on Bataan that: "Under combat conditions it operated with no mechanical defects and when used in foxholes did not undergo stoppages from dust or dirt. It has been in almost constant action for as much as a week without cleaning or lubrication."



Today the site of the Springfield Armory—which was closed in 1968 by President Nixon (in a highly controversial decision)—is both the main campus of [Springfield Technical Community College](#) and a [National Historic Site](#).

"For over two centuries the hilltop overlooking the Connecticut River had been the most important place for the development and manufacture of arms for the American soldier. The facility evolved from a place where skilled craftsmen built, piece by piece, one musket at a time, into a center pioneering mass-production techniques, and finally into an institute famous for its research and development." [Wikipedia—see entire article](#).

E. B. Atmus Co. up to the present...

After graduating from the **Stoneleigh School** in 1939, E. B.'s daughter, Dorothy—later Mrs. Gordon Mulvey—worked for a brief stint at Steiger's Department Store.

But she soon started working at her father's company in the early 1940s, and aside from a period in the 1950s and 1960s when she raised her three children all of whom now work for the company — Gordon Jr. who is the current President of E. B. Atmus; Susan Atmus Mulvey who is head of the Export Division of E. B. Atmus; and Jeff — she worked there until her retirement in the 1980s.



It was during the WWII period, that E. B. Atmus shifted its primary business from automobile parts to machine parts, primarily bearings and belts. With some additions, these products still constitute the bulk of E. B. Atmus' business today.