

FEATURES

Hewlett-Packard changed Loveland



Ken Jessen

Colorado History

Editor's note: Part one of a two-part series. Watch for the second part on Oct. 27.

The story of California-based Hewlett-Packard starts with Loveland First National Bank President Paul Rice and General Electric appliance dealer Bob Hipps.

Money from the Loveland Development Fund was used to acquire a portion of the Schwartz farm on the southwest side of Loveland for an industrial site. Dimes and quarters collected by Loveland children were matched by the bank.

In the late 1950s, the Great Western Sugar Co. was the largest industry in Loveland, but the company was not growing. The town had stagnated, and this prompted business leaders to try to attract an outside corporation.

Since Dave Packard was born in Colorado, it was only logical that Hewlett-Packard looked in Dave's home state to expand.

Stan Selby was picked to travel to Boulder, drawn by the town and the University of Colorado.

President Rice heard of Hewlett-Packard's interest in Colorado, but he knew nothing of the company. He made a telephone call to see if it was reputable.

Rice invited Selby to tour Loveland. Later Selby reciprocated and invited a contingent from Loveland to fly out to corporate headquarters in Palo Alto.

Their sincere presentation moved Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard, and Loveland, sporting but one traffic light, was selected over Boulder.

Activity at Loveland began in 1960 at a time when HP's sales totaled \$76 million and worldwide employment stood at 3,500. Getting qualified people was the first order of business, and Hewlett-Packard opened a training center in a leased building.

Many of the candidates for jobs came from farm families. To direct this program, Don Cullen transferred from Palo Alto and was soon joined by Mary Burkett.

Burkett hardly knew what to make of the town. She later recalled sitting at the town's one traffic light through two cycles while a farmer stood in the middle of the intersection chatting with the driver of a pickup truck



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Hewlett-Packard's first building on the hill at 14th Street Southwest and Taft Avenue is now part of a technological center, Rocky Mountain Center for Innovation and Technology.

power supplies.

Soon two vacuum tube voltmeters were transferred from Palo Alto, and the 200A Audio Oscillator was also moved to Loveland.

The Research and Development Lab had its own pioneers.

Marco Negrete and Don Wick were first to move from Palo Alto in March 1961. They were joined by Bill Barton and Bill Smith. Chuck Platz was hired right out of Colorado State University.

Among the first visitors to Loveland were Bill McCullough and Don Schulz, who both eventually moved to Loveland.

Other leased structures at the time included the Quonset hut, now occupied by Handy Glass at First and Lincoln. Those who worked in the building called it "a memorable experience" void of air conditioning. During the summer, it was cooled by a lawn sprinkler on the roof! It housed Research and Development as well as the transformer winding production line. The company was informal, and wives wishing to see spouses would drop their



HEWLETT-PACKARD COLLECTION

These are the founders of Hewlett-Packard. Bill Hewlett is on the left and Dave Packard on the right.

one of the intersections ending with the driver of a pickup truck. After interviews, 70 local residents were in training during the month of May. Those that demonstrated the necessary aptitudes were offered jobs.

Don Carlson was HP Loveland's first employee and joined Bob Moomaw as test engineers. "Big" John Hansen arrived to help with training.

Groundbreaking for the first Hewlett-Packard plant in Loveland took place Feb. 15, 1960, at a site at Third Street and Lincoln Avenue.

The 12,800-square-foot structure was completed June 1, 1960. It was an interim plant that later became the Components Building.

The first open house was held that September, and the Reporter-Herald gave the event a dozen pages.

Bob Hipps cut the ribbon, and Dave Packard made a few remarks about his company's arrival in Loveland.

The event was broadcast live on KLOV, Loveland's local radio station. At least 3,000 attended and toured the new plant.

Production began in July with a staff of 28 employees building

was minimal, and wives wishing to go shopping would drop their children off.

Also leased was the Armory Building across the street from the Components Building. It was used as a warehouse, training center and to display the company's products.

During the fall of 1961, construction was under way on Building A located on the hill. This was the largest single structure in the entire company. The move into Building A began in July 1962.

On Saturday, Oct. 13, 1962, Colorado Gov. Steve McNichols officially opened the new building. The dedication ceremonies were broadcast live on KLOV. Denver newspapers were on hand along with two television stations, Channel 7 and Channel 9.

Hewlett-Packard was not above a little showmanship. The governor pressed a Zenith TV remote control that was supposed to cut a wire. When this failed, a couple of employees stayed out of view as best they could and cut with wire with a pair of pliers, allowing a tethered 10-foot helium-filled balloon to lift a welcome banner. The front door was opened by a

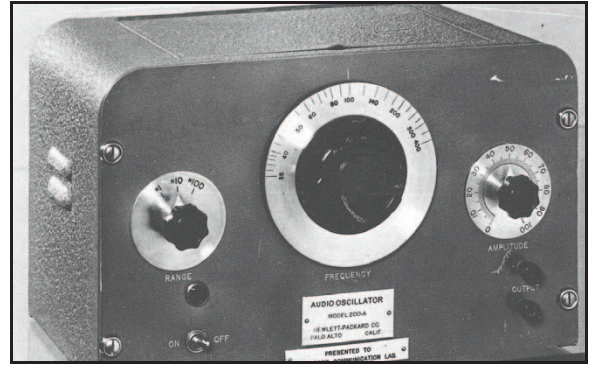
remotely controlled motor.

The Loveland High School Band performed followed by a brief speech by the governor. Emphasis was placed by Bill and Dave on the new partnership between Hewlett-Packard and the Loveland community.

Immediately after the grand opening, the public was invited to tour the new plant. A lot of work went into putting together displays, and an expert on each product was on hand to answer questions.

An estimated 9,000 people visited the new facility that day.

Kenneth Jessen has lived in Loveland since 1965 and has contributed to area newspapers for more than four decades. He has written more than 2,000 illustrated articles published along with 20 books. Jessen is in his third year teaching adult education at Colorado State University (OSHER program) and has lectured in Northern Colorado.



HEWLETT-PACKARD COLLECTION

Audio oscillators were a key instrument for many testing applications. Using Bill Hewlett's design, the 200A incorporated an electronic bridge to regulate its output level independent of output frequency.



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The remote wire release for a helium-filled balloon to reveal a welcome banner did not work as planned. The wire was cut manually at the opening of Building A on the hill Oct. 13, 1962.



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The Quonset hut at Lincoln Avenue and First Street, now occupied by Handy Glass, once housed Hewlett-Packard's research and development lab.



HEWLETT-PACKARD COLLECTION

Mary Burkett (Sweitzer) was a Loveland pioneer at the Hewlett-Packard facility and dean of women, responsible for counseling, interviewing, screening and the general welfare of female employees.