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This is a work of historical biography - not of a person, but of an enterprise. Moving Ahead: The First Fifty Years of Haskell is an account of the Haskell Company’s corporate life, written with the cooperation of its people. In helping an outsider understand the story of a living business, everyone associated with Haskell has been supportive and extraordinarily forthcoming. Company founder and chairman Preston Haskell, and president and chief executive officer Steven Halverson, were generous with their time, candid about their experiences, and have encouraged me to follow this story where the facts lead. I have been sensitive to their confidences, while sharing the routines, the dramas, the intentions and the happenstances that mark the path of a successful, long-lived business. If the result is half as interesting to read as it has been to create, these efforts will satisfy.

Beginning in May, 2014, I conducted thirty-nine formal, recorded oral history interviews relating to Haskell, most with present or former company employees. Each interview is a fascinating story in its own right, and I thank those who shared their experiences with me. In addition, I have spoken informally with dozens of people, within and outside the company. I traveled to Haskell’s offices in Atlanta, Charlotte, Beloit, and Columbus, learning the history of companies who have joined the integrated twenty-first century Haskell enterprise. The research for this account has included a study of the history of the construction industry and its relatively new (but burgeoning) subfield, the design-build sector. A 1990 company history, On Target: The First Twenty-Five Years of The Haskell Company, by Jules Wagman, helped orient me to Haskell’s early years, and gave me a useful perspective on the growth of the company and its industry. I thank Jules Wagman for permission to re-state quotations from interviews that he conducted.

The archive of formally recorded interviews conducted for this project are now preserved at Haskell. With cheerful efficiency, Beverly Chapman transcribed the majority of the interviews, and provided research help, for all of which I am grateful. Others who have contributed helpfully to the project include Bryan Higham, Diane Dombrowski, Deborah Hendrix, Jim Crooks, Beth Stubbs, Melissa Kelly, Luke Romner, Martha Oakey, Imogene Spears, Sally Anderson, Judy Buckner, Dave Balz, and Stacy Ferguson. The dozens of individuals who took time for informal, but helpful conversations with me have my thanks.

I owe special thanks to Margaret Akra “Maggie” Bulin, who knows Haskell as no one else does. She has introduced me to dozens of the company’s present and former employees, clients, and colleagues. She scheduled meetings and arranged my travel to Haskell’s branch locations. She answered questions, small and large, and has run down facts that required checking. She does everything with patience, grace, and good humor.

Foremost, my thanks go to Preston H. Haskell for inspiring and commissioning this fifty-year history of the enterprise he founded. He cooperated with this project graciously and unstintingly, through seven formal interviews and numerous less formal exchanges. I have learned much from him, and from the many people with whom I have spoken who have experienced his keen intellect, visionary leadership, and exemplary professionalism.

Alan Bliss
Jacksonville, Florida
The Haskell Company’s first fifty years parallel a half-century of changes in America’s economy. Since the 1960s, manufacturing in the U.S. declined, while American workers became more globally integrated. Instead of industrial output, the consumption of goods and services became a crucial measure of American economic health. In this environment of disruptive change, countless businesses have withered and disappeared, shuttered or been subsumed by mergers. Haskell survived, grew and prospered. While sticking to its industry and to its organizing principles, it has reinvented itself in successive stages. With each stage in its evolution, the company expanded on its skills and capabilities. Fifty years later, it is sophisticated beyond anything suggested in its origin as a small Jacksonville-based construction and engineering firm.

Certain consistent practices and behaviors run through the company’s history. Haskell has innovated both strategically and tactically (and often fearlessly). It has integrated new services in the pursuit of better and more comprehensive performance and competitive advantage. It has adopted, adapted to, and pioneered imposing technological changes. The company has striven, not just to stay relevant but to arrive, early and prepared, in the markets and sectors where clients need its services. It has cultivated its people so as to ensure its future. In a universe of companies that talk earnestly of the importance of their people, the Haskell Company walks the walk. An emphasis on values and integrity runs throughout the organization. It strenuously promotes teaming across professional disciplines, making the company nimble, creative, resilient, and entrepreneurial. Finally, it has consistently placed high value on its outside relationships.

By keeping its commitments, no matter how ambitious or costly, Haskell shows its customers that they are its priority. As a result, existing customers are routinely the source of new business. If customers’ needs change, the company evolves to meet those needs, and to undertake more ambitious commitments. The chapters that follow show how the people of Haskell have lived those practices, and the values that reinforce and sustain them.

The Haskell Company’s company history is more than a road map to its past. Placing the firm into larger historical context at critical points illustrates the pattern of innovation and the culture of entrepreneurship that defines it. Even though the company is in many ways atypical, this study is attentive to Haskell’s role in American industry, and its connections to the lives of Americans more broadly. In recent decades, those connections have become international, which is characteristic of enterprises intent on competing in the globalizing twenty-first century economy.

Chapter 1 describes Haskell’s origins, and introduces company’s founder, Preston Haskell. The company was early to adopt new technologies, deploying them ingeniously while exploring more comprehensive ways to deliver construction services. Creativity and sophisticated innovation were part of Haskell’s foundational culture. So too were remembrance and customer service – traits that enabled Haskell to compete against far larger and more established firms. Chapter 2 takes Haskell through the events of the first ten years, as the company perfected and strongly promoted design-build project delivery, and moved from residential toward nonresidential markets such as distribution centers, light manufacturing plants, and shopping centers. The company’s growth paralleled that of its industry and clientele, and the firm innovated to achieve greater efficiencies, through such things as

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Chapter 4 situates the company at twenty-five years of age. Haskell’s people have established a record of business accomplishments, successful projects, as well as a reputation for civic and social responsibility. In Chapter 3, Haskell continues its push for greater productivity in construction, and expanding the concept of integrated design-build services. The company continued delivering larger projects, including an innovative new facility for American Transtec, and in 1984, Designed and built on an extraordinarily ambitious schedule, it was the largest job in the company’s history to date, and demanded more of the staff than had anything before. Along with strengthening confidence in its design-build model, the company increased development of its internal capabilities, such as steel fabrication, while more thorough cross-disciplinary collaboration resulted in improved project delivery performance. In 1986, Haskell designed, built, and occupied its new Jacksonville headquarters on the banks of the St. Johns River. Also during that decade, Preston Haskell campaigned successfully to bring a design-build delivery model to public sector projects, where tradition and legal obstacles had impeded its practice. By winning important new business from national companies, Haskell extended its geographic reach across the U.S.

Chapter 5 recounts one of Haskell’s most substantive changes, the arrival of Steven Halverson as President, and soon after as CEO. Preston Haskell had been the visionary in the company’s development, and in cultivating the field of design-build project delivery. Halverson then developed Haskell organizationally, building on its culture, honing its strategy, developing its people, and strengthening its balance sheet. Halverson’s arrival occurred as the design-build field broke through construction industry perceptions that it was a niche specialty, instead of representing an “alternative” method of project delivery, at the beginning of the twenty-first century design-build had entered the mainstream. Haskell had led the change. It would be Halverson who would take the company to the next levels.

In Chapter 6, the aftermath of September 11, 2001 surprised many with a transition to a rising economy. Haskell’s projects and revenues grew, while the focus on high performance strengthened profitability, though the leadership first had to negotiate a crisis in surety markets. A pivotal conversation with a major customer, Frito-Lay, pointed to Haskell’s need to integrate Process engineering and industrial procurement with design and construction, and crucially influenced its strategic planning. Halverson initiated a series of actions aimed at strengthening human development across the company. A 2006 jobsite accident reinforced Haskell’s aggressive approach to safety and the company’s commitment to the well-being of its people.

Chapter 7 looks at the effects of the Great Recession that began in 2008, and disrupted businesses around the world. The ensuing financial crisis was the worst since the Great Depression, and the most challenging passage in the company’s experience since the mid-1970s. Haskell’s strong finances enabled it to survive and emerge positioned to advance its integration strategy through acquisitions.

Chapter 8 focuses on the four independent companies that have recently joined Haskell – the Atlanta-based E&M, Seiberling Associates, of Beloit, Wisconsin, H.R. Gray, headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, and FreemanWhite, in Charlotte, North Carolina. Each firm has its own rich history, which factored into the way they fit with Haskell’s strategy and culture. The Haskell that has resulted from these additions is an organization with engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) resources, no longer constrained by the sum of its parts. Consolidating those resources positioned Haskell to work at the next level.

Chapter 9 places Haskell in the context of its fiftieth year. The company continues to grow its capacity to perform highly sophisticated work, and realizes increasing benefits from its ongoing program of human development initiatives. Haskell distinguishes itself from companies in its industry as well as from firms of comparable size in other industries. In ability and ambition, the twenty-first century iteration of the company increasingly reflects the global markets in which it competes.
Preston H. Haskell III, born in 1938 in Birmingham, Alabama, is professorial, courtly, genial, urbane, and dignified, a man of palpably acute intelligence, with a sometimes deceptively owlish demeanor that suddenly gives way to an incisive manner. He formulates responses as he listens, organizes his thoughts in list form, then discusses them in paragraphs. He came to Jacksonville in 1962, after an Ivy League education in engineering and business, and worked for the next three years for a leading builder, as a project superintendent, a project manager and as a vice-president. The company that he then founded, bearing his name, reflects Haskell’s background in many ways.

Haskell’s father was a business executive who eventually founded his own company. He and his wife modeled civic involvement and entrepreneurship, as well as educational achievement. Early on, Preston knew that he wanted to be in the construction business, and earned a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering at Princeton. Beginning at age 16, Haskell worked summers for the Birmingham-based Daniel Construction, one of the South’s largest such firms. In addition to gaining exposure to field construction practices as a laborer and carpenter’s helper; he worked as a field engineer and office clerk, and became interested in cost-controls and accounting.

From Princeton, Haskell went directly to Harvard, earning a master’s degree in Business Administration. His concentration was on finance, accounting and taxation, but in his final year he also attended the nearby Massachusetts Institute of Technology. There he studied building engineering and construction, with course work that included computer programming and critical-path scheduling.

A telling example of Haskell’s early experience was a college business venture that demonstrated instincts for entrepreneurship and innovation, and foreshadowed his interest in design-build construction. The Southern Lawn Sprinkler Company designed and installed residential irrigation systems during the three summer months each year when lawns required care, and when college students required paychecks.

“We were able to get a lot of business and fill up the books for the summer, and get it all done and paid for before we all went back to college.” – Preston Haskell
Haskell estimated and sold jobs. Then he prepared the designs and specified the parts. He hired fellow college students to perform the installations. “We had a little shop where we preassembled the tees, nipples, elbows and the sprinkler head for each system. All the guys in the field had to do is go put the assembly down. It went very successfully. My selling price was ten cents a square foot of lawn area, and we could usually make about thirty or forty percent gross profit on that pricing model. We were able to get a lot of business and fill up the books for the summer, and get it all done and paid for before we all went back to college.”

In September 1962, Haskell moved to Jacksonville and began working for the S.S. Jacobs Company, a leading construction contractor headed by the founder’s son, Robert ‘Bobby’ Jacobs. Jacobs’ offer was attractive, and Jacksonville impressed Haskell favorably. With the support of his wife of eight months, Joan, he joined the Jacobs Company as a project superintendent.

At Jacobs, Haskell first reported to a veteran manager named John Hamilton, who was starting a project to build a new warehouse and offices in Jacksonville for Brundage Motors, the Volkswagen distributor for the southeastern U.S. In a 2014 interview, Hamilton remembered being told by Bob Jacobs to “take Preston and let him be the superintendent.” Initially skeptical, Hamilton was soon as impressed as Jacobs had been. “I would have to maybe tone down Preston’s exuberance a tiny bit here and there,” he recalled with amusement.
every morning, running the trades, mud on my boots, handling labor relations, unions, pouring concrete, erecting steel, as well as upstream coordinating the construction documents.”

The architect had designed the exterior walls to be built using “lift-up” concrete slabs. The slabs were to be poured into forms while flat on the ground and allowed to cure. They were then tilted to the vertical position, aligned and permanently connected. Fabrication of the slabs took place on the job site, rather than in a remote facility. John Hamilton had experience with the practice and had introduced a wrinkle. The exterior surfaces of the office area would be finished with decorative aggregate, or colored stone. The architect further specified that the aggregate should be of two different colors.

Typically, decorative aggregate was applied on the top surface after the underlying concrete had been poured and prior to being tilted-up into position. For this job, Hamilton and Haskell innovated. The decorative aggregate mixed with cement was placed first, so that it would be on the face-down side of the slab, using a “retarder” solution to prevent the hardening of the cement. Then the reinforcing steel was placed and the concrete poured for the slab. Ordinarily this process would have created difficulty, because in the two or three days required for curing the slab, the cement around the decorative stone would also have hardened. Hamilton and Haskell accelerated the curing process for the slabs, using fast-curing concrete placed with a high-frequency vibrator, and a steam tent over the slabs. The slabs were tilted up the following morning, and workers immediately began washing the cement away from the aggregate, leaving the exposed stone finish. The process reduced labor, and shortened the time required for construction. As Hamilton recalls, “If Preston had the right man. Preston was eager and loved giving into that. It was something new, something different, and gosh he ate it up. . . Preston was smart, he was extremely knowledgeable and . . . very, very innovative. He didn’t one time say, ‘don’t you think . . . ?’ He just said, ‘that’s great. Let’s do it!’ I think that attitude carried him over and played a huge part in his success.”

As superintendent on the Brundage Motors project, Haskell observed first-hand the effects of labor union rules in the construction trades. Such rules forbade members of different trades from performing a task (e.g., a carpenter moving a piece of steel) nominally belonging to a worker from another trade - in the example given, an ironworker. The time lost waiting for a member of the privileged trade was costly and frustrating to builders. In one case, Haskell inadvertently broke a rule that only a foreman could issue orders to a union tradesman – not a superintendent. Apparently intending to teach the young superintendent a lesson, a union representative stopped all work on the project intending to teach the young superintendent a lesson, a union representative stopped all work on the project for nearly a day. Haskell did indeed draw lessons from that and similar incidents, informing his later policies concerning labor.

As a result of his immersion in the Brundage Motors project, Haskell learned other things that had not been part of his formal civil engineering education. That included the detailed design of mechanical and electrical systems, an intimate, hands-on experience with the technique of tilt-up construction, and innovating on the job site. Perhaps most influential was Haskell’s work coordinating the architects and engineers. “It fell to me to put it all together and make it work.” Organizing that team animated his idea for a construction business model in which all of the necessary professionals would work under one roof, collaborating on each job from start to finish. Collectively, they would be accountable to customers under one contract. From that concept, the Preston H. Haskell Company eventually emerged.

When Haskell joined the Jacobs Company, the firm had nothing resembling a computer, but a neighboring insurance company owned a mainframe machine. Input was by punch cards. Haskell recalled, “I was able to take that mainframe computer and the punch-card processing and adapt it to CPM, meaning critical path method scheduling.” John Hamilton recalled his initial experience with CPM as “moving from punch card to electronic” and that he had thought it “a very, very interesting and gosh he ate it up. . . .” He had developed “a method of scheduling.” John Hamilton recalled his initial experience with CPM as “moving from punch card to electronic” and that he had thought it “a very, very interesting and revolutionary technique.”
At Jacobs, Haskell moved from superintendent of the Brundage Motors job directly into project management. Following the resignation of his chief operating officer, all of the project managers reported to Jacobs who, due to his immersion in far flung real estate development activities, was often not accessible.

Haskell managed a variety of projects, typically three at any given time. Some were substantial, including another job, an office building for Brundage Motors. Other projects included warehouses and production facilities for paper companies such as Owens Illinois and Continental Can. These jobs were more demanding. Number one, if there were processes or manufacturing taking place, those requirements were more sophisticated, required more engineering, more knowledge of and experience with that particular process. Number two, the big industrial companies, the manufacturers like DuPont, had very high standards and they didn’t do business with just anybody.

In 1964, Jacksonville mortgage banker and residential apartment developer Jim Winston formed a partnership to build new apartments on a beachfront property. Haskell had become acquainted with Winston, and in seeking the job for the Jacobs Company, Haskell discovered that a conflict between Winston’s partner and Jacobs would prevent the latter from winning the business. “I told Winston, with whom I shared a key point is the day that the structural steel is going to be delivered. Well, you start at that date and you do some backing up and some moving forward . . .” ~ Eric Henderson, Covington Industries

Haskell managed the construction, while Bert Sheffy, a former Jacobs Company colleague who returned to Jacksonville to join Haskell, designed the HVAC.

Haskell says, “What it taught me, along with several similar experiences, was that we were just more nimble, and smarter, and faster, and able to design to a much higher degree of efficiency; design out any unproductive or unessential things.”

The Covington Industries job was a breakthrough into a different market that also validated Haskell’s certainly about design-build as a delivery method, and his company’s ability to perform it.

A design-build contractor operating under the Haskell model could offer value to owners in ways beyond just the sophistication of the design and construction process. Time is one way. In specific market sectors, timing performance particularly matters. There are hundreds of ways that a job can fall behind schedule. If there is no fault of the contractor, and customers often have little choice but to accept ambiguous excuses from contractors. But to an owner who, for example, is committed to operating a retail store at a certain date, the urgency of delivery by that date is connected to other events and concerned parties. For lessees, many things must happen before the doors can open. Tenants must install fixtures and merchandise, recruit

relationships Haskell had formed with developers such as Jim Winston, Paul Fletcher, and John Massie. However, Haskell was convinced that his strengths lay elsewhere. “I said, I did not want to be a bricks-and-sticks apartment constructor. My real interest was in commercial and industrial construction. It was more profitable, more sophisticated. But industrial projects were more demanding. Number one, if there were processes or manufacturing taking place, those requirements were more sophisticated, required more engineering, more knowledge of and experience with that particular process. Number two, the big industrial companies, the manufacturers like DuPont, had very high standards and they didn’t do business with just anybody.”

Looking back, Haskell is proud of certain things, and learning in his work on the Fletcher Building, an eight-story office building on Riverside Avenue, he formed a lifelong friendship with Paul Fletcher.

Observing his employer’s practices convinced Haskell of developments such as Jim Winston, Paul Fletcher, and John Massie. However, Haskell was convinced that his strengths lay elsewhere. “I said, I did not want to be a bricks-and-sticks apartment constructor. My real interest was in commercial and industrial construction. It was more profitable, more sophisticated. But industrial projects were more demanding. Number one, if there were processes or manufacturing taking place, those requirements were more sophisticated, required more engineering, more knowledge of and experience with that particular process. Number two, the big industrial companies, the manufacturers like DuPont, had very high standards and they didn’t do business with just anybody.”

The apartments’ intent to eventually launch his own enterprise. Even before arriving in Jacksonville, it had been Haskell’s intent to eventually launch his own enterprise. In 1964, Jacksonville mortgage banker and residential apartment developer Jim Winston formed a partnership to build new apartments on a beachfront property. Haskell had become acquainted with Winston, and in seeking the job for the Jacobs Company, Haskell discovered that a conflict between Winston’s partner and Jacobs would prevent the latter from winning the business. “I told Winston, with whom I shared a great deal of my thinking, that I had a great desire to go into business for myself,” and proposed taking on the contract. Winston wanted to work with Haskell on the project, and the two reached an agreement. In October 1965, Haskell founded the Preston H. Haskell Company.

The apartment project for Jim Winston led to more multifamily business for the Preston H. Haskell Company. The first three jobs in the company’s portfolio were residential, the result of the strong skepticism at critical-path planning. “To me, one huge key point is the day that the structural steel is going to be delivered. Well, you start at that date and you do some backing up and some moving forward . . .” ~ Eric Henderson, Covington Industries

In 1967, a college classmate of Haskell’s became the company’s first industrial client. At a young age, Eric Henderson had taken over his family’s business, Covington Industries. When Covington wanted to build a new apparel manufacturing plant in southern Alabama, Henderson contacted Haskell. “I went up there, looked at the site, and spent a day or two walking through the surrounding area, and then back to Jacksonville to join Haskell, designed the HVAC. Architect Emilio Zeller designed the building. Preston Haskell managed the construction, while Bert Sheffy, an early employee, was the job superintendent. It was a true design-build performance, with the entire project emerging from the same firm. Haskell says, “What it taught me, along with several similar experiences, was that we were just more nimble, and smarter, and faster, and able to design to a much higher degree of efficiency; design out any unproductive or unessential things.”

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Moving Ahead

became part of the company’s culture. What sustained budget - held potential risk, a tolerance for which all of those commitments - to time, performance and commitment to price early in the process. Undertaking Haskell’s design-build proposals also included a firm nearly thirty projects for Mitchell. Mitchell Company. “The Haskell Company performed of design-build - we make the owners’ responsibilities sure that it did. That is one of the great selling points the store was about to open it was our job to make to us. If it didn’t meet Kmart’s specifications the day they expected . . . Mitchell would simply turn that over became very familiar with Kmart’s specifications, what became a significant customer. As Haskell recalls, “We because very familiar with Kmart’s specifications, what they expected . . . Mitchell would simply turn that over to us. If it didn’t meet Kmart’s specifications the day the store was about to open it was our job to make sure that it did. That is one of the great selling points of design-build - we make the owners’ responsibilities our responsibilities . . . that lifted a huge load off of the architect’s shoulders.” The Haskell Company performed nearly thirty projects for Mitchell.

Haskell’s design-build proposals also included a firm commitment to price early in the process. Undertaking all of those commitments - to time, performance and budget - held potential risk, a tolerance for which became part of the company’s culture. What sustained that culture, and distinguished The Haskell Company from competitors, was a passion for design was engineering. “Being able to design it to the budget that we were committed to - other people just couldn’t do that,” Haskell reflected. Designers who worked independently of the construction team lacked that passion. They worked from a defensive mindset, over-designing and over-engineering, ensuring that, no matter what happened - subsequently the designer could avoid blame. “They absolutely have no ownership in the financial outcome of the project,” Haskell noted. “They only get a fee for designing it, and have very little incentive to get in there, roll up their sleeves, be smarter, and look at alternative designs and choose the one which is the most cost effective.”

Disruptive innovation that yields efficiency is a strategy for success in many industries. Preston Haskell has been a disruptor in the design and construction field, and Haskell’s design-build method of performing and delivering projects of high quality and aesthetic appeal that are economically viable. The core innovation that The Haskell Company adopted and deployed was the design-build method of performing and delivering a construction project.

Emilio Zeller, the architect on the Covington Industries job and many of Haskell’s other early projects, was not an employee of The Haskell Company. However, because Haskell had engaged him, he answered to that company rather than to the project owner. Controlling the architectural design made Haskell a design-builder. Haskell’s design-build method of performing and delivering projects of high quality and aesthetic appeal that are economically viable. The core innovation that The Haskell Company adopted and deployed was the design-build method of performing and delivering a construction project.

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In the more traditional model of construction, an owner hires an architect and then a general contractor, with the architect in the role of representing the owner’s interests. That bifurcation of the principal roles in construction performance took root during the Industrial Revolution, as building methods and requirements became more sophisticated, and demanded greater specialization. Throughout the twentieth century, the pattern of keeping design and construction separate prevailed in both private and public contracting. Owners depended on the skill and integrity of an architect as the prime professional. In theory, the architect would oversee the construction and keep the contractor honest. A contractor who bid the construction according to the documents and followed them would deliver a project as the owner and architect intended. In practice, the relationships among the parties often became adversarial. The strongest position was often that of the architect, who could deflect criticism by pointing out that the other parties had accepted the design. Tension and distrust between designers and contractors became commonplace, with owners easily caught in the middle. Decades of litigation generated a body of case law and judicial precedent, and a growing specialty in construction law.

Design-build sought to eliminate those conflicts by making one party accountable to the owner. Preston Haskell was an early proponent and became a leading evangelist for the alternative project delivery method, and made it the basis of his company’s business model as a “turn-key” builder. In a 1973 proposal letter, he explained that virtually all of his company’s projects were performed using the design-construct approach, “wherein we provide, with our own staff of in-house architects and engineers, complete design services as well as actual construction.” He then listed the advantages to customers:

• “Savings in time due to the telescoping of design and construction phases.”
• “Dollar savings arising from our intimate knowledge of construction costs and methods brought to bear upon the manner in which the project is designed.”
• “Single responsibility for both the design and construction phases - as opposed to ‘buck passing’ which may arise when two different entities are responsible for your satisfaction with the finished product.”
• “Our ability to guarantee construction cost well in advance of the completion of working drawings and specifications, which obviates your expenditure of large amounts of time and money on working drawings without knowing a firm cost.”

The Haskell Company innovated in such practices as tilt-up construction. The company designed, engineered, and increasingly perfected its ability to build in the field with its own personnel. Self-performing construction brought more of the process under the company's control, lending confidence that it could deliver projects on time and on budget. The Haskell Company’s reputation became that of making and keeping bold promises.
The design-build practices of which The Haskell Company sought to win acceptance evoked the ancient concept of the master builder. What seemed in the 1970s new and threatening to traditionalists was in fact old. Historically significant buildings dating back centuries, such as temples from ancient Greece and Rome, or the Middle East, or Europe’s great cathedrals, were the products of master builders, who imagined and created a structure, controlling every stage from idea to completed project. The design-builder fulfills the same function. To divide construction into separate design, bid, and build functions, independently performed, is a more recent phenomenon.

Nationally and at the local level, the American Institute of Architects (AIA) was the guardian of design-bid-build and even opposed the idea that an architect could work for a contractor and maintain independence of professional judgment. The public was entitled to expect safe buildings, constructed according to high standards of design and engineering. Customarily the prime professional, the architect was also expected to ensure that construction took place according to the designers’ plans.

Critics of design-build also argued that only an independent architect could protect the owner’s interest. An architect who could be influenced by a construction contractor might temporize over aspects of the design, or hesitate to challenge deviations from the plans. Ambiguities, incompatibilities and errors sometimes cropped up after construction had begun. The AIA held that it was only the architect who could arbitrate conflicts.

When The Haskell Company hired architects to work directly for the firm, the Jacksonville AIA did not admit them to membership. But a registered architect did not need AIA membership in order to work, thus the AIA’s resistance was symbolic. In 1973, a breakthrough came when Haskell hired W. Stanley Gordon, AIA, and a former president of the Jacksonville chapter. Still, in other states the AIA fought on, the North Carolina organization even winning enactment of a statute that until 1978 barred licensure to architects employed by design-build firms. 1978 was also when Florida allowed corporations to practice architecture, as was already the case with contractors and engineers. With passage of the new law, the tagline on the Haskell logo became “Architects / Engineers / Contractors,” the first company in Florida to identify itself as all three. Acceptance of the comprehensive delivery method remained uneven, though. Preston Haskell continued to devote much time and effort to advancing the professional practice of integrated design-build construction.

After the Covington Industries job, The Haskell Company won another industrial contract from the Knight Paper Company. The three-building, 86,000 square foot facility was larger and more sophisticated than anything Haskell had previously done. In addition, Knight Paper wanted a turnkey facility that it would lease, rather than own. Haskell accommodated them through a separate enterprise, Haskell Realty Developers (HRD), in which Preston Haskell was the principal. The Knight Paper job was the beginning of a relationship with Jim Walter Papers, which acquired...
Knight during the construction of the Jacksonville facility. Beginning in 1968, Haskell built eleven projects for Jim Walter. A year later, The Haskell Company won the first of nine projects for Mac Papers, including manufacturing and warehouse facilities that called for greater sophistication than anything the company had tackled to date. That same year, Haskell also began its first project for E.I. duPont deNemours, a new facility for blending and warehousing paint products in Jacksonville. duPont learned of Haskell’s record of delivering a quality tilt-up building for $5.00 to $6.00 per square foot, which was less than half the estimate of duPont’s own engineers. Under challenge, Haskell stood by his proposal, and performed the project on time and on budget. In the years that followed, duPont returned to Haskell for six additional jobs that totaled 1.6 million square feet. Consistently high performance leading to repeat clients was becoming another of The Haskell Company’s characteristics.

In the early 1970s, Haskell undertook another new initiative, low temperature distribution centers and frozen food processing plants. This grew from a relationship with Jacksonville businessman Charles Nesbit, a widely known operator of freezer warehouses. Nesbit was also a specialty contractor for low temperature insulation and refrigeration. His firm teamed with The Haskell Company. duPont’s facility typically performed insulation and refrigeration work, and Haskell having responsibility for the site work, the overall engineering and construction of the steel and concrete structure, and providing a single contract with the client. Over a period of four years, the two companies completed more than a dozen low temperature warehouses and food processing plants in five southeastern states. The arrangement ended when Nesbit attempted to move into general contracting, taking the client relationships, most of which had indeed originally been his. Subsequently, Haskell developed its own low temperature expertise and performance capabilities.

In 1971, the Preston H. Haskell Company built and occupied a new office building of its own, replacing its original space at 128 Riverside Avenue. The new quarters, at 1061 Riverside Avenue, consisted of a two-story, 13,200 square foot building of the company’s own design, using tilt-up construction. The second floor was built on a floor slab slightly larger than the first, and the tilt-slabs for the upper level were cast and erected from that level. At first occupying most of the second floor, the fast-growing company soon took over almost the entire building. Nearby, at 720 Gilmore Street, the company designed and built a six-story office building with an underground garage, for the Barnett-Winston Company, led by Haskell’s first client five years earlier, Jim Winston. By 1977, The Haskell Company had again outgrown its space, and took over two floors of the Barnett-Winston Building, which eventually became the Haskell Building. It remained the company’s headquarters until 1986. Haskell himself led the company’s engineering department until 1970, then recruited David Clarke from the Overmeyer Warehouse organization. Clarke and Haskell gradually expanded the firm’s architectural and engineering team to handle the influx of projects. Differences between those who design and those who build were endemic in the industry, and subordinating those differences to the interest of the client was the whole point of a design-build firm like Haskell. Still within the design-build firm conflict can arise. It fell to senior leaders such as Preston himself to arbitrate the sharpest of those disputes. Christopher Holmes joined the company in 1974, as an architect. He remembers that “there was a clear definition by Preston that you are a professional engineer or architect, and you will be treated that way, but we are all part of one team. So it was clear that the discipline of architecture and engineering were all part of the same pot that construction would be in.” Haskell’s personal, hands-on engagement with the daily operations of the company is legendary. Stories persist about his marking up construction documents after the employee working on them had left for the day, or moving them to a different stage in the process. Holmes recalled that, “he would come through at night and look at everybody’s drawings . . . he was really involved, and he would leave little, cryptic notes on drawings.”

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Since its founding, The Haskell Company has steadily improved tilt-up methodology, and developed creative applications for it. "Things about it ... really hadn't been tapped at that time," Christopher Holmes said. "It was a new system that nobody had really pushed the boundaries of yet." For Holmes, fresh out of architecture school at the University of Florida, tilt-up was brand new, and The Haskell Company’s approach to design-build made it essential for team members to understand the entire construction process. "In the first year, I got to go out on a construction job for six months and watch tilt-up being placed, and do layout with the superintendent and that sort of thing. So that was a really eye-opening experience, especially from the standpoint of understanding what tilt-up was and how it was placed and what the restrictions were relative to placement and lifting."

Tilt-up construction became nearly a Haskell Company trademark. As the company’s design and construction teams gained skill with the method, they performed it with great efficiency, offering attractive savings to owners. It was not a universal answer to project requirements, as Holmes explained. "Part of the challenge that we tried to take on is, can tilt-up be used for that? And if it can be, then what is the best way to do that? Can the aesthetics be generated through tilt-up the same as other products such as stucco or block or cast-in-place concrete? So you weigh what is achievable for tilt-slabs were in the range of twenty-five to twenty-eight feet. At the time of writing, Haskell strove to accomplish new things through the use of tilt-up panels, such as high-finish applied surfaces, slender fins, taller panels, thermal insulation, and slender dimensions. In the 1970s, the maximum heights achievable for tilt-slabs were in the range of twenty-five to twenty-eight feet. At the time of writing, Haskell is constructing six-story buildings using single panels."

The Presto H. Haskell Company had been posting annual increases in activity, with strong sales volume and profits. But beginning in 1973, the Arab oil embargo caused a nationwide economic downturn. By the fall of 1974, the national economy was in a deep recession, marked by a collapse in building activity of all types, and the company entered the toughest passage in its history. Newly opened branch offices Charlotte and Tampa were closed. Travel was curtailed, capital expenditures were suspended, and a grim round of layoffs began. At Haskell, as elsewhere throughout the country, holiday spirits were subdued that winter. In 1975, the company posted a net loss for the first and only time in its existence.

The recession continued into 1976, and The Haskell Company adapted to survival on half the revenues that had been on the books in 1974. Customers that helped the company survive included DuPont, which had contracted for two large product distribution centers in Nashville, TN, and Charleston, SC. Another important and complex project was a distribution center in Orlando for Super Food Services of Dayton, Ohio. At $3.8 million, it represented an important part of the company’s portfolio at a critical moment. The project director was Kennon Holmes, who was destined for senior leadership in the company. Holmes’ successful performance on the Super Food project propelled his advancement at Haskell.

The lessons that Haskell drew from the experience of the 1974-1976 recession included the understanding that it is faster and easier to add expenses than to reduce them. Because of the scarcity of work in a recession, the company that enters a slowdown with a strong backlog of orders holds an advantage in the hiring of skilled workers and subcontractors. Pricing stabilizes, and profitability can be achieved, even though business volume may be sharply reduced. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, a recession yields opportunities to create and execute “policy projects” that may have been set aside when keeping up with the demands of high volume. Capital purchases can be made at favorable prices. The market during a recession rewards those with strong finances, a position which Haskell aimed to preserve in anticipation of future economic dislocations.

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, even in the American South, traditionally hostile to labor organizations, union labor prevailed in commercial and industrial construction. As a youth working summer jobs in Birmingham, Preston Haskell had carried a union card. But by the early 1970s, The Haskell Company and other builders were experiencing difficult labor relations. Over the preceding decades, organized labor in construction trades had enjoyed a strong hand thanks to economic growth and a construction boom. Unions won labor contracts establishing good wages, and enjoyed various “work rules” that hampered productivity. Work rules required a member of a particular trade to do certain tasks on a union contract job site, and forbade anyone else from doing that task. For example, a carpenter could not pick up a section of steel bar and place it into a wooden form for concrete — an ironworker had to perform that task. Violations could, and did, lead to jobs being shut down by order of the union representative, something that actually happened to Preston Haskell while working for Jacobs.

Project Director, Kennon Holmes

Tilt-up construction at J.C. Penny Cut Order Carpet facility, 1974

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Haskell had begun as a so-called “open shop,” where union membership is not required. To compete for non-residential construction contracts, it signed union agreements on specific jobs, and eventually signed a master labor agreement negotiated by the local chapter of the Associated General Contractors, of which the company was a member. By 1972, however, rising costs drove contractors to form parallel corporations that could operate as non-union employers. Known as “double-breasting,” the arrangement was permitted by the National Labor Relations Board. A construction firm that was party to union agreements could legally operate a separate non-unionized corporation, in a separate location, but under the same ownership as the original firm. As double-breasting spread, union contractors had little choice but to follow the practice. To answer this need, Haskell Company senior executives founded Construction Southeast, Inc.

“But because the PCEs are there, they can lead by example.” - Preston Haskell

By 1976, The Haskell Company withdrew from the master labor agreement, closed Construction Southeast, and merged the nonunion labor resources developed by that company into Haskell. During this period, the company began to develop what became Haskell’s Permanent Craft Employee (PCE) program. Skilled workers hired by The Haskell Company became permanent, full-time employees, willing to travel, to Wichita and tried to hire locally.”

Permanent Craft Employees; qualified, committed craftsmen served as a “core” of highly skilled tradesmen on out-of-town work. Preston Haskell explained: “If we send six or eight men to Wichita, they become sort of a core and we can hire less qualified workers, not necessarily trained very well in a particular craft. But because the PCEs are there, they can lead by example. If we were pouring concrete a certain way, it doesn’t take very many PCEs to show the rest of the crew what and how to do. If we are doing tilt-up walls, our core will provide the continuity and consistency of quality and productivity that would not be available if we just went to Wichita and tried to hire locally.”

The Haskell Company has cultivated a strong ability to self-perform skilled construction work, whereas many competitors subcontract most of their work – especially where a job must be performed in a remote location. Haskell’s PCEs can seed the job site workforce in any location, and reduce the company’s dependence on subcontractors. The advantages are several. For one, the company has greater control of the project schedule while a subcontractor may have other projects that conflict with the Haskell job. Haskell’s PCEs leverage their skills and experience to perform economically, resulting in more competitive labor costs. Also, many of Haskell’s more sophisticated clientele value a contractor who can significantly self-perform construction, thereby controlling the pace and quality of the work.

As the company and the economy emerged from the recession of the mid-1970s, Haskell won new customers such as Procter & Gamble (P&G), Days Inn, Family Centers, Inc. (part of A&P Groceries), Albertson’s Supermarkets, and Mazda Motors. In 1977, P&G had a paper products warehouses constructed side-by-side in Albany Georgia; one as a design-build project by The Haskell Company, the other using a conventional, cost-plus contracting method. On completion, P&G managers compared the projects and found the building constructed by Haskell superior in quality, while delivered at a cost to P&G of about seventy percent that of the comparable project. That success led to important future work for The Haskell Company. In addition to Mazda, for whom Haskell has built offices and distribution facilities in several locations, other automobile importers contracted with Haskell for buildings in Jacksonville. Imported car sales were growing, and Jacksonville was a major port of entry. HRD had acquired property along Western Way, a frontage road parallel to Interstate 95, and was able to offer attractive land and building packages to importers including Nissan, Fiat, Mercedes-Benz, and British Leyland. The sites offered good transportation access plus brand exposure to passing motorists. Mercedes-Benz subsequently hired Haskell to build a truck manufacturing plant in Hampton, Virginia.

Retail chains also continued building in the late 1970s and into the 1980s. Successful performance for a developer of shopping centers anchored by Kmart and other major chains led to similar projects in several states. A&P contracted with Haskell to build ten Family Mart stores. As a new decade opened, warehouse and distribution centers continued to be a major part of the company’s design-build portfolio, but more significant and sophisticated projects were soon to come. ◆
Perhaps the most transformative project in Haskell’s twentieth century experience was the American Transtech job. In value, it was twice the size of the largest project the company had yet undertaken. It required features with which the company lacked experience, and it had to be built under a crushing deadline. In competition with other local firms, including contractors and real estate developers, the Haskell team made its initial proposal in mid-September, 1982, to a group representing an anonymous Fortune 500 company. The project would consist of 450,000 square feet of space on a thirty-acre site on Jacksonville’s south side.

On September 9, the owner’s representatives handed over a two-page memo broadly outlining their requirements. Haskell’s head of architecture and engineering, John Zona, gathered a team in a Haskell Company conference room. The group included David Engdahl as project architect. The project director would be George Albertelli, with Kennon Holmes as project executive. The team began preparing on Thursday for a presentation to the mystery customer the following Friday – in itself an impossibly short timeline to develop such a sophisticated proposal. The importance of the task was underscored by the company’s backlog at the time, which had become thin owing to a nationwide financial crisis precipitating another recession. “We were working 24 hours a day,” Engdahl recalled. “This was really true design-build.”

“Aggressive” is the term most used when discussing the timetable for the Transtech job. It had to be delivered by August 31 of 1983 – eleven months away. When the customer’s identity became known – it was the telecommunications giant, American Telephone and Telegraph (AT&T) - the reason for its urgency became clear. AT&T was under a federal judge’s order to divest itself of component smaller telephone companies. From those companies, seven new telephone companies, nicknamed “Baby Bells” would emerge. The newly independent companies would be publicly traded, and three million shareholders would have several options for converting their AT&T stock into shares of the new corporations. A massive program of stock transactions would have to be complete and the Baby Bells in business by January 1, 1984, leading to the watchword within AT&T of “one-one eightyfour”. To accomplish this, shareholder transactions must begin no later than September 1, 1983.

One of the physical requirements was a computer room one acre in size that would accommodate a forest of mainframe computers. Related systems included enhanced ventilation and cooling. Highly reliable and redundant electrical power was another critical factor, along with flooring that would afford access to the cabling that connected the computers. Such things added complexities that were in some areas new to The Haskell Company.
Another of the customers’ requirements was that the building be suited for conversion to multi-tenant offices. American Transtech could depend upon a stream of business for up to five years, after which the Baby Bells might make alternate arrangements. The owner needed flexibility as to how the space was configured, so as to have the option of selling it or leasing portions to other users.

The design that Haskell proposed was of a suburban campus with “W” shaped buildings, three stories in height, linked inside and outside by walkways. A lake buffered the buildings from Baymeadows Drive (just west of Interstate 95). Parking was dispersed among the existing trees that dotted the property, which Haskell’s designers sought to preserve and enhance with landscaping design. Extensive use of curved glass admitted natural light to the work areas, and dramatized the aesthetics of the building and its surroundings. Circular exterior stairwell towers became eye-catching features of the buildings. In addition to offering aesthetic appeal, the building’s sections and features were designed to be highly repeatable, making it economical to build while accommodating the unforgiving delivery schedule.

One week after receiving the client’s detail sheet, the team presented a detailed design, a construction timeline, and a price estimate. Preston Haskell stipulated that if Transtech accepted the design as submitted, the company would commit to deliver the project according to the proposed schedule and at the price estimated. Transtech became convinced, and a contract was signed on September 28, 1982.
Detailed design work began that day. In the weeks and months that followed, Haskell’s people worked virtually non-stop. Owing to long lead times for major equipment, Haskell placed orders in October for such things as air conditioning chillers and electrical transformers, though specifications were still being drafted, and mechanical and electrical contractors were yet to be hired. Steel fabrication began in November and site work and foundations later that month, even as detailed construction documents were still being created. Steel erection began in December. Engdahl, the lead architect, recalls it as “probably the pinnacle of my career in architecture . . . it really brought the architects, the engineers and the construction staff together. We worked in lockstep . . . it was 24/7.” According to Engdahl, the project team’s motto was, “There is no September first!”

The Transtech project indeed ended on August 31 with a celebratory dinner held in the strikingly handsome building. The project attracted national attention and won multiple design awards. It also transformed Haskell in several ways. It strengthened the company during an uncertain economy. It drove the teams to pull together and perform as they never had before, producing interior, exterior, and landscaping designs, plus complex systems such as redundant electrical utility feeds. It proved that Haskell’s people could perform on a schedule that sometimes seemed impossible. “It changed the psychology of . . . what we could accomplish,” Engdahl says. “There was one goal, and it was August 31st. We had to all cooperate to make that happen.”

“It changed the psychology of what we could accomplish. There was one goal, and it was August 31st. We had to all cooperate to make that happen.” ~ David Engdahl
The Transtech facility was predominantly a high-tech office project, and was followed by other such projects. Three years later, in 1986, The Haskell Company designed, built, and occupied its own three-story, 123,000 square foot office building on the banks of the St. Johns River. In style and sophistication, the new headquarters is often compared to a graceful ocean liner. As with the Transtech project, its grace and functionality, in a setting of natural beauty, showcased the company’s achievements and its design capabilities.
The Haskell Company’s multidisciplinary approach to project development helped it to pursue and win customers with sophisticated needs. During the 1970s and 1980s, that synergy also drew from the role of Haskell Facility Developers (HRD), a partnership that complemented the engineering and construction company. HRD provided project finance for specific projects, which The Haskell Company designed and built. HRD leased the project to its customer, and subsequently sold the property to an outside investor. In addition to single-tenant leased buildings, HRD also developed multi-tenant warehouses and shopping centers. However, after the recession of 1974-1976, those opportunities diminished, while financing costs increased. The general economic decline mandated that The Haskell Company pull back from anything that distracted it from the core of its design-build business.

In 1980 and 1981, The Haskell Company built hotels, the University of Central Florida, and downtown facilities in Fort Pierce and Jacksonville - cities where older central business districts had no legacy of adequate parking. Holmes noted that parking garages are surprisingly complex. “They look real simple, but it is in the details of working with the construction team, being able to plan a sequence of operations, knowing that you are going to start construction at this end and back out of the building away from the starting point.” The Haskell Company strove to integrate the specialties involved in design and construction, reflecting Preston’s vision of the practice. Christopher Holmes explained, “The practice has been to cross-pollinate between construction, architecture and engineering, to make sure that everybody understands what the other one does for a living.”

During the mid-1980s, Holmes spent four and a half years as a construction manager. “It was an avenue to understand what the other disciplines do for a living, and to cross-pollinate between construction, architecture, and engineering, to make sure that everybody understands what the other one does for a living.”

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Structural steel is a key item on the critical path of any construction project, but dependence upon outside fabricators risks fluctuations in price and delays in delivery. The solution was to make them instead of buying them.

In 1981, the company acquired a tract of land on West 12th Street, and Haskell began exploring how it could build its own structural steel fabrication facility. Steve Gibson joined the shop in 1985, and in 2004 became the general manager. The difference between Haskell and other steel fabrication companies, he recalled, was the pace and urgency of meeting construction schedules. “Other shops . . . wouldn’t work overtime unless they absolutely were forced to. But when I came to Haskell, there was a sense of urgency about everything we did . . . We all did everything we could to make sure that we supported the construction projects.”

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The Steel Fabrication operation was part of what the company called the Construction Industries Group, which included the steel shop and an equipment rental unit. Additional operations came to include pre-stressed concrete, and contracting services for electrical, roofing, and refrigeration. All existed primarily to support the construction operations and to vertically integrate The Haskell Company. By broadening the company’s self-performance resources, Construction Industries contributed to profitability and project performance.

Construction Industries’ commercial refrigeration unit helped attract a significant customer to The Haskell Company. Kraft Foods had circulated a request for proposals (RFP) for a food facility in Twinsburg, Ohio. Greg Ferrell, initially a construction superintendent, was managing Construction Industries. Having become familiar with its commercial ammonia refrigeration systems, the Kraft RFP came to him. “Their freezer boxes and their cooler boxes are the lifeblood of their facility. Not everybody can do that. You need to know how to design all the electrical enclosures, the roofing, the walls, panels, the floor, and the floor insulation, the heat in the floor. So it’s a very specialized building.” After its successful performance on that job, Haskell delivered similar projects for Kraft.
By the late 1980s, The Haskell Company’s annual revenues were in the range of $100 million. Its design-build delivery method was winning construction business from private owners and publicly traded corporations in markets beyond Florida. Hotels, offices, and retail buildings continued as valuable business sectors, along with industrial projects. National companies such as Frito-Lay became important new customers of The Haskell Company. Life care and retirement communities provided construction growth potential.

But public sector design-build work remained out of reach. In local, state, and federal government contracting, tradition and law mandated the use of conventional design-bid-build, with the contractor chosen on the basis of low price. Increasingly, Preston Haskell and others in the company devoted themselves to promoting design-build as an alternative in public procurement, and to support for legislative reforms that would make that possible. To do this, Haskell developed guidelines that showed how public officials could attract competitive proposals that would allow for comparative evaluation on the basis of best value, rather than simply lowest price, and that would also promote transparency in the awarding of contracts by public entities.

In 1989, the State of Florida adopted legislation, pioneering in the U.S., that allowed public agencies to conduct design-build procurement. “Design-build contract” was defined in the new law as a single contract with a firm that was certified as a general contractor and that was certified in the practice of engineering or architecture. Also in the law were methods for local government agencies, such as cities, counties and school boards, to establish defensible criteria for soliciting and evaluating competitive design-build proposals - the so-called “Competitive Proposal Selection Process.”

As one result of Florida’s new law, The Haskell Company won contracts to build public schools such as New River Middle School in Ft. Lauderdale, Landmark Middle School and Mandarin Middle School in Jacksonville, and office and parking structures in Tallahassee. Routine Haskell practices such as designing for tilt-up construction, among other time and cost-saving strategies, allowed the company to price the new school buildings competitively and to deliver them on a fast track. Speed was critical to the school system’s need for classrooms where enrollment was growing quickly.

Florida’s legislation opened a significant public sector market to design-build contractors. The law became a model for enabling legislation subsequently adopted in jurisdictions across the U.S. However, actually accomplishing similar legislative action in other states, and at the federal level, remained a challenge in the decade ahead.

Throughout much of the company’s history to date, Preston Haskell had been engaged in Jacksonville’s civic and community affairs. During the difficult years of the mid-1970s energy crisis, he chaired the Jacksonville Electric Authority (JEA). During Haskell’s tenure, JEA launched a series of initiatives aimed at improving efficiency and managing costs. Haskell served the State of Florida as well, in areas of statewide concern such as postsecondary education, public facilities finance, and insurance and tort reform. His public service reflected a commitment to good citizenship that remains a model for The Haskell Company’s people at every level. His experience fostered an understanding of government, better equipping him to contribute to policy formation in areas such as public procurement. This exposure and expertise proved valuable as his company and the construction industry entered the 1990s.
In 1990, The Haskell Company celebrated its first twenty-five years. For two and a half decades, the company had focused on several things: advancing the design-build delivery method, creativity in design, technological innovation, integrating professionals from across the disciplines, adding abilities to self-perform projects, pursuing work of increasing complexity and sophistication, identifying and entering new markets, delivering value, and strengthening its people. As the company’s founder and the source of its vision, Preston Haskell had led the enterprise into ambitious ventures. Not all had succeeded, but the company’s culture of fearless entrepreneurship and technical excellence persisted and grew.

Haskell’s culture has a strong aesthetic sense, expressed in the setting of its riverfront headquarters, the design of its projects, and through its collection of abstract paintings and prints, many created by significant artists, that has expanded over the last forty-five years. The thoughtfully displayed works of art signify and reinforce the culture of creativity that connects and inspires the company’s people—workers, customers, or visitors. The significance of the company’s art is such that visitors, often in groups, come to the offices on Riverside Avenue for the express purpose of viewing its collection. A number of Haskell employees are sufficiently knowledgeable to serve as docents for such visits.

The presence of dramatically colorful abstract art contrasts with the orderly gravitas of representational imagery that is the essence of architecture and engineering. Haskell explains, “the first being the personal pleasure of the occupants of the office, the second being that an environment where artwork is present complements or even stimulates creativity. We work with designs and ideas, and we are constantly trying to be at the forefront of creative thought. Finally, it conveys to visitors something about the company’s interest in aesthetics and creativity.”

The company’s persona is discernible in other ways having to do with its physical geography. Walls are glass, and doors typically stand open. Generous work tables at standing height appear invitingly throughout the common spaces. It is easy for people to work together, because they do so intentionally every day. Preston Haskell elaborates: “The open door policy, the fact that there are no opaque walls, that people are accessible . . . that sends a message.” The message is that Haskell’s people readily share problems, experiences, and ideas. The company’s offices foster a culture that is collaborative as well as creative.
A setting that facilitated collaboration was important to The Haskell Company’s business model. Integrating design and construction was the company’s brand, and there wasn’t the camaraderie. We went down many different avenues to fix that. One was to design-build project delivery. Preston Haskell led a campaign for its wider acceptance. He wrote and published widely on topics related to design-build, as the “Brooks Act,” which provided that architects and engineers in federal contracting were to be selected solely on qualifications, Price could have no part in the process. The matter divided professional architects and engineers, an increasing number of whom had themselves become design-build practitioners, employed by firms such as The Haskell Company.

Professional architects and engineers argued that practitioners employed by an entrepreneurial design-build contractor might feel compelled to subordinate their judgment to the interests of their employer. The standards of practice of design-build contracting addressed by mapping clear pathways of professional accountability and responsibility, which conformed to laws that already governed the professions. And indeed, by 1994, when the DBIA had been established with Preston Haskell elected as its first chairman, the AIA had embraced design-build’s legitimacy. That year, AIA president Chester A. “Chef” Widhorn joined with Haskell and the DBIA to seek new legislation removing the restrictive “inret” provisions in the Brooks Act. By the end of the year, new design-build legislation had passed both houses of Congress. The new law was signed by President Clinton in early 1995, since which time design-build has gained wide use in procurement by federal agencies.

A marker of success was the 1993 founding of the Design-Build Institute of America (DBIA). The DBIA resulted from Preston Haskell’s efforts, along with those of industry allies such as Charles Pankow, the head of a California-based firm bearing his name. In that environment, Haskell won projects that had once been exclusively on medical projects could deliver effective designs. In that environment, Haskell won projects that included a 30,000 square foot medical office building at Baptist Medical Center Beaches, in Jacksonville Beach, a 55,000 square foot medical office building at Baptist Medical Center Nassau, plus additions and clinical area renovations of a fifty-four bed hospital in Fernandina Beach, Florida. Other projects were the Jacksonville Orthopedic Institute, a 45,000 square foot outpatient surgery, rehabilitation and medical office center in Jacksonville, and the Baptist System’s Wolfson Children’s Hospital, for which Haskell provided construction management.

The DBIA remains the major institutional advocate for design-build, though promoting its acceptance is no longer the dominant challenge. The organization has been able to turn to investing in education and the continuing advancement of best practices for practitioners, as well as support for customers. It continues to receive strong support from The Haskell Company, which has been continually represented on its board of directors. At different times, three of Haskell’s executives have served as chairman of the National Board of the DBIA.

By 1990s, the Haskell Company was having somewhat more success with customers in the healthcare industry, which was slow to embrace design-build. The first major client had been the Baptist Health System, with a major medical campus in downtown Jacksonville. Like many urban hospitals, it was being already intensively developed site, bounded on the west by the St. Johns River, an interstate highway, and by railroad tracks. In 1985, an out-patient center next to the hospital was Haskell’s first design-build project for Baptist.

Christopher Holmes remembers the project as “a very interesting building. It took their imaging department . . . and brought half of it over for out-patient use. There were two gamma radiation-based vaults. The second floor was radiation oncology, and the third floor was the chemical treatment of cancer. The thickest walls were eight feet, and I think the ceilings were maybe four feet in thickness. A block away is the FEC railroad track that feeds all the traffic to Miami . . . we had physicians in there doing eye surgery, so there was no room for vibration at all in the structure. So we went through structural analysis, making the building in certain areas stiffer, and more flexible in other areas to dampen it out.” Haskell’s design team benefitted from their first Computer-Aided Design (CAD) system. CAD technology advanced rapidly and continued to shorten the design and engineering processes, as well as assist builders in modeling designs before they reached the construction stage.

During the 1990s, a perception lingered among healthcare executives that their facilities were so specialized that only architects who focused exclusively on medical projects could deliver effective designs. In that environment, Haskell won projects that included a 30,000 square foot medical office building at Baptist Medical Center Beaches, in Jacksonville Beach, a 55,000 square foot medical office building at Baptist Medical Center Nassau, plus additions and clinical area renovations of a fifty-four bed hospital in Fernandina Beach, Florida. Other projects were the Jacksonville Orthopedic Institute, a 45,000 square foot outpatient surgery, rehabilitation and medical office center in Jacksonville, and the Baptist System’s Wolfson Children’s Hospital, for which Haskell provided construction management.
In 1996, The Haskell Company delivered a dramatic project that happened to rise from its healthcare clientele. Though relatively compact in size, it is memorable to every Haskell employee who touched it. The reasons owe to the complexity of its design and execution, and its testimony to what design-build project delivery can do.

Every day, 130,000 cars and trucks pass beneath the elegant, glass-enclosed Baptist-Nemours walkway linking the Wolfson Children's Hospital (part of Baptist Health System's sprawling downtown Jacksonville campus) with the eleven-story Nemours Children's Clinic. The walkway's seven hundred eighty-foot length spans Interstate Highway 95, at a point just south and east of the St. Johns River where the highway twists through downtown Jacksonville. In 1996, the walkway was the first private structure to be built across an interstate highway. Increasing the challenge was that the aging highway, opened in 1960, was being shifted and elevated to connect with a new nine-lane, high-level bridge then yet to be built across the adjacent St. Johns River.

For the Baptist-Nemours walkway project, The Haskell Company dealt with two project owners (Baptist Health and Nemours Children's Health System), who shared the cost of the overpass equally. Each was already operating busy, sophisticated facilities on their respective medical campuses. Once the design concept was established, the permitting process consumed a year and a half, involving the State of Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration (AHCA), the Federal Highway Administration, the Florida Department of Transportation, and the City of Jacksonville. No model existed for what Haskell proposed, and a unique external condition applied — Interstate 95 could be closed only during darkness, for six hours at a time, on two nights. No holiday or weekend closures could be allowed.

Unique though it was, the Baptist-Nemours walkway became a model for the possibilities of the design-build method, and for Haskell's system of integrated project delivery. As Holmes put it, “I can’t imagine having it designed by one group and built by another group. The wheels would fall off in the early stages. It truly is an example of understanding constructability, understanding construction tolerances, understanding construction methods, means, timing and schedule, monetary value, permitting, design, good aesthetics, and kind of the cutting edge of what you can do. All of these pieces came together on this project.”

For this project, nothing could be left touching the ground in the right-of-way. In addition, the space available on either side of the highway was limited by...
the presence of the two hospitals, open and working day and night. The eventual design called for two
towers, shaped at the top like wishbones, standing on
private land on each side of the Interstate. The concrete
towers were precast on the jobsite, demonstrating
The Haskell Company’s ability to perform tilt-up
construction innovatively, in this case on an unusually
confined site and under challenging conditions.

Each of the two towers consisted of three sections
that were precast in steel forms on site. Once erected,
cables extended from each tower in either direction
to support the bridge. The center steel truss was the
last piece to be put up in the air, which was when the
highway had to be shut down.

In the decades since its founding, The Haskell Company
has adapted tilt-up techniques for use in nearly every
kind of construction. Using tilt-up for the overpass
allowed Haskell’s design-build team to capitalize on
(at that time) its over thirty years of experience in
continually expanding the limits of what tilt-up could
do. The company’s engineers and architects had
grown their capabilities with computer-aided design
(CAD), which allowed them to model various options
and shortened the time to a finished design. The steel
fabrication section supplied almost all the critical
components. Haskell PCEs performed the assembly
and erection on site, ensuring control over the process.
Having produced and erected the piers and columns,
they placed the trusses, poured the concrete, fitted the
wall sections, and finished the interior and exteriors.

Interest in the project grew intense, and many of those
involved were present for the critical nighttime event,
when the interstate was closed for six hours and the
center span was lifted and fitted in place. Steve Gibson,
who had performed modeling for the design using
Auto-CAD, observed the process from the ground
beneath: ‘It’s just kind of an odd feeling to be standing
in the middle of the roadway - you keep thinking a car
is going to sneak up on you.’ Preston Haskell recalled
the scene: “Many of us, including [Baptist Health CEO]
Bill Mason and I, gathered on the roof of an adjacent
building to watch the operation. You can imagine my
relief when the center sections were flown up and
precisely fit within the allotted space.”

The November 1998 issue of Concrete Construction
featured the award-winning
Baptist-Nemours Pedestrian Overpass on its cover.

For its design and
construction of the
Baptist-Nemours
Pedestrian Overpass,
the Tilt-Up Concrete
Association presented The Haskell Company with its
1998 Tilt-Up Achievement Award. The project also
received an Excellence in Construction Award from
the Associated Builders and Contractors, and Design-
Build Institute of American’s national award for Best
Project Under Five Million Dollars. Denise Ramsey,
a mechanical engineer responsible for the HVAC
(heating, ventilation and air-conditioning) calls the
project one “that you point to as being very proud you
are associated with.”

The towers turned out to be aesthetically striking.
The bridge that they support allows hospital staff and
visitors to safely and comfortably cross six lanes of
high-speed traffic, day and night, in any weather. The
finished overpass is an iconic structure seen by nearly
everyone who travels through Jacksonville.
In 1999, Preston Haskell’s vision had established the company as one of, if not the national leader in design-build project delivery. Instead of being an “alternative,” design-build had become mainstream. Companies much larger than Haskell had taken note of its success, with many moving to set up their own design-build operations. The growth of DBIA, the success of design-build in the public sector, and the emulation of the model by a growing number of firms all suggested future opportunities.

Preston Haskell looked to the future recognizing without urgency that he must eventually plan for leadership succession. His presumption, and that of the company’s senior management, had been that the next generation of leadership would come from within, but a timetable for that change did not seem imminent. Haskell had turned sixty the year previously. He enjoyed good health, and no external factors impinged on the company’s leadership needs going forward. The economy was robust, as was the construction industry. Supported by capable managers at the company, he continued to expand his advocacy for design-build and to shape the activities of DBIA. He helped expand that organization’s board, recruiting new members such as Steve Halverson, a senior vice-president of the Minneapolis-based M.A. Mortenson Construction. Mortenson was a large commercial and industrial contractor against which Haskell occasionally competed. The two men had first met several years earlier, and became better acquainted through their shared involvement in the DBIA.

In March of 1999, Haskell telephoned Halverson, noting that they would both be attending a board meeting of the DBIA in Las Vegas the following week. Could Halverson get there early so the two could meet for a drink, Haskell wondered? Halverson agreed, speculating that Preston wished to discuss his company’s future.

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Preston had suggested a drink rather than dinner, anticipating that the conversation might be brief. The two met at the pyramid-shaped Luxor Hotel. Haskell remarked that he had recently turned sixty, and was thinking ahead. Realizing that the question might seem odd, and expecting a negative answer - was there any chance Halverson would consider leaving Mortenson and coming to The Haskell Company? “He might have said no, but happily, my timing was just right. He was considering making a move, and I was able to offer him two things that were not available to him at Mortenson - a path to becoming CEO, and stock ownership.” The conversation that followed over dinner was hardly brief, although as Steve recalls, “we came to terms rather quickly.”

When Halverson contemplated Haskell’s offer, he says, “I really thought Haskell, while small in relative terms, was near the front of where a significant part of the industry was going to head.” It was where Halverson had hoped Mortenson would move. Indeed, when Halverson told “Mort” Mortenson of his decision, Mortenson countered by asking Halverson to stay. If The Haskell Company was that good, maybe Mortenson should buy it. Halverson could run it and execute the design-build strategy that they had discussed. Surprised, Steve agreed to pass the idea along. “I’m not surprised,” Haskell replied, politely but firmly declining to consider the option. He and Halverson both wanted to pursue the arrangement that was shaping up between them.
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In May, Halverson with his wife and daughter had an enjoyable visit to Jacksonville, and he furthered his discussions with Preston. In early June, over dinner at Chicago’s O’Hare Airport, Haskell and Halverson finalized their agreement. Halverson began winding up his work at Mortenson, while Haskell informed his company’s senior management. That summer he introduced them to Steve during informal meetings. The Haskell Company’s new president took office on August 1, 1999.

Steven T. Halverson grew up in Minnesota, and was educated there through his bachelor’s degree in political science and philosophy from Saint John’s University. Newly married he and his high-school sweetheart, Diane moved to Washington D.C., where both attended American University. To earn money while studying law at AU, Halverson worked for the American Bar Association. The District of Columbia, Federal Public Defender Office had funded a grant to help state and local governments deter corruption and fraud by strengthening their procurement practices, of which construction and design services were a big part. Halverson visited numerous states, cities and counties, and testified before “countless” legislatures and city councils. In the process, he learned how public bodies procured construction and design services. With Donald Gavin, an attorney concentrating on that practice area, Halverson co-authored a book chapter on state-level procurement. After graduating in 1979, he spent a year with Gavin’s Washington law firm before returning with his family to Minnesota.

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During fifteen years with the Mortenson Company, Halverson acquired three portfolios of responsibility. One was to run the company’s then relatively modest western operations; another, to develop its federal government contracting; and the third was to advance Mortenson internationally, where the company had up until then little or no presence. International business had interested Halverson since law school.

“For me, first as a lawyer but to learn our business? If thinking, Mort Mortenson asked, “Why don’t you work than practicing law. When a Briggs client, the CEO of Morgan, Halverson was a civil litigator. His experience from 1980 to 1984, at the St. Paul law firm of Briggs and once a dollar operation that had not been profitable in its eight-year existence. “Maybe Mortenson’s thinking was, you can’t fall out of a basement window. The kid can’t screw this up too badly - let’s see if anything good comes of it,” Halverson recalls.

In 1989, at the time of Halverson’s arrival, Denver and much of the west were in a deep recession. However, a new 4.8 billion-dollar Denver International Airport was in the works. Halverson’s law school experience gave him confidence in his understanding of the public procurement process. Relatively few firms in the region were positioned to compete in the public sector, adapting to the rules, regulatory agencies, and reporting requirements. Under Halverson’s direction, the Mortenson Company enjoyed success with the airport project, and then won the contract to build a large, complex baseball stadium for the Colorado Rockies. Within five years, the western division grew tenfold, to $400 million in business — approximately one-third of total company revenues and a significant percent of its profits.

From Denver, Halverson moved to Los Angeles, where the Mortenson Company had won several significant projects, including a large convention center project. The western region expanded under Halverson’s management, with offices in Denver, Colorado Springs, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Hawaii all reporting to him. He became deeply immersed in construction and operations, as the company’s projects involved complex contracting as well as construction performance.

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Mortenson appeared to see possibilities in the you’re any good at it we’ll find an opportunity for you on the operating side of the business and take it from there.” “I jumped at it,” Halverson recalls.

In 1994, Mortenson tasked Halverson and two contemporary executives to strategically evaluate the company’s future. For nearly a year the three worked as a “think-tank,” traveling the U.S. and the world, and talking to “smart people” in and outside the construction industry. A relatively small design-build firm in the Southeast, The Haskell Company, drew Halverson’s attention. A phone call elicited an invitation from Preston Haskell to come and spend a day. Haskell’s openness impressed his visitor, as did the smaller company’s commitment to and success with design-build and its integrated-performance model. The two men warned to each other, and the following year, Halverson accepted an invitation from Haskell to join the board of the Design-Build Institute of America. Halverson’s support for DBIA was informed by his conviction that design-build would gain in importance in the construction industry. His employer was receptive but, as a large, respected and mature construction enterprise already, Mortenson was not positioned to fully pivot toward design-build as its principal method of project delivery.

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had an imposing record of innovating and pushing the company’s design-build was already part of the culture. Instead of adapting to a novel delivery method, the company was trying to adapt. By 1965 on the basis of a vision to which other builders had no inkling, The Haskell Company had been conceived and founded in early 1999, when Preston Haskell called. “I said, ‘if you asked me a month from now, I would be working for somebody else.’” When Halverson came aboard, Greg Ferrell (now retired from the position of chief operating officer) headed the company’s industrial group. He found Halverson personable: “I thought he had a genuine feeling for the well-being of all employees of the company. I thought he had a sense of integrity, he wasn’t going to do anything that would be perceived as not aboveboard, and certainly had our customers’ interests at heart as the number one priority. He had a lot of the things that were important for somebody who’s going to lead our company.”

Steve Halverson meets with Preston Haskell, 1999

What particularly intrigued Halverson was that The Haskell Company had been conceived and founded in 1965 on the basis of a vision to which other builders and engineering firms were finally trying to adapt. By the late 1990s, design-build was no longer unusual. As a competitor against Mortenson, Haskell had prevailed initially a process of getting to know its people, to which Halverson devoted his first weeks. The company’s senior managers had been taken by surprise when the founder turned to an outsider to assume the executive role. Preston and Steve anticipated that the latter would need a year or so to build credibility and respect in his new role. The speed with which that took place “exceeded my expectations,” Haskell recalled; so much so that on January 1, 2000, five months later, Haskell added the title of chief executive officer to Halverson’s portfolio. Preston Haskell took the position of chairman, which he holds at this writing in 2015.

“Steve’s done a wonderful job in terms of client relationships, developing new markets, bringing up people at every level of the company to higher performance levels,” Haskell notes. But he and other company veterans agree that Halverson’s greatest effect has been in the area of profitability. “Our profit margins were never as consistent or as high as I wanted them to be,” Haskell said. “Steve brought fresh ideas and a strong discipline to his position, and that discipline included increasing profits at the job level by two or three percentage points, which can be huge in construction companies, which are revenue-intensive.” In 2015, the company’s book value is about five times what it was when Halverson assumed the presidency, and profit margins are approximately twice what they had been. “Profits are like oxygen,” Halverson asserts. Without them, “nothing else is possible. You can’t compensate people, can’t create a great work environment, can’t innovate. You can’t do anything without having a fundamentally profitable business model.”

Halverson’s background gave him a fresh lens through which to view the company. He settled on a course aimed toward ramping up and leveraging the company’s strengths in terms of operations and strategic direction. The Haskell Company has maintained its focus on design-build and its culture of innovation, while expanding on its capabilities for integrated projects. Its strategic plan going forward would build on its legacy and established characteristics.

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The company's leadership emphasizes the human insurance premiums. Morale is a consideration, but delays, and lead to higher job costs, as well as increased for a strong safety culture is obvious. Injuries cause than a fierce concentration on safety. The business case people became manifest in many ways, none more so Halverson's concern for the well being of Haskell's "You can't go back in time and you hurt. You can't go back in time and make that go away." ~ Lance Simons The Haskell Company has turned away from profitable business owing to conflict with a customer over the primacy of safe jobsite practices. Halverson is emphatic about his intent: "I think most people would probably say [if asked], what do you think Steve cares about? I would guess that people would say safety, and I hope that's the case . . . if anybody comes to work here, they are safer than they would be in almost any other construction enterprise anywhere in the world. That's an important accomplishment. You can add up statistically the number of people who aren't hurt or aren't killed because they work here somewhere... You can't make up someone . . . we can make up a schedule . . . we can make up a dollar. If a delay costs us money, we can make that up somewhere. We're a big company . . . we can make up a schedule delay. You can't make up somebody you hurt . . . you can't go back in time and make that go away.''

The Haskell Company's leadership entered the twenty-first century with a focus on deepening The Haskell Company's financial and human capital. Their strategic plan called for doing what Haskell did already, capitalizing on the company's resources while driving them to perform in more complex, sophisticated ways. Over the preceding thirty-five years, Preston Halverson's vision had led the company to accomplishments that gained national recognition. Halverson, with a commitment to design-build and an affinity for international business, sought to widen its sense of itself and its capabilities. He pointed the company toward accomplishments in new places and markets.

Halverson's concern for the well being of Haskell's people became manifest in many ways, none more so than a fierce concentration on safety. The business case for a strong safety culture is obvious. Injuries cause delays, and lead to higher job costs, as well as increased insurance premiums. Morale is a consideration, but the company's leadership emphasizes the human dimension. Lance Simons, Haskell's corporate safety director, invokes Steve Halverson's stance: "We can always make up a dollar. If a delay costs us money, we can make that up somewhere. We're a big company . . . we can make up a schedule delay. You can't make up somebody you hurt . . . you can't go back in time and make that go away.''

The new CEO's strategic vision was informed by the ways in which The Haskell Company differed from the rest of its industry. It also arose out of differences between Steve Halverson's experience and that of Haskell veterans. Halverson appraised it this way: "People who had . . . spent most of their careers in the company, didn't have a lot of external experience. It's an over-generalization, obviously, but I think it's accurate. I had had a rather opposite career. I'd practiced law, spent time with a different company, managed large-scale joint ventures with other large companies, and had that year sabbatical, traveling the world. So I had . . . probably a more global view of the industry. That certainly informed my judgment, and I hope was beneficial to the company, to have an outside-in view of how the company was, what its opportunities might be, and what its performance expectations ought to be."

Nonetheless, in deciding to leave his former employer where he had enjoyed success and strong relationships, and move his family to Jacksonville, Halverson was won over by the model and the organization that Preston Haskell had built. It was the product of vision and consistency of purpose. The differences between the founder and his successor included a style of leadership that was, in Haskell's case more singular, observed Halverson: "He is a person of towering intellect, and he has great confidence in that intellect. In terms of big directions of the company, they were mainly headed in the right directions already . . . . I thought a few things when I first came. One was, the company needed to be much more disciplined around identification and management of risk than it had been, and we changed that. I am, by nature, far more financially conservative, and I saw the future of the company . . . accompanied by a much more robust and powerful balance sheet, and I worked hard to equip it with the financial resources that matched its vision and capabilities."
With Steve Halverson as the new CEO, The Haskell Company’s people looked ahead to the new century. Halverson sought ways to strengthen the company’s human development, while responding to clients’ needs for design-build services capable of delivering projects of complexity and sophistication. A pivotal experience with an important client solidified Haskell’s decision to enhance its design-build project delivery method to incorporate process design and engineering, and equipment procurement. But before realizing those initiatives, Halverson first had to respond to external events that precipitated difficulties throughout the construction industry.

In 2001, events in the sureties business challenged Haskell and other construction firms nationwide. Sureties are financial guarantors. The issuer of a surety bond guarantees that a project will get built, or that the customers will be made financially whole. Many customers would only enter into a construction contract with a surety bond, and in the absence of such a guarantee, lending institutions might hesitate to extend credit to a project. Often though, Haskell’s customers forego the expense of a surety bond knowing that Haskell possesses abundant surety capacity. Thus, to Haskell and its customers, the mere existence of a strong surety relationship is indispensable, even if the bond itself is not written.

Following the September 11th attacks on the U.S. and other economic dislocations, the property and casualty insurance industry reported steep losses. Amid widespread uncertainty as to risk exposure, some insurance companies who were also surety underwriters left the market altogether. Others categorically dropped large numbers of customers. Haskell’s underwriter, American International Group, was one of those retaining only its ten largest contractors and dropping all others. Haskell’s surety representative quickly arranged meetings with possible new underwriters whom Halverson traveled to meet. Repeatedly, if politely, he was told “no.” The crisis was becoming Halverson’s first serious test as CEO. Without access to sureties, survival was at stake. The Florida representatives for The Travelers Insurance Company also said no to Haskell, whose surety broker then appealed directly to Terry Lukow, the Travelers executive who headed surety business for the construction sector. Halverson and Preston Haskell flew to Connecticut to meet with Lukow, who listened impassively to their presentation. Halverson’s legal experience representing sureties gave him insight as to how such companies thought. He candidly acknowledged to Lukow that on paper nothing supported relaxing Travelers’ underwriting practices, notoriously rigorous at the best of times. Instead of pleading for exceptions, Halverson explained The Haskell Company’s distinctive business model, its internal human capital, its external relationships, and its market outlook. At the end, his own staff watching silently, Lukow responded: “I learned a long time ago, we don’t underwrite companies and balance sheets. We underwrite people. I believe what you’re saying about the people at this company. We’re going to take a risk, and we’re going to underwrite them.”

“It trust this company. There’s nothing I wouldn’t do for it.” ~ Preston Haskell

It was not that easy, however. Halverson was unsurprised when Lukow later added a caveat. In addition to the assets of the company, Preston Haskell and Steve Halverson, as individuals, must personally guarantee the surety coverage to the Travelers.
Company. It meant risking their net worth. As soon as he
learned of the new requirement, Halverson phoned Haskell, who was traveling abroad. Reached in Moscow at a late hour, Preston Haskell instantly consented to the
underwriting demand. Halverson urged caution—
everything Preston had would be on the line. Maybe he
should take the night and think it over carefully. "I
don't need to," Preston replied. "If you want to call back
and tell me you tell the same thing tomorrow, I will,
but I trust you. I trust this company. There's nothing
I wouldn't do for it." Halverson vividly recalls the
conversation, and the confidence that it conveyed, in
him and in the company.

While responding to distractions such as an unsteady
economy and the surety crisis, Halverson sought to
maintain focus on the company's opportunity horizon.
In terms of increasing the company's reach, he thought
that its capabilities were not being fully used. The
projects it was doing were relatively simple and quickly
executed, while experience had convinced him about
what Haskell's business model could accomplish. "We
set about preparing the company to do larger, more
complex, more engineering-centered kinds of projects."

Halverson's plan coincided with the needs of long
established clients, such as Frito-Lay, which was
preparing to introduce hummus to its food product
line. A turnkey project to design and build the food production
facility, specify and acquire the equipment for making
a fresh tack on constructing plant facilities. Large
corporations in many industries had been reducing
their in-house design and engineering staffs. In that
environment, it made sense to have one contractor
fully responsible not only for the building, but also for
making it ready to produce and perform for the owner.
"That's the model we call," O'Leary believes. "Were we
going to keep building buildings and working for four
percent margins? Or were we going to become more
engineering focused, and process focused? Inside the
box work, we called it."

Responding to that challenge squared with Steve
Halverson's appraisal of what Haskell could do. His
confidence was palpable. As O'Leary recalls, the
initiative seemed ambitious, but achievable. "You
would think that if it would have been a significant discussion,
but it wasn't. The customer asked us for it. That was a
bold decision, because a lot goes into it and a lot more
risk than we anticipated," Halverson's later perspective
was similar. "You can't just say you're going to take on
more complex projects, unless you at the same time
improve your capacity for measuring and managing
risk." Clearly, all of Haskell's people would reach for
higher levels of performance.

Early during Halverson's presidency, he and Preston
Haskell met informally every few weeks, away from
the office, to share ideas. In a conversation that Steve
vividly remembers, Haskell asked a seemingly simple,
but profound, question: "Are we good enough?" "I didn't
answer that in that conversation," O'Leary says. "My
interpretation of that was, as we look to the future,
were we able to compete in a big future?" Had that
been in doubt, Halverson notes, the sensible options
might have included putting the company into play as a
merger or acquisition target. An alternative might have
been to reorganize management, hiring an "A-team"
of veteran outsiders. Recalling all of Haskell's potential
importance of the question, Halverson reflected for
some time before concluding that Haskell was, in fact,
good enough. "Best decision I ever made. It retained
a faith and confidence in the core of the organization."
By that, he meant Haskell’s people, its culture, and its business model.

“I was mistaken if I thought my job was to run projects or tell people how to run projects. I concluded, early on, that the role of the CEO is three things: attracting talent, developing talent, and shaping culture.” - Steve Halverson

Halverson sees his job as being able to identify and establish the right people for positions. In the twenty-first century economy, it is normal for people to change jobs often. Haskell attracts sophisticated, talented people with strong credentials, and wins their ongoing loyalty, making it an uncommon place to work. It is not unusual to find people who have worked at the company for decades, a fact that impresses even those hired more recently. Creating an environment where that happens is at the center of the company’s leadership portfolio. Halverson explained that he soon came to devote approximately forty percent of his time to matters relating to Haskell’s people: “I was mistaken if I thought my job was to run projects or tell people how to run projects. I concluded, early on, that the role of the CEO is three things: attracting talent, developing talent, and shaping culture.”

In pursuit of that agenda, Halverson elevated and recalibrated the company’s human resources function. Typically, human resources is an administrative department that reports through an executive with other portfolios, such as a chief financial officer. Instead, Haskell has made HR a strategic function, whose head reports directly to the CEO. “Beginning in the early 2000s, we completely tore apart the training and professional development program, and moved to recruit better leaders into the HR function, and to place them in the organization differently.” In 2006, Halverson established an Office of the Chief Executive (OCE), in which the leadership responsibilities are dispersed among a senior cabinet. The OCE is a four-person team, of which three members are executive vice-presidents. The fourth member is Halverson, who notes that the executive vice president for human resources is an indispensable part of the cabinet: “So, it is the people person, the money person (the CFO), the operations person, and me.”

What further differentiated Haskell in its emphasis on human resources was the perspective of those recruited to that position. Halverson chose to reach outside of construction for human resources talent, explaining that he could teach the person in that post about the industry. What he sought was someone who could bring “world-class skills about how to manage and inspire talented people.” A goal of Halverson’s was for Haskell to be one of the great places to work in America. The job of human resources is to make Haskell a place where the best people in the industry want to work, where, as Steve hopes, “moms and dads will guide their kids, and say, if you could only work for Haskell, that’d be great.”

The construction industry overall is seldom noted for emphasizing and developing talent, which makes Haskell stand out. Halverson believes that experts in the industry, if given free rein throughout the company and then asked what is unusual about it, would say that Haskell devotes more to human resources and related functions than is normal. “I defend that robustly. It’s done with great intentionality. You can tell what a company’s priorities are by how it allocates resources, and we allocate a lot to HR.”
Support for educational advancement is one means for investing in Haskell’s people, and examples abound. In 2002, a civil engineer and project director named John Paul Saenz had lunch with Steve Halverson and Greg Ferrell, along with the head of HR at that time, David Bogage. “As part of my career development, they asked if I would be interested in graduate education in business. It sounded like a lot of extra work, and I had my plate full at the time. I remember Steve just saying, ‘Look, we’d like to send you to get your MBA.’ He added, ‘You know we can look at different schools.’” Saenz recognized “a huge signal that there was a lot of confidence in what I had done and what they thought I could do. That was a great career opportunity for me, and even today I promote that within my group. That degree in business complemented everything I had done on the engineering and construction sides, and has informed a lot of my thinking that resulted in what I am doing now.” His path to that position included establishing Haskell’s permanent presence in Mexico, which after five years under his management grew to $98 million in gross revenues, a significant percentage of the company’s total sales. By 2012, Saenz was president of Haskell’s Industrial Group.

By comparing itself to others in and outside of engineering and construction, Haskell discerns and appropriates practices that offer something to the company’s purpose. In the case of human resources, Haskell looks to companies such as their client, PepsiCo, which Halverson credits with being a “leadership factory.” His own service as an outside member of other corporate boards affords him a close perspective on those firms’ techniques and experiences. And Haskell’s HR leadership is regularly involved in organizations and networks where valuable outside information and knowledge of best practices can be derived.

The Haskell Company’s human values are evident nowhere more than in its safety culture, Steve Halverson’s passion for which percolates throughout the entire organization. On any given day, Haskell’s people are at work on jobsites across the U.S. and in other nations. By its nature, the work is sometimes dangerous. Averting that risk is part of the Company’s mission for which every employee has responsibility. One of the benefits of design-build and of Haskell’s integrated performance is that safety runs through every project from contract to delivery. The company’s concise Code of Safe Practices is part of every contract. Architects and engineers confer with those who will perform the work, including subcontractors. Construction drawings contain “safety alerts” which identify potential hazards. Thus, safety is designed into a project, hazards are designed out, and building it exposes workers to minimal risks. Continual training, accident prevention programs, and jobsite safety meetings maintain the cultural emphasis, consistently reinforced by Haskell’s leaders at every level.

In 2006, Haskell experienced an accident with two fatalities, involving subcontractor employees on a residential high-rise in downtown Jacksonville. A removable platform failed while workers were using it at high elevation. The subsequent investigation assigned blame to a third-party equipment supplier. Nevertheless, the loss was a shock to the Haskell organization, and inspired a recommitment to safe practices. In that same year, Haskell joined the American Contractors Insurance Group, a consortium of some forty contractors who jointly self-insure against loss from accidents, and who measure their safety records against each others’. Sharing experiences and outcomes incentivizes the member firms to maximize safety and minimize losses. “Every accident is preventable,” says safety director Lance Simons. His job is to communicate that message throughout the company, along with the values associated with safe performance. Everyone associated with the Haskell organization aspires to the highest level of that performance, or they do not last.

Aligning Haskell’s culture with its twenty-first century mission helped identify the people it needed to attract and develop. Skills and credentials were obvious, but values were harder to measure, while ultimately essential to a good fit. As the company’s strategy focused on elevating its performance capabilities, adding talent by acquiring other companies offered a way to accelerate the process. Evaluating organizations for their compatibility with Haskell’s values and distinctive business model would be difficult. Even while launching that initiative, the company had to weather another storm.
Anyone experienced in business during recent decades would agree that 2008 stands out as the worst economic dislocation since the Great Depression. Few anticipated it on the scale that took place. Those like Preston Haskell, who had experienced the recession of 1974-1976 and subsequent less severe recessions, knew well how to manage through them. Economic downturns have trajectories, and temporal boundaries. They begin and end, and in the meantime have to be weathered, for which there are tactics such as reducing expenses, curtailing travel and purchases, and retaining core personnel despite layoffs. In short, there is what Steve Halverson calls a “playbook.” It includes maintaining a set of defensive positions such as a backlog of work and a strong balance sheet. All of those things Haskell historically did. But in late 2008 and early 2009, the playbook was, as Halverson put it, “useless.”

In 2007 and 2008, a crisis in “subprime” home mortgages spread throughout financial markets. By early 2009, bad news had been adding up for months, and securities markets faltered. Like many companies, Haskell had tens of millions of dollars in those securities, which were routinely negotiable for cash. To the surprise of even close market watchers, they were at least temporarily unsalable. Conditions worsened with each confidence-rattling development, such as the collapse of the venerable Lehman Brothers investment-banking firm. Shares in an influential money market fund “broke the buck”, meaning values fell below $1.00, which was nearly unprecedented in the history of money market funds.

Only massive federal intervention saved major banks and financial corporations. At Haskell and at companies across the country, the ground seemed to shift beneath their feet. Halverson said, “Our fortress balance sheet was under assault because of unprecedented financial gyrations. You could just feel that people were afraid because they either explicitly or intuitively understood that life was different and we were in free fall. Not just Haskell, but the industry and the economy were in free fall. Nobody knew where the bottom was.”

Chapter Seven

“I specifically remember getting several calls from customers between January and March of 2009, with hundreds of millions of dollars under contract, signed contracts, who called and said, ‘Stop.’” ~ Jim O’Leary

The company’s other defensive position, a reassuringly strong backlog, also wavered. John Paul Saenz, then vice-president of Haskell’s Food and Beverage Division, recalled, “I remember looking around and realizing that a lot of people didn’t realize how bad this really was, not just for Haskell, but for the entire US economy. Construction companies don’t fare well in recessions because capital spending falls.” Jim O’Leary was on the front line: “I specifically remember getting several calls from customers between January and March of 2009, with hundreds of millions of dollars under contract, signed contracts, who called and said, ‘Stop.’ Projects where we were moving dirt, projects that we were starting foundations on, the customers called and said, ‘Stop.’ We’re canceling. We’ll work out the details.’ That was mind-boggling. Obviously that raised the question of what to do about all the good people whom we didn’t know what to do with. It was a rough time to live through and to manage a business through.”

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Construction companies across the country staggered, and many failed. Halverson recalls: “We had a quarter of a billion dollars of backlog evaporate in a seventy-five or ninety day period. It went away. Cancellations of a billion dollars of backlog evaporate in a seventy-five day period. It went away. Cancellations of a billion dollars of backlog evaporate in a seventy-five day period. It went away. Cancellations of a billion dollars of backlog evaporate in a seventy-five day period. It went away. Cancellations...”

It showed the resilience of the company. It revealed the character of our people. They rose to tough challenges and didn’t lose sight of who they were, who the company was, or how to behave.” - Steve Halverson

Ferrell himself recalls the period as one of intense focus. “It was getting the right people in the right spots. John Paul Saenz believes that diversification saved Haskell. “Our weathering of the recession could not have made a greater case for the diversity of our markets. You saw companies that were focused solely in the commercial markets - a lot of those companies aren’t around anymore.” Indeed, banks were for construction firms during the period were approximately three times the normal rate in the industry. Steve Halverson reflected on the worst moments of the so-called Great Recession: “I wouldn’t wish that on anyone, but it was good for us in a perverse way. It showed the resilience of the company. It revealed the character of our people. They rose to tough challenges and didn’t lose sight of who they were, who the company was, or how to behave. They didn’t panic - they executed at a very high level, and they developed confidence. I said to them, we’re all now seen a major-league fastball. There will be more recessions in the future, but it’s highly unlikely that you’ll see one like this again. It was so gratifying for me to see how they responded, individually and collectively.”
Initially, the new firm’s market niche was in the beverage industry, with customers such as Coca-Cola. Over time, approximately sixty percent of its customers came from the food and beverage industry, with the remainder manufacturing such things as consumer products or pharmaceuticals. A long-term relationship developed between E 2M and Tropicana, which was also a client of Haskell. Another major Haskell client, Frito-Lay, had done business with E2M.

As early as 2003, at industry trade shows such as Pack Expo, Haskell and E 2M began to notice each other marketing to similar customers. People in both firms had discerned the need for greater integration of services in complex projects for large companies. Over time, the idea of an acquisition grew more compelling for both firms. The financial metrics were not hard to evaluate, but everyone was convinced that the outcome of the acquisition would be greater than simply the sum of its parts. Don Baldwin, now Haskell’s senior vice president and chief strategy and marketing officer, came from E/M. “It had lots of intellectual property and was well regarded as a systems integrator, but had no scale - to take on a hundred million dollar project was impossible. Haskell had plenty of bonding capacity, and was very well respected as a builder, but had no systems knowledge and lacked the ability to deliver the whole operational aspect of the plant.” Baldwin added, “It was a huge opportunity to make a game changing shift in the go-to-market strategy. Clients were telling us it was what they wanted. Competitors weren’t doing it.” But finally, it was mutual comfort with the culture of the two firms that cemented the deal. As Halverson says, “The financial analysis is easy, the strategic analysis is easy. The cultural fit is hard, and acquisitions succeed or fail most commonly on the ability to correctly engage and integrate the cultures of an organization.”

Agreement between the two firms evolved slowly. Saenz does not believe that the shaky economy was a deterrent to acquiring E²M. “We had already started the process in the recession. We just applied a lot of pressure to make sure it worked. We knew that we were making a bet, and it had to be successful.” When the basic transaction came together in late 2009, the impact was nearly immediate. Within thirty days, Haskell won a 90 million dollar project for Tropicana, which was already familiar to both firms. The orange juice producer converted its packaging to blow-molded plastic bottles, which customers now recognize as the ubiquitous, clear carafe.

Another customer in common for the two firms was Diageo, the world’s largest manufacturer of distilled beverages, including dozens of brands such as Johnny Walker. Based in the U.K., Diageo had significant U.S. operations. Haskell was already building a rum distillery for them on the island of St. Croix. Fast on the heels of the E²M acquisition and the Tropicana project, Haskell won a 186 million dollar Diageo contract to renovate and expand two facilities, in Plainfield, Illinois and in Relay, Maryland. Halverson says, “It wasn’t just a big project. It positioned us in a different place. The old Haskell would have built the box, into which others would have put all this elaborate equipment. With our enhanced capabilities, we would build the box and put the equipment in, and calibrate it, and connect it, and make sure it ran, and guarantee that it worked. Greater risk, much greater complexity. But, at the core, it built on this model that Preston had established integrating design and construction, treating them as one thing, not two.”

In addition to transforming its self-identity, Haskell’s work for Diageo changed the company’s project delivery method to a model known as EPC - engineer, procure, and construct. As Halverson suggested, EPC is design-build with wider responsibilities. It made manifest the vision of the company that Halverson had formulated early in his tenure, that its core business model could expand by adding strengths. “It was,” he said, “exactly the reason we had acquired E²M to begin with. The combined enterprise could compete for projects that Haskell couldn’t have competed for before, nor could E²M. Independently, we wouldn’t even be invited to try. Together, we could make a case that we were the right firm, and so we did.”

The recession of 2008-2009 had a greater impact on the American economy than any similar event since the 1930s. The effects on construction industry were worse than those of the 1974-1976 recession. However, The Haskell Company survived the 2007-2009 events.
better than it had those of the 1970s. Instead of losing money, it posted robust profits. It emerged stronger financially and in the depth of its talent. It had maneuvered to a position from which could enter new markets, and perform larger and more sophisticated projects than ever before.

John Paul Saenz reflected: “We made good money during the recession, which was unusual, and we came out not only surviving but stronger. But we also invested in E&M. I remember at that point thinking, we have a very good company here. The fact that we weathered that recession, as well as the fact that we invested during the recession meant a lot to me. I said, ‘This is a really solid company.’ That appraisal gained support as Haskell consolidated and built upon its acquisition, and moved its EPC model forward.”
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"Haskell has been an outstanding partner. They are transparent, collaborative and innovative. They are delivering a truly transformational project for our Medical Center, and they are doing it with a great deal of sophistication, focus and dedication."

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Ricky Draehn, Senior Engineering Director
ConAgra

"Haskell has been an outstanding partner. They are transparent, collaborative and innovative. They are delivering a truly transformational project for our Medical Center, and they are doing it with a great deal of sophistication, focus and dedication."

John Couris, President and CEO
Jupiter Medical Center

"Haskell has been an excellent firm to work with. Their management of subcontractors is outstanding and their in-house personnel are excellent. They are very responsive to the Coast Guard’s changing requirements."

Pamela Argilan, Senior Field Contracting Officer
U.S. Coast Guard

"After asking our Spirit team where the project would be if we had hired someone other than Haskell, everyone said we would only be halfway done by now. Their performance has been excellent; working closely with us as one team."

Ron Redford
Facilities Senior Manager
Spirit AeroSystems

"Haskell delivered an impressive facility for FlightSafety Boeing, creating the world’s largest, non-airline-owned flight training facility. The design-build team completed the project ahead of schedule, despite increases in project scope, and within budget. The company proved that although there were obstacles along the way, each one was met and conquered with professionalism and a positive attitude."

Walter G. Bush, Senior Manager, Facilities Development
FlightSafety Boeing Training International
In recent years, four independent companies have joined Haskell— the Atlanta-based E2M, Seiberling Associates, of Beloit, Wisconsin, H.R. Gray, headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, and FreemanWhite, in Charlotte, North Carolina. The specialized expertise, market position, and internal culture of each company factored into its fit with Haskell’s strategy. The Haskell that has resulted from these additions is an organization with resources and capabilities that, in toto, considerably exceed the sum of its parts. Consolidating those resources positioned Haskell to serve more markets, at higher levels of sophistication, contract value, and profitability, but with commensurate increases in responsibility and risk.

Haskell’s interest in strengthening its capacity to provide engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) delivery was the major rationale behind its acquisition of E2M. In common with design-build, EPC fixes total responsibility for design and construction upon Haskell, which commits to a firm price and schedule. EPC adds process design to the company’s services, which includes the specification, procurement, organization and installation of all the equipment requisite to the customer’s objectives. But more importantly, EPC commits the company to standards of operational performance of the completed process facility.

To drive the EPC model forward, the Industrial Group focused on another relatively small engineering firm with which, like E2M, they had become familiar through trade shows and personal connections. As Steve Halverson recalled, “We wanted more process engineering, and we identified Seiberling, a small, very, very smart firm with leading edge capabilities and technologies.”

The Beloit-based Seiberling firm had been founded in 1976 by Dale Seiberling, an engineer and academic who pioneered the design of cleaning systems for the dairy industry. From there, Seiberling had established a presence throughout the food and beverage industry, where Haskell wanted to grow. Its specialty was engineering clean-in-place (CIP) processes for customers who required food-grade or pharmaceutical-grade facilities. The CIP process involves steam or...
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With the Seiberling acquisition, specialized teams began collaborating under the Haskell brand. Foremost among their attributes in common were technical excellence, seriousness of purpose, and a focus on managing projects to create value. E2M’s EPC delivery model intrigued designers and engineers on all sides of the strategy. E2M’s Keith Perkey said, “Where it starts to get really neat is when…you bring together the three organizations’ expertise. The power of the whole is much greater than each individual.” - Keith Perkey

Don Huett, trained as an electrical engineer, joined Seiberling in 1978 from Kroger, where he had worked on dairy processing equipment. (In 2014, Huett retired as executive vice president.) Huett saw Seiberling as a good fit for his professional interests, but he was also drawn by its entrepreneurial nature. “I like an environment where engineering is the enterprise, not just part of the overhead. In manufacturing companies, engineering is looked upon as overhead. I thought it would be great to be in a position where your work is actually the lifeblood of the company.”

Similarly to the people of E2M, Seiberling’s principals planned eventually to address leadership succession, but they were not pressed to act. It was the potential of combining their company with Haskell that sealed the deal, Huett reflected. “It seemed like a good culture fit. The things we thought were important, Haskell thought were important too - our business relationships and our internal relationships. Another thing is that we did not compete. If we got together, they were not going to get rid of half of this group. Our people should be secure. Our client base did not overlap much. The more we looked, the more we thought, there are a lot of pluses here. Frankly, they were just like us. They were nice people. I liked talking with them and working with them. So, I probably would not have said at the time that I was quite ready, but I think we could have waited ten years and never found a better match.”

“Where it starts to get really neat is when…you bring together the three organizations’ expertise. The power of the whole is much greater than each individual.” - Keith Perkey

Seiberling eliminated the need for daily disassembly and cleaning of the myriad network of tanks, pipes, pumps and valves typical of dairy and food plants. engineers write computer code and continually adapt technologies to strengthen the value of new systems, and add value for customers by retrofitting existing systems. Haskell, E2M and Seiberling had each independently worked with major food and beverage-producing companies. By combining their skills in EPC delivery, the team responded to what such customers needed. Like Haskell, E2M and Seiberling had strong reputations for skill and performance. They also shared other characteristics such as customer focus, an emphasis on adding value through sophisticated design and engineering, and deliberately fostering a creative, collaborative culture. They were also competitive - engineers who were also entrepreneurially minded.

Based in Midwestern dairy farming country, Seiberling served customers such as Borden Milk and the Kroger Grocery chain, which owned dairy plants in several states. It soon expanded to the brewing and wine industries, then to food producers such as General Mills, Nabisco, and Frito-Lay. Pharmaceuticals and bio-techn manufacturers came next. Seiberling engineers developed other process technologies that added value for the firm’s customers, a typical requirement for whom process performance in a clean or sterile environment.

In addition to the efficiencies gained by cleaning production machinery while it remained intact, Seiberling automated the process equipment. From wire for the firm’s industrial ovens, Seiberling moved its customers toward programmable controls. Its

Cornell Dairy Plant, Ithaca, NY (above) and SweetWater Brewery Expansion, Atlanta, GA (right)
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High skill, high integrity, and demonstrable creation of value for customers. Owing to the complexity of large infrastructure projects and the political sensitivity of major public expenditures, H.R. Gray's credibility is a significant asset.

The combined Haskell / H.R. Gray enterprise gave Haskell greater credibility in related markets in water and wastewater infrastructure. The nationwide deficit in those markets is estimated at a staggering $2.5 trillion in work needed over the next twenty years. Thus, the acquisition of H.R. Gray is consistent with Haskell's pattern of strategic investment for the long term.

Haskell has long been present in the market for designing and constructing healthcare facilities. As noted earlier, healthcare customers understandably and justifiably viewed their market as highly specialized. But it is unsurprising that hospitals in particular appeal to Haskell's pursuit of big, complicated projects requiring great skill and excellence in design as well as construction. Designing an all-new hospital from the ground up (called a “greenfield”) project is a challenging specialty. Existing hospitals must also routinely modernize and expand. In the latter case, the designer and builder must accomplish everything without interrupting day-to-day functions.

FreemanWhite is an architecture/engineering and analytics firm. While its emphasis is on healthcare markets and services, it echoes the characteristics that linked Haskell to E 2M and Seiberling — creativity, an entrepreneurial bent, customers of high skill, high integrity, and demonstrable creation of value for customers. Owing to the complexity of large infrastructure projects and the political sensitivity of major public expenditures, H.R. Gray's credibility is a significant asset.

An example of program management by H.R. Gray is a $250 million tunnel being built for the City of Columbus, Ohio. At twenty-eight feet in diameter and six miles in length, the project is being constructed beneath the city while contractors work amidst the ongoing life of the city above ground. Hundreds of events must be planned and coordinated, such as street closings, community relations, and relocating utilities. Coordinating the many steps in such a costly and complex program is the responsibility of the program manager, who is typically engaged before the design engineers and contractors. Elected and appointed officials in Columbus and numerous other jurisdictions in Ohio trust H.R. Gray to perform that management function, and to represent the interests of the owner — in this example, the people of Columbus.

New economic models incentivize healthcare providers to be smart and efficient, to deploy their resources so as to achieve measurably good outcomes. FreemanWhite's services are targeted at helping that industry become more effective at making sick people healthy. FreemanWhite devotes itself to the information-based design of facilities dealing with human well-being. Indeed, human factors in healthcare design add complexity as well as excitement throughout the process.

Haskell's design-build model of project delivery lent itself to the healthcare market, for reasons similar to...
those accounting for its success elsewhere—integrated service that serves FremanWhite’s customers. However, projects such as hospitals and clinics require strategic planning that is unique to the care and movement of people who may be experiencing the worst, or sometimes perhaps the best day of their lives. FreemanWhite developed its specialization by accumulating data about the steps in treatment processes, analyzing information and observations, and evaluating outcomes.

In 2012, when Jim Eaton became vice president of Haskell’s Healthcare Division, his first order of business was to develop a strategy to move the company further into that market. Between the alternatives of developing greater design capacity in house or acquiring an existing team, the company quickly settled on the latter, and Eaton set about finding the right match. FreemanWhite, a century-old architecture firm based in Charlotte, North Carolina, quickly became his focus. After several years in healthcare construction, Eaton had become familiar with FreemanWhite as one of the industry’s leading designers nationwide, and knew that it met Haskell’s strategic criteria. More than ample skills in design and construction already existed within Haskell, but the things that drove healthcare clients’ business and operational needs relied on highly specialized information and analytics, as well as smart architectural design. Those were FreemanWhite’s particular strengths.

During the mid-1990s, FreemanWhite made a strategic choice to focus on designing emergency medicine departments. It began developing a knowledge base, hired an experienced emergency room nurse to help make sense of data, and adapted software for use emergency rooms instead. A sub-market for ED as sick people without access to primary care doctors departments (EDs) in hospitals was growing rapidly, and FreemanWhite was keen to capitalize on that.

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Concentrating on emergency departments opened the way for FreemanWhite to design medicine departments. It began developing a knowledge base, hired an experienced emergency room nurse to help make sense of data, and adapted software for use emergency rooms instead. A sub-market for ED as sick people without access to primary care doctors departments (EDs) in hospitals was growing rapidly, and FreemanWhite was keen to capitalize on that.

Eaton knew that it was an unusual opportunity: “We knew it met Haskell’s strategic criteria. More than ample skills in design and construction already existed within Haskell, but the things that drove healthcare clients’ business and operational needs relied on highly specialized information and analytics, as well as smart architectural design. Those were FreemanWhite’s particular strengths.”

FreemanWhite thus branded itself as a highly specialized architectural firm and as a consultant for EDs. Its clients are credentialed in many disciplines and specialties, such as architecture, engineering, business and healthcare administration, nursing and various medical fields. People with contracting experience perform construction administration, representing owners. All bring passion, creativity and innovation to work that demands skill and intelligence. They collaborate across disciplines in a consciously entrepreneurial way. As Haskell and FreemanWhite contemplated joining forces, they recognized many similarities in each other, making a successful cultural fit seem likely.

Merger or acquisition conversations were not new at FreemanWhite, but from the perspective of chairman Frank Brooks, the case for Haskell was unusually strong. It contributed to FreemanWhite’s holistic approach to meeting its customer’s needs, and its aspiration to a more seamless delivery model by adding in.”

Healthcare is 17 percent of the U.S. GDP and growing,” Halverson notes. “Healthcare needs to be positioned to provide comprehensive solutions to clients, and to be a part of reforming healthcare in the U.S.”

E&M and Seiberling Associates brought specialized capabilities to Haskell’s EPC strategy. H.R. Gray and FreemanWhite propelled Haskell into markets where its potential had as yet been underdeveloped. All four firms added value to Haskell at several levels, as well as furthered the company’s collaborative persona. Each of the firms acquired between 2010 and 2014 proved compatible with Haskell’s people, practices, and its overall vision of an integrated team with broad, deep resources. In each case, the fit with Haskell complemented the experience and potential of people who had already grown successful enterprises. Most significantly, each acquisition strengthened Haskell’s competitive position, in skill and geographic presence and across a range of markets, building types, and services, all with positive growth potential.

In addition to its robust design-build project delivery model, reputation, and financial strength, Haskell quickly brought advantages to the acquired enterprises that included strong project management discipline and sophisticated financial controls. Effective cost accounting and information technology practices helped elevate the capacity of formerly small firms to perform large projects efficiently and profitably. Teams constituted from throughout the integrated Haskell organization deliver projects that are complex, challenging, and innovative, and they serve as a training ground for growth to its people at every level. For the past fifteen years, continually refining and advancing that dimension of the firm has been elemental to its strategy. ◆
In its fiftieth year, Haskell experiences trends common to the design-build industry, including demographic and technological changes. However, it successfully differentiates itself among competitors and in the construction industry generally. What also distinguishes Haskell is its cultural emphasis on human development, the result of a highly conscious program that engages every employee, informed by perspectives from both inside and outside the field of construction. Haskell’s investment in human resources is exceptional for an organization its size, no matter the industry.

Companies and institutions so often refer to people as their principal asset that the rhetoric barely seems sincere. Among Haskell’s people, the discussion is intentional, not reflexive, and authentic, not rhetorical. The reasons are several. Deliberate organizational practices are one. Confidence in the transparency of management decision-making plays a role. The employee stock ownership plan (ESOP) is another. Plans to launch the ESOP were well advanced when the 2008 recession began to unfold. The company’s senior management moved forward anyway, seeing tangible employee ownership as critical to the organization’s fabric. With the first distribution of shares, the new entity owned in part by every employee became the firm’s largest shareholder, at 32 percent, a percentage that grows each year. With good reason, Haskell’s people feel personally invested in an organization that is on top of its game.

Characteristics that draw clients to Haskell are often similar to those that attract employees. The company is on the cutting edge of innovation and creativity; it stands behind its commitments to customers; it is noted for high-level performance in sophisticated markets. It pioneered and deploys a consistently successful business model. Those observable and measurable attributes are appealing both within and outside the company. An early-career engineer, construction manager, or professional in any field who has researched prospective employers recognizes that the Haskell name and brand exude quality. People with confidence in their abilities and a desire to maximize them, who aspire to excellence in what they do, want to work for such a company. People who already work there see value for themselves and for the whole enterprise by perpetuating those qualities through their own performance.

Early on, Steve Halverson came to the view that the CEO’s role centered around “influencing people and culture.” Consistent with that view, he saw human resources not only as an administrative function, but also as a force to advance the company’s understanding of its capabilities. Seeking a leader for that portfolio, he reached outside the construction industry, and through a recruiter, connected with David Thaeler, then head of HR at a large healthcare organization. The recruiter described Haskell, saying, “They are looking for an HR leader who understands the importance of people, training, development and acquisition, as well as talent, talent management and performance management.” Thaeler saw human resources as an organic part of a company, and found similar views in Halverson. “Steve kept reinforcing the importance of people as being one of the three legs of the stool - people, operations, and finance.” In discussing training and human development, Halverson believed that the company was doing much for senior leadership, but not enough for hundreds of other employees. Elevating skills and competencies across the company was essential to the future. Another concern was ensuring that people understood Haskell’s values, and were aligned with those values in their work performance and in the conduct of business.
Moving Ahead

Haskell was on a path to deploy human resources more strategically, through measures such as the Great Place to Work® model. That direction had begun early in Halverson’s tenure as CEO, but the effort was still mainly tactical. In 2008, raising human resources to a strategic function became Thaeler’s challenge as executive vice president and chief human resources officer. Decisions in which HR previously had been slightly involved came under new evaluation for their fit with culture and values. The shift gained gradual acceptance across the company, with some asking why Haskell needed to involve HR with matters in which it had no traditional role. The process was complicated by certain Haskell characteristics, such as an entrepreneurial bent that came with considerable autonomy, especially in field operations. “Now it’s been seven years,” Thaeler reflects. “I think everyone agrees that we’re a values-driven organization. Its four key values are something we talk about all the time. Almost everyone can articulate each value. That drives our operating principles.”

Halverson’s objective has been to make Haskell a company at which the best people in the industry want to work. People would not want to leave, not simply because of pay, but because they liked their work and to whom they worked, and because they found security in a values-driven company. Competence and trust in the company’s reputation. Haskell’s senior leaders collaborate creatively to perform excellent work, and their capabilities because of the investment the company has made in those fifteen years. To see watching people whom I first knew fifteen years earlier, relatively early in their careers, and of seeing how they have developed and grown and enlarged themselves periodically, new or recently hired employees at every level participate in an on-boarding event. The daylong proceedings are usually held at the company’s Jacksonville headquarters, although Haskell’s offices in other cities also host the events. In the ground-floor development center, on-boarding presentations introduce thirty employees from all backgrounds to the things that lie behind Haskell’s culture is that of a group of people who collaborate creatively to perform excellent work, and to stand behind it. Doing so successfully and profitably ensures that the company attracts the best and most talented people in every position, and that compensation is at the top of the industry. To that end, financial strength is a strategic objective. Specifically, the company seeks to maintain earnings in the top 20 percent of the industry. As Greg Ferrell notes, “We were always a great company. We just didn’t have the company’s Jacksonville headquarters, although Haskell’s offices in other cities also host the events. In the ground-floor development center, on-boarding presentations introduce thirty employees from all backgrounds to the things that lie behind the company’s reputation. Haskell’s senior leaders participate, including Steve Halverson and Preston Haskell. People from throughout the company demonstrate their commitment to its core values, and to practices such as safety and the code of conduct. Jonathan Toke, who often participates in on-boarding sessions, emphasizes their importance. “It’s making sure everybody hears a core, central message as to what we believe in.” Question and answer sessions are sometimes enlivened with group role-playing to dramatize situations from the company’s actual experience. Among other effects, on-boarding serves an early affirmation of Haskell’s commitment to education and training.

In 2015, Halverson’s experience as CEO has allowed him to observe the effect of the company’s investment in its people over time. “Now I’ve had the benefit of watching people whom I first knew fifteen years earlier, relatively early in their careers, and of seeing how they have developed and grown and enlarged themselves and their capabilities because of the investment the company has made in those fifteen years. To see them reach their human potential is extraordinarily gratifying.” Haskell’s culture is that of a group of people who collaborate creatively to perform excellent work, and to stand behind it. Doing so successfully and profitably ensures that the company attracts the best and most talented people in every position, and that compensation is at the top of the industry. To that end, financial strength is a strategic objective. Specifically, the company seeks to maintain earnings in the top 20 percent of the industry. As Greg Ferrell notes, “We were always a great company. We just didn’t have the balance sheet that said we were, until more recent times.” Consistent with long-standing policy, the company maintains a capital position sufficient to continue making strategic acquisitions, to internally develop new business opportunities, and to act from a position of strength during economic dislocations. Haskell’s position in the market for design-build services falls between extremely large competitors,
such as Bechtel, Fluor or KBR, and numerous smaller companies. However, that does not limit Haskell to projects, markets, or competition merely on the basis of size. From the beginning, Steve Halverson pushed the company to lift its gaze. Upon becoming CEO, he says, “I saw nothing that suggested that Haskell couldn’t compete and punch way above its weight. We do today. Our competition now is, oftentimes, five or ten times larger than we are, but not five or ten times better.”

For 2014, Haskell’s revenue was approximately $600 million - relatively speaking, a small part of the total U.S. domestic market of $160 billion for nonresidential design-build services. Thus, Haskell’s revenue potential is not limited by the size of market, or by Haskell’s position in the market. The company’s 2014 revenue was divided approximately half and half between the private sector industrial market and the water, government, and healthcare markets, demonstrating the continuing strength of its diversified market positions.

Haskell’s larger competitors enjoy economies of scale and name recognition. However, large firms sometimes face greater difficulty performing at consistently high levels of customer satisfaction as to safety, quality, and schedule. Customers in every industry place a premium on safety and high quality. They repeatedly bring their business to Haskell with confidence that it will deliver on those things. In addition, Haskell is well known for creativity, innovation, responsiveness and excellence in design and construction, which are less easily achievable by companies whose size and entrenched cost structures make them less nimble.

Haskell’s broad strategy calls for growth, particularly in the ability to do larger, more complex work in markets where size and complexity matter. Recently, its continual focus on projects of greater sophistication took it to California and Maryland, where it has built proton therapy centers that, in terms of design, constructability, engineering and building systems, stand among the most complex in anyone’s experience. The facility in California was the seventh in the nation; the one in Maryland, to be completed in 2015, will be the tenth. Proton therapy is cancer treatment advanced beyond normal gamma radiation. The reinforced concrete walls of the actual treatment vaults are ten feet thick, with...
six-foot floor and roof thicknesses. Each vault is three stories high, and measures fifty by eighty feet. Electrical conduits and plumbing pipes enter the concrete walls, making a ninety-degree turn for about four or five feet and then turn ninety-degrees again to penetrate the therapy vault while maintaining protection for adjacent workers and other users. Each of the five therapy bays is penetrated by some five hundred conduits. Each penetration must be separated by certain minimum distances, and placed so as not to interfere with other functions, as well as to avoid compromising the reinforcing steel in the concrete walls, all of which begins to illustrate the complexities of the design and construction challenges.

The California proton therapy center was further complicated by the need to design for earthquake protection. In the case of the more recent project, the reinforcing steel in the concrete walls, all of which

Haskell's move to internationalize its reach began in the twenty-first century, in Mexico, where John Paul Saenz led an important project for Frito-Lay. As he completed that job, Saenz learned of additional opportunities in Mexico, and was allowed to pursue it after overcoming skepticism among the company's senior leadership. The business was slow to develop, and he credits Ferrell, O'Leary, and Halverson for their patience with Haskell. Haskell's success in Mexico established a model for globalizing. It has since grown business throughout Latin America and expanded operations into Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia.

Haskell at fifty years of age has a tradition of citizenship, initially modeled by Preston Haskell, that compacts with its internal values. Volunteering and mentoring outside the company are encouraged for employees at every level. Senior leaders typically serve on the boards of non-profit organizations, where their contributions reinforce Haskell's continuing commitment to social responsibility. The company is deliberately philanthropic by such means as its dedication of three percent of profits to charitable causes in its communities. Haskell practices sustainability in its own operations and in the projects it delivers. Specific company goals include

with the company's foundational strategy, which was "solving the client's problems, and adopting the client's objectives as our own." This was followed by employee onboarding in April, 2015, nearly fifty years following the company's first project in Atlantic Beach. Entering its second half-century, Haskell's nearly one thousand employees and growing in the U.S. and around the world remain aligned with the same culture, values, and practices, certain that they are building a company to last.

Continuities remain, however. Preston Haskell points to one of the most important when describing the company's foundational strategy, which was "solving the client's problems, and adopting the client's objectives as our own." This was followed by employee onboarding in April, 2015, nearly fifty years following the company's first project in Atlantic Beach. Entering its second half-century, Haskell's nearly one thousand employees and growing in the U.S. and around the world remain aligned with the same culture, values, and practices, certain that they are building a company to last.

Attracting talented people is perpetually ongoing, and Haskell fosters strong relationships with faculty and administrators of highly ranked university programs, where it recruits aggressively. According to Toke, a Canadian who counts himself as Haskell's first international hire, Haskell's people will continue to "blend technical knowledge and expertise with practical experience, from knowing what concrete feels like to standing next to a machine and tinkering with it, in that space which is a step beyond just theoretical. We will be recruiting and growing folks with natural inquisitiveness and open-mindedness."

Halverson expresses pride that, since 2000, "the kinds of projects Haskell is doing are of magnitude more complicated, more sophisticated, and larger. The company attacks them with confidence, with competence, and with great results." The company’s services have expanded from design-build to include engineer-procure-construct and program management. Haskell operates nationally through a network of thirteen offices, and by 2015 operated in more than a dozen countries. Half a century after its modest beginning in Jacksonville, Florida, the company approaches the next half-century with confidence that its best days are ahead.

Six decades later and Haskell still leads with the values that drove the company's first project in Atlantic Beach. Entering its second half-century, Haskell's nearly one thousand employees and growing in the U.S. and around the world remain aligned with the same culture, values, and practices, certain that they are building a company to last. 

Steve Halverson (left) and David Balz (center) accept the JBJ Partners in Philanthropy award from Jacksonville Business Journal, 2014
List of Major Projects | 1990 - 2015

1990s

United States Postal Service - Panama City, FL • Kraft - Cleveland, OH • CSX Transportation Customer Service Center - Jacksonville, FL • NASA Processing Control Center - Cape Canaveral, FL • Quaker Oats Food Processing Plant - Louisville, KY • Baptist Health Outpatient Center - Jacksonville, FL • Montgomery Ward - Prince George's County, MD • Baptist Hospital - Jacksonville, FL • Dade Foods - Ontario, Canada • FDOT Operations Center - West Palm Beach, FL • Baptist Pediatrician Overpass - Jacksonville, FL • United States Postal Service - Charleston, WV • The Cove at River Garden - Jacksonville, FL • FDOT Chipley - Chipley, FL • Norm Thompson Outfitters Distribution Center - Charles Town, WV • Sears - Plantation, FL • University of Miami Garage - Coral Gables, FL • Tampa General Garage - Tampa, FL • Jacksonville Orthopedic Institute - Jacksonville, FL • Darton College - Albany, GA • SeaPak - Brownsville, TX • Kraft Foodservice Distribution Facility - Boca Raton, FL • FDOT District IV Office Building - Fort Lauderdale, FL • Coca Cola USA New Horizons Syrup Branch Expansion - Columbus, OH • Target Stores Warehouse Expansion - Tifton, GA • Consolidated Stores - Montgomery, AL • United Retail Group Distribution Facility - Troy, OH • Blainstone - Tallahassee, FL • Grande Ocean Resort - Hilton Head, SC • CDC Headquarters - Atlanta, GA • United States Postal Service General Mail Facility - Charleston, SC • Palmetto General Hospital - Hialeah, FL • Northern Telecom - Mississauga, Canada • United States Postal Service - Charleston, WV • Desert Springs Villas Resort Phase II - Palm Desert, CA • Wolfson Children's Hospital - Jacksonville, FL • Computer Power - Jacksonville, FL • Falcon's Landing - Sterling, VA • Fosters Daily Democrat - Dover, NH • FDOT Tumpke - Pompano Beach, FL • EquiCredit - Jacksonville, FL • Fine Distributing - Miami, FL • TRW - Queen Creek, AZ • Origil Brothers - Memphis, TN • Santa Rosa Correctional Institution - Milton, FL • FDOT District I Office Building - Bartow, FL • Titan IV Storage Facility - St. Augustine, FL • Beaches Redevelopment - Jacksonville Beach, FL • Holiday Inn - Montego Bay, Jamaica • University of Miami Garage - Coral Gables, FL • Dade Elementary Schools - Miami, FL • Blue Cross/Blue Shield Campus - Jacksonville, FL • Frito-Lay Research Facility - Rhinelander, WI • Bok Tower Gardens Education and Visitor Center - Lake Wales, FL • Frito-Lay - Ontario, Canada • The Times Leader Newspaper Production Facility - Wilkes-Barre, PA • Frito-Lay GES Pick Center Expansion - Perry, GA • New River Middle School - Fort Lauderdale, FL • Consolidated Stores - Montgomery, AL • Armour-Swift Eckrich - Downers Grove, IL • Quaker Oats Liqui-Dri Food Plant - Louisville, KY • Park Place of Coralwood - Tampa, FL • Medicaid Partners - St. Augustine, FL • The Laurels at Piney Glen - Charlotte, NC • Frito-Lay Warehouse - Pineville, NC • Alliant Foodservice Distribution Facility Expansion - Rocky Mount, NC • Gallo Salame - Orlando, FL • Frito-Lay - Quebec, Canada • Kraft - Dallas, TX • Alliant Foodservice - Indianapolis, IN • Southeast High School - Bradenton, FL • Frito-Lay - Rosenberg, TX • Kraft - Chicago, IL • Duval County Middle School - Jacksonville, FL • Falkenberg Jail Phase I - Tampa, FL • Frito-Lay - Jonesboro, AR • Frito-Lay - Lynchburg, VA • NCROC Paradise Valley - Fairfield, CA • James Point Health Care - Newport News, VA • James Point II Health Care - Newport News, VA • The Haven at Caledonia - Charlotte, NC • Grayson Nursing Home - Roanoke, VA • CSC Distribution - Chesapeake, VA • The Varanda-Meridian Property - Porte Vedra, FL • Anheuser-Busch Warehouse and Packaging Expansion - Williamsburg, VA • Barnett, Inc. Office Building - Jacksonville, FL • River City plastics - Jacksonville, FL • Hampton Inn - Mooresville, NC • Roanoke Assisted Living Center - Roanoke, VA • Senior Quarters at Lake Wyke - Closer, SC • Laurels Highland Creek - Charlotte, NC • The Laurels - Pineville, NC • Alliant Foodservice, Inc. - Tampa, FL • Barnett Bank Office Park Communications Facility & Parking Structure - Jacksonville, FL • Pepsi-Cola Warehouse and Distribution Center - Tampa, FL • Pembroke Pines Schools - Pembroke Pines, FL • Kraft General Foods Post-Buffer Warehouse - Battlecreek, MI • Eagle Point Elementary - Westport, FL • Big Lots Warehouse & Distribution Center Expansion - Montgomery, AL • Frito-Lay Plant & WWI - Rosenberg, TX • Alliant Foodservice - Woolwich, NJ • Carolina Turkeys - Mount Olive, NC • Great Lakes Cheese - Hirman, OH • Kraft Dry Goods Storage - Norcross, GA • KB Toys Dist Center - Montgomery, AL • BATA Office Expansion - Jacksonville, FL • United States Postal Service - Atlanta, GA • Orlando International Airport Parking - Orlando, FL • Frito-Lay - Pompano Beach, FL • Anheuser-Busch - Oklahoma City, OK • The Haven at Columbia - Columbia, SC • Frito-Lay - Jonesboro, AR • Morningstar - Gainesville, GA • Morningstar - Carrollton, GA • Morningstar - Albertville, AL • Carestone at Milford Chace - Maretta, GA • Kings Daughter - Roanoke, VA • Morningstar - Northport, AL • Senior Quarters at Staunton - Roanoke, VA • Petroleum Helicopters Help & Support Facilities - Venice, LA • Pembroke Pines East Campus - Pembroke Pines, FL • Falls Church Fire Station - Falls Church, VA • Eau Galle High School - Melbourne, FL • Lucent Tech ADRF - Orlando, FL • Lucent Tech Bldg 61 - Orlando, FL • Pembroke Pines Middle School - Pembroke Pines, FL • Georgia Military College Student Services Building - Milledgeville, GA • KB Toys Southeast Distribution Center - Montgomery, AL • FCCJ Criminal Justice Center - Jacksonville, FL • Flight-Safety Atlantic, GA • Deerwood North at Gran Park - Jacksonville, FL • Holsum Bakery - Phoenix, AZ • Flight-Safety Training Facility - Miami, FL • Anheuser-Busch - Columbus, GA • Frito-Lay Mexicali, Baja CA • Arthur Anderson - Jacksonville, FL • Duval County Middle School Phase II - Tallahassee, FL • Winn-Dixie - Charlotte, NC • Volusia County Justice - Daytona Beach, FL • ECBS Deerwood Phase II - Jacksonville, FL • Pembroke Pines Academic Village Design - Pembroke Pines, FL • Lee Nursing & Rehab Center - Roanoke, VA • Cookeville Nursing & Rehab - Cookeville, TN • Carestone at Miford Chase - Macon, GA • Frito-Lay - Jacksonville, FL • Fort Health Service - Lebanon, TN • Kraft Dry Goods Storage - Norcross, GA • United States Postal Service - Owens Mills, MD • Parris Island Golf Course - Parris Island, SC • Trilogy Health Services - Kokomo, IN • Frito-Lay Expansion - Perry, GA • Gulfstream Expansion Parking - Savannah, GA • Tandem Health Assisted Living Facility - Canonsburg, PA • Sebring Airport Authority - Sebring, FL • Jet Aviation Hangar and IEF Expansion - Teterboro, NJ • The Villages Charter School - Leesburg, FL • United States Postal Service - Erie, PA • Banta Books - Harrisonburg, VA • Pembroke Pines Miscellaneous Projects - Pembroke Pines, FL • Pembroke Pines - Lake Park Garages - Lexington, VA • Intermodal Transportation Facility - Daytona Beach, FL • Northwestern Middle School - Jacksonville, FL • Anheuser-Busch Williamsburg, VA • The Crane Company - Jacksonville, FL • Amneal Food And Storage Facility - Pittsburgh, PA

1990 - 2015: The First Twenty Five Years of The Haskell Company, by Jules L. Wagman
About the Author

Alan Bliss is a historian with a research focus on urban and maritime topics in the modern U.S. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Florida, and teaches at the University of North Florida. He also consults for public and private organizations. Bliss lives in Jacksonville.