



## How Did A-B's Octagon Mark Originate?

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**(Let Us Know If You Know!)**

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Information is meager about the origin of the famous A-B-in-an-octagon which has represented Allen-Bradley products for almost 60 years.

The original trademark registration for the octagon indicates first use in interstate commerce as October 1, 1923 . . . the year, unfortunately, when this magazine suspended publication for two years, leaving us with no documented announcement of its introduction.

The first published use of the famous octagon which we've been able to find was a considerably embellished version printed in the May, 1925 issue of the magazine (see inset). Here, representatives of "labor" and "management" grin at each other against the octagonal background. The letter "A" ends in an elaborate flourish, which was retained until the fifties, when a simpler type style was substituted.

Lynn Matthias, who was to become vice president of research, joined the company in 1927; his guess is that the mark can probably be traced back to the fertile mind of Adolph Fensholt, founder of A-B's long-time advertising agency, since "that's where most of that kind of thing originated."

But Fensholt Advertising, too, can only speculate. Production manager Helen Kallam, longest in time-in-rank with 28 years on the job, recalls only that "someone once told me that the octagon was patterned after a clock." That seemed a likely lead, until we determined that the first A-B clock, forerunner to our current pacesetter, did not appear upon the Milwaukee skyline until the 1930s.

So we admit to defeat: who was the anonymous designer of one of the best-known trademarks in American industry? Is there hidden symbolism in the design? Was it the first trademark ever used to represent Allen-Bradley . . . or just the first to be registered, and to endure? Why was it chosen?

If anyone out there was among the early members of the A-B family, and can remember how our trademark came to be, please give Arnold Ericson a call (671-2000, Ext. 2832). You may be the keeper of a piece of corporate history that should be preserved.