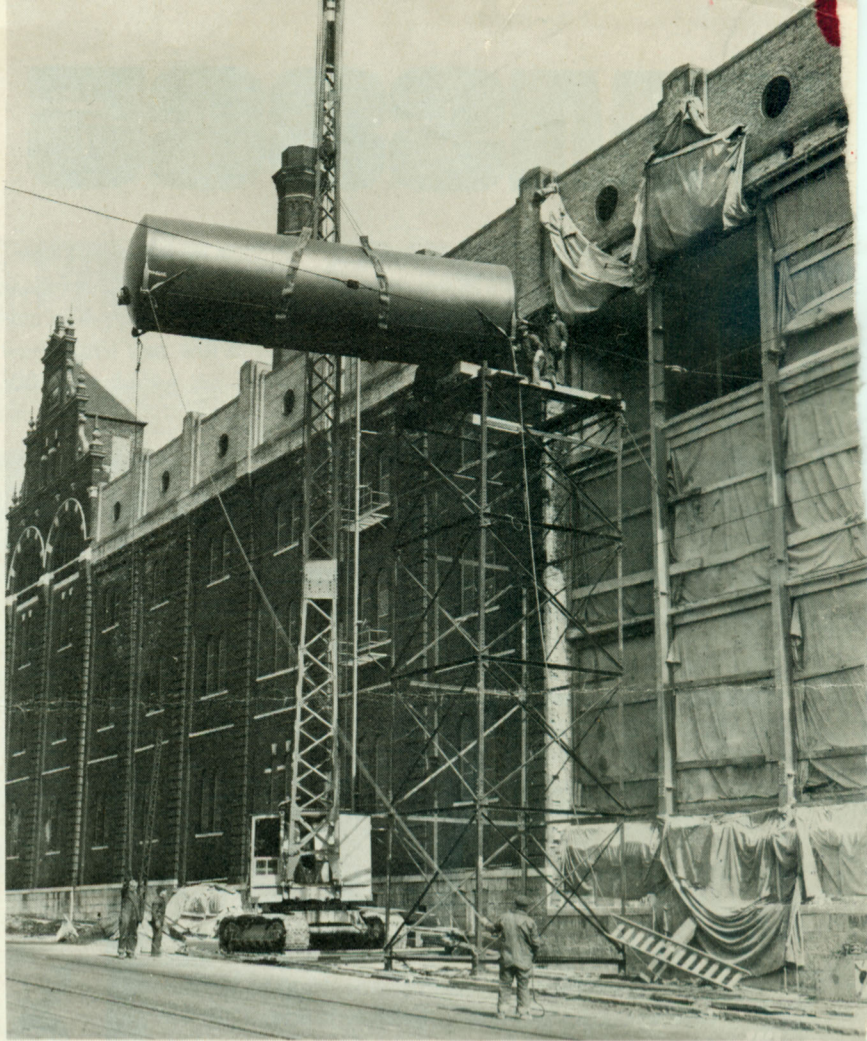


Milwaukee firm is 69 years old

Father and son: The Prices have come a long way

Installation of glass-lined beer fermentation tanks, as in this Schlitz brewery in Milwaukee in the late '30s, was an important part of Price's business.

In 1909, Leo Price took part in a Labor Day parade in Milwaukee after his return from three years in the territory that was later to become the state of Arizona. Price is pictured with Ironworkers Local 8, and is seated at the far right atop the stage.



By Ed Coudal
Special Correspondent

LEO PRICE GOT his buck during deer season last fall. He looks forward to fishing brook trout—"Anyone can catch pike and bass," he says, "but you have to be good to get trout."—in the lake country of northern Wisconsin this summer. And he goes into the offices of Price Erecting Co., Milwaukee, where he is chairman, virtually every day.

None of which is particularly remarkable, except that Leo Price is 89 years old. Price said: "I've seen a lot of changes since I started this company in 1916. Today, everything is equipment . . . bigger, more powerful, faster, better. Years ago, it was men, not machines."

Price Erecting, while proud of its long history and proud tradition as one of the oldest rigging firms in the country, has been quick to change with the technology of the times and the new needs of customers.

Once the premier installer of huge glass-lined beer fermentation tanks—"We put in more than 14,000 such tanks in 408 locations all over the western hemisphere," Price said—the company's work today falls into four major categories.

According to Glenn Price, Leo's son and president of Price Erecting: "We work largely in machinery moving, steel erecting, precast concrete erecting and heavy factory maintenance." Glenn adds that crane rental is a small part of the business, used primarily to keep the expensive equipment Price owns generating revenues during slow times.

The multiple capabilities of Price were particularly noticeable during the monster winter of '78-79 that buried the upper midwest in blizzard after blizzard. Price was called in to shore up dozens of factory roofs nearing the point of collapse under unheard of snowloads.

The various types of equipment Price can bring to bear on a job include 12 truck cranes, ranging from 15 to 140

ton capacity, and five derricks with 5 to 50 ton capacity. The company's fleet of 19 vehicles supports the equipment and a work force that will range as high as 300 men during the busy summer season.

Hundreds of men

The scope of Price's jobs ranges from installing a single machine to massive jobs that will use hundreds of men for up to two years.

One such job was the Marquette Cement Co. plant on Neville Island in the Monongahela River at Pittsburgh. Some 150 men in a Price crew spent 18 months putting up the plant. An Allis-Chalmers facility at Springfield, Ill tied up a 60-man crew for two years, and another cement plant in the Catskill Mountains of New York used almost 200 men for two years.

The variety of work Price tackles is evident in the fact that the company usually has an average of 30 different rigging and machinery jobs going at one time, primarily in the upper midwest, with more than half in Wisconsin.

One such major job coming up is a 600-foot bridge at Wauwatosa, Wis., which will involve the placement of 21 box girders—each 100 feet long and weighing 25 tons—over the Menominee River, the Milwaukee Road rail-

road tracks and a part of the downtown area of the Milwaukee suburb.

Octogenarian Price said: "We would have thought of a way to do that job in the old days, but it would have taken us a long time. New methods and machinery today cut erection time to 10% of what it used to be when we depended on gin poles, derricks, 'Chicago' booms and lots of raw manpower."

Raw manpower is still important to Price Erecting, but it's a different kind of manpower. Glenn Price points out that "a new generation of Price employees" is moving into key positions, many of them new crew foremen up from the gang ranks, replacing men who have been with the company for more than 40 years.

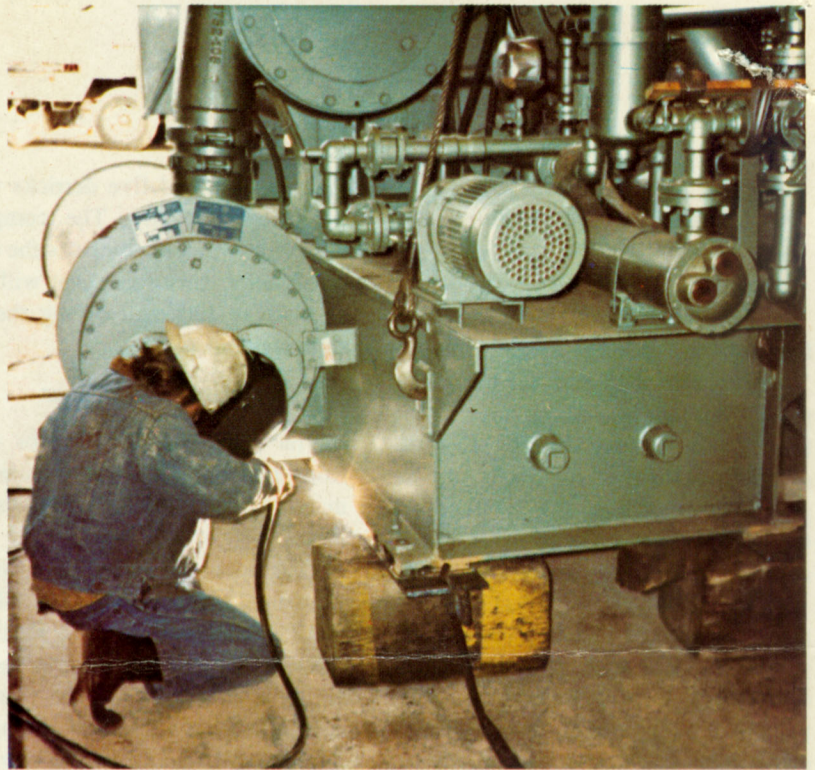
Glenn points out that foremen with 52, 48, 47, 46 and 40 years of service with Price have retired within the last five years, and they have been replaced by young men from within the organization. "We look for men who are aggressive, who want to work and who want responsibility. We've been lucky to maintain a highly motivated and dedicated work force all these years, and it rubs off on the younger men."

In addition, Glenn actively recruits top engineering and technical gradu-



Glenn and Leo Price, son and father, president and chairman, respectively, of Price Erecting of Milwaukee.

Chokers, rollers and other accessory equipment of all sorts is neatly cataloged and stored in Price's 22,400-square-foot warehouse.



One of Price's employees prepares a piece of heavy machinery for installation at a customer's factory.

ates from the University of Wisconsin and Marquette University, Glenn's own school.

Just as Price has a history of stable work force, so does it have a long and well-known list of customers, including many major corporations in the upper midwest.

Leo Price remembers the old days: "We put up the Plankinton Arcade building in downtown Milwaukee in six weeks in 1924, rigging and riveting 2,200 tons of steel on a square block in the busiest part of town," and he looks forward to what's ahead for his business. Leo says: "The machines will continue to get bigger and the men who run them will continue to get smarter."

Proud lift

Like the long ago Plankinton building, another job that Price Erecting is singularly proud of is the biggest single lift ever made on rubber, considering weight and height involved. In 1972, a 103-foot-long, 12-foot diameter deaerating feedwater tank weighing 88 tons, was placed atop a 170-foot-high powerhouse of the Columbia Generating plant of the Wisconsin Power and Light Co. at Portage, Wi.

The lift, complicated by having only

four inches of boom clearance at the top, was accomplished in 21½ minutes using a P&H 6250, 250-ton truck crane. The precision of the load balance and the exactness of the rig setup after five hours of minute adjustments was shown in the dramatic readings from a transit trained on the boom tip during the lift: Deflection of the tip never exceeded 5½ inches during the entire lift.

The precast concrete work Price does includes apartment buildings and such public buildings as the Pio Nono High School in South Milwaukee. The heart of the Pio Nono job was a 50-ton, 128-foot-long T support. To move it from Burlington, Wi to South Milwaukee Price designed a special vehicle, which was made up of a cab for the motive power and driver, the T itself as the "body" of the vehicle and a steerable rear support vehicle with the rear driver linked to the front driver by telephone.

Once on the job site, the beam was raised some 35 feet with a matched, double-end lift using a pair of Bucyrus Erie 30Bs controllable to within one-quarter inch.

Glenn Price is leery of "blowing his own horn," as he puts it, because of the competitive nature of the business. "When a big job comes up you're bid-

ding against riggers from all over the country, not just from your area," he said.

The uncertain economic times do not overly worry Price. "We've always been financially conservative," Glenn said. "We once bought a 250-ton truck crane for a specific job. When the job was finished we decided to get rid of it—I think it's over in Singapore now—then got a second job that needed just the same kind of crane. A company that likes to gamble might have kept the big crane in the hope of landing a job that could use it, but we didn't. We just went out and bought another crane."

Leo Price, looking forward to some of the bigger jobs coming up—which the Prices will not discuss for competitive reasons—said: "We make our share of the big lifts around here. They come to us. They want us to make them today."

Today is a long way and a long time from 1909, when Leo Price was rigging steel in the territory that was not yet the state of Arizona. When Leo was building derricks and driving rivets by hand, and when Leo was applauding Gen. Pershing's response to Pancho Villa's raid across the Mexican border.