

*Museums of Industry, Technology, and Labor (continued)*

	Museum	Location	Theme/Highlights
Woodworking and Lumbering	Gardner Heritage State Park	Gardner, Mass.	Furniture making and silversmithing
	Patten Lumbermen's Museum	Patten, Maine	Work and technology of logging, logging camp and blacksmith shop
	Old Schwamb Mill	Arlington, Mass.	19th-century millwork and woodworking machinery, operating firm making picture frames
	Frye's Measure Mill	Wilton, N.H.	1858 waterpowered mill with associated machines for box making, operating company
Diverse Industries	Charles River Museum of Industry	Waltham, Mass.	Textiles, watches, automobiles, machine tool, first fully integrated textile mill in United States
	Maine State Museum	Augusta, Maine	Permanent exhibition on textile, lumbering, and fishing industries
	Worcester Historical Museum	Worcester, Mass.	Permanent exhibition on diverse industries, including steel and wire, diverse social experience

General Electric's research complex at 1 Plastics Avenue, Pittsfield, developed Lexan polycarbonate and other advanced engineering plastics.

New England's most famous postwar plastic product was Tupperware, developed by Earl Tupper of Berlin, N.H., while he was experimenting with injection molding of polyethylene for Du Pont in the late 1940s. Popular attention focused on Tupperware home parties administered from Orlando, Fla., but the patented food containers were manufactured in Massachusetts and Rhode Island for several decades. At the opposite end of the spectrum was the Monsanto House of the Future, a fiberglass-reinforced polyester shell engineered by Albert Dietz at MIT's Plastics Research Laboratory in Cambridge, Mass. Intended as a mass-production prototype, the futuristic Monsanto House was installed at Disneyland in 1957 and visited by 20 million people. New England's plastics industry suffered during the 1980s and 1990s as manufacturing moved outside the United States. The region's historical importance was recognized in 1992 when the industry-funded National Plastics Center and Museum opened at Leominster.

Alison J. Clarke, *Tupperware: The Promise of Plastic in 1950s America* (1999); J. Harry DuBois, *Plastics History U.S.A.* (1972); Robert Friedel, *Pioneer Plastic: The Making and Selling of Celluloid* (1983); Jeffrey L. Meikle, *American Plastic: A Cultural History* (1995).

Jeffrey L. Meikle

**Pratt and Whitney** A unit of United Technologies, Pratt and Whitney is one of Connecticut's most famous manufacturers and a significant contributor to the state's economy. Headquartered in East Hartford, the company, whose motto is "Dependable Engines," produces and services space-propulsion systems and jet engines for the military, commercial, and general-aviation markets. Plants are located in North Haven, Middletown, and Cheshire, Conn.; North Berwick, Maine; Columbus, Ga.; West Palm Beach, Fla.; San Antonio, Tex.; San Jose, Calif.; and Montreal, Halifax, and Toronto, Canada.

In 1925 Frederick Rentschler, a former president of Wright Aeronautical and an aviation pioneer, traveled to Hartford to seek funding for the production of a revolutionary new airplane engine. Rentschler chose Connecticut because it was home to many small tool companies and a skilled labor force, crucial elements of his business plan.

Rentschler bought both the name and the physical plant of Pratt and Whitney, a machine-tool and gun manufacturer founded in 1860 by Francis Pratt and Amos Whitney, cousin of the famous Connecticut inventor and entrepreneur Eli Whitney. Rentschler quickly assembled a team of aviation visionaries, and in only six months Pratt and Whitney unveiled the Wasp, a revolutionary 425-horsepower engine weighing less than 650 pounds.

The radial air-cooled Wasp, which made a

buzzing noise in flight, was a radical departure from the heavier, more cumbersome engines of its day. It powered record-setting flights by Amelia Earhart, Charles Lindbergh, and Jimmy Doolittle. In 1926 the Wasp's performance prompted the U.S. Navy to order 200 of the impressive engines, thus cementing the company's reputation as an innovator in the nascent aviation industry.

In 1929 a merger between Pratt and Whitney, Boeing Air Transport, Chance Vought Aircraft Corporation, and Hamilton Aircraft (later Hamilton Standard) resulted in the creation of United Aircraft and Transport Company (UATC). UATC's aim was to produce under one corporate roof all the parts needed to build planes and a new airline, United, to fly them. Antitrust legislation in 1934 forced the breakup of UATC into three separate companies, with United Aircraft retaining Pratt and Whitney, Chance Vought, Sikorsky (brought on board after the initial merger), and Hamilton Standard.

Following quickly on the heels of the Wasp's remarkable success, the company produced the Hornet, the Wasp Junior, and the Twin Wasp, which was used in many World War II-era military planes. Pratt and Whitney and its sister companies contributed more than 363,600 engines to the war effort. Over 600 million horsepower, fully half the total U.S. aerial horsepower during World War II, was produced by Pratt and Whitney engines.

Having put all its resources into developing

