

his obvious determination, Butler agreed to let West Coast sell Butler printing papers and the two shook hands — creating an association which still exists today.

In 1945, West Coast Paper Company became a corporation and Dick Abrams assumed the title of President. Future executive titles were in the making, too, as the company's work force expanded. West Coast was building its reputation for employee longevity and morale. Dick Abrams believed in progress. This meant listening to employee's ideas and trying any suggestion, no matter how unconventional, that held promise for the company and its customers. It meant giving employees progressively greater responsibility as they showed their commitment to the West Coast ideas of service. As a result, the company attracted ambitious, concerned, people. Today's Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer, **Phil O'Loane**, started to work in 1938 in the company's warehouse. Vice-President **Dave Paxton** began his West Coast career as a new addition to the sales force in 1947, when the company bought out the Paul Jones Paper Company, for which Dave worked, and expanded into all of the Holgate Street building to house its growing work force and inventory of paper and non-paper products.



**4TH & HOLGATE BUILDING**

As a headquarters, it was doomed.

In 1949, disaster occurred again to change the course of events for the now well-established company. This time, it didn't take a depression — it took an earthquake.

The walls collapsed. The entire back half of the building fell into the lot next door. No employees were injured (although one barely escaped by diving

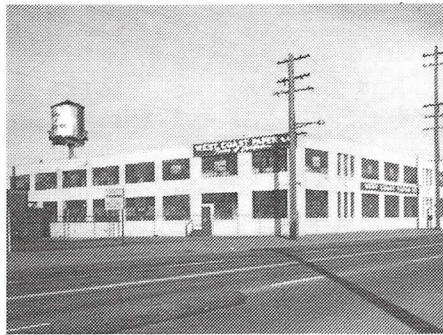
from a bathroom window and outrunning the wall as it fell behind him).

A number of prominent firms (including some of West Coast's own competitors) quickly stepped forward to prove the Seattle business community's solidarity with offers to help by storing the undestroyed inventory until the building could be rebuilt.

But the owners of the leased building didn't see it that way. Rebuilding was an investment they weren't willing to make. And that created a serious decision point for West Coast — take the heavy risk of buying the building and repairing and restocking it or close the doors forever.

Dick Abrams made the commitment: despite the risk, West Coast was in the paper business for keeps. The building went back up. **R.W. Abrams**, the president's son, started his career with the company on the ground floor (quite literally — helping to rebuild the foundation).

By 1955, the company had outgrown its plant and moved to new quarters at First Avenue South and South Hudson Street — a two-story building with 77,000 square feet of space.



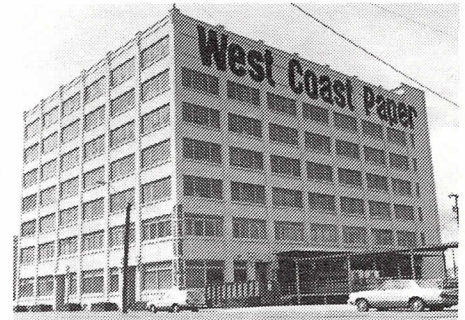
**1ST AVE. SO. & HUDSON ST. BLDG.**

In 1960, Dick Abrams (with an uncharacteristic lack of modesty) posed for a series of light-hearted promotional postcards showing him hunting for new orders. Hunting everywhere. In sewers, in boxcars, in every unlikely place imaginable. The campaign was a success, and it also won a national award.

This may have influenced West Coast to put more emphasis on its fine papers. Advertising and sales graphics were becoming more creative. Many manufac-

turers were making better and more varied text and cover stocks. In 1963, fine paper sales became a full-time marketing goal. West Coast increased its lines of paper in inventory and its sales force with experienced men. It then stepped up its sales calls on designers, printers, and advertising agencies.

West Coast Paper Company celebrated the start of 1967 with a move to another new building, its present quarters at 2203 First Avenue South where it soon outgrew the 142,000 square feet of warehouse space.



**PRESENT WCP BUILDING**

In 1977, two additional buildings were purchased to the north side and soon after that the purchase of the block long side street which separated the buildings were arranged. A large covered ramp joining the newly acquired buildings has now been completed giving additional space for shipping and receiving. The new building houses a paper pick-up store, the Sample and Advertising department as well as warehouse space. The last decade the company has opened four paper pick-up stores, Bellevue/Redmond, Mercer Street, First Ave. So., and the newest in Bellingham.

This was West Coast Paper Company in the first five decades — and how it grew, turning disaster into opportunity, from paper bags in the back of a car to the biggest independent paper company in the Pacific Northwest market.

West Coast, too, is more concerned with the future than the past. And, whatever opportunities (or even disasters) the company is looking forward to meeting the challenge the next 50 years is going to bring.