



Blue Book Services

TRADING MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

An inside look at ...

Philip G. Ball Company Race-West Company Sparky's Transportation

*Celebrating 75 years and four generations
of dedication, quality, and service*

BY HARRIS CUTLER

We are honored and grateful that Philip G. Ball Company, and the Ball and Cutler families, have been in business for 75 years.

Our company history begins with our founder, Philip G. Ball. Philip Ball was born in 1900 in Newark, New Jersey. His produce career began when he lived in Scranton, Pennsylvania during the Great Depression. He started in the produce business during the early 1930s and continued through the difficult years of World War II.

In 1944 Philip opened his own produce business and named it Ball Brokerage Company. During those early years, his wife, Lil, and their daughters Dorrie and Sarita, helped with the business. Work began early in the morning and lasted until late in the day.

Philip founded his business based on honest dealings, fair prices, and with tremendous integrity. As all of the business was local in nature, there were many personal visits and face to face conversations.

GENERATION ONE: 1944 TO 1965

Philip Ball focused his attention on selling carloads of fresh apples, oranges, potatoes, onions, carrots, and other fruits and vegetables to receivers in Scranton and Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

There was no interstate highway system back then and everything traveled by rail. By the 1950s, President Dwight D. Eisenhower developed the highway system and we had our first over-the-road trucks by the middle of the decade. There were two modes of communication to distant shipping points: very expensive long-distance phone calls, or Western Union telegrams, which were inexpensive.

Sarita, the younger Ball daughter, married Phil Cutler on January 8, 1950, and Phil soon joined his father-in-law in the produce business.

GENERATION TWO: 1948 TO 1983

Phil Cutler began to do business outside of northeastern Pennsylvania in the early 1960s. He sold produce to customers in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, setting up repeat shipments at firm prices that continued season after season. His relationships and big thinking set a great pace for the company's growth during these years.

Phil suffered a major setback when his biggest customer filed for bankruptcy. He had guaranteed payment to growers when they questioned the buyer's credit worth. With hard work, Phil and his family paid every grower back on all the unpaid bills.

In 1973, when the family was forced by Hurricane Agnes to leave their home on Race Street in West Pittston, Phil opened the Race-West Company: "Race-West indicates Race Street in West Pittston, so that all future generations never forgot where they came from."

Due to past experiences with bankruptcy, the business bought and owned all product so growers could be paid quickly. A large community of farmers came to depend on the Cutler family.

Phil Cutler was a master planner and most of the success enjoyed today is a result of the careful, methodical strategies he brought to the business and still guide it to this day. His expressions, "Crumbs are bread too," or "Trouble is the name of the game," and "The gristmills of the Gods grind slowly, but exceedingly fine," have delighted visitors to the office over the years, as these words were prominently displayed on the walls.

In the late 1970s Phil's sons entered the business. Each family member focused on certain commodities and became experts in the field. Race-West began handling substantial volume in vegetables, primarily for national distribution. During the 1980s and 1990s, the company experienced great success and strong growth.

GENERATION THREE: 1980 TO PRESENT

Daniel Cutler, Phil's son, was a creative force within both the company and the industry. More than just business, contracts, and new technology, Daniel brought a level of fun and excitement to the business. He made company relationships more about matching up with like-minded business partners who were not focused on the economics of the trade, but more on real progress between companies.

Daniel brought much improvement to the family business and prepared it for international trade. The Chernobyl nuclear accident contaminated all fresh fruits and vegetables on the European continent. Daniel and his friend Barry Prevor, from Prevor Marketing International in the Bronx, New York, shipped hundreds of containers of produce to help feed Europe's population.

Tragically, Daniel and his wife Jackie passed away in an auto accident, during icy conditions, on their way home from celebrating their fifth wedding anniversary.

The loss of Philip Cutler at such a young age, the passing of Phil Ball, and the untimely death of Daniel did great damage to the family and its spirit. Moving out of all the sadness was diffi-



PHILIP BALL



PHIL CUTLER



DANIEL CUTLER



HARRIS & JANICE CUTLER

"Harris and Janice Cutler are deeply appreciative of all who have helped our companies over the years."

cult and took significant courage. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the tremendous support of close business relationships carried the company through. To this day, the family remains very grateful to all who helped during this difficult time.

Over the 75 years since the Ball and Cutler families began in the produce business, there have been many changes in the industry. Our secret to long-term success has been choosing our trading partners carefully and focusing on their businesses and their needs.

Phil Cutler founded Race-West Company in 1973; Ball Brokerage Company was renamed the Philip G. Ball Company after Phil Ball died in 1992; and in 1993 the Cutler family opened Sparky's Transportation as a tribute to Daniel, who was nicknamed Sparky.

Sparky's enjoyed limited success in its early years, but by 2007 it began to reap the benefits of steady growth and hard work. Today, Sparky's enjoys the highest transportation ratings of the industry. All three companies—Philip G. Ball Company, Race-West Company, and Sparky's Transportation—are a unique family of companies. All three enjoy the

highest ratings available from Blue Book Services.

Philip Ball's honesty and integrity, Phil Cutler's perseverance and sense of honor, and Daniel's sensitivity to people and passion for long-term relationships formulated our companies' and family's mission.

GENERATION FOUR: TODAY AND BEYOND

This legacy business, created by our founder, is now in the great hands of the fourth generation: Marcus, Geoffrey, Joseph, Charlotte, and Max Cutler.

Our family story is not complete without giving thanks to our loyal employees in Clarks Summit, Pennsylvania, and now, in Riverdale, New York. Their efforts have supported our concepts and led us to great growth in scope and depth of integrity.

Today Race-West, Philip G. Ball, and Sparky's Transportation are involved in the distribution of fresh produce all over the United States, Canada, and Europe. Phil Ball, Phil Cutler, and Daniel Cutler would be proud of the wonderful companies we are operating, decades later, every season, every day.

We look back with great appreciation and look forward with great anticipation to continuing to serve our farm and distribution partners for years to come.

Harris and Janice Cutler are deeply appreciative of all who have helped our companies over the years. Our valued team is well respected in the industry. In the produce business, there are no laurels to rest on; every day we must earn respect and continue to be the best option for our trading partners.

For those of you who work with us, thank you so much for taking us to this great milestone.

To those we are not working with yet, we look forward to meeting you and learning how we can work together.



CELEBRATING
75 YEARS
OF SERVICE

"Have regard for your name, for it will continue longer than a thousand treasures of gold. The days of a good life are numbered, but a good name lasts forever." - Ben Sira