

**BACON & WILSON, PC**  
Springfield, Massachusetts  
founded 1895

**B**acon & Wilson has all the modern bells and whistles you'd expect from a law firm that boasts 28 attorneys and is considered a business leader in western Massachusetts and central Connecticut.

It also has plenty of the historical architecture and charm you'd expect from a Springfield, Massachusetts, company that has been established in the same community for 107 years. Longtime Bacon & Wilson partner Michael Katz doesn't ever want to forget how and why it all began.

"On my desk I have five books that were owned by our founder, George Bacon," says Katz, who was hired in 1974. "I love these books. They represent a bridge to the past. And the past is a bridge to the future."

After laying the groundwork for a specialized practice focusing on corporate and business law, George Albert Bacon turned much of his attention to community involvement and politics. In 1924, Bacon, a good friend of Calvin Coolidge, served as president of the Massachusetts Electoral College.



George Bacon

Strong company and community ties still exist. Attorneys Michael Ratner and Paul Salvage have been with the firm for more than 35 years. Secretary Lena Doty is still going strong in her 54th year. "We pride ourselves on always hiring the brightest and best attorneys and staff," Katz says. "We have a strong family atmosphere. It's more than just a business relationship. Many of our clients also become our friends."

According to Katz, work done outside the office or courtroom is just as important as and even more rewarding than that done on the job. Many of the firm's more than 100 employees commit money, time and effort to fund-raisers for the United Way, the American Cancer Society and, Katz's favorite, the Jimmy Fund—the Children's Clinic of the Dana Farber Cancer Institute in Boston.

"We're proud of our historical roots, and I think people like the firm's stability," Katz explains. "They know if they need us 10 to 15 years from now that we'll still be here. Clients like that security."

"It would be nice to know that someday books that I used may be used by another attorney 100 years from now."

For more, see [www.bacon-wilson.com](http://www.bacon-wilson.com).  
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COURTESY THE BANK OF STOCKTON HISTORICAL PHOTO COLLECTION

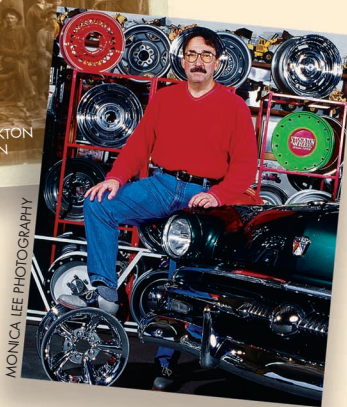
**STOCKTON WHEEL COMPANY**  
Stockton, California  
founded 1883

**T**heir motto is "We didn't invent the wheel ... just perfected it," although it seems Stockton Wheel Company has been around long enough to do both.

Stockton Wheel, the country's oldest operating wheelwright, was founded by Benjamin Holt and his brothers, transplanted New Englanders who kept the business in the family until 1932. Stockton Wheel has been operated by four subsequent owners, including the current owner, Frank Mauro, who purchased the business in 1977.

Innovation seems to be the key to keeping a wheel company alive in the marketplace, and the Holt brothers and those who followed them kept Stockton Wheel thriving by consistently putting a new spin on the wheel business.

Since its founding, the company has fabricated wheels for almost every application—from the enormous wooden tractor wheels Benjamin Holt designed to support tractors in the moist valley soil and his later



MONICA LEE PHOTOGRAPHY

*The Internet and Frank Mauro's passion for hot rods rolled Stockton Wheel into the 21st century.*

perfection of a track-laying vehicle (known more commonly as the "caterpillar tractor") to small cart wheels, giant industrial wheels and, under Mauro's guidance, custom wheels for everything from hot rods to NASA's Space Shuttle program.

"Our forte is building the impossible," says Mauro, who explains that when he took over, Stockton Wheel's products were primarily agriculturally oriented. "In order to continue to grow, we had to develop new lines, find new areas for sales—we had to look for other avenues of interest," Mauro says.

Consequently, now "every call is different. One day it's fire trucks, the next day a vineyard sprayer. Wheels for a mine in Alaska or for rescue vehicles for swamps in Florida, rides at Disneyland or a shuttle in Las Vegas.

"We have the expertise to explain what fits. People are confident when they hang up the phone. That's part of being here for so long—understanding all the applications, either industrial or hot rod."

It was Mauro's personal interest in hot rods and the advent of the Internet that created an explosion of business for Stockton Wheel, spreading its reputation far beyond the borders of California to the rest of the world.

"The Internet has opened us up to a worldwide market," he says. "I think that the Internet and the exposure we get worldwide will continue to grow this business. We have street-rod customers across the United States and as far away as Norway, England and Japan."

For more information, see [www.stocktonwheel.com](http://www.stocktonwheel.com). —Tod Jones

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OLD AMERICAN COMPANIES

YEAR	COMPANY
1802	DuPont
1853	Levi Strauss & Company
1850	American Express
1855	Miller Brewing Company
1885	Crayola
1888	McGraw-Hill
1889	Campbell Soup
1892	Eastman Kodak Company
1894	Hershey Chocolate Company
1895	Arnold, Schwinn & Company

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