



1902-1909



Paul Delorme

## *The truth is I had an idea....*

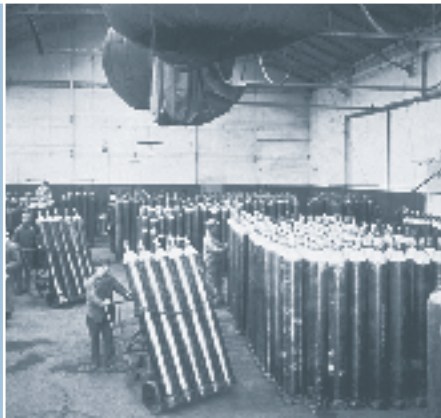
*«It was not a great idea, but it did have some useful consequences, as even the worst ideas occasionally can. I saw my invention of dissolved acetylene, then barely hatched, as under threat for a number of reasons, one of which was the high price of calcium carbide at that time. That was when I had the idea that it might be possible to reduce the price by producing the high temperatures required to manufacture the product through burning coal in oxygen instead of using electricity. But it would only work if the oxygen could also be produced at a low enough price.*

*Although this idea was of no practical use immediately, as calcium carbide was still made using electricity, it was this same idea – and it would not be wrong to call it a lucky coincidence – that led me to search for a way to liquify air in order to produce oxygen more efficiently. The other, and quite extraordinary, coincidence was that it was also oxygen that would save acetylene by giving it a new lease on life – such that I could never have foreseen – in welding and cutting. This is how dissolved acetylene became the largest market for Air liquide and ensured the Group's success.*

*But that was not the end of the story: although there's no doubt that it was acetylene that led me towards liquid air, it is equally certain that liquid air led me on to extract the noble gases, extract hydrogen from coke-over fumes and synthesize ammonia at very high pressure...»*

*George Claude*

Somewhat like this the engineer George Claude with the financial support of the business man Paul Delorme founded in 1902 Air Liquide in France. After 4 years, in 1906, Air Liquide begins its geographical expansion and in 1912 it is already present in the 5 continents.



## The tough years

Air Liquide comes to Greece in 1909, under the name "To Oxygono" (The Oxygen). L'Air Liquide in France assigned Constantinou Nikolaidis with the commercialization of oxygen, nitrogen and acetylene in Greece, Turkey, Egypt and Minor Asia. The first production unit was 50 HP, with a capacity of 20 m3 per hour, producing oxygen of 95% purity. Its Status was signed on Friday 5th June 1909, among Fernard Serpieri, greek banker, Zafiris Matsas, the Director of the Bank of Greece and Constantinou Nikolaidis, Engineer.

The 1st World War constraints but does not eliminate its activities. The method of using oxygen and acetylene in cutting and welding metals is an efficient quality product. At the same time, the company supplies all the major hospitals of Athens with oxygen. In 1926 the company's headquarters are on 10th Solomou Str., in the Athenian southern suburb of Faliro, the company starts producing oxygen and acetylene in Thessaloniki (capital of Northern Greece) and in 1932 it expands its activities in Volos (central Greece).

After the end of 2nd World War the company's site in Faliro is completely destroyed by the Germans.

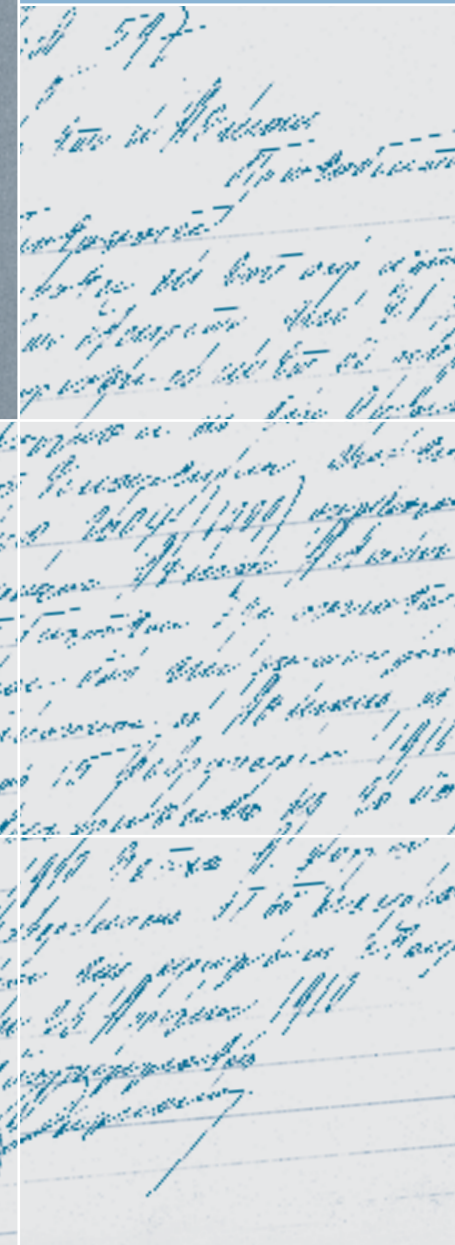
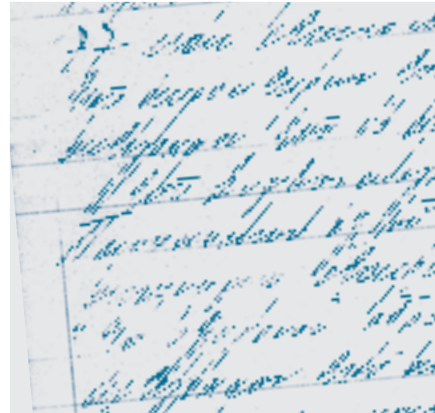
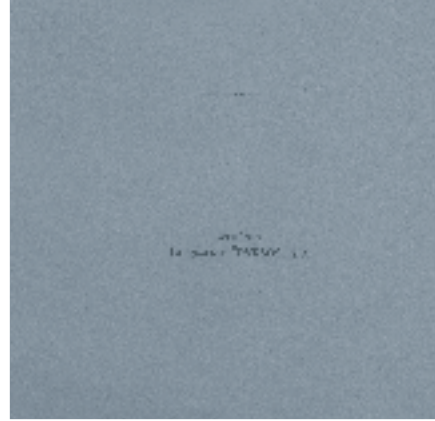
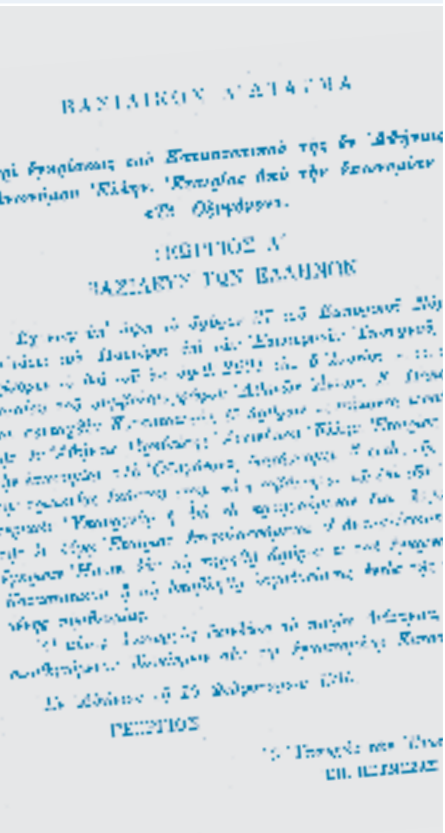
The site is rebuilt and the production continues.

## STATUTS DE LA SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME "L'OXYGÈNE"

A PROPOS

DE LA SOCIÉTÉ ANONYME "L'OXYGÈNE"

1909-1945





## The road to development

In 1958 the company constructs its first production unit of liquid nitrogen at the industrial area of Sindos, Thessaloniki and its Northern Greece headquarters are installed at the Andreou Georgiou street, where they remain until 1995. The region of Northern Greece initiates the new development era of the company by the signature of big contracts: in 1969 the company supplies a major customer in the Sindos area by an oxygen pipeline, which is the first constructed in Greece.

The '70s start with the change of the name of the company according to the mother company's specifications: L'AIR LIQUIDE HELLAS AEBA constructs its biggest oxygen and nitrogen production unit at Tanagra, within the Prefecture of Viotia. During the end of the decade L'Air Liquide Hellas AEBA takes over the activities of the Swedish AGA in Greece and the ones of the smaller company named "ZEFIROS A.E.", both dealing with production, filling and commercialization of industrial and medical gases.

In 1980, after the merge of the three companies, L'Air Liquide Hellas has its headquarters in 10th Sina Street at the center of the town of Athens, has two liquid oxygen production units in Tanagra and Thessaloniki and three filling centers in Thessaloniki, Tanagra and Aspropyrgos.

1946-1980

1980-2000

## Few years ago...

During the '80s, within the general development of the greek market, L'Air Liquide Hellas expands and takes over the activities of CARBONICA A.E. and AFLOR A.E., both dealing with the production and commercialization of gaseous, liquid and solid carbon dioxide. In 1982 the headquarters of the company are transferred to a more spacious place in the number 26 of Asklipiou street, where it will remain for the next 24 years.

Air Liquide Hellas updates and automates its Thessaloniki production unit and puts the basis for its future development, aiming at the expansion of its synergies. Air Liquide Hellas is now the permanent supplier of the major greek industries: Steel industries, refineries, chemical industries, food and beverage industries, by supplying them with products through either an extensive pipelines' network, or by the construction of on-site units, or by the continuous supply of their sites with products in both gaseous and liquid form. Air Liquide Hellas is as well supplying all greek major hospitals with high quality products and high tech equipment.

In 1991 Air Liquide Hellas expands its Healthcare activities in the Homecare sector, through VitalAire activity, according to the international group's specifications. In 1999 it purchases a majority share of the homecare company PNEYMON in Ioannina (Western Greece) and at the same time it proceeds in the merge with CARBONICA and AFLOR.

Before the start of the new millennium, Group Air Liquide Hellas disposes two automated liquid oxygen and nitrogen production units in Thessaloniki and Aspropyrgos, one carbon dioxide production unit in Florina, one hydrogen filling center in Thessaloniki, two filling centers of industrial, medical and specialty gases in Thessaloniki and Aspropyrgos and one homecare subsidiary, PNEYMON, in Ioannina.



2001-today

Tanagra's Plant

## Starting the new millennium

The new millennium starts with the start up of the new automated production unit in Tanagra, while in 2003 the new homecare subsidiary «VitalAire Hellas – Homecare ABEE» is established. The Air Liquide Hellas Group's expansion towards Homecare continues with the purchase of the majority share of Allertec Homecare at Thessaloniki. In 2005 the company's headquarters are transferred to Aspropyrgos and in October 2006. All the administrative services of Air Liquide Hellas are transferred to Aspropyrgos.

Group Air Liquide Hellas having consolidated its place in the industrial sector accelerates its growth in the healthcare sector. Two new VitalAire stores are inaugurated, one in Neo Psychiko and the other in Ioannina. Workshops are organized training healthcare professionals to VitalAire's high tech equipment. Air Liquide Hellas being the recognized leader of the greek market proceeds to the take over of the activities of Messer in Greece.

Group Air Liquide Hellas sticking to the core value of sustainable development develops technologies for the protection of the environment. In May 2006 it wins the Clean Technology Prize by the competent authority in Greece, while in 2008 it signs a major contract for the supply of specialty gases to the first photovoltaic panels production site in Greece.