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# Flowserve Corporation

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## Introduction

Flowserve Corporation's history is the story of American enterprise, ingenuity, and resilience. As one of the world's leading providers of fluid motion and control products and services, Flowserve stands as a testament to more than two centuries of technological innovation, mergers, and strategic growth. From its earliest roots in the late 18th century to its current place among S&P 500 industry leaders, Flowserve's journey traces both the evolution of industrial America and the dynamism of a globalized market.

The story begins in the workshops and foundries of the early industrial age, where pioneering figures such as Thomas Simpson and Worthington laid the foundations for the technologies that would change manufacturing, transportation, and infrastructure worldwide. Through numerous rounds of growth, competition, and transformation, the companies that would eventually form Flowserve built a reputation for reliability, quality, and innovation in everything from pumps for waterworks to advanced sealing systems for petrochemical plants.

The modern Flowserve emerged from a bold merger in 1997, but its DNA is a rich tapestry of acquired knowledge, inventions, and partnerships stretching across continents and centuries. As Flowserve grew, it navigated the complexities of global competition, economic downturns, and technological disruption—expanding its portfolio, entering new markets, and absorbing companies with distinguished histories of their own. Today, its reach extends to critical infrastructure in nearly every part of the world, serving industries as diverse as oil and gas, water management, power generation, pharmaceuticals, and food processing.

Just as the demands on industrial enterprises have changed, so has Flowserve. The company has embraced sustainability and environmental stewardship, enhanced its digital capabilities, and launched new initiatives to ensure it remains competitive in a rapidly evolving energy and industrial landscape. With investments in research, strategic acquisitions, and an unwavering commitment to safety and ethics, Flowserve continues to adapt and thrive as a leader in both traditional and emerging sectors.

This book presents a comprehensive account of Flowserve Corporation: its storied past, its present state, and its prospects for the future. Drawing upon historical sources, financial data, industry analysis, and firsthand accounts, we explore how Flowserve exemplifies the spirit of American industrial enterprise. As we chart the company's narrative from its earliest days to its future ambitions—including the transformative merger with Chart Industries—we gain insight into the factors that have shaped its success and the challenges it must still confront.

For anyone interested in the intersection of technology, business leadership, and global industry, the story of Flowserve offers lessons that resonate far beyond its own sector. Whether you are a student of business, an industry professional, or simply a curious reader, you are invited to join this exploration of a remarkable American company—its history, its impact, and its ongoing quest to control and enable the world's most essential flows.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: The Origins: Simpson & Thompson and the Early Years (1790-1900)**

The story of Flowserve Corporation, a company synonymous with fluid motion and control, begins not in the sprawling industrial complexes of modern America, but in a small London workshop in the late 18th century. It was 1790 when Thomas Simpson, a British innovator with an eye for the burgeoning possibilities of steam power, established Simpson & Thompson. This fledgling company laid the foundational stones for what would eventually become a global enterprise, specializing in a technology that, at the time, was revolutionizing daily life: the pump.

At the close of the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution was gaining momentum. James Watt had already refined the steam engine, transforming it from a mere curiosity into a practical workhorse. This invention, with its ability to convert reciprocating motion into rotary motion, opened up new avenues for mechanization, and one of the most critical applications was in pumping water. Before this, water management largely relied on human or animal power, often through simple scoop wheels or the ancient Archimedean screw. While devices like the hand pump had seen advancements in the mid-18th century, the advent of steam power promised a scale and efficiency previously unimaginable.

Thomas Simpson recognized this potential. His early work focused on harnessing steam power for municipal water applications. London, a rapidly expanding city, faced ever-growing demands for clean water and efficient drainage, making it a fertile ground for such innovations. Simpson & Thompson began to manufacture pumping engines, contributing to the vital infrastructure that supported urban development. These early pumps, though rudimentary by today's standards, were technological marvels of their time, capable of moving large volumes of water with unprecedented force.

The company, later known as James Simpson & Co., continued to evolve throughout the 19th century. By 1860, it had established a new factory by the Thames at Grosvenor Road, Pimlico. The business manufactured not just engines and pumps but also other machinery. This era was marked by continuous refinement of pump designs, moving from simple hand-operated devices to more complex piston and later, centrifugal pumps. The demand for such equipment was constant, fueled by industrial growth, expanding cities, and the need for reliable water supplies and drainage systems.

Across the Atlantic, another significant figure was emerging in the American industrial

landscape: Henry R. Worthington. In 1845, Worthington invented the world's first direct-acting steam pumping engine. This innovation was a game-changer, initially designed to power canal boats and U.S. naval vessels. Worthington's company soon expanded its focus, pioneering pump designs for boiler feed systems, oil pipelines, and hydroelectric applications. His work in steam pumps became a cornerstone of industrial development in the United States, providing the muscle needed for critical processes in emerging industries.

Meanwhile, in 1872, out in Woodland, California, another pioneer named Byron Jackson set up his first machine shop. Jackson, an inventor and manufacturer, initially focused on farm equipment, creating tools for local farmers. His early innovations included a "Self-Feeder" for harvesting grain, which significantly reduced time and expense. However, it was his foray into pump manufacturing that would solidify his legacy. The demand for pumps was particularly high in California's fruit-growing regions, like the Santa Clara Valley, where irrigation was crucial.

In 1878, Byron Jackson moved his business to San Francisco, and by the 1880s, his company began manufacturing centrifugal pumps. In 1890, he patented his first centrifugal pump, a testament to his inventive spirit. Over his lifetime, Jackson was awarded 13 patents for various inventions, many of which contributed to the advancement of pumping technology. The company's factory in San Francisco became one of the largest on the Pacific coast, producing steam engines, pumping machinery, and various agricultural implements. Even a devastating earthquake and fire in 1906, which destroyed his plant, couldn't halt the company's progress; business continued with salvaged machinery.

The late 19th century saw a convergence of technological advancements that further propelled the pump industry. The widespread adoption of electricity, for instance, began to transform how pumps were powered, moving beyond steam to more versatile and efficient electrical systems. This era also witnessed the development of more specialized pumps, moving away from general-purpose designs to those tailored for specific industrial applications. From municipal waterworks to nascent oil pipelines, the need for reliable fluid control was becoming increasingly evident.

As the century drew to a close, the foundations for modern fluid motion and control were firmly in place. Companies like Simpson & Thompson (which would become Worthington Simpson Pumps) and Byron Jackson were not merely manufacturing equipment; they were engineering solutions that enabled industrial progress on a grand scale. Their commitment to innovation, even in the face of challenges, laid the groundwork for the complex and interconnected global industry that Flowserve Corporation would one day lead. These early years, characterized by ingenuity and an entrepreneurial spirit, set the stage for the strategic mergers and acquisitions that would define the company's trajectory in the centuries to come.

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