

The Birth of Minnesota's Computer Industry

Minnesota's computer industry is not a story widely known, and until recently, not widely told. It had its humble beginnings in a company named Engineering Research Associates (ERA), founded in 1946 in St. Paul. Over the years, the company grew, changed names, was bought and sold, and eventually closed up shop.

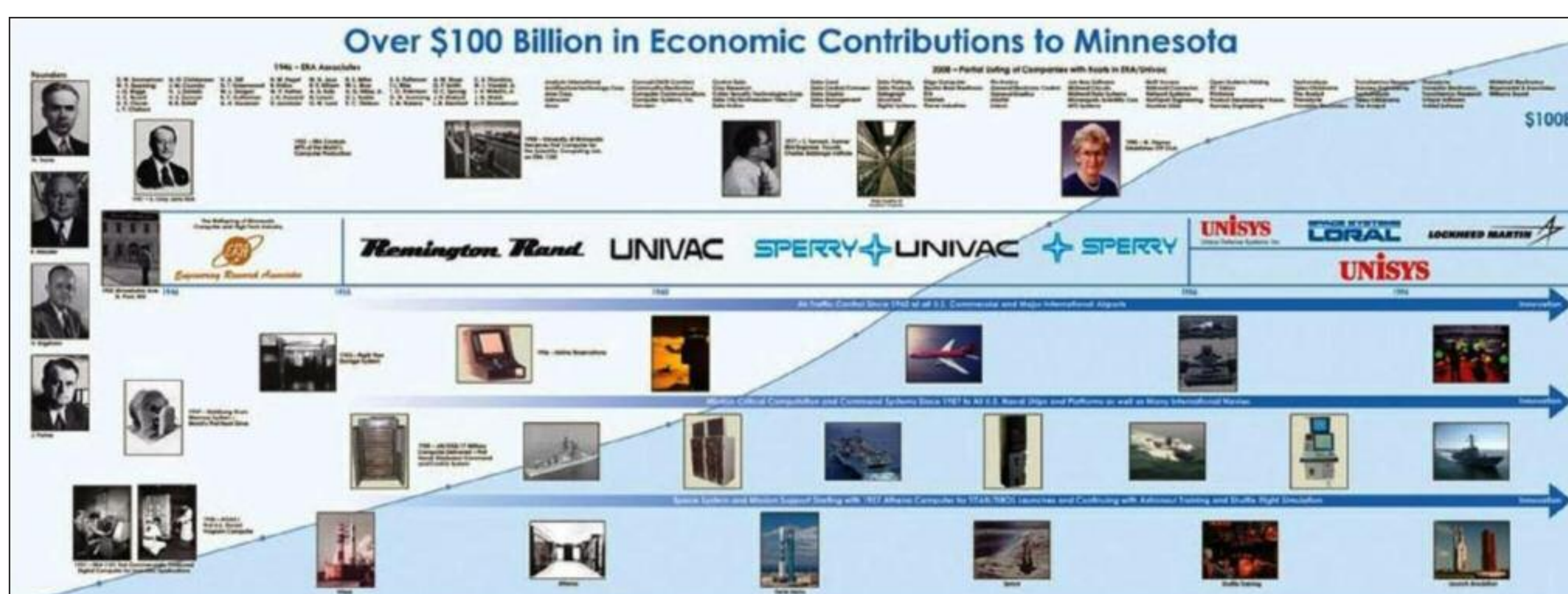
In its time it was the source of great innovation, brilliant minds, and many dedicated hands. Through their labor they powered naval ships and submarines, sent rockets into space, landed countless commercial airplanes, and predicted the weather.

This exhibit tells the story of ERA and its many successor companies, their many products and systems, and the profound impact they have had on the economy of Minnesota, and the United States.



Above: An ERA representative at a trade show in the early 1950s. Many of the company's products were produced for the U.S. Military and were classified, completely unknown to the public until years later.

You can say quite confidently that the computer industry has its roots in two places in the world, Philadelphia and here (Twin Cities).



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Dr. Thomas Misa
Director, Charles
Babbage Institute

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