

The History of the LPA (SAMA)

While the manufacturing of instruments in America dates back to the colonial period of our history, most scientific and industrial instruments, apparatus, and equipment used in this country prior to World War I was imported from Europe.

When war engulfed Europe in 1914 and disrupted trade, the U.S. laboratory products and supplies industry was born. Four years later, in 1918, a handful of manufacturers, predominantly from the Chicago area, met to discuss the future of the American scientific products industry.

The major concerns for the manufacturers were standardization of instrument parts to expedite war production and repairs in the field, elimination of certain instruments to afford greater output of important equipment for the armed forces, and the possible post-war abolition of duty-free importation of scientific instruments and apparatus to assist in strengthening the young U.S. industry.

Twenty-one companies formed the charter membership of the Association of Scientific Apparatus Makers of America in November of 1918. Many of the original members were acquired or consolidated with other companies over the years. One of those founding members, Eberbach & Son (now Eberbach Corp.) is still a member today and has the distinction of being the oldest member company of the LPA.

The association would evolve and transform over the decades to what is today the Laboratory Products Association. In the 1940s, the name of the organization was changed to Scientific Apparatus Makers Association, better known as SAMA, and later to the SAMA Group of Associations.

Because of the diversity of the products and markets of its member companies, SAMA found it expedient to organize into various product-oriented sections. These sections had their own memberships, dues structures, meetings, and unique benefits and programs in addition to those provided by SAMA. The number and structure of these sections changed over time. In 1975, for example, the SAMA sections included: Analytical/Nuclear Instruments; Laboratory Equipment; Measurement & Testing Instruments; Optical; Process Measurement & Control; and Scientific Laboratory Furniture & Equipment.

By the 1980s as the sections had grown considerably in their autonomy, SAMA found itself functioning in more of an administrative capacity, providing offices, equipment, and shared services such as accounting. By the late 1990s, many of the operating sections left SAMA and independently incorporated as separate trade associations.

In 2011, SAMA was comprised of just the Laboratory Products Association and the Optical Imaging Association (formerly the Optical section). Over time, SAMA recognition faded and diminished and the Laboratory Products Association had developed a name for itself as “the” association representing the laboratory products and equipment industry. The SAMA Board of Directors unanimously voted to change the organization from SAMA Group of Associations to Laboratory Products Association (LPA) effective July 1, 2011 to better reflect the true governance, membership, and structure of the association.

Today, the LPA is a dynamic and vibrant association with approximately 120 member companies who are manufacturers and distributors of laboratory products used in scientific research, applied sciences, and life sciences worldwide. Its mission is to enable its members to consistently improve their global and commercial success by providing them with unique opportunities in networking, market information, and education.

Timeline

1918

- Association of Scientific Apparatus Makers of the United States of America founded at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago, Illinois.

1920s

- Aided in the publication of the *Review of Scientific Instruments*, the first U.S. journal devoted to the industry.
- Eliminated 3,000 unnecessary sizes and types of lab apparatus.
- Promoted industry standardization; liaised with the National Bureau of Standards to improve the agency's testing facilities.
- Developed a code of ethics for the industry.

- Monitored issues on tariffs, product liability, insurance, and military specifications for instruments.

1930s

- The Laboratory Suppliers section is organized (predecessor to the LPA).
- National Industry Recovery Act enacted with scientific industry code provided by SAMA.
- Represented industry positions on tariffs, Social Security, minimum wages, anti-lobbying bills, trade promotion practices, and military preparedness.

1940s

- Association name changed to Scientific Apparatus Makers Association.
- A small Washington, D.C. office is established.
- Established procedures for the issuance of standards in cooperation with other major standards bodies.
- Represented industry positions such as the unemployment tax, trade mark legislation, reciprocal trade agreements with Canada, and price regulation.

1950s

- Refined scientific instruments and products classifications used in the U.S. Department of Commerce statistics.
- Launched public information programs and published industry opportunity booklets.
- SAMA member of executives served rotating terms as deputy directors in the Business and Defense Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

1960s

- SAMA headquarters are moved from Chicago to Washington, D.C.
- New analytical instruments section is formed and is known as the AIA section.
- Published directory of international standards with counterpart U.S. standards.
- Represented industry positions on the Florence Agreement, procurement procedures, domestic production classifications, and others.

1970s

- Sponsored trade missions to the Far East, South America, and Russia.
- Drafted proposal for tax incentives for university R&D.

-Represented industry positions on medical device regulations, government procurement, standards development, export regulations, and accreditation test laboratories.

1980s

- Represented industry positions on hospital cost containment, instrument appreciation, export licensing, government procurement, hazardous material shipping, and risk retention legislation.
- Instrumental in development and enactment of R&D tax credits for U.S. industry.
- The Scientific Laboratory Furniture & Equipment section withdraws from SAMA and independently incorporates as the Scientific Equipment and Furniture Association (SEFA).
- Major reorganization of SAMA into four affiliated associations: (Analytical Instrument Association; Laboratory Products Association; Measurement, Control & Automation Association; and the Optical Imaging Association.
- Surveying section of the Optical Imaging Association became the Geomatics Industry of America Association.
- The offices are moved from Washington, D.C. to Alexandria, VA.

1990s

- LPA establishes government affairs group to monitor critical issues.
- Measurement Control & Automation Association withdraws from SAMA and independently incorporates.
- With its expansion into life sciences, the Analytical Instrument Association changes its name to the Analytical Life Sciences Systems Association.

2000s

- The Analytical Life Science Systems Association withdraws from SAMA and independently incorporates.
- The member companies of the Geomatics Industry Association of America chose to affiliate with the Association of Equipment Manufacturers instead of SAMA.
- The SAMA Board of Directors votes to change the name of the organization from SAMA Group of Associations to the Laboratory Products Association. The Optical Imaging Association becomes a subgroup of the LPA.
- The LPA office moves to White Post, VA.