

The Holland Furniture Industry is Established

Draft 6/16/08

Need, abundant raw materials, and industrial advances fostered a notable furniture industry in West Michigan. Rapid development of transportation by water and rail contributed to the industry's growth, which centered in Grand Rapids. Holland's furniture industry was largely an outgrowth of the Grand Rapids furniture industry. A diminishing wood supply and the "Great Depression" of the 1930's forced many fine companies to close. Today, major manufacturers of office furniture such as Herman Miller and Haworth are joined by smaller companies that are facing challenges in the world markets.

- 1849-1856 Jan & Grietje Kolvoord

Located at the Old Groningen settlement between Holland and Zeeland. The Kolvoords were a Dutch immigrant couple. Jan turned bedsteads and chairs while Grietje assembled them.

- 1864 A. Vennema

Local cabinet maker.

- ca. 1865 - 1871 Pieter Sakkers

Sakkers, a Dutch immigrant, retailed furniture but also built tables, bureaus, washstands, and wardrobes in a variety of partnerships, first with a Mr. Wakker and then with Mr. Peyster. Sakker's shop burned in the Holland fire and never reopened, although he later made some furniture in the neighboring community of Zeeland.

- 1869 James A. Brouwer

Furniture retailer who learned the art of furniture making in the back room of Pieter Sakkers' store at the age of 15. He later built a large furniture store on 8th street.

- 1887 - 1931 Ottawa Furniture Co.

Manufacturer of medium-priced dining, breakfast, library, bedroom, and apartment suites in Mission, Colonial, Chippendale, Sheraton, and Adam Revival styles.

- ca. 1888 - ca. 1905 Werkman Manufacturing Co.

Produced wooden farm implements and low-priced chamber suites.

- 1889 - 1984 West Michigan Furniture Co.

The largest furniture manufacturer here in the 1890's. Their specialization was bedroom suites.

- 1890 - 1900 Lakeside Furniture Manufacturing

Manufacturer of desks, bookcases, and tables.

- ca. 1890 GeorgeTrenk

Manufacturer of center tables, furniture trimmings, and small stands.

- 1893 - 1894 Van Ark Furniture Co.

Manufacturer of Golden Oak bedroom suites and sideboards.

- 1894 Holland Furniture Co.

Initially manufactured Golden Oak bedroom suites and sideboards. From the late 30's to the early 40's the company jointly manufactured the "Calvert Line" of colonial reproductions with Dutch woodcraft shops in Zeeland, MI. Successor to Van Ark Furniture Co.

- 1898 - 1934 Bay View Furniture

Founded on the shores of Macatawa Bay, it manufactured extension and library tables and later radio and TV cabinets.

- 1904 Michigan Toy & Novelty Co.

Manufacturer of drop carvings, coach trimmings, embossed moldings, turned moldings, rope moldings, and rosettes for the furniture industry.

- 1905 - 1929 Bush and Lane Piano Co.

Moved to Holland from Chicago and manufactured pianos, phonograph and radio cabinets.

- 1906 - 1944 Chas. P. Limbert Co.

Limbert moved from Grand Rapids and made "Holland Dutch Arts and Crafts" furniture until about 1922 and Period Revival furniture into the 1940's.

- 1908 - 1916 Tromp Manufacturing Co.

Local picture framer who later added furniture, novelties, frames, mirrors, tabourets, pedestals, etc. under the Tromp Manufacturing Company (1908-1916).

- 1914 - 1927 Holland Chair Co.

Founded by Henry Huls and George Vander Riet, the company made chairs and occasional tables until 1927.

- 1921 American Cabinet Co.

Holland Manufacturer of period revival furniture with decorative painting.

- 1923 - Present Herman Miller

A leader in the move from traditional residential furniture making to the production of modern residential and office furniture and systems.

- 1926 Imperial Chair Co.

Manufacturer of chamber, dining, and library suites.

- 1928 - Present Howard Miller" America's largest clock company" specializes in grandfather clocks.

- 1933 - Present Charles R. Sligh Co.

The Sligh family business produces a variety of furniture from bedroom sets to executive desks.

- 1933 - Present Baker Furniture

Began in Allegan in 1895 and moved to Holland after the demise of Bush and Lane. The company continues to make high quality period reproductions but closed its Holland plant in 2004.

- 1946 Fine Arts Studio

Manufacturer of occasional pieces, wall brackets, and desks. In 1978 the company became Extensole Corp.

- 1948 - Present Haworth Inc.

Originally founded as Modern Products by G.W. Haworth, a Holland shop teacher. The name was changed in 1975. Today it is one of the largest office interiors manufacturers in the world.

- 1949 - Present Worden Co.

Originally made wooden teachers desks with Bolhuis Lumber & Manufacturing. In the late 50's they began making wooden library furniture. Worden purchased Bolhuis in 1982 and is one of the largest makers of library furniture in the U.S.

- 1955 Fleetwood Furniture Co.

Manufacturer of educational and business furniture, audio-visual equipment, audience-reply electronics, dormitory furniture, bookcases, cabinets, and tables. Fleetwood moved to Holland Township in 1986.

- 1958 Hart Mirror Division, Donelley Corp.

Manufacturer of decorative residential mirrors. Hart Mirror became LaBarge, Inc. in 1962. LaBarge moved to North Carolina in 2000.

- 1968 Trendway Corp.

Manufacturer of open office systems and floor to ceiling partitions, Trendway purchased Modern Partitions' line in 1976.

- 1988 Charter House, Inc. (Subsidiary of Stainless, Inc.)

Formerly a division of Holland Stitchcraft. Charter House manufactures wood and fiberglass custom tables and cabinets, condiment counters, and planters for family-oriented and fast-food restaurants. Clients include Big Boy, Arby's, McDonalds, Burger King, Denny's, and IHOP in the U.S., Canada, Latin America, Europe, and the Middle East.