

LLOYD FLANDERS™

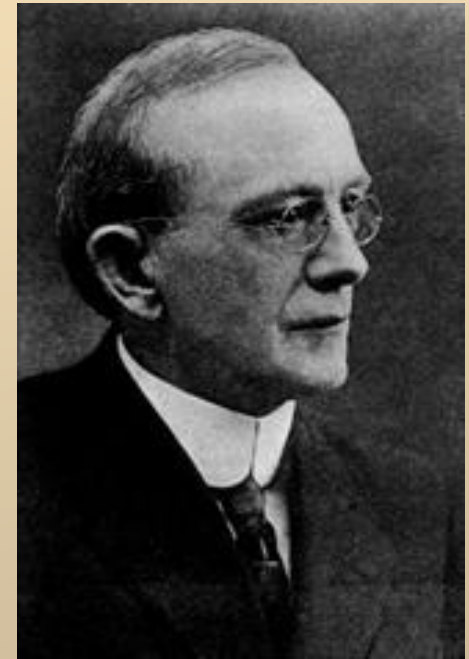
A Profile of American Tradition, Innovation, and Craftsmanship.

1858 – The Birth of an Inventor

Marshall B. Lloyd was born March 10th, 1858 in St. Paul, Minnesota. His family, consisting of an English immigrant to Canada, Canadian mother, and siblings, soon returned to Meaford, North of Toronto, to manage a farm.

Young Marshall was unable complete what basic rural education he was afforded, instead providing supplemental income by working at a local shingle mill with his father. It is believed he showed the first evidence of his ingenuity there as he developed an eaves-trough for houses, and a method for building barns out of split-cedar poles.

Lloyd had a variety of odd jobs throughout his young life, often showcasing a talent for creativity and persistence. He sold fish door-to-door, worked in a grocery store, sold soap door-to-door, and peddled jewelry on the streets of Toronto. He also ran a rural mail delivery route spanning two days and sixty-five miles, by use of dog sled.



Eventually, Lloyd would hear stories of the great profits to be made in land speculation in Manitoba. Selling his pocket watch to afford the fare, he bought a one-way ticket, and arrived penniless. He secured a job and began saving money. With that savings, he made a \$150 profit one hour after purchasing a plot of land.

After some time, Lloyd left Manitoba and his real estate business with over \$15,000. With that money he moved his family south to the United States and purchased a farm in North Dakota. After finding he did not care for farm work, he left for St. Thomas, North Dakota.

While selling insurance in St. Thomas, he invented a combination bag-holder and scale after watching two men work to fill and weigh a sack of grain, reasoning they were expending twice the necessary labor.

With his new invention, Lloyd pooled all of his money into forming the Lloyd Scale Company. Unfortunately a fire eventually destroyed everything before Lloyd could establish his product, and he was once more left penniless. Now in his 30's, Lloyd began to realize his true potential as an inventor. He devoted much of his free time towards developing and patenting new ideas.

In 1890 Lloyd obtained a partnership with the C.O. White Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota which paid for use of many of his inventions. He worked diligently, developing and improving the company's products, and became President of the company in 1894 at the age of 36.

Continued use of existing and new patents allowed Lloyd to buy out the C.O. White Company in 1900 and rename it the Lloyd Manufacturing Company.

1900 – Lloyd Manufacturing Company

The Lloyd Manufacturing Company produced a diverse range of specialty products including steel bed springs and boy's wagons, for which Lloyd invented a new wire wheel.

Lloyd's ambitions would nonetheless necessitate a change, as he sought to expand and invest further in the company.



In 1906, to meet his desire for expansion, Lloyd began building a new factory in Menominee, MI a once-thriving lumber town, nestled in a bay of Lake Michigan. Its proximity to the lake reminded Lloyd of his youth close to the Great Lakes. The dwindling lumber industry provided the company with a plethora of investors, and its position on the lake and crossroads of railroad systems allowed for ease of transit. Work on the factory completed a year later, and the Minneapolis plant closed, moving machines and assets to Menominee where they have remained for over 100 years.

His time in Menominee resulted in two great inventions that marked his life and put the small town on the map. In 1913 the Lloyd Oxy-Acetylene Method of manufacturing steel tubing was patented. While many steel manufacturers referred to the idea as crazy, they eventually paid for the right to use it.



In 1917, Lloyd patented the Lloyd Loom. A machine that for the first time allowed a wicker weave to be constructed separate from a frame and instead be affixed to the frame by hand later. The loom could do the work of 30 men and reduce a day's work to a nearly automatic process. It is considered a stroke of genius that Lloyd developed this method, as wicker furniture manufacturers had been trying to mechanize the process for a number of years with no success.

The Lloyd Loom allowed for a greater volume and speed than previously possible, and it showed. Lloyd Manufacturing became the world's largest producer of wicker baby carriages and prams, causing the name of a little American municipality to be known in distribution centers the nation over for millions of dollars worth of merchandise in crates stamped, "From Lloyd – Menominee".

Lloyd continued to live in Menominee until his death in 1927, contributing much to the town as Mayor and through numerous social projects, some of which he personally funded.

1921 – Heywood Wakefield and Onward

Traditional wicker companies saw the quality, durability, and speed at which the Lloyd Manufacturing Company could produce wicker baby carriages, and feared what would come if the company began making wicker furniture as well. When asked, Lloyd was quoted saying he saw the potential for the furniture industry, but the factory was simply too crowded already as they worked to meet the demand for baby carriages.

By 1921 Heywood-Wakefield Company, a furniture manufacturer formed out of the consolidation of Heywood Brothers & Company, formed in 1826 by five brothers in Gardner, Massachusetts, and Wakefield Rattan Company, founded 1851 in Reading, Massachusetts, was a prestigious and established producer of wicker and rattan furniture.

Lloyd Manufacturing Company soon became a manufacturer under Heywood-Wakefield when an offer was made to purchase the company and American rights to the Lloyd Loom. Lloyd remained as an independent within the company, making an entrance into the furniture industry soon after.

In 1923, having perfected their first complete line of furniture the year before, Lloyd announced a massive building program to improve production of the successful furniture products. Though he retired from managing the factory in 1924, Lloyd continued as director of Heywood-Wakefield with the title “Advisory Engineer to the Corporation.”

The Heywood-Wakefield wicker furniture proved popular until the World’s Fair in 1933. Fewer and fewer Lloyd Loom furnishings appeared in catalogs as the company tried attracting consumers seeking a more modern aesthetic.

By 1941 the Menominee Factory joined the war effort, producing shell cases, military and hospital furniture, aircraft sections, and eventually glider frameworks, but did not return to producing wicker furniture immediately after the war.

The company had instead won government contracts for metal outdoor seats, auditorium seats, and school furniture, which helped to keep the factory open even as other Heywood Wakefield factories closed.

As the number of government contracts began to decrease in the early sixties, the company found itself in a difficult position. Interest in wicker was low, and Heywood Wakefield had lost the majority of its retail furniture business.

In 1982, Heywood Wakefield was liquidated, and the Menominee Lloyd Manufacturing factory was closed. It had been continuously producing for 75 years.

But it would not remain closed for long, thanks to one businessman who put focus back on the wicker furniture, utilizing the innovative material and traditional, lasting design.

1982 – Flanders Manufacturing and All-Weather Wicker

Flanders Manufacturing Company was founded by Don Flanders and his wife, Phala, in 1954 with just 2 employees. When it was sold to become part of the Riverside Furniture Corporation in 1969 it had 350 employees and was one of the largest case goods firms in the Southwest.

When the Lloyd Manufacturing division of Heywood-Wakefield was closed in 1982, Don's son, Dudley, saw the potential the original Lloyd fibre afforded outdoor furniture as opposed to the metal and plastic materials common at the time. That December, the Flanders family purchased the Lloyd Looms and Lloyd Manufacturing facilities from the bankrupt company to form Lloyd Flanders. Production of wicker furniture began in January 1983, and used the innovations of the original Lloyd inventions with the business and practical prowess of Flanders Manufacturing at the helm.

In 1985, Lloyd Flanders debuted all-weather wicker to the casual furniture industry. A new waterproofing technique allowed for the additional resilience demanded by the furniture's outdoor use. Outdoor and poolside pieces brought new life to the once closed factory.

Furniture that had once graced a multitude of homes in America would be remembered and honored as Lloyd Flanders introduced a small line of traditionally designed furniture appropriately named its Heirloom collection. Pieces were assembled much the same way they were in 1922, building on American tradition, innovation, and craftsmanship.

As the category of all-weather wicker has grown, Lloyd Flanders expanded its furniture offerings to include synthetic hand-made wicker products that are manufactured off shore, as well as sustainably-sourced teak.

Innovation has been the hallmark of Lloyd Flanders in its role as the leading manufacturer of all-weather wicker. Improvements in materials, processes, finishes, design, and seating continue to be introduced each new season.

Today Lloyd Flanders Industries employs 109 people at the Manufacturing Facility in Menominee, Michigan. The facility covers 500,000 square feet of manufacturing space, which ranges in age from 1900 to the 1930s.

Lloyd Flanders all-weather-wicker is distributed by 2,000 retail outlets and interior designers thanks to a network of independent sales representatives across the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean.