

# A window into the past, a doorway to the future



## *A.W. Hastings builds on 150 years of experience*

In 1854, Albert W. Hastings founded A.W. Hastings & Co., and began making window sash and doors in the Haymarket Square district of Boston.

Although deliveries were made locally over the cobblestone streets by horse and wagon, Hastings' products made it as far as San Francisco, shipped by clipper ship around Cape Horn.



*Above: Although Hastings' business changed from millwork production to distribution in the post-World War II era, the company still produced its own window products up until the late 1960s.*

*Right: Hastings' office at the turn of the century reflected the austerity and formality of the times.*



By 1923, downtown Boston was becoming more congested, and the company relocated its warehouse to Somerville, Mass.

A.W. Hastings & Co. operated as a partnership owned by the Hastings family until 1940, when Albert Boles Hastings, son of the founder, incorporated the firm and delegated to employees Jack Haley and Ivan Hoyt the task of revitalizing the business.

Following Albert B. Hastings' death in 1943, management was given the option by the executors of his estate to acquire ownership of the business and plant.

Ivan Hoyt succeeded Haley as president in 1945 and shortly after, exercised the option to purchase the business.

During the post-World War II building boom, A.W. Hastings & Co.'s business focus shifted from a millwork producer that built and supplied windows and doors

directly to the general public, to a wholesaler focusing on the distribution of a variety of building products to retail lumberyards. Hastings now focused on lumber dealers as its customer base.

During this period, Hastings expanded its territory outside of the Boston market. At various times, operations were opened in Northampton, Mass., Providence, R.I. and Portland, Me. In 1954, the Rhode Island location was destroyed by Hurricane Carol, which left downtown Providence under 12 feet of water. This event led to the closing of Hastings' operations in that location.

In 1968, Hastings moved from the building where it had taken up operations in the 1920s to a new distribution center in Somerville that offered better highway access.

Hastings expanded in 1973, when it purchased another building products distributor, Johnson Building Materials, with locations in Manchester, N.H. and Burlington, Vt. This addition gave Hastings four locations throughout New England.

In 1976, Hastings' primary window supplier severed a 25-year business relationship, forcing Hastings to search for a new supplier. A primary consideration was to find a window manufacturer whose products and business principles matched those on which Hastings' reputation had been built: quality and dependability.

The search led to a small regional window manufacturer located in Warroad, Minn. Marvin Windows and Doors, a family owned company, was expanding its market with revolutionary new concepts — windows and doors made to order and

delivered within a two-week production cycle. This idea was particularly appealing because it meant that customers could get their products in the sizes and with the options they preferred, without delays or out-of-stock issues.

The partnership between the two companies initiated a new era at A.W. Hastings.

It was challenging to introduce an unknown window product into a tradition-oriented market like New England, particularly as the company was struggling to replace the volume it had lost.

Hastings expanded the company's market area to include western New England, and portions of eastern N.Y. This new market proved lucrative, and it soon became apparent that a distribution facility would be needed to provide better service. A new operation — opened in Springfield, Mass. in 1978 — was run by Ivan Hoyt's son, Dusty.

The fledgling operation in Springfield steadily grew during the building boom of the 1980s. In 1986, Dusty Hoyt became president of Hastings, overseeing the company's four locations. Soon after, Dusty, along with his brother Jody, made the decision to divest themselves of their other products and focus the company's efforts exclusively on the distribution of Marvin products. This was a unique move that provided necessary focus and capitalized on Marvin's growth potential.

Specialization enabled Hastings to provide an elevated level of expertise for its dealers. Its role as wholesaler now focused on marketing, education, sales and technical expertise through a committed network of retailers.

This redefinition of a "wholesale distributor" placed A.W. Hastings on the leading edge of a rapidly changing industry. The strength and growth of the company's dealer network has reduced the demand for more traditional distribution functions, which made possible a consolidation of all operations to one location, in Enfield, CT. This operation efficiently houses all of Hastings' support services for the dealer network.

The past few years have been a time of unprecedented success for Hastings. But history shows that the company must remain flexible and alert to changes within the industry. To that end, Hastings consciously fosters an environ-

ment which encourages employees to seize opportunities by always remaining flexible, anticipating change and searching for improvement.

This perpetuation of A.W. Hastings' original entrepreneurial spirit is what continues to differentiate Hastings from its competitors, and leads the company into its next 150 years. ■

*Year Founded:* 1854

*Location:* Enfield

*Specialty:* Wholesale distributor of Marvin Window and Door products

*Client Base:* Window and door retailers



*Hastings' new product education center is an example of how the company adapts its focus as the industry evolves.*



*The success of Hastings' operation in recent years is evidence of the quality and expertise of its personnel.*