

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet

This small booklet from 1960, includes full-page pictures of the Hesston Manufacturing Company factory and a written narrative of the history of the company and it's employees. This publication funded by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission through the Kansas State Historical Records Advisory Board.

Creator: Hesston Manufacturing Company

Date: 1960

Callnumber: Hesston Public Library

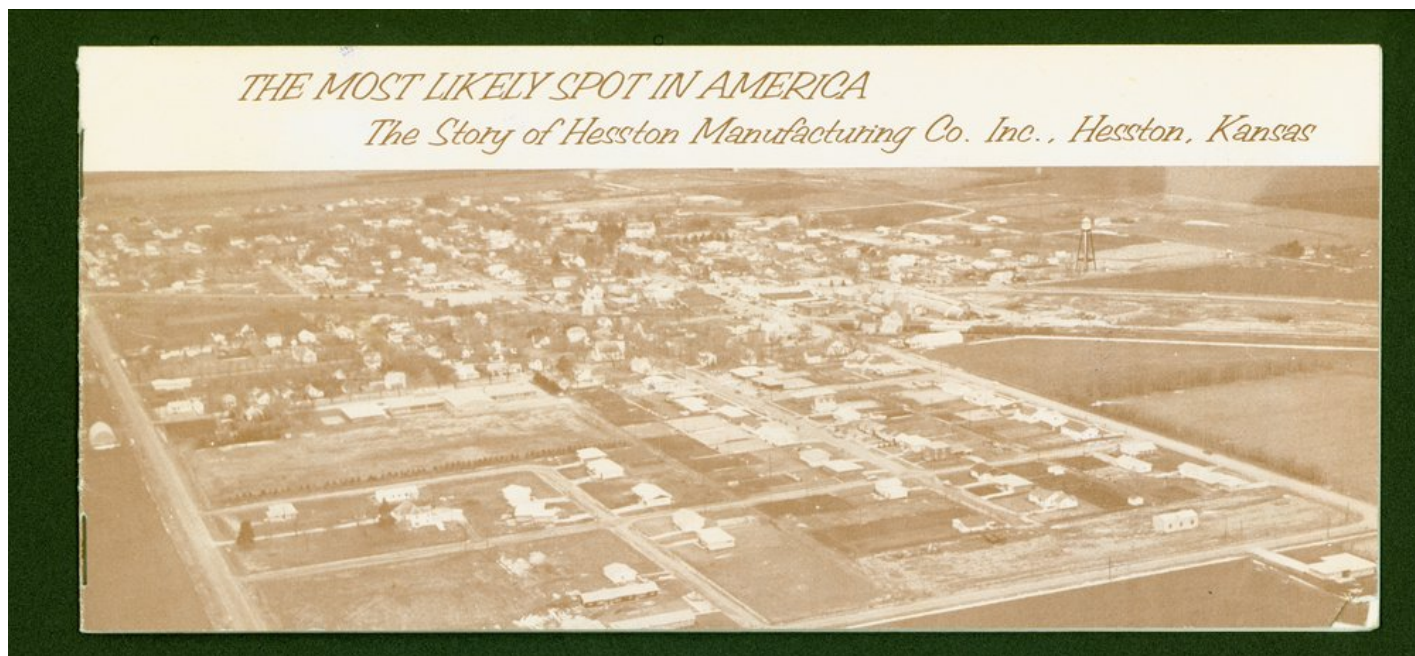
KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 448835

Item Identifier: 448835

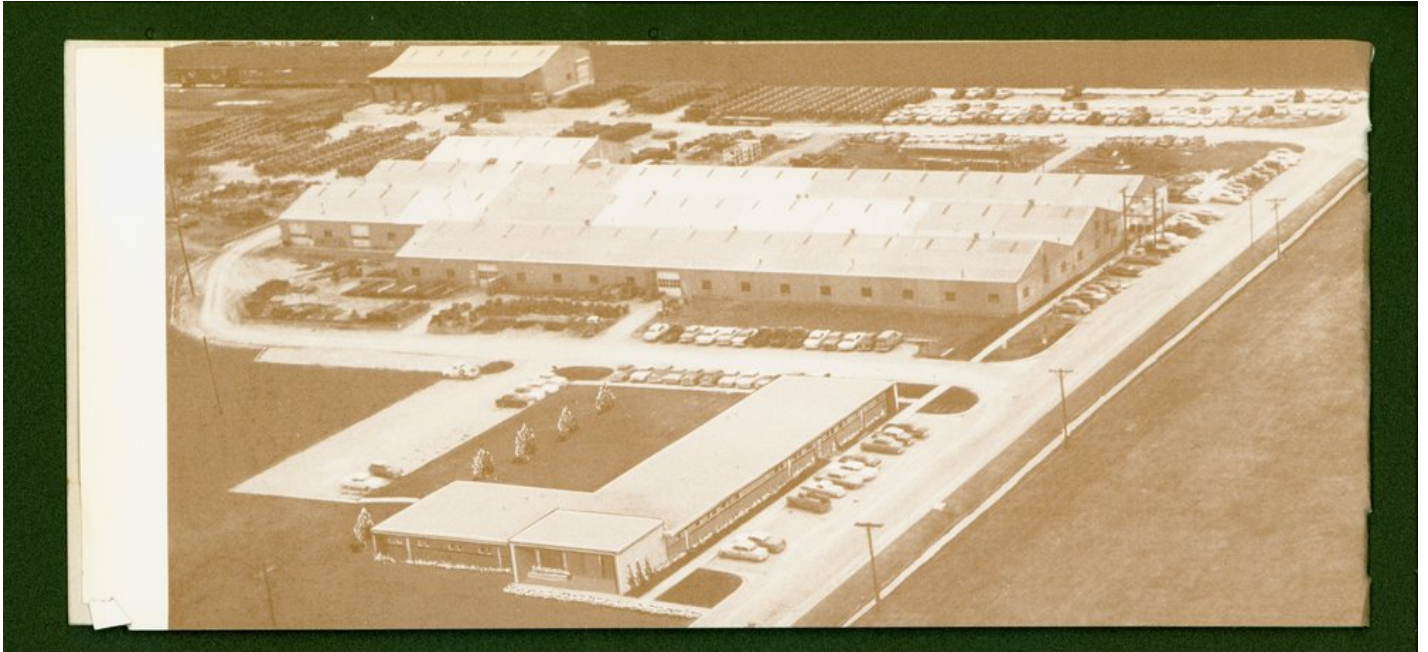
www.kansasmemory.org/item/448835



Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet



Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet



Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet

THE MOST LIKELY SPOT IN AMERICA

The Story of Hesston Manufacturing Co. Inc., Hesston, Kansas

“Large streams from little fountains flow,
Tall oaks from little acorns grow.”

DAVID EVERETT

THESE words, so often used to the point of becoming trite, nevertheless describe the process whereby Hesston Manufacturing Co., Inc. has attained industrial prominence, 14th largest among the nation's 1200 farm equipment manufacturers.

The story of Hesston is not an unusual story in America. It has happened time and again. Most of America's major industries had their beginnings the same way. It is often called the American way ... or the free enterprise way. A need is discovered. An idea is born. A product is produced.

Someone buys and if it is good others buy. Distribution is established. Competition is encountered. Faith is exerted. A new industry is born.

Yet, the story of Hesston Manufacturing is unusual because it happened here, in a small, central Kansas farming community, in what most observers would call, "The most unlikely spot in America." For the town of Hesston offered few natural resources, no centralized shipping points, no other industry to help sustain it. It was just a good, quiet, farming community.

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet

But really, is it the most unlikely spot in America? No, because the most important ingredient is here in the community of Hesston and its surrounding area. That ingredient? People! An industrious people, well disciplined to hard work, honesty, and integrity. A freedom-loving people who are used to meeting problems with ingenuity and who know no other way than to give a day's labor for a day's pay. A God-fearing people who seek religious tolerance and who worship every day – not just on Sundays. A people who have spent their lifetime in farming... who have the "feel of the farm"... and who have inventiveness to solve the problems of the farmer.

So it is only natural that out of these people a farm machinery company should grow, a company that supplies equipment to all the 50 states, plus Canada, Mexico, Europe, South America, Africa.

The company's new general offices are a tribute to those who have helped it grow – the employees,

the community, the industry. They are an expression of faith in the future. For the story of Hesston Manufacturing Co., Inc. is not complete. It is still happening!



Hesston Manufacturing started in business in the Quonset Building in the foreground with five employees in 1947. The building at the rear was added later.

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet

...how it all began

*N*CESSITY, they say, is the mother of invention. In the summer of 1946, a man from Hesston – the head man in a combine crew – was keeping tally of the time his men lost stopping their combines to unload wheat. Five hours a day lost. Five precious hours that expensive, self-propelled combines could be cutting instead of sitting waiting for the crew to scoop out the bin.

He took his problem to the owner of the Hesston machine shop. Together they worked out a practical answer – an unloading auger attachment to the combine. It unloaded the combine automatically – faster, even on the run.

Neighbors saw it and wanted it. A few were produced. Soon the word spread around, and the augers had to be made in quantity. By 1947 a company was formed – Hesston Manufacturing Company. Its office and factory were in a small, modest Quonset building.

In 1948 the Hesston Unloading Auger was being installed on many new combines throughout the grain belt. Today, this unloader is no longer in the company's product line, but is standard equipment on all combines – produced by the combine manufacturer. Nevertheless, it started a company off to a humble beginning . . . it gave nourishment to an acorn that had been planted.

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet



The Combine Unloading Auger was Hesston's first product. No longer in production, it is now furnished as standard equipment by the combine manufacturer.

82 different products

FROM unloading augers came other ideas to improve the lot of the farmer... straw spreaders... concave adjustments... straight-through augers... balanced grain tanks... retractable finger augers... soybean bar attachments... row crop saver attachments... and many, many others. All in all a total of 82 new products have been pioneered and produced by Hesston — many have become standard equipment on today's harvesting machinery produced by major manufacturers.

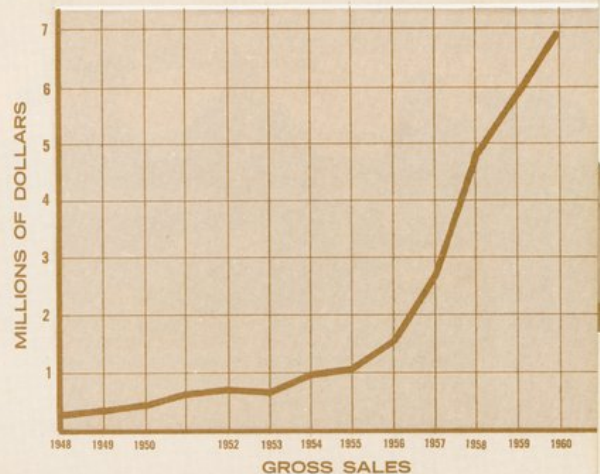
In 1953 a new era began for Hesston when the famous Straw Chopper was introduced. It boosted the sales volume past the million-dollar mark for the first time in 1954. Employment grew from the original five people to past 75. Today, more Hesston Straw Choppers are sold than any other make.

The best was yet to come! A new product was introduced to the farmer in 1955. It was called the Hesston Self-Propelled Swather. It was Hesston's first venture into an independently powered unit. At first the agricultural world was skeptical.

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet

Then the swather began to catch on — by the dozens at first, then by the hundreds. As improvements were made the swather became known as the Hesston Windrower-Conditioner to be used in hay as well as in grain and many other crops. The nation's ranchers and farmers responded enthusiastically. For the first time they could cut, condition, and windrow hay in a single operation with only one machine. Sales climbed to near \$5 million in 1958, near \$6 million in 1959, and near \$7 million in 1960.

Everyone connected with Hesston feels that this is just the beginning. As new products are introduced and other Hesston innovations in farming are accepted, an even brighter future is coming up on the horizon. Why? Because Hesston is dedicated toward producing specialized farm equipment that will enable the diminishing farm population feed a growing nation!



GROSS SALES
This chart shows the growth of Hesston's consolidated sales volume from 1948 through 1960.

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet

Who makes up the "Hesston family"?

IT WOULD be impossible to count the people who contribute to Hesston's success and upon whom the company will depend in the future. The family made up of employees... the community... the area... a nation-wide network of distributors, dealers, and salesmen... suppliers... bankers, and a whole host of others.

By 1960 the immediate "Hesston family" — the employees — was almost equal to the entire population of its town when the company began. A third of these live in Hesston or on farms nearby. As many more live within the county, many at neighboring Newton. The rest come from the area — McPherson, Hillsboro, Peabody, Buhler,

Goessel, Moundridge, even from Wichita and Hutchinson — to name just a few.

As the company grew it was able to attract individuals from major farm equipment industries such as Ford, J. I. Case, Firestone, International Harvester, and many others. These men have added to the technical knowledge and resourcefulness of the firm, and they have found positions of responsibility in the community.

Hesston employees are like those of any other company. They work together... they play together... they take part in civic activities.

You'll find them on the school board, on the town council. Even the town mayor works here.

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet

Many teach Sunday School or are on various boards of their churches. You may find them on the board of overseers at Hesston College or participating in establishing a home for the aged. Some of the officers of the company actively serve in farm equipment industry associations.

"Uncle Abe" Hess would be pleased to watch this company grow. He was a builder. He gave his name to this town, 80 acres to its college, and leadership to its people. He and others like him would be pleased to see the people working shoulder to shoulder on the assembly line as they worked in the grain fields when they settled the area nearly 100 years ago. They would be glad to see the company producing tools to lighten the work of a new generation of farmers, and for the opportunity it offers to the youth of the entire area.

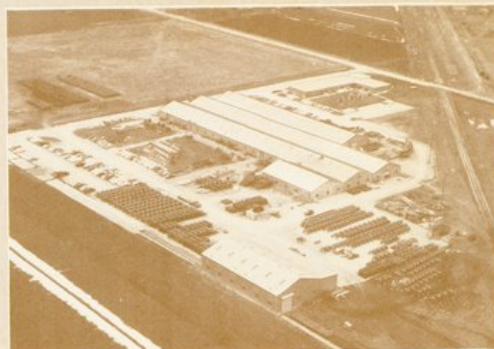


The operating committee meets each Friday morning to coordinate the company's activities.

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet



PLANT I – Located on the site of the original factory, but expanded several times to accommodate additional production.



PLANT II – View from the northwest corner of the new plant facilities. The general office building can be seen in the center. Windrows in yard have all been sold and are waiting for shipment.

LITHO IN U.S.A.

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet

HESSTON Specialized Farm Equipment.



The Hesston Windrower-Conditioner



The Hesston Reversible
Straw Chopper



The Hesston
Row Crop Saver



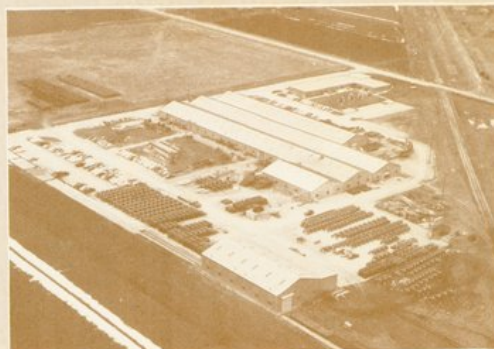
The Hesston
Corn Harvester

also many other products manufactured for major farm equipment companies

Hesston Manufacturing Company booklet



PLANT I – Located on the site of the original factory, but expanded several times to accommodate additional production.



PLANT II – View from the northwest corner of the new plant facilities. The general office building can be seen in the center. Windrows in yard have all been sold and are waiting for shipment.

LITHO IN U.S.A.