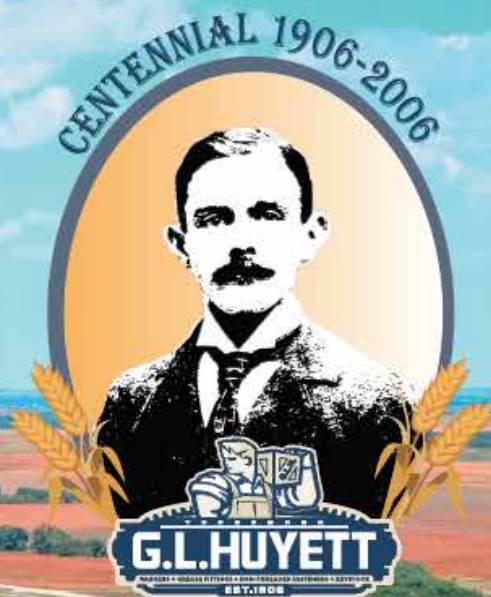


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R. L. English



# G. L. HUYETT



G. L. Huyett was incorporated in 1906, and as such, is one of the oldest continually operating businesses in the state of Kansas.

## enriches customers with a "way of life."

Few companies in any industry have experienced a Centennial, and in the fastener industry, it is virtually unheard of. But for G. L. Huyett, a Centennial means more than just a century of service. As Timothy O'Keeffe, Vice President, suggests, "It is a reminder of our way of life. We are a way of life in our industry, and in our local community."

From a humble start in the little town of Minneapolis, Kansas, G. L. Huyett has grown to become a leading-edge supplier of what O'Keeffe refers to as Class D inventory items, or "those items at the edge of your desk-- the stuff that is hard to find, hard to buy, or hard to make." Huyett has assembled a unique group of capabilities in some 90,000 square feet of space on the prairie of Kansas. As the cover of this issue shows, the firm is located in a wheat field.

### ONE STOP SHOP

"Our first priority is to make the customer's experience easy," says Jim Kelly, Chief Operating Officer of Huyett. Among the ease of use efforts Kelly cites, the company answers the phone by the third ring from 7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. five days per week. The firm advertises no voicemail and stocks some 100,000 parts.

"This place is not run by accountants, but by operators," says Debbie Andrews, Operations Manager. "We are committed to inventory and are committed to shipping all orders received by 12:00 noon out the same day." In addition, the company promises to return quotes on a same day/next day basis. Orders are shipped in reinforced cardboard boxes that significantly exceed the minimum packaging requirements of UPS® and FedEx®.

"There are really two parts to the term 'One Stop Shop,'" says Randy Gantvoort, Director of Sales. "It is a matter of one stop and one shop. That means that the customer must not only have to come to only one place to find all that they need, but that they must also only have to visit that place one time. In other words, no callbacks to get a quote, no expedites, no back orders, and no freight damage. If we are successful as a



*A state-of-the-art training facility was finished in 2005.*



*Teamwork and resourcefulness are the hallmarks of G. L. Huyett Employees.*



*Precision packaging equipment allows for customization of client orders.*

One Stop Shop, we will know by how we are integrated with our customers, and in how we maintain a silent presence in their business mix."

**"WE HANDLE THE CLASS D HARD-TO-FIND PARTS THAT NO ONE ELSE WANTS. THAT IS OUR WAY OF LIFE."**

"Most people ask me 'What do we sell?' at trade shows and on sales calls," says O'Keeffe. I like to reply with, "Why do you buy?" O'Keeffe then shows an order from a customer that has four items on it — a Type G grooved pin; a Type A alloy grooved pin; a metric rolled pin; and a lubrication oiler cup. The purchase order value is \$563.00. "Look at this order," he exclaims. "Where else can you buy these four oddball items in one place at one time? Three of the items are stock, and one item will ship in four days. This distributor probably sold this order for something like \$1,000. Now instead of calling a grooved pin supplier, a rolled pin supplier, and a grease cup manufacturer separately, this buyer can move on to the next sale, and no longer invest time in servicing this one." "That is our way of life," adds Gantvoort.

## UNIQUE EXECUTION

G. L. Huyett is a manufacturer, master distributor, and importer. The firm's manufacturing capabilities include cutting, grinding, milling, turning, and other processes commonly found in machine shops. There are two primary manufactured product lines—shaft keys

and pins, including clevis pins, dowel pins, shear pins, and three point pins. In addition the firm offers low cost laser and stamping services for special flat washers and spacers. There are some 1,000 tons of raw material in stock, mostly in low carbon, medium carbon, and nonferrous grades.

Huyett is an importer of three point pins, shaft collars, worm band hose clamps, steel balls, and a variety of other specialty fasteners. The company has a global sourcing department and conducts numerous offshore visits each year, in China, Taiwan, India, Europe, and South America.

The company is a preferred distributor for Recoil, a division of Alcoa Fastening Systems, and a manufacturer of threaded inserts; Rotorclip, a leading manufacturer of retaining rings and self compensating hose clamps; Spirolox, a wave spring manufacturer; Western Wire, a manufacturer of wireforms; Spirol, a manufacturer of rolled and coiled pins and spacers; Driv-Lok, a manufacturer of grooved pins and drive studs; and Kingfisher Lubrication, Alemite, and Lincoln, all manufacturers of grease fittings and lubrication equipment.

Huyett has a state-of-the-art packaging department and packages maintenance assortment kits and custom packs for a variety of customers. The firm recently released a new Assortments Catalog, consisting of some 90 pages of kits and boxed parts for resale. Packaging equipment can accommodate any bag size, as the equipment uses plastic film, versus pre-finished bags, to create bags in line in the production cycle.

With an in-house advertising agency that is well known for creative design, Huyett is able to produce customized designs of both catalogs and packaging equipment that improve user interface and excitement. The ad agency does outside work for other clients, and has all the major capabilities for production of print and electronic campaigns.



*Huyett Advertising is a stand alone division that produces outside work for other clients.*

Huyett's Las Vegas trade show booth is well known and has won "Best of Show" at the NIFS-West in each year of its introduction. Many in the industry recall the "We want you" campaign that Huyett produced on behalf of the National Fastener Distributors Association during the past two years.

## BEST PRACTICES

With 97% of its sales to distributors, Huyett management has oriented its approach to minimize cost and optimize efficiency. The firm is influenced by the teachings of James P. Womack and Daniel T. Jones, who identified the concept of lean consumption. Lean consumption is the process of solving customers' problems and solving them completely, by ensuring that goods and services work well, and work well together. To encourage thoughtful discourse and discussion on the matter, Huyett



*Huyett is dedicated to the American way of life.*



*The company invests in technology and lean thinking to maximize efficiency for customers, employees and profits.*



*The sales staff is trained to answer the phone with a friendly Kansas smile.*



*Custom packaging is common practice.*

sponsors a forum and website [www.lean-consumption.org](http://www.lean-consumption.org).

Huyett management is dedicated to continuous improvement at all levels of its operation. In 2005, work was completed on a state-of-the-art training center to assist in the organic development of World Class manufacturing and distribution practices. In addition, the firm is working with Activant, a leading software firm, to implement a user friendly distribution interface under the Trading Partner Connect™ platform. Timothy O'Keeffe sums it up best when he states, "Connectivity and seamless commerce with our distributor customers is our highest challenge, priority, and opportunity."



*G. L. Huyett maintains this research website in support of lean business practices.*

Lean methods are deployed throughout the plant. Proprietary technology is used in order picking so that customers can buy in whatever quantities they consume. "If someone wants 112 pieces, we'll give them 112 pieces," says Gantvoort. In manufacturing, Huyett has developed high speed cutters and milling fixtures that maximize throughput of shaft keys. All of the turning equipment has automatic bar feeds and off-line programming to allow "lights out" production of pins and clevises.

**"CONNECTIVITY AND SEAMLESS COMMERCE WITH OUR DISTRIBUTOR CUSTOMERS IS OUR HIGHEST CHALLENGE, PRIORITY AND OPPORTUNITY."**

Gantvoort, who is relatively new to the industry, also emphasizes the firm's support of distribution. "In my research of the business, I have found that most of our competitors derive more than 50% of their sales from OEMs and users. I am surprised at such a level of channel conflict, and I hope to emphasize to our customer base that when they buy from us, they are buying from a supplier whose interests are aligned with their own. We are not our customer's competitor."

## 100,000 PARTS

So what does G. L. Huyett sell? The company has some 100,000 unique items in stock, including keystack, retaining rings, pins, grease fittings, shaft collars, hose clamps, grease guns and couplers, threaded inserts, machinery bushings, special flat washers, o-rings, electrical connectors, and threaded rod. Within these categories, Huyett stocks nearly every part ever made—including large sizes and metrics.

"There are two aspects to our product offering that people tend to underestimate," says Gantvoort. "They underestimate our breadth, and our ability to make special orders. We have more SKUs of inventory than most of our principal manufacturers, and if there is something we do not have, we can make it." Gantvoort cites rolled pins as an example. "We probably have more rolled pins in stock, as measured by line items, than Spirol, our supplier. We carry 3/4" diameter coiled spring pins in stock. If we happen to not have a length that a customer needs, we can cut it to size."



*G. L. Huyett's new Assortment Catalog.*

Besides a continued emphasis in technology development and enhancing the customer's experience, Huyett management suggests that a major new product line will be introduced in 2007. "We are in the final stages," says O'Keeffe, "but with our Centennial and the opening of our West Building, we have been very busy. While we had one heck of a party to celebrate, the reality is that we want the opportunity for our community to have a second century." And for that to happen, this little business in a wheat field, which some call the Great American Desert, must continue to invest in the hard work and enterprising efforts that its pioneering founders engaged in some one hundred years ago. ■

[www.nfda-fastener.org](http://www.nfda-fastener.org)



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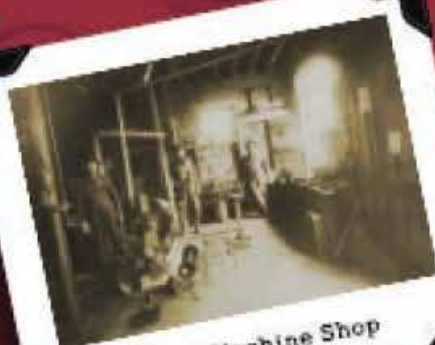
The NFDA is your fastener trade association, dedicated to distributor-member enrichment, networking, legislative and regulatory action, and education.



G. L. Huyett,  
Founder



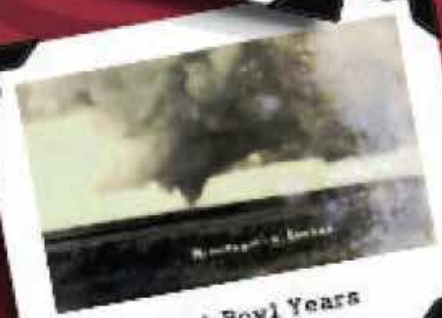
Original Location



Early Machine Shop



Company Founding



Dust Bowl Years



Product Expansion



Early Customers

G. L. Huyett was founded in Minneapolis, Kansas, on August 17, 1899, by Guy Huyett at the corner of Concord and Second Streets, when he purchased the hardware stock of the Globe Department Store. The Minneapolis Messenger recognized the event: "Mr. Huyett has made this town for several years as a representative of a wholesale hardware house and is well known to most of our businessmen who with the rest of our people will welcome him to our city and social circles." The business was incorporated in 1906, which is the recognized date of the company founding, and as such is one of the oldest continuously operating businesses in the state of Kansas.

Farmers would often come in search of machinery bushings, a precision washer of the time. Agricultural equipment was loosely designed and poorly fitted. It was common to have to take up slack on shafts and in other assemblies during use. Huyett became known for this product, which was distributed via the famed HB-3 display boards, found all over North America. Later, the signature Quick Repair™ washer was developed that allowed slack reduction without disassembly.

In 1912, the business was moved into an old hotel at 126 Concord. The hotel was drug on wagons to the site, which was attractive because it was closer to the rail spur, making it easier on the horses to haul parts up the hill. The company operated there until 1998, and G. L. Huyett continues to operate a satellite warehouse in this location today. In 1930, Henry Hahn took over the company, which had six open accounts. It was a struggle to survive the effects of the Dust Bowl and two world wars, so in an effort to increase sales, G. L. Huyett sold alfalfa seed.

Henry Hahn's son, Louis, bought the business in 1948. Louis Hahn was a real entrepreneur around the Minneapolis area. He owned a local gas station, ran the drive-in restaurant, and on the side accumulated 2,000 acres of farmland. By now the business generated \$18,000 in annual sales. Local townsfolk would gather around the stove on Concord Street and count washers into 10's and 25's, which were wire-tied using ties manufactured by the Western Wire Company in St. Louis, Missouri. On Sunday's during summer, folks would gather under the shade tree on Charlie "Chalk" Cooper's land next door, and sip whiskey while they worked. This group became known as the "South Side Sunday Sipper's Society" or "SSSSS."

G. L. Huyett made a major transformation in 1974, when Louie's son, Bob, joined the business. Bob was a professor at St. Cloud State College in Minnesota, where among his pupils was Will Oberton, Chief Executive Officer of Fastenal.

In the summers, Bob would travel to different parts of the country and call on hardware wholesalers and nut and bolt houses seeking their machine bushing business. In 1976, Bob and Louie bought stamping equipment and contracted with Ewald Gall, a farmer, to manufacture machine bushings on his spread a few miles outside of St. Cloud. At this time, the run sizes for each part were fairly small. Scrap steel was purchased from Franklin Manufacturing, a refrigerator company, and Gall would run the parts on one-up dies on his farm. The parts were shipped from St. Cloud to



Rock City



Chalk Cooper



Headquarters  
1912-1998



Use of Mobile Homes



Dolly & Bob Hahn

Minneapolis, Kansas, for packaging.

Bob Hahn recalls one winter night in 1978 or 1979 when the truck slid into a ditch in Iowa. The driver called Bob in the middle of the night. While the driver was at first unconcerned because he knew that the parts were covered by insurance, he turned frigid when Bob made him return to the ditch to retrieve the parts. A major customer needed the parts immediately, and G. L. Huyett could not wait for the bushings to be re-run. Bob spent the night in sub-zero temperatures separating snow, ice, and mud from the bushings so that the orders could be shipped out on time.

It was during this period that the operating philosophy of G. L. Huyett began to develop. Specifically, Bob Hahn always treated his customers with a kindness and respect generally not found elsewhere. As a result, these customers stuck with the company through good times and bad. G. L. Huyett began to develop a reputation of "if I am in trouble or I need it now or it's weird... call Huyett." The business was also affected by Dolly's strict attention to detail. It was not unusual for the Minneapolis postmaster to see envelopes arrive with pocket change taped inside to compensate Huyett for small unauthorized deductions and unearned cash discounts. The business grew one customer at a time. Each day Bob would answer the telephone and make sales calls. At night he would pack the orders and take the paperwork to his wife. Dolly would stay up late into the night hand typing each invoice, line-by-line on a Smith Corona typewriter.

The rest of the 1980's saw growth in new products and customers. By 1992, the Hahn's were each working as many as 100 hours per week. In November, Bob sold the business to Tim and Carol O'Keeffe. Mr. O'Keeffe had been an investment banker in Kansas City and was attracted to G. L. Huyett because of its growth potential and its tangibility in American industry. O'Keeffe introduced formalized management practices to the company. New products were added, and in 1996, the company published its first catalog. In 1997, a new plant was constructed in the Minneapolis Industrial Park. Late in 1998, a manufacturing area was incorporated, dedicated to the efficient world class manufacturing of shaft keys, leystock, and pins. CNC machine tools with "lights out" production capability, a specialized proprietary tumbling room, and proprietary fixtures are some of the features of the work area. The company expects manufactured goods to increase as a percentage of total sales in the future. In 2006 a building was purchased on the west side of town that houses product development, warehouse operations, and Huyett Advertising, an agency and new division of the company.

On August 12, 2006 local townsfolk and supporters of the company gathered in the wheat field adjacent to the headquarters, and celebrated the Centennial of G. L. Huyett. The mayor presented the company with a monument that will be set in Markley Grove, the city's park. Regretfully, Dolly Hahn, the matriarch of G. L. Huyett passed away just a few days earlier on August 8. The rich cultural heritage and challenging conditions of the Kansas prairie has instilled a sense of pioneering spirit and entrepreneurial savvy such that this firm will see success well into its second century.



Hard at Work



Advertising Agency



South Concord Street



Main Headquarters



# Lean Consumption

www.lean-consumption.org



Lean consumption is an organizational way-of-life concept, first coined by James P. Womack and Daniel T. Jones. Lean consumption is the process of minimizing the customer's time and effort in delivering parts and service when they want it, where they want it, and how they want it.



G.L. Huyett sponsors this important research website in an effort to promote lean thinking within its own organization, and among its constituents. Suppliers and customers are encouraged to participate. The site includes recommended reading materials, blogs, and links to other sites, for reference and discussion.

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