

Jasper Desk Company

Founded: 1876

Location: Sixth Street, on northwest corner of the square (1865); Anderson Street (1876); 415 East Sixth Street (1998)

Jasper was situated in the middle of one of the largest hardwood forests available for harvesting in the mid–nineteenth century. Several furniture businesses were drawn to the city both before and after the Civil War. The oldest continuous manufacturer of office furniture began operation in 1865. Jacob, John, and Joseph Alles purchased property from John Mehringer, opening the Alles Brothers Furniture Company. They were among the first German cabinetmakers to manufacture furniture in Jasper. The brothers sold everything from baby buggies to children's wagons and caskets. A decade later the brothers changed the name of their company to the Jasper Furniture Company. Further defining its products in 1888, the brothers gave their operation a different designation, the Jasper Furniture & Desk Company. By 1906 the brothers sold principal interest in the business to the Kuebler, Joseph, and Gramelspacher families.

The three families continued to be involved in the business throughout the twentieth century. In 1913 the families refined the company's product to include only office furniture. The business's name again changed to its current manifest. Before the Great Depression the company had capital stock in excess of \$250,000, a number that did not decrease during the economic downturn. By the end of the 1970s the company was processing about 1.5 million feet of lumber and 2 million feet of veneer, producing as many as 25,000 units per year. The large production numbers were made possible, in part, because of a switch in the early 1970s to a conveyor-driven drying system that quickened the finishing process, compressing the overall

time of product development from seven to three days. In addition to desks, the company manufactures bookcases, phone consoles, and tables. In fiscal year 1998 the company employed 140 people and had sales in the range of \$10 million to \$24.9 million. John Gramelspacher served as president.