

Thomas L. Green & Company

Founded: 1893

Location: 46 Massachusetts Avenue (1893–94);[Wright and Wright Building on southeast corner of Georgia and Capitol—from Fall 1895 to 20 April 1896]; 329 Massachusetts Avenue (1896–97); South Alabama Street (3rd floor of Hitz Baking Company) (1897–99); 1510 West Washington Street (1899–1911); 202 North Miley Avenue (1911–)

Thomas Luther Green was born in 1874 on a farm near Eminence, Indiana. The family moved to Indianapolis in 1883. Thomas was an inveterate tinkerer, and, when he turned fifteen, his older brother Alonzo installed a metalworking lathe for him in the basement. Green apprenticed as a machinist under Elsworth Fenton, the superintendent at DeTamble, Cryan & Company, manufacturers of biscuit machinery. Fenton became a mentor to Green, who was hardworking and showed an early aptitude for engineering and designing machines. “Only one man took me seriously,” Green later recalled, “and it was he who really started me in the machinery business.” The two would stay after work and talk, long after the other employees had gone home.

After DeTamble, Cryan & Company was purchased and moved to Richmond, Indiana, Green worked for a time at a local manufacturer of steam engines, boilers, and sawmill machinery and then found work as a machinist in St. Louis and Chicago. When he returned to Indianapolis in 1893 and was unable to find a job, Green established a shop with Robert C. Berry that repaired bicycles and small machines. He tired of the work, however, and decided to return to DeTamble, Cryan & Company, and he and Fenton labored over the production of a new vertical three-spindle dough mixer. When the company refused Fenton recognition for his contributions to the machine’s design, he quit, taking young Green with him. Although Fenton returned to the old company, Green

decided to dissolve his partnership with Berry and begin a new firm. In 1894, in partnership with Albert Resener, Louis Kiefer, and John H. Shoaf, he established Green & Resener to manufacture biscuit cutters. After Resener sold his interest, the firm became Green & Kiefer. By the end of the year, however, the remaining partners sold their interests to Green, although the firm remained Green & Kiefer.

Green's brother Alonzo became a partner, and they began to build the business, using most of their firm's earnings as working capital. Fire twice burned out their shop in 1895 and 1896. After the second fire, they renamed the partnership Thomas L. Green & Company, and in 1897 they rented space on the third floor of the Hitz Baking Company on South Alabama Street. When the National Biscuit Company (or Nabisco) acquired Hitz Baking Company in 1899, Thomas L. Green & Company was forced to move, relocating to 1510 West Washington Street. Moreover, Nabisco's near monopolization of biscuit makers forced Green to search for independent biscuit plants as customers, conduct general repairs as a sideline, and design a new class of machinery that would not infringe on existing patents. Green eventually secured over twenty patents, developing the first rotary biscuit-cutting machine and making several improvements on existing biscuit machinery.

Thomas L. Green & Company was incorporated in 1910 and, later that year, moved to a new building on 202 North Miley Avenue. Thomas Green, who had few hobbies and, he admitted, did not know how to play, took his first real vacation after he experienced a nervous breakdown in 1924. He died in 1934. Leadership of the company fell to trusted employees and Marvin Lugar, Green's son-in-law. Lugar was a farmer who established a livestock commission firm with his father in 1935. He dutifully

worked his way through the hierarchy of Thomas L. Green & Company and was elected president in 1947. In chronic poor health, Lugar relied heavily on Executive Vice President Frank H. Hubbard.

Leadership of the company fell to Lugar's two sons, Richard and Thomas, as well as longtime employee Frank Hubbard after Marvin's death in 1956. Richard and Thomas Lugar became vice presidents of the company. Thomas, a mechanical engineer trained at Purdue University, oversaw the technical operations; Richard specialized in finances and business strategy. Both worked long hours, reorganizing the company to give greater autonomy to top officials, retooling the plant, and establishing an incentive bonus system. The brothers focused on building an overseas market, and exports eventually accounted for one-third to one-half of the company's sales. Thomas L. Green & Company served customers in thirty-eight countries and became the only manufacturer of complete baking production lines in the United States. In the 1960s the company, becoming more oriented to the snack food industry, developed continuous sheeting, cutting, and baking lines for the frozen pizza industry; continuous band ovens for fudge brownies; and machines for manufacturing processed snack chips and Pop-Tarts. The company had one production line longer than a football field and capable of producing over 9,220 pounds of crackers per hour. Richard left the company to enter politics, becoming mayor of Indianapolis in 1968 and United States Senator in 1976. Thomas then assumed the presidency of the company, a position he retained in 1999.

After graduating from Purdue, Thomas worked for the Allison Division of General Motors for two years before serving in the United States Army. After his honorable discharge, he joined his family's firm and was placed in charge of installing

machinery. Hubbard, although not officially the president of the organization, was the recognized authority in the plant after Marvin Lugar's death. He single-handedly opened new markets for the company's products in Central and South America and the Caribbean. Hubbard's knowledge of the machinery and ability to develop good customer relations was one of the major reasons for the company's growth in the 1950s and 1960s.

Thomas's son, Todd Lugar, joined the company immediately after graduating from Purdue University in 1984. A year later he left the family firm to obtain financial experience with Merrill Lynch and Raffenberger Hughes & Company. Seven years later he returned to Thomas L. Green as the company's development director. He moved the concern to adopt computer-aided design systems and developed the company's first strategic plan.

The 1980s and 1990s were a growth period for the business. Sales and the number of employees hired nearly doubled between 1988 and 1993. At the end of the twentieth century the company continued to produce custom-made baking equipment, employed 99 people, and expected sales of around \$15 million.