

Foreword

The year 2018 is an important one for Turkstra Lumber as we celebrate our 65th anniversary in business.

It's hard to believe, but when we started, Louis S. Laurent was Prime Minister, box stores didn't exist, cell phones hadn't been prototyped on Star Trek and Google wasn't a thought yet.

Reviewing our history provides an opportunity to highlight some of the unique personalities who have helped us survive and grow over time. Although we do have brick and mortar buildings and operate modern manufacturing plants, it is the people (not buildings) who provide customer service.

Our true strength lies in the commitment and teamwork of our employees, vendors and customers. These are the folks at the core of the “Turkstra Lumber story.”

This volume does not permit us space to acknowledge everyone involved in our success over the years. It would be impossible to have remained "always on the level" without the support of a great many more people not mentioned in this book. A heartfelt thank you to our customers who provide the opportunity, our vendors who make and supply the products, and our employees who continue to deliver world-class service.

While the tools of the trade have evolved over time, our original commitment to excellence remains. I know Peter Turkstra (Sr.) was very proud of the organization he founded in 1953. I think he would be equally pleased with the strides we've made to build upon his vision.

Peter Turkstra



Timeline

1927 – Peter Sr. arrives in Burlington, Ontario with brother Hessel and sister Joujke

1940 – Turkstra Construction established

1951 – Peter Sr. secures loan to start his own lumberyard

1953 – Wentworth Street location in downtown Hamilton opens

1963 – Waterdown location opens

1967 – Stoney Creek lumberyard opens

1968 – Smithville location opens

1969 – Brantford location & The Mill opens

1975 – Turkstra Trusses opens

1979 – J.R.'s Hardware opens

1980 – Dunnville location opens



1980 – Fairfield Windows acquired; later becomes Turkstra Windows

1988 – Ridgeway & Fort Erie locations acquired

1990 – Carl Turkstra becomes President

1995 – Dundas location opens

1996 – Peter Turkstra joins business

1998 – Niagara Falls location opens

2001 – Cambridge location acquired

2005 – Turkstra Trim & Doors opens

2006 – Simcoe & Woodstock locations open

2010 – Lawson Lumber acquired

2013 – Designer Showcase established in Stoney Creek location

2017 – Turkstra Lumber named one of Canada's Best Managed Companies

2018 – Turkstra Lumber publishes *Always on the Level* to celebrate 65 years in business



Introduction

Sixty-five years ago, an intrepid and hardworking Dutch immigrant realized his dream of opening a lumberyard in the industrial heartland of southern Ontario. Guided by faith and ambition, Peter Turkstra founded Turkstra Lumber upon a set of core personal values. These values continue to guide those of us who work at Turkstra, especially our commitment to “build our future based on traditional values.”

What does this mean?

It means we pride ourselves on delivering quality products and world-class service with integrity and respect. It means we stand behind our products and services and ensure we support our employees, customers, suppliers and the communities we serve.

This is no idle commitment. It requires a level of dedication to doing business in an intentional and deliberate way.

There is strength in our history. Our founder left a strong impression on the character and reputation of our company that still resonates two generations later. We believe our sixty-fifth anniversary in business is not only a time of celebration, but an opportunity to reflect on how we got to where we are today, so we can better navigate present challenges and the future road ahead.

Always on the Level is the story of one immigrant family business and its impact on the local community.

The book is based on family memoirs, records, memorabilia and a series of interviews conducted with the Turkstra family and Turkstra Lumber’s leaders, employees and longtime customers. It is an account of Dutch immigration and settlement in mid-twentieth century Canada; a corporate history of how one lumberyard expanded into multiple industries and eleven branches; and a story of community development and philanthropy.

Peter Turkstra Sr. was a son, brother, husband, father, grandfather, uncle, mentor and friend to most of the people you will meet in this book. Readers will learn about the Turkstras, an enterprising farming family who left their homeland in the Netherlands to settle in the Hamilton area of southern Ontario, Canada. A religious family with a strong work ethic, the Turkstras quickly established themselves in their adopted country while helping settle thousands of other Dutch immigrants along the way.

From its founding in 1953 to the present, Turkstra Lumber steadily grew to become a household name in Hamilton and other local communities. Through hard work and determination, Peter Sr. built a company whose reputation became synonymous with its motto: "Always on the Level."

The good works of the Turkstras extend well beyond the lumberyard. Supporting social enterprises and other community initiatives is not simply a matter of corporate public relations for Turkstra; it is embedded deep within the fabric of the company. Giving back to the community is considered a high priority for a family and business which have always had strong notions of what it means to be good citizens.

In the end, it is this history and these qualities that set the company apart in a crowded twenty-first century marketplace. The story of Turkstra Lumber is a refreshing reminder that business can still be done with a handshake and nails can still be weighed by the pound.



