

# OUR HISTORY

## A Rich History

### The Very Beginning . . .

The Koch Butchers' Supply Company was founded as a partnership in 1883 by three young men, Messrs. J.V. Smith, Edwin Beggs, and Arthur Koch—the partners had previously been in the hide business. As they called on the butchers who, by slaughtering cattle and hogs, were the main source of hides, these men came to realize that the rapid growth of the meat industry offered a big opportunity to a first-class butcher supply company.

This was at the same time that the large meat packers, Armour, Swift, and Cudahy, were expanding across the western United States to construct their first really large processing and packaging plants in Chicago and Kansas City.



### Kansas City Ideal for Packers . . .

Kansas City proved to be an ideal location for packinghouses. It was close to the abundant cattle supply of the western plains. The Union Pacific and Santa Fe railroads had extended their lines to such cow towns as Dodge City and Abilene where they loaded the droves of longhorns that had come to the railheads by the tens and hundreds of thousands. Good rail

connections to the East brought the abundant supply of meat to a hungry market.

By locating packinghouses in Kansas City and shipping meat rather than livestock eastward, further stock feeding was saved, freight charges were reduced, and loss of live weight during the rail journey was lessened.

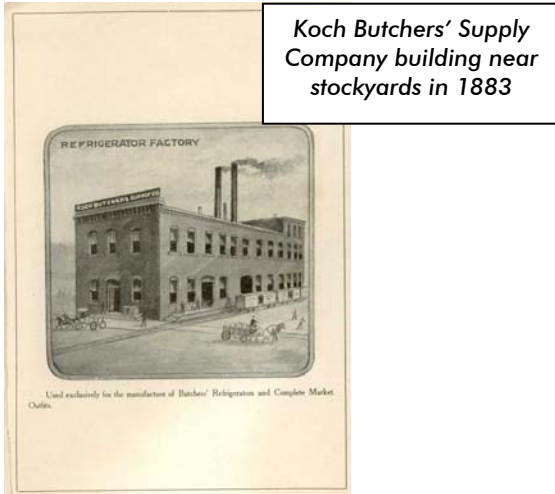


It was during the 1880s that the last great buffalo herds vanished. Many former buffalo hunters came to Kansas City and found work in the packinghouses. They were workers who understood their own meat markets and small packinghouses and, most importantly, the art of meat cutting. Many opened their own meat markets and small packing plants and shipped, in the aggregate, large quantities of meat to the East.

The old-time meat worker was more than a storekeeper. He was a manufacturer and processor. He frequently bought and fattened his own stock, slaughtered it, and used the portions of the carcass not sold as fresh meat by processing in various ways. The butcher business was much more of a specialized trade than it is today.

# OUR HISTORY

It was close to the Kansas City stockyards that the founders of The Koch Butchers' Supply Company first started in business. They bought hides and sausage casings, and sold butchers' tools and equipment.



In 1883, neither the butcher nor the consumer of meat gave much consideration to refrigeration. The founders of Koch, however, were progressive and farsighted. They realized that refrigeration would enable the retail meat business to prosper and grow, because refrigeration would preserve meat properly between the time of slaughter and the time of sale.

## **Manufacturing began in 1889 . . .**

So Koch began to manufacture coolers for butchers. These earliest coolers were intended for refrigeration by natural ice, cut in winter from the lakes and rivers, stored in icehouses, and delivered with considerable uncertainty and inconvenience. The first Koch coolers had ice bunkers of tremendous size, in which a substantial amount of ice could be stored.

They faced the same problems manufacturers face today: temperature, air circulation, humidity, insulation, durability, and design. Mr. Koch worked through these issues with astonishing success, with the result that Koch coolers became the standard by which all others throughout the Southwest were judged.

As the business grew, Mr. Smith withdrew from the partnership. Since Messrs. Beggs and Koch found that each had a natural bent toward a different line of the business, Mr. Beggs devoted himself exclusively to the handling of hides. Mr. Koch, in his own firm, redoubled his energies to the manufacture of coolers and the sale of supplies to butchers and packinghouses.

In 1897, the business incorporated as the Koch Butchers' Supply Company, a Missouri corporation. The old charter shows that the capital stock at that time amounted to \$25,000.

As time went on, the business outgrew the original quarters, a group of buildings in the West Bottoms stockyards area of Kansas City. What seemed like a roomy and pretentious building was constructed near Fifth and Wyandotte in Kansas City, Missouri. A retail salesroom was established on the first floor and the balance of the five-story building was used for the manufacture of coolers and the marble-top butcher counters of that era.

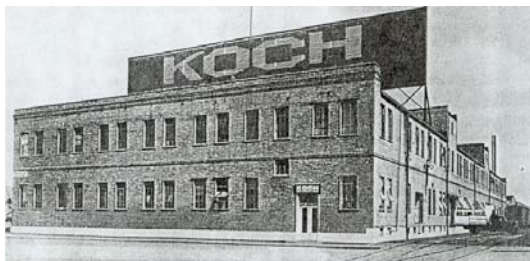
# OUR HISTORY



New building  
erected at Fifth and  
Wyandotte in 1916

## Millard Mayer Enters Business . . .

Mr. Millard Mayer joined the business in 1917. The business continued to grow, and the manufacturing building that seemed spacious in 1916 became very crowded. Just ten years later it became necessary to move the Koch business once again. So, in 1926 Koch moved to North Kansas City, across the Missouri river from the Wyandotte Street factory.



PLANT 1 IN NORTH KANSAS CITY  
"Serving the Meat Man Continuously Since 1883"

At the time of moving, the most popular Koch product was its freezer display case. The case included large end bunkers in which patented tanks held a mixture of cracked ice and salt. These freezer cases

were made during the period between 1921 and 1927. Like the block ice counters before them, the efficiency and durability of these cases did much to enhance the reputation of Koch's equipment offering.

## Introducing Raymond Starr, Sr. . . .



In 1925, Raymond H. Starr, Sr., a native of Kansas City and an engineering graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.), joined the company to help start the electrical refrigeration business.

Koch struggled through the Depression and labor unrest in the 1930s. The company built refrigerators for the US Navy and cots for the US Army during World War II and enjoyed a surge of business after the war was over when many meat-locker plants were built. But, after the war, Koch got squeezed out of the supermarket refrigerator market by bigger competitors, so the company developed a line of refrigerators for hotels, restaurants and hospitals.

In 1949, Koch split into two parts and the refrigerator division was sold (later acquired by Hobart Corporation). Mr. Starr acquired the butcher supplies division and the Koch name and began focusing on the mail order business and so the Koch catalog was born.

# OUR HISTORY

## Enter Lawrence D. Starr . . .

In 1957, Raymond's son, Lawrence D. Starr, joined the business after leaving the Army. While in the Army, Lawrence (who had earned a master's degree in food technology at M.I.T.) was stationed in Germany as a counter intelligence agent. He often visited the German Federal Meat Research Institute in Kulmbach, West Germany.



He was fascinated by the variety of German-built food processing machines. These special machines could chop and mix meat in novel ways. Some were unknown in the U.S. at the time, so, after returning home, he persuaded his father to let Koch import German food processing and vacuum packaging machinery for distribution in the United States.

## 29<sup>th</sup> Street Campus Developed . . .

When his father died in 1966, Lawrence D. Starr was named president of the company.

In 1971, the 1411 building was built and served as Koch's primary sales office.

Lawrence in front of 1411 building



The company's butcher supplies were shipped from the 30,000 square-foot barrel-roof warehouse building at 2901 Fairmount. This building is now used primarily for manufacturing and engineering operations.

2901 Fairmount Building



In 1965, Koch began selling vacuum packaging equipment manufactured by Multivac of West Germany. In the mid 1970s, Koch negotiated an exclusive distributorship with Multivac.

In 1978, Koch constructed the 1414 building to house the Multivac equipment and a fully equipped, multi-functional test kitchen.

# OUR HISTORY

1414  
Building



Nine years passed and in October 1987, Multivac decided to sell direct in the U.S. and thus opened an office in Kansas City. Koch sold its U.S. distributor rights to Multivac, but retained exclusive rights on the smaller chamber machine through 1990.

## John D. Starr joins Koch . . .



In 1990, Lawrence Starr's son, John D. Starr, joined the company after earning a Bachelor's degree in Chemistry and an MBA from M.I.T., and working in international finance for several years. John quickly took leadership of the Equipment Division.

In 1991, Koch engineers designed and manufactured (in what was once the supplies warehouse at 2901 Fairmount) a full line of packaging equipment, making Koch the only U.S. manufacturer of a double chamber vacuum packaging machine. In 1994, Koch also began manufacturing its own Crossweb package and film labelers.

In 1996, the decision was finalized to focus on small and medium sized equipment. The company took a unique stance in the industry by focusing on telephone sales and direct mail promotion, and eliminating field sales. The Equipment Division increased its engineering and manufacturing capacity to develop a more complete line of chamber machines, labelers, and smokehouses. As a result, company achieved several meaningful patents for its machine designs. As a result of the changes in the Equipment Division, sales increased by over 50%.

The Facilities department of the Equipment Division was established to help international businesses design and build food processing plants, from start to finish. This included constructing the building, equipping it with packaging and processing machinery, and providing the training. Projects included facilities in the U.S., the former Soviet Union, the former Eastern Bloc countries of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech and Slovak Federal Republics, China, Micronesia, Trinidad, Mexico, and many others.



Turnkey plant in  
Mt. McKinley,  
Alaska

# OUR HISTORY

## Supplies Division in the '90s . . .

Meanwhile, the Supplies Division continued to grow its business. In 1989, consolidating its distribution from three facilities into one, the company moved into a 53,000 square foot warehouse in North Kansas City. In 1994, the warehouse was expanded to over 100,000 square feet.



The Supplies Division built a state-of-the-art photo studio in this new warehouse, where products were photographed and catalogs produced in-house.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the Supplies Division began a conversion operation to make its own bandsaw blades and vacuum pouches, and an engraving shop to create USDA and other stamps for the food industry. A shop was established to repair scales, Wellsaws, stunner guns, sharpen sets, and other products, lowering costs and improving turnaround for Koch's customers.

In the mid-to-late 1990s, Koch expanded its warehouse capabilities by opening satellite warehouses in Atlanta, Georgia, Fresno, California, Albertville, Alabama, and Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

Effective 1 January 2000, John D. Starr was named president and chief executive officer of Koch Supplies Inc.

The Supplies Division continued to develop its professional sales staff in its call center, as well as field sales representatives.

For five decades, Koch Supplies Inc. was a Starr family enterprise and, thanks to the support of our customers, we grew and prospered. However, as consolidation in our industry became more commonplace, we found it necessary to explore growth opportunities available in a changing marketplace.

As a result, in December 2000, Bunzl Distribution, Inc. acquired our Supplies Division. Our Equipment Division, renamed Koch Equipment LLC, is owned and operated by an investor group headed by John D. Starr as chief executive officer.



John D. Starr  
Chief Executive Officer

# OUR HISTORY

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Present and future customers of the equipment business reaped the benefits from the transaction. The separation of the supplies and equipment businesses enabled each company to focus on the expertise needed for excellence in their core businesses and product offerings.

## **Koch Equipment Today . . .**



1414 West 29<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, MO 64108-3604

Today we are a full line manufacturer of equipment for processing, packaging, and labeling. A one-stop shop for vacuum chamber equipment, skin packaging machines, modified atmosphere tray sealers, and labelers, as well as a full range of processing equipment including kill floor equipment, mixers, grinders, bowl cutters, injectors, tumblers, stuffers, dicers, smokehouses, rollstock parts, accessories, and service.

## **Koch Equipment's Consultative Approach . . .**

We are interested in your current operation, its strengths and weaknesses, your market and competitive position, your current plans, immediate goals, and future dreams. Only when we understand these factors can we effectively discuss practical solution alternatives and recommend equipment and/or operational changes that meet your needs and maximize your return on investment.

## **Predictable Value and Dependability from Koch Equipment . . .**

When you have been in business since 1883, word inevitably gets around with regard to how you treat your customers. Words like honesty, integrity, and dependability are associated with Koch Equipment and we work hard to continue that tradition. We have built our business and our reputation by selling our customers only what they need and not what we could get them to buy. By providing reliable equipment that represents good value and standing solidly behind it, we are building customer relationships upon which we can depend for our future growth and theirs.