

Willy Huber Jr.

Piller Sausages and Delicatessens Ltd. celebrates its fiftieth year in business in 2007 and when President Willy Huber celebrates it will be with a nod to his great-great-grandfather.



Jakob Huber, a German who first opened a meat processing plant in Yugoslavia, began the family tradition back in the 1880s.

The local business was established when Willy's father Wilhelm Huber Sr. opened a small butcher shop with George Piller in 1957. Each partner invested just \$500 and soon they were selling European-style sausage at the Waterloo market.

Today, the Wismer Street plant is selling sausages and everything from luncheon meats to liver spreads as far away as China with annual sales of more than \$100 million. "Our company has never, ever in its whole history, had a decline in sales. Never even a flat line," said Willy Huber in 2001. "There has always been growth every year from coast-to-coast since 1957 – non-stop growth."

Piller's phenomenal success is due to a winning combination of old world recipes and new world technology. The formula was bolstered by the Huber family's reputation. "I always try to treat people with respect no matter who I'm talking to . . . Our family philosophy has always been – and this is something my father always taught us and he's right on the money – you have to be an honest business. If you give your word, your word is your word."

It was not long before Wilhelm Sr. and George Piller realized they had a winning product and an eager market. Indeed, within three months of opening their tiny butcher shop just outside Waterloo, they changed locations and purchased another butcher shop, this time on a 32-acre parcel of land that would soon become their Wismer Street plant.

In 1959, George Piller decided to leave the partnership and Wilhelm brought his two brothers, Heinrich and Edward into the business and made it a wholesale business, selling to supermarkets in nearby cities.

"We have a recipe for a product and have never changed it. In all our processed meats we start with a good, fresh meat block and, using a combination of spices, aging, and smoking, we bring out that distinctive European-style flavour."

By the mid-1980s, six tractor trailers filled with 100,000 kilograms of processed meat were leaving Piller's every week.

"I'm working for 300 other families that have to take a pay cheque home. I always have to take that into consideration in what we do."

“We’re very proud to be here in Waterloo. It is one of the best communities to live in. The best thing that ever happened to us was that our parents came to Canada. That is the best thing that ever happened to our family.”

Photo courtesy of Piller Sausages and Delicatessens Ltd.