

BIONIC™



NEWS RELEASE

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For Release:

Hillerich & Bradsby Co. is the family-owned, 119-year-old manufacturer of the legendary Louisville Slugger® baseball bats, PowerBilt® golf equipment, Louisville Hockey equipment and Bionic™ Glove Technology gloves for gardening and other tasks.

John A. "Bud" Hillerich was just 14 in 1880 when he began as an apprentice in his father's Louisville, Kentucky woodworking shop, turning everything from bed posts to bowling balls on a wood lathe. Four years later, he turned a baseball bat for Pete "The Old Gladiator" Browning of the Louisville Eclipse Baseball Team and changed the company forever.

Word quickly spread about the attributes of that bat and by 1894 the name Louisville Slugger was a registered U.S. trademark. In 1905, early baseball star Honus Wagner signed a contract to let his autograph be used on the bats, one of the first professional athlete endorsements of a retail product. Since then, virtually every big league baseball legend from Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth to Mickey Mantle and Roger Maris has made history with Louisville Slugger baseball bats. Bud Hillerich's tenure with the company continued until his death in 1946. Today, his grandson, John A. "Jack" Hillerich III is chairman and his great-grandson, John A. Hillerich IV is president and CEO. In between, the company has grown and diversified greatly. In 1916, the company made the first of what became its PowerBilt line of golf clubs. Louisville Hockey began in 1966 when Hillerich & Bradsby bought Wally Enterprises in Wallaceburg, Ontario. And, although the company still makes custom bats for professional baseball players, it has become one of the major producers of aluminum bats in the world, selling over 1.5 million Louisville Slugger aluminum bats annually.

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Hillerich & Bradsby also became a major tourist attraction in 1996 with the opening of its new Louisville Slugger Museum, wooden bat factory and headquarters complex on historic West Main Street, just 10 blocks from where Bud Hillerich turned the first bat 119 years ago.

Now in its third century, the company has diversified once again, combining its long history of manufacturing and innovation with the vast knowledge of a noted orthopedic hand surgeon to form the Bionic Glove Technology division.

Under the research and development direction of Dr. James A. Kleinert, the division's first product, the Bionic Gardening Glove, is on the market, and other task-oriented gloves are in the works.