

Transcribed Excerpts from "More Than Just Washing Machines" Article about Maytag Plant in Newton, Iowa, June 21, 2019

... Surrounded by, at one time, nine similar businesses in Newton, a place that many folks considered to be the "washing machine center of the world," the Maytag Corporation emerged on top as the premiere company that outlasted its competition, until it was purchased by Whirlpool Corporation in 2006 and subsequently closed its facilities...

"We started out making farm equipment and made threshing machines and things like that, and then they dabbled into washing machines," Streeter, 92, said Thursday. "And finally they found out the market for washing machines was a lot better than the market for farm equipment."

Founded 126 years ago by F. L. Maytag, the Newton business was once the workplace of the 92-year-old Streeter, who became head of the maintenance department for Maytag Plant 2. He retired from the company after 39 years. Streeter's mother and father had also worked at Maytag...

Maytag was the first company, Streeter added, to build a cast aluminum washing machine body in the 1920s, a style that was very popular among customers and would eventually kickstart the company into national recognition...

Bill Perrenoud, executive director of the Jasper County Historical Museum, said Maytag was known for its dependability, at least that's how the company sold itself as...

... the gas-powered engines packed inside Maytag's washing machines found other uses and could power other appliances like lawnmowers and pumps...

A small race car on display at the museum, Street said, was not sold commercially, but rather was a promotional or sales item. And how did that car operate exactly? The gas-powered engine that was used in a Maytag-brand washing machine.

Ironing machines, dishwashers, refrigerators and more. If Maytag determined a need for something, the company would make it...

The company, he said, likely put in a lot of research hours and listened to the needs of its customers to decide what appliance would be distributed.

"It was well-thought-out," Perrenoud said. "You take a look at the different washing machines they produced and the changes they made from one model to the next would be looking for improvements. And before they made those improvements they tested them."

Although Maytag Corporation is no longer in Newton, the company certainly left a lasting impression on the community. The family name is ingrained in the town's infrastructure...

"One of the catchphrases was: 'Newton needs Maytag,'" Perrenoud said. "... And I think there's a lot of truth to that. Newton would not have been half the community it would have."