

# Maple Landmark

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Release at Will

## **Who Hires Their Mother?**

### ***Vermont Company Defines, Embodies Family Business***

MIDDLEBURY, Vt. – When searching for new employees, few business owners would consider hiring their immediate family members, especially their own mother. Yet that is exactly what happened in 1989. Michael Rainville had started Maple Landmark Woodcraft just ten years prior and, after his parents sold their general store, he employed his mother, Pat. Three decades later, this uncommon decision is still seen daily. Each weekday, at 6:00am with the rest of the 30-person production team, Pat starts that day's work of supervising the paint and finish room as one of the longest-tenured company employees.

Rainville hiring his own mother, however unconventional, did not turn out to be a unique choice for him. In the 40-year history of the company, five other immediate family members have found employment at the Vermont wooden products manufacturer. Rainville's sister, Barbara, works in the finish room alongside their mother and in the office as Marketing Manager. His wife, Jill, manages the office and oversees shipping. Rainville's older son, Adam, maintains all external e-commerce platforms, as well as internal production management. His younger son, Andrew, handles product photography, the company website, monthly customer emails, and social media. Finally, Rainville's late grandmother, Hattie, assembled small items and tied ornaments until her "retirement" in 2015 at the age of 96, when she began attending the local senior activities center.

Though not officially part of the Rainville family, many other employees working on the production floor, have been with the company for decades and could be considered honorary members. Hilda Vincent, the lumber prep and sanding supervisor, has logged 30 years of service. As she recalled, looking at catalog covers dating back to 1995, "I remember all of these!" Regan Wedge, a maintenance and projects lead, shared a similar sentiment, accounting for 24 years, "Everyone's your friend. Everyone grew up together here and Mike & the family make you feel like you're part of the family." Around the shop, woodworkers of varying terms tend to the saws, sanders, and hammers with one unifying value – making quality wooden products in Vermont.

"We are simply people who like to make stuff and that's what we're about," stated Rainville, "With that we take great pride in making that happen right here in Middlebury, Vermont." Middlebury was not always the home of Maple Landmark; it was started around 10 miles northeast of its current location in the small town of Lincoln. Keeping the business in Vermont's Addison County, however, Rainville has been able to retain local talent, tapping into the state's

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rich history of carpentry and woodworking. In fact, his own grandfathers were woodworkers in their own right. For the last 40 years, Maple Landmark has been exemplifying the prototypical family business, but the art of woodworking has always been the Rainville family's business.

In the quiet hills of Lincoln in 1979, Pat didn't know what to expect when she presented young Mike with a coping saw, sand block, and some pieces of wood to keep him busy. Maybe a neat homemade craft, maybe just a pile of sawdust. One thing is for sure, she certainly did not expect a long-term job out of it.

## **About Maple Landmark**

Maple Landmark is a wooden products manufacturer located in Middlebury, Vermont. Since 1979, the 40 woodworkers at Maple Landmark have been crafting a wide array of award-winning toys, games, and gifts from local and sustainable wood. Maple Landmark uses a variety of manufacturing systems, innovative product design, and modern technology integrated with classic woodworking to remain competitive in a crowded industry that faces significant international trade pressures. Distributing products across the United States and sometimes internationally, Maple Landmark is recognized as a standard for quality wooden products in an increasingly tech-driven world.

For more information on Maple Landmark, please visit the website at [www.maplelandmark.com](http://www.maplelandmark.com).

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