



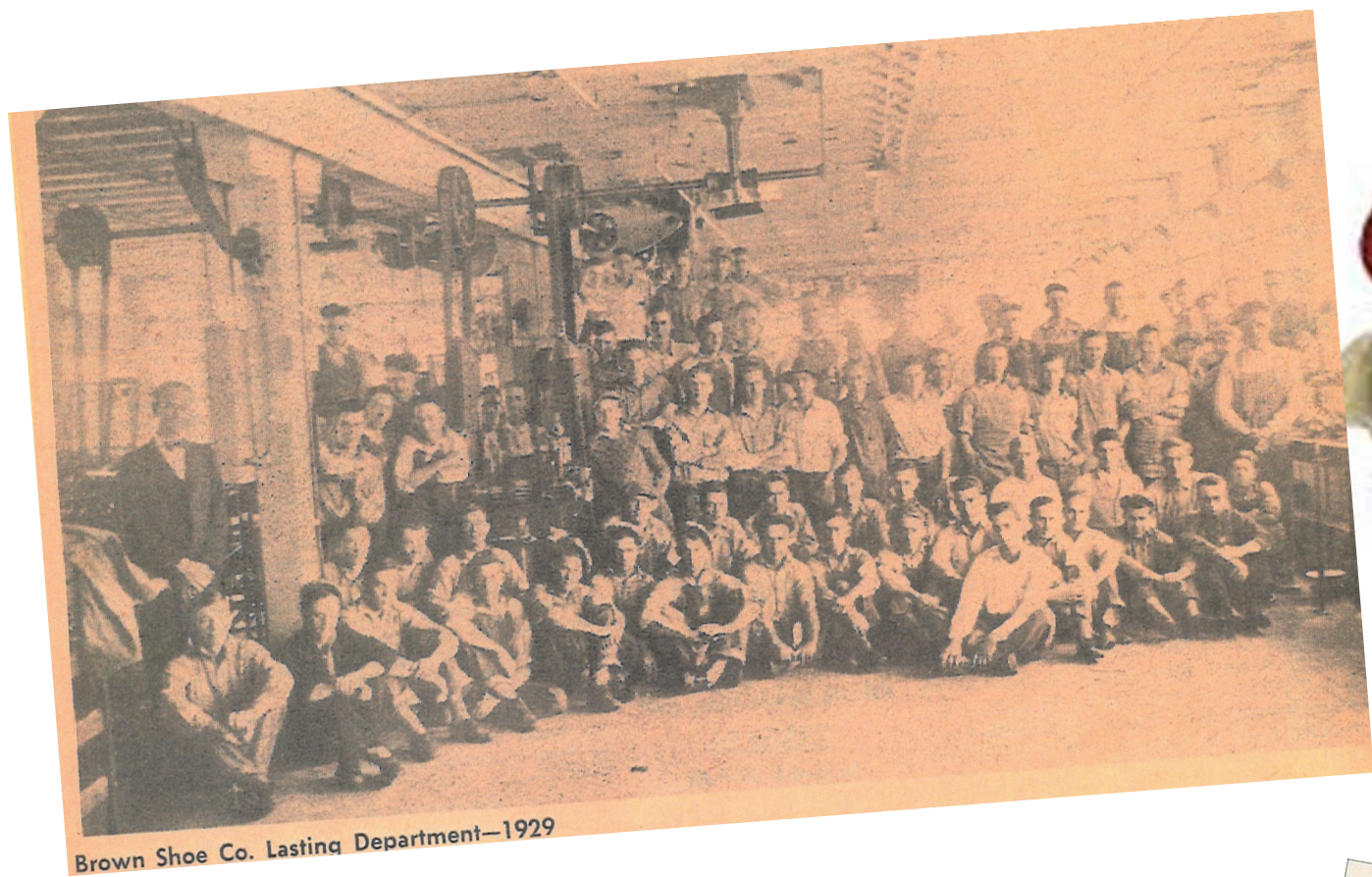
The Brown Shoe Company was founded in St. Louis, Missouri in 1878 by George Warren Brown. Brown Shoe first located in Mattoon in 1922. The Company leased a building at 116 N. 16th Street. Within a year the plant was employing 300 workers and producing 2200 pairs of shoes a day.

In 1928 with the N. 16th Street at full capacity Brown Shoe and the Mattoon Chamber of Commerce entered into an agreement by which the City of Mattoon would raise \$175,000 dollars for a new plant and abate taxes on it for 10 years. The fund raising drive began on April 15, 1928 and the goal was reached on March 5th.



The new plant was a three story, 33,132 square foot facility built at 1400 Piatt. The new factory opened on October 12, 1928.

By 1955 the plant was employing 535 workers and turning out over 4500 pairs of shoe a day.



The Naturalizer brand was the predominant product but the plant also produced Air Step, Buster Brown, Pedwin, Roblee, and Life Stride.



In 1968 Brown Shoe Company built a new, more efficient, single story 72,000 square foot building on West Route 121 and sold the building on Piatt to the Mattoon Community School District.

By 1970, despite increased efficiencies, foreign imports were taking their toll on domestic shoe manufacturers and Brown Shoe Company made the decision to close the Mattoon plant.

The building was subsequently sold to Justrite Manufacturing in 1973 and they are still operating in Mattoon.