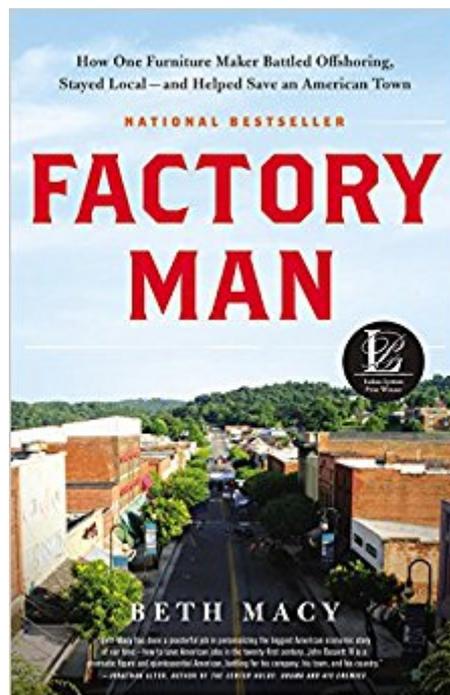


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# Factory Man: How One Furniture Maker Battled Offshoring, Stayed Local - And Helped Save An American Town



## Synopsis

The instant New York Times bestseller about one man's battle to save hundreds of jobs by demonstrating the greatness of American business. The Bassett Furniture Company was once the world's biggest wood furniture manufacturer. Run by the same powerful Virginia family for generations, it was also the center of life in Bassett, Virginia. But beginning in the 1980s, the first waves of Asian competition hit, and ultimately Bassett was forced to send its production overseas. One man fought back: John Bassett III, a shrewd and determined third-generation factory man, now chairman of Vaughan-Bassett Furniture Co, which employs more than 700 Virginians and has sales of more than \$90 million. In *FACTORY MAN*, Beth Macy brings to life Bassett's deeply personal furniture and family story, along with a host of characters from an industry that was as cutthroat as it was colorful. As she shows how he uses legal maneuvers, factory efficiencies, and sheer grit and cunning to save hundreds of jobs, she also reveals the truth about modern industry in America.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 464 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown and Company; Later Printing edition (July 15, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316231436

ISBN-13: 978-0316231435

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.5 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (370 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #57,983 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #4 in [Books > Business & Money > Human Resources > Outsourcing](#) #13 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Decorative Arts & Design > Furniture Design](#) #15 in [Books > Business & Money > Industries > Manufacturing](#)

## Customer Reviews

Offshoring eliminated 673,000 jobs from American furniture makers and related firms, per author Macy. (I certainly believe it, having driven through areas of North Carolina over a period of years, and witnessed the drastic decline in functioning furniture factories in the early 2000s.) Between 2001 - 12, 63,300 U.S. factories closed and five million associated American factory jobs went away. Author Macy's book begins with a focus on the effects of offshoring on America's working class, zeroing in on the Appalachian regions of Virginia and North Carolina that once monopolized

the market. She contends that Thomas Friedman 'and other free-trade cheerleaders' have little grasp of the human cost of their theories. The most obvious, to one traveling through that region, is that of economic decline within that region. The 'hero' in all this is John Bassett III (JBIII), grandson of the Bassett Furniture Co. (once the world's largest wood furniture manufacturer with 14 plants in several Southern states) founder and the firm's current president. He turns down a Chinese company's offer to make his products at lower costs - there's no question about the Chinese company's ability to do so because it's already making identical products for its own customers. This is equivalent to modern-day economic heresy. JBIII then undertakes an expensive lawsuit against Chinese furniture manufacturers, contending their actions violate WTO anti-dumping regulations. JBIII hoped that duties of 30 - 40% would be imposed, per the Tariff Act of 1930. Unfortunately, his fellow furniture manufacturing CEO peers, along with 90% of the economists consulted opposed JBIII's proposal to impose tariffs and argued that stopping unfair competition would simply move the problem somewhere else.

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