

People and Things I Remember or Have Known About

I was born May 5, 1844 in Buckland Center in a house which has been used for several years as a wayside inn. My parents were Elisha and Lucinda Wells. They were more than respectable: they were honest, not rich, but compared to their neighbors, they were poor. They were married when both were twenty-two years old. Father had built a blacksmith shop and had the tools necessary for a blacksmith business, and was conducting such a business. It is interesting to know how he was able at his age to have acquired the tools. Then as now parents can take money earned by minor children, but so far as I know it is not aften[sic] done now, but in the days when father was a boy his father took all the money he earned and he was put to work when a young boy on a farm, or whatever was found for him to do, and when he was about eighteen years old he bought his time of his father by paying a sum of money each year until he was twenty-one years old, and the money he received over the amount he paid to his father, and living expenses, was used to buy the shop and tools already mentioned. As his father was a blacksmith my father had learned the trade and was a skillful workman in iron.

When he was about eighteen years old and when he bought his time from his father, he went to Greenfield to work for John Russell who had a jewelry store, and a shop for making chisels, and also added the manufacture of cutlery. Some

time **later** Nathaniel E. Russell, brother of John Russell, who had made some money in a woolen mill in a *stone* building still standing *in* Factory Hollow, joined his brother John in the cutlery business, and went to New York City to start a store to sell the products. This I believe was the first effort to make cutlery in this country and was for *many* years very successful any way as long as it was managed by the Russells. At the start Englishmen were brought from England who were experts as cutlers *in* the way the business was conducted in those days. Among them was Mathew Chapman who afterwards was a superintendent for many years.

And that was when *my* father earned and saved the money which he used to start the business in Buckland.

After my Father had carried on the business *of blacksmith* for three or four years he was induced to go to Shelburne Falls to work for a company who were starting a business of making cutlery, who wanted him because of his experience in Greenfield † and now I will tell something about that Company.

A man named Lamson had a business making scythe snaths used for cutting grass and he had several sons who took over that business, and added the making of cutlery in a small way. They in a way which I have always considered wrong because, I have always thought the owner should know more about it than any one in his employ, and should manage it himself, and spite of the fact that it was in their case successful, I still think I am right.

They also got a number of cutlers *from* England mostly from Sheffield, among them Joseph W. Gardner who afterward became superintendent.

The name *of* the sons were Nathaniel and *Ebenezer G*, Lamson. Neither of them ever gave much personal attention to the business or even had a desk in the office. At first a man by name of William T. Clement was superintendent of the manufacturing, and Samuel L. Bardwell looked after the office. Abel F. Goodnow a relative of the Lamsons joined the company and the business was carried on under the name of Lamson and Goodnow. Mr. Goodnow located in New York and attended to sale of the products.

Sometime later it was incorporates under name of Lamson and Goodnow Mfg. Co., Wm. T. Clement served for 10 or 15 years and was succeeded by Mr. Gardner who served in same capacity until 1875 successfully, when he started a shop for making pocket cutlery which was not successful. Mr. **Bardwell** was succeeded by Frederick A. Ball who had charge of the office and finance until his death.

There was much rivalry between the J. Russell Co., and the Lamson and Goodnow Mfg. Co. Nathaniel Russell always felt bitter to the other Co. and could never see any good in it and would never believe the other company could ever make any money, but Mr. Bardwell once gave me statements for several years showing large profits and there is other evidence that much money was made by both companies until about 1870. Since that time is another story.

Nathaniel Lamson, usually called Deacon, was respected by everyone. Ebenezer was what would now be called a hustler, but was not considered very reliable by many. I will have more to tell about him later. Mr. Goodnow was a very able business man. Nathaniel Lamson had two children; one daughter who was one of my teachers in the public schools, and a son. At his death he left for those days a large estate and his son had a fine time spending his share, which did not last long, and finally was supported by labor of his wife, who did dressmaking and kept a boarding house.

The company wanted my father because he was a skillful iron and steel worker and for his experience with the J. Russell Co. His work was to forge carving and butcher knives from flat bars of steel with a hand hammer, after heating in a charcoal fire and trimming the edges to shape with shears operated by hand. It has always been thought that knives made in this way had better cutting qualities than when made in modern but cheaper methods. *When* he moved to Shelburne Falls, he lived in the oldest house in town, but later built a house on what is now called State street, which he later exchanged for a large house on upper main street, on the Shelburne side of the river. While living there we had a very unpleasant experience. *When I* was about 8 years old and mother and I were making a short visit in Ashfield we had word that father was ill, we hurried home and soon found he had small pox. My sister Cora was then a year old took it from him and both were very sick, but owing to good care by mother and the

help of a good doctor by name of Stephen Tabor, both lived. Everyone in town was much excited and frightened. Rufus Smith his wife and two children lived in the house with us and although all of us suffered with variola fever, none had the small pox. It was always a mystery how my father caught the disease because no one had it in the vicinity and no stranger had been seen around there. One incident I remember well which showed the folly of people: one of my duties was to drive our cows and one or more of our neighbors cows to pasture in the morning and get them at night. In doing this we had to go past the academy where there were a number of boys. Herman Smith was with me, and a number of the academy boys started to make trouble for us until one of them shouted, "They are the small pox boys." and we had everything our own way.

At that time, about the only way for boys to get money was by driving cows to pasture, about a mile. For doing this from May until November we were paid one dollar. I earned in this way \$3.00 which I deposited in the Sherburne Falls five cents savings bank. Book no. 100 shows that I was one of the early depositors, it is there yet.

It was the custom then for almost every one to keep a cow and pig which helped to keep down the cost of living; butter than costing 10¢ per lb. and eggs 10¢ per doz. My father earned about \$1.50 per day and when work was slack in the shop he was told that he would have to be laid off because he had saved something to live on which others did not have.

My father always seemed to think that I could do anything. One incident which occurred when I was 7 or 8 years old shows that he felt that way early in my life; he had a very handsome young horse, and one day he put me on the horse's back, gave me the reins and told me to ride. I had never done anything with a horse, and knew nothing about driving one, but I started and rode the length of Main St., and back. How I knew enough to turn around is still a mystery to me, but anyway I did, perhaps with the aid of the horse.

We lived in the main street house until the death of my grandfather who had a small farm house and blacksmith shop in what was called the mill yard in Buckland and all of which he built and where he had carried on the business of a blacksmith. The shop was an old fashioned one with the roof on the backside reaching almost to the ground with a place at one end for shoeing oxen. They *were* led into a strong wood frame, their neck fastened by strong wood bars, a belt made of leather was put under their bodies by means of which the ox was carried off the floor, and the foot to be shod was fastened to one side of the frame. *Oxen* are used so little now that it is very seldom you can find a place to shoe them, and that is the reason I have described it

After my grandfather died my father brought this farm and buildings and we moved there. He continued to work making knives for Lamson Goodnow & Co., but he did it in the shop I have described. He took the steel from their factory and carried the forged blades back to them. I was then about 11

years old and it was my job to carry the work both ways driving a large high spirited horse, which was difficult to control at the factory because of the noise, and because my feet did not reach the floor of the wagon, but I always got home safely. Sometime later he gave up making knives; probably because the company did not want them, and he tore down the old shop, and built a new *one*, and carried on the business of a blacksmith.

While living in Buckland I went to school in "a little red school house," not far from our house. A district school and in many ways I believe it was a better school than the graded schools we have **now**. A part of the **time I** went to a private school in the middle town of Buckland, walking two miles each day.

One of the teachers in the district school was Electa Trowbridge who was the daughter of Deacon Silas Trowbridge, and who lived near the school house, she is now living at the age of 95. Another one was Sarah C. Forbes, whose father was dead leaving her with no means of living. My father as district school committee hired *her* and she proved an excellent teacher. She taught me a longer time than any other.

About this time a boy of about my age of a fine family was caught stealing, and it disturbed my father very much. He said to me, "If you should do such a thing I don't *know* what I should do to you." This was the only time he ever said anything about being honest, or my mother, but I knew without being told what they wanted; children always know

whether their parents are good or bad. You cannot fool them.

In those days iron was high. All horse and ox shoes were made by hand by the blacksmith. Old horse shoes were welded together to make new ones. One man could do it alone, but when two were available both were used, I remember when I was too short I would stand on a box and with a heavy hammer using both hands, I would strike in the place where *my* father struck first on the iron which was heated to a welding heat, and when he let his hammer fall on the anvil it was the signal for me to stop, as it was necessary to "strike while the iron was hot." The blows had to fall hard and fast. At that time I was about 13 years old. In the summer I also worked on the farm doing all kinds of farm work. At that time little machinery was used on a farm except a plow and harrow. Hay was cut with a scythe, and I could do that as well as a man. The grass, after it was cut and dried was raked into bundles with hand rakes. I well remember the first horse drawn rake that was used and there was much difference of opinion among farmers as to using it would not make *so* clean hay. There was much excitement when a mowing machine was brought into use and we all went some distance to see it work.

My father once sent me to a neighbors two or three miles from house to get a young heifer and from the man who had it. I learned a lesson I *never* forgot. He said, "I don't know how much you know about cattle; but you should know that if they start to get away it is difficult to stop them,

but if you stop them before they get the advantage of you, you can control them." I have found that applies not only to animals but to habits, men, and business.

After working on the farm and in the shop for about five years there was a strike of the men in the cutlery shop; the first thing in that kind known in that part of the country, and my father and I were working in the hay field. Mr. E. G. Lamson and A. F. Goodnow came to see him and asked him to go to work for them and take charge of the forging. Then they asked him what wages he would want, and I well remember he said "Two dollars a day," and I could see he thought it was a large price, but they hired him and he went to work and stayed although he was threatened by the strikers. It was a hard life for him, he would get up before 5AM, attend to his cows and other stock, eat his breakfast, drive two miles getting to the shop at 7AM, work all day starting for home at 6 PM, eat his supper take care of cows which would take until 8:50. For a time I did part of the work of caring for the stock, but when I was about 15 years old my father arranged for me to live with the family of J. W. Gardner, and pay for my board by odd jobs and go to school. The school I attended was kept by a man called Professor Avery, and was not a public school. He wanted my father to send me to college, but while I have many things to be thankful to my good father and mother, there is nothing I am more thankful to them for than that they did not do it.

One of the boys who attended the same school was from New Jersey named Walter Page and I am confident he was the same one who was ambassador to England during the world war. Another and quite a different boy was Edgar Gray son of the Baptist minister in the town and who afterwards was located in Washington D.C. That boy was a big strong one but every morning he would ask me how to solve the lessons for the day. He afterwards got a job in Washington swindled a number of people out of a large amount of money, got away to England and was a bad character in every way.

I went to this school for a year and then as the present way of putting it I accepted a place in a shop where pocket knives were made, my work being cleaning, sharpening, and packing the knives, still living in the family of Mr. Gardner and doing odd jobs morning and night. I received for wages \$14.00 per month paying \$7.00 per month in addition to my work for my board. The times were hard and the company paid us half the wages in cash and notes due in six months for the other half. Many of the workmen sold their notes at a discount but I kept mine until they were due, which meant I received no money at all for six months, but father supplied what I needed and I had all the money I ever earned, quite different from the way his father treated him, but father always said he would not treat his children as he had been treated. His father had followed the rule to "Spare the rod and spoil the child," which I think is just the way to spoil the child. Certainly my father never followed the old rule.

About 1860 it looked as if war would come. The company began making parts of rifles and my father was put to work forging them by process called drop forging. I do not know if he was the first one to do that kind of work but if not the first he must have been among the first. About that time, I went home to live and went back and forth with my father as already described. After a few months we went to work and found the factory had been burned in the night, and my father was transferred to Windsor Vt. to have charge of forging parts of Springfield rifles. The shop where I was employed was not burned and I continued to work there going back and forth and taking care of the farm animals as father had done but I could not stand it for long and gave up work in the shop and stayed at home to look after the farm. In a few months father got a job as office boy in the factory at Windsor Vt. and I went there to live with him boarding at the hotel and other places. I was hired for three years at \$100. for the first year \$200 for the second year and \$300 for the third year but the company paid each year just double what I agreed to work for. The office force consisted of Samuel L. Bardwell who formally held the same position in Lamson & Goodnow Mfg. Co. when they started making cutlery in Shelburne Falls and afterwards moved to a farm near my father, and whom Mr. Lamson had hired to go to Windsor, a young man who was paymaster, and myself.

Not long after I went to work, the paymaster went away and I took his place. Sometime afterwards Mr. Bardwell was transferred to New York to take charge of the store for selling cutlery, but before he went I had been given charge of the books as well as acting paymaster for about 400 men. It was a case where I was willing to do the work and others were willing to let me.

After Mr. Bardwell went away Mr. Lamson who was a strong baptist hired a man also a baptist who was from a neighboring town to take charge of the office. I still continued to do all the work. One day Mr. Lamson asked the man to write a letter to Washington about a contract for more rifles. He was a very poor penman and Mr. Lamson after reading the letter called me to his desk and said, "I can't send such a looking letter to Washington , wont you write for me?" I did and when he saw it he gave a sigh of relief and said, "That is more like it." In those days of course there were no typewriters; all the letters were written with a pen, copied on thin wet paper by pressing in a letter press. Not long after this occurred I told Mr. Lamson that I was doing all the work and that either the man in charge must go, or I would go. He said, "I don't want you to go, and not long after *the* man went and I was left in full charge and with the help of a boy did all the work in the office until the end of the war.

. An incident occurred which convinced me that a college

education was not everything. Mr. Lamson had a protege whose expenses he had paid through college and afterwards put him to work around his office. At that time all files came from England and we had a lot of various sizes and kinds come in invoiced in pounds shilling, and pence in gold and this young man was given the job of fixing the prices for different kinds in U.S. paper money. He spent several weeks trying to do it with little or no progress, and one day I got to the office in the afternoon before the others, and before two o'clock had a formula made to work it out. Before I go on with my story, I will tell something about the company.

Mr. E. G. Lamson was quite a trader and about that beginning of the war he found a factory in Winsor Vt. formally owned by the Robbins and Lawrence Co. who formerly made Enfield rifles for the British Gov't but had been abandoned sometime. They had also made various iron working machinery. There were many skillful mechanics in the town who had worked in the shop. As I have said Mr. Lamson got hold of the shop in some way. I don't know just how but I do not think he paid but little if any cash, and he interested Mr. A. F. Goodnow and B. B. Yale both of New York and connected with Lamson & Goodnow Co. to go in with him. I never knew whether any of them put in any money but I do know that the money for carrying on the business was borrowed on the credit of the three men (another poor way for doing business in my mature opinion). The money was borrowed

mostly from the Shelburne Falls Bank of which Mr. Lamson was president and from a Greenfield Bank now the First Nat'l Bank and Trust Co.

They then secured a contract from the U.S. Gov't for 20,000 Springfield rifles at \$20.00 each, then Mr. Lamson (who was the only one of the three (who spent anytime in Windsor) contracted with various mechanics in the town to make different parts of the guns, agreeing to advance each \$50.00 per month. This appeared to be a good thing for both parties but the increase in wages and other things which enter into the cost soon left the contractor no profit, but most of them stood by their contract receiving only \$50.00 per month for their work. I remember however there was one who kept the work going but he went to somewhere in Massachusetts and got a job leaving the work to be done by men whom he hired but he was careful to come around every month to get his \$50.00. One day I figured his account which showed a loss and still he kept drawing his fifty dollars and doing nothing. I showed the figures to Mr. Bardwell and he to Mr. Lamson, who soon stopped it. I don't see why someone should not have found it out as well as I. I never knew whether Mr. Lamson knew if I had anything to do with it or not. After the contract for 20,000 rifles was completed another contract was secured for a like number and also for 1,000 breech loading carbines; also for 1,000 Ball

magazine rifles. Great hope was based on getting contract for them but the end of the war put an end to gun business. During all this time quite a business was in making machinery*

After the business had been going for about two years Mr. Lamson conceived the idea of converting the company into a corporation called E. G. Lamson & Co., leaving out Mr. Goodnow and Yale, I don't know just what his plan was but the two New York men came up to Windsor and there was a pow wow, after which they went home with \$40,000 in cash, and and Mr. Lamson carried on the business alone and some assistance from his son and I know that at one time his property there was worth about \$500,000 in Windsor, but he lost it all within a few years. Mr. Lamson had four children Flora, Eastman, Florence and Allen, all dead but Allen. He was the kindest of men in his family but he seemed to think that the way to manage men was to find fault, scold and abuse them. At any rate that is what he did, and he would abuse his son the worst of all. I have never thought it was the best way, strange to say he always treated me well, never scolded or found fault, and I have reason to think I was satisfactory. After my father and I had been in Winsor about a year he moved moved his family, consisting of my mother, sister Cora 8 years younger than myself, brother Frank 10 years younger and mother's mother, to Winsor, and a little later he went to Buckland and bought a fine young horse and drove it to Windsor as a surprise for me, and I took much pleasure

in caring for and driving it. At the close of the war work on rifles was almost discontinued and my father went to East Charlemont, bought a farm and moved there. I remained there in Windsor a few weeks and then went to live with him, on the hill farm and for a few days was as homesick as any one could be, but then I went to work on the farm. We had a pair of oxen and the horse mentioned above but most of the farm work including mowing machine was done with oxen. We kept a number of cows, sheep, hens, ducks etc. I worked very hard days, going to Shelburne Falls in the evening for such business as was necessary to do. Many times I remember it was very dark before I got home.

As horses are used so little now an experience I had may be interesting. About the time I came on to the farm a man by name of Williams and Daniel Lamson Jr. were in company giving lessons in horse training and came to Shelburne Falls for that purpose. They had a stallion which they drove without bridle or reins through the streets as an advertisement. I joined the school and I will take my experience afterwards which will show how the training was done.

One of our neighbors had a horse which would run away, kick etc. and the owner knowing that I had attended the school asked me to train him. The first thing I did was to turn the horse loose in a room with nothing on him, then with a light whip in my hand I went into the room and quickly struck the horse on the hind legs, he at once run to the other

side of the roan and I repeated the blow, soon he turned and looked at me, when *he* did that I put the whip behind me and walked to *his* head, when he nothing happened when his head was towards me he followed me being very careful to keep his head near me, then I put a bridle *on* him, a strap around his body just back of his forelegs and from that strap another one to the left fore leg and a strap from the right leg up over his back, which I had in my hand. I then pulled up his left leg and tied it to the strap around his body thus leaving *him* on three legs. He then reared and thrashed around trying to get away, I held on to the left rein and after awhile I pulled the strap over his back which was fastened to his right leg, leaving him on his front knees and hind legs, he continued to rear and struggle but after a while I pulled on the right rein which was fastened to the bridle bit and rolled him over on his side keeping him there until he was quiet and found I was his master. I then let him get up and we harnessed him and drove him hitched to a wagon, *and* no further trouble, but when the owner tried to drive him afterwards, the horse ran away and smashed the wagon. The secret of managing the horse in to astonish it by doing something first.

Of course there was not much money coming in and father was discouraged, as he had always had a cash income, One may he saw Mr. Gardner the supt. of the cutlery, who proposed that father buy a small shop and water power near Shelburne Falls and knives for the Lamson & Goodnow Mfg. Co.,

which he did and during the winter I drove about 5 miles and superintended building a new shop on the property, for a forge shop.

We had expected to make butcher knives as father was an expert on them, but we had a contract to make table knives without handles and neither of us knew anything about making them but we went at it. I looked after the manufacturing taking the knives when finished to the Lamson & Goodnow Co. paying the men, and what time I had I worked on anything that was needed doing any part of the work and father worked at something all the time. It was not until later that I found why we were given table knives to make and then I found that Mr. Gardner rec'd a commission, or as we would now call it a rake off of 2¢ per lb. on all steel bought by the Lamson & Goodnow Co. given him by English steel makers, and more steel would be used in table than butcher knives, and we had to buy steel of Lamson & Goodnow Co.

We carried on this business for three years when the company decided, on account of dull trade not to buy any more of us, and we had to stop, When we took the contract the price offered was 56 ¢ per dozen but I soon found that that price was just what they cost us and I finally got 62¢ per dozen and at the latter price we made about \$4.00 per day for each of us.

While we were making knives my father had an idea of making hollow iron handles and did make dies for forging

them; he had only a cold chisel and hammer to make the dies with and he made some handles, he took them to Greenfield and showed them to the J. Russell Co. and not long after they came out with handles very similar to the ones my father made. We never made any to sell.

We were left with a water power and shop, but no business, and then I had an opportunity to know what harm, or good a chance remark may do especially when made by one who knows little about what they are talking. Sometime before we bought the property soae one had remarked it was a good place for a paper mill, because there were springs on the place but the springs were too small to amount to anything. However the remark was repeated to us and as we had nothing to do it started us to thinking about it. We had never even saw the outside of such a mill, much less the inside of one, but we heard there was one in Cummington and with a cousin I went to it in the winter and looked it over and knew no more about it afterwards than I did before. I want to say here that it was very foolish to go into a business without knowing more about it but we did with disastrous results. We also heard there was a mill near Northampton which had made manilla paper; that is paper made for ragging rope wrapping bundles, but for some reason had given up the business, and the machinery was for sale. We then interested a lawyer in Shelburne Falls, Samuel T. Field, to invest some money with us and we bought the machinery. Mean

time before we could use it we needed and built a new dam higher than the old one, and also built a three story mill! (which by the way was very unsuitable for the business) to build the dam we bought a wood lot on a hill near by, and I went into the woods with a gang of men cut and screw logs to the dam. I remember the snow was waist deep and the hill so steep that we loaded the logs on a short sled drawn by oxen, the other end resting on the ground, the oxen would brace all four feet, the sled pushing them down the hill without lifting their feet from the ground. This job took all winter, and in the spring we began to build the dam and mill. As soon as we began on the dam a man by the name of Calvin Shattuck, who owned a cotton mill higher up on the stream that our dam would put the water back further than he would like and he built a company dam to call it. A water power which caused us some trouble, and we will see that it did him no good. We had the mill and dam nearly completed by Oct. when the worst rain ever known in these parts occurred. In the first day of Oct. Saturday it began to rain and rained Sunday harder than I ever saw it. Monday it still continued. 8½ inches fell in all. Bridges were swept away. Hardly one bridge left in Deerfield North and Connecticut River, people who were from home could not get home for days, many men were drowned. I saw one man who fell in the river and was carried away before our eyes. Shattuck's cotton mill on the stream

above us was carried away bodily and none of the building machinery, even the water wheel, was ever found. All these and other dams, buildings and bridges went over the dam we had just built, and it was several days before we could tell if our dam had gone or not, the water was so high. it did not go although it washed out around both ends.

Just before the freshet Mr. Shattuck had got out an injunction to prevent us from completing our dam, but he had troubles of his own and we went to work and repaired our dam. We had not placed the machinery in the mill and father thought it might be used by Mr. Shattuck to begin business, he therefore offered it to him but was told the fight would be continued. However he had too many troubles of his own and nothing more was done about the injunction. The damage done by the freshet and expense caused by it used up all our money and we could not do as we planned that is put in a larger water wheel, and other changes so we decided to go on with the old water wheel and instead of making manilla paper which would take more power we made white newspaper, using old paper of various kinds. I have always thought if we could have carried out the plans we started with the results would have been better.

We hired a paper maker and he stayed about a year. When he went away I took full charge of making and selling, the latter I had done all the time. Our principal markets were New York City and Boston. I had never tried to sell

anything nor had I been to the city. The first time I went to New York the only hotel I had ever heard of was the old Aster, and as I wanted to be safe I went there. The price was \$4.00 per day and they served four meals a day, went to all of them and did full justice to them, but afterwards found cheaper places; although I had never had any experience in selling I always managed to sell all the paper we made and went to market about once a month.

It was a hard job to look after the mill as we ran it 24 hours a day, and if anything went wrong, I was called to set it right day or night and hardly a night passed but some one would rap on *my* window and I would have to get up and fix it. Many times I would work night and day for 24 hours and sometime two days without sleep, when something broke down, and when you remember that I had had no experience in such work it will be seen how hard it was, but the confidence my father always had in me and the praotioe of doing things helped me through many hard places and it was good for me, but with all our work for three years, we could not make it successful and we had to stop. The trade we made with Mr. Field was that he should put in \$10,000 for half interest, and our property was put in at the same amount but father and I were not to receive any pay for our work unless there were profits, I forget whether we were to have more than half the profits if any for our share of the capital and labor, but think we were in that case to have a small amount for our labor, of course we never got anything.

After we stopped the mill I found a customer for the machinery to a firm in New Jersey and father and brother Frank went there and helped install it. Frank had worked in the mill for sometime much of the time nights, taking the paper from the machine and packing it for shipment.

The business men in Shelburne Falls whom I remember were Joel Thayer who kept a country store, John Newell a hardware store, L. M. Packard a dry goods store, George Bates a shoe store part of the time and a grocery store for a time, Theodore Wood a jewelry store, Jonas Patch Photographer, Otis Maynard cashier of the bank, A. K. Hawkes treasurer of the Savings Bank, Merrick clothing, C. S. Francis was the first cashier of the bank, J. Frost feed and livery stable, H. H. Mayhew first in clothing afterwards bought the manufacturing business making gimlets and tools of Wm. Maynard. Col. Greenleaf and Major Winn both of whom served in the 52nd regiment in civil war, Daniel Foster who made apple paring machines, Josiah Pratt who made extra good axes L. Yale inventor of the Yale lock developed the lock business, A. M. Sargeant who was connected with Yale and Greenleaf and was said to be a card sharp, the story was that a New York gambler came to Greenfield and started a game with others of the same kind and was getting the best of them, when the Greenfield men saw how it was going they sent a man with a fast horse to get Sargeant, who went to Greenfield got into the game and cleaned out the New Yorker.

For many years I had managed to take the Springfield Daily Republican, and one day I saw an advertisement,(wanted a bookkeeper salary \$1000 a year address A. Rice Greenfield) "There," I said, "is a chance for me." I immediately went to Greenfield but could find no one by that name, but in answer to a letter I sent I received *one* from Wiley and Russell. I then *went* to see them and went to work for a month *on* trial and stayed there a year. The J, Russell Co. had employed a number of men and made Greenfield a manufacturing town, and when that Co. moved to Turners Falls, most of the men employed by it continued to live in Greenfield and *went* to Turners Falls by train, the population of the town was about 4500. The other manufacturing businesses in town when I came in 1873 were *the* Charles R. Field who had a shop on Union St., not far from Church St. who made wood parts for baby carriages, the business was bought by Mr. Edward Strecker about 25 years since and moved to a shop near Mill St., which had been used by a cooperation Co., to make cutlery and is still carried on by Mr. Strecker's son. The Warner Mfg. Co. , in shop at Nash's mill who made iron parts for baby carriages and managed by Henry W. Warner and John C. Sanderson. A number of years ago the business was moved to the B. B. Noyes factory on Hope St., this was after Mr. Warner died and about six years ago the business was sold and moved out of town.

The company consisting of B. B. Noyes and Oscar C. Stratton made iron parts of baby carriages in the factory on Hope St. now occupied by the Co., and managed by Winthrop T. Noyes son of B. B. Noyes but the business is now foundry and machine shop. In the same building John C. Spring made window sashes and doors until his death a few years later. Mr. Maurice Munson had a factory west of the Green River now occupied by the Rugg Mfg. Co., making parts of baby carriages and was very prosperous, but lost all his property and died in poverty. He built the house now owned by Mrs. Dr. Robbins at great expense which was largely the cause of his poverty. The Greenfield Tool Co., was located near Wells St., where the American Tap and Die and now Threadwell company were and are, made planes and other tools but they discontinued business after a few years. The Parkers (father and son) managed the business, the son is now in Boston practicing law.

A history of Wiley and Russell up to the time I went to them is necessary in order to know what followed. About four **years** before John J. Grant, **two Reece brothers and perhaps** one or two others started a corporation machine shop in the basement of what is now the B. B. Noyes shop on Hope St., doing some job work, making small hand bolt cutters using a round die split on one side for cutting the screw **threads**, the same *one* used later by E. J. Reece Co., the business was carried on until about 1871 with little profit when Solon L. Wiley a native of Greenfield who had made some money in the

south just after the war as a carpet bagger took an interest in the business and in company with John J. Grant leased the factory which had been vacated by the J. Russell Co., about 2 years and had moved to their new factory in Turners Falls and carried on the same business. I cannot find that Wiley put much money into the business, but shortly after he went into the company he interested Mr. Nathaniel Russell who had recently sold his interest in the J. Russell Co., to invest \$10 ,000 and form a company called Wiley and Russell the Russell being Charles P. Russell nephew of Nathaniel Russell, who furnished the money, and gave it to C. P. Russell. They enlarged the business by adding to machines already used, more and larger machines for the same purpose, but without a profit.

Mr. C. P. Russell was not satisfied with the management or with Mr. Wiley. Mr. Russell attended to all of the office work, Mr. Grant the manufacturing end and Mr. Wiley did not do much of anything, so at the end of a year Mr. Russell told Mr. Wiley that he would give him \$1000 to keep away from the business for a year and if there were any profits would divide them equally, that brings us to the time I went to work for them. I found Wiley to be a schemer and speculator who preferred to get a living by his wits than work, and was not always particular how he did it but I saw little of him.

Mr. Russell had good business principles and was a very pleasant man to work with but had no manufacturing experience and did not know how to go at it. He could never see any good

in any one who was a competitor in business. Mr. Grant was a fine mechanic with many ideas in advance of the time, but was worse than useless as manager of the shop.

I have omitted to state that about the time Wiley had taken an interest, Grant had invented a die for cutting screw threads, similar to the one I have described, except it was made in two parts. It proved successful and was afterwards named by Mr. Russell the "Lightening." It would do no better work or quicker than the old one.

I found the books or cash had never been balanced and it took me a long time to get them in shape, many errors were naturally found but I never could find all.

After I had been there some time Mr. Grant one day showed me a drawing of a set of hand stocks and dies using the same dies as were used on the machines. I immediately saw the possibilities of such tools and urged that they go to manufacturing them, and a little later that was done.

Meantime the year Mr. Wiley was to stay out was nearly completed, but there were no profits and Mr. Russell pretty nearly decided to give up the business rather than go on with Wiley.

I had been watching the business, and thought there was a great opportunity for a profitable one if properly managed so I proposed that we form a stock company of \$40,000 and I would buy \$10,000 of Wiley stock giving him my notes payable in stock of the company. Wiley took my proposal to a lawyer

named S. O. Lamb, he looked it over and like many lawyers did not know what to say it being a new one to him, but he could find no fault, and the plan was carried out. The rest of rest of the stock was owned by Mr. Russell (who controlled} Mr.

Wiley and Mr. Grant. I had had experience in organizing stock companies in Winsor Vt. , and I made the papers, carried out the plano of incorporation alone with out the help of a lawyer or anyone.

Mr. Grant was not satisfied, and went to Hartford Ct., and got the Pratt ard Whiting Co., to go to making taps and dies under a patent of his. They invested a large amount of money in it but rec'd no profits as long as he managed it, afterward it was successful.

Grant left there and went to Cleveland Ohio, and associated with parties making steel balls, and was sent to Europe where he sold a business, for a large sum, and his share was large. He then went to Franklin Pa., built a large factory and lost all he had.

After the Wiley and Russell Mfg. Co. was organized as stated, we contracted with several men in the factory to build the machines, this was done in Sept., and when we took our annual inventory in July of the next year we found we had made a profit of \$17,500 from which a stock dividend was declared of [?? unreadable] of which I rec'd \$2500 this stock I afterwards traded to George Washburn in part payment for house and lot on Congress St., Frances (my wife) paying \$2500.

My sister Cora began teaching school when she was 16 years old and her first school consisted of 40 scholars, she continued to teach for several **years, until** her marriage to Albert O.

Yeaw, and that shows how we had to get our living.

Meantime I found a **place in** the shop for my brother Frank O. Wells then about 19 years old to work turning taps on a lathe. After he had worked on it for a while the man who had threaded the taps went away and I proposed to the foreman of that **dept.**, that he put Frank on the job but he thought *Frank* had not enough experience to do it and besides another boy who had been there longer should have the job. I told *him* the other boy could not do it, but he might try him which he .did and found he could not, then Frank tried it and succeeded better than anyone who had been on the **job.**

Also my father had gone to work selling the **tools** to blacksmith and other shops. He drove a horse all over New England, New York York, Ohio, Penn., and New Jersey. Although he had never sold anything that way, he was very successful **because** as I **have found** many times since, the best salesmen are the ones who know more about the things he is selling than his customer and puts the most work into the job. It is not the man who can talk the most who sells best.

When we began to sell the "lightning" screw plates, which I have told about, the problem was how to do it. I proposed that we go direct to the users, and sell on the plan now known as the installment plan, paying \$5.00 when they took the tools

and giving notes payable \$5.00 a month until paid for. The price of the plates was \$25. each, and the payments were almost always paid when due, there was very little loss. It was sometime before we could get the dealers to buy and sell them. I took a screw plate to New York City the first time we tried to sell to dealers and showed it to a Mr. White who had the best tool store in the city, he looked it over approved of it and asked *the* price. I told him it was \$25.00, "Why," he said, "Young man you cannot sell it to blacksmiths any more than you can fly, because they now buy buy something for \$5.00." I answered, "We have been selling them for a year at that price as fast as we made them." He had nothing to say but would not buy any. This taught me a lesson that dealers do not know what will sell, if it is anything new, and since then I have never asked one as to whether any new thing would sell, one must be able to judge for himself if he does *not know*, no one does.

While we sold screw plates, we continued to sell bolt **cutting** machines, and one of our salesmen had an interesting experience which was **quite** a help to the company, his name was **Spaulding**, and he proposed to go among the miners in the west just after the big fire in Virginia City, and asked if we would let him have all he could get over the regular **price, which** we agreed to do, then he sold at an average price, collected the pay in **gold, which was money used** there, paid us in paper money, *gold being worth* worth about \$1.40 in paper, so that he made as

near as I could find out about \$1500 a month, but it was a rough place to stay in and he had a hard time. It was a good trade for both parties. I had invented and got a patent in a new screw cutting die, and assigned it to the company and sometime later invented another and was asked to assign it to the company, but I had begun to see that now the business was successful, I was not considered so necessary, and I declined to assign it. The fiscal year ended July 1, and it was the time to take the annual inventory and see how much we had made but Mr. Russell put it off, and a few weeks later told me that he should not vote for me as an officer of the company after my term of office expired which would be in Sept., and in fact no inventory was taken until after I was out and so I did not get my share of the total profits for the second year, I estimated the total profits would be about \$12,000.

Before I came to Greenfield I had always attended the congregational church with my family, but had not been in accord with all of the doctrines and when I came to Greenfield I attended the Unitarian church and found it to be more nearly as I had believed, and at one of the gatherings I met Frances M. Cowles, whose mother had died when Frances was about 10 years old, after which she went to live with her mother's brother John Ward in Montague, and after his death she continued to live with his widow Mrs. E. V. Ward and with her moved to Greenfield. We seemed to be drawn together, and within a few weeks we were engaged, and were married April 13, 1875, the union having been a great success. At present writing 1930

we have lived together, and there has never passed an unkind word, our home has been a haven of rest for both of us, she has been a model wife and mother, as well as housekeeper, until our son came she did her own housework and did it perfectly. Of course I have known no mother-in-law, but I could ask for no better friend than Mrs. Ward, and I have always felt grateful to her for many favors and assistance. I also have greatly enjoyed companionship with her, her children, her in-laws, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Artimas Ward once said he was willing to sacrifice all his wife's relatives to win the war, but I would rather lose a war than sacrifice any of my wife's relatives.

We began housekeeping in a house on Union St., and Frances fixed it wonderfully attractive. After living there less than a year we moved into the house on Congress St., where we have lived ever since although we moved the house away and built a new one in its place. She never interfered in my business as some will do who think they know about it than their husbands

but I never any any who did.

Feb. 11, 1881 our son Fred Ward Wells was born, and brought a great charge into our lives, I have played and worked with him ever since and he has been a source of great pleasure and comfort; he was always and is, a good boy and man, not only that, but also of much ability, and good judgment so that I can rely on it in business as well as other things, and very thoughtful of our welfare. He has also shown that he has

excellent qualities as a mechanic.

After leaving Wiley and Russell Co., I began to look around to find a way to live, and developed the screw cutting die I had invented, my brother then 21 years old proposed go in together and make it, which we finally did. My father also went in with us, this made a pretty good team, father to sell, Frank had experience in the shop. We hired an old machine shop with some very old machines. We each put in about \$300 in all we had about \$1000. We worked getting tools and machines ready, about three months, when the shop caught fire damaging the machinery and building, we had \$500 insurance, bought what was left of the machines, of the owner Newell Snow for \$150, and moved into the shop of B.B. Noyes & Co., on Hope St., and began again. The machines we had would be worth a fortune in a museum now. No one would think they could be used for anything but we did use them for a time. At first we did all the work ourselves. I worked on all operations except one which was cutting threads on taps and that Frank was an expert. I have always felt that any one managing a business should know more about everything connected with it than any one in his employ, for only that way could he know whether the work was done properly and so be able to know what each man was worth, to appreciate and reward the efficient ones and let the other kind go.

When I lived with Mr. Gardner he gave me some instructions in mechanical drawing and while I was not very proficient at

at it I could and did design all the machines we made to sell and many special machines for our own use, well enough for pattern makers and machinists to work to, which shows that many times things can be taught to children if not very thoroughly which may be useful later in life.

Among the machines I designed for our use was one for threading taps at one revolution of the tap, and two years after I found it very useful when I forged pipe taps ready to thread which was the only way it could be done. Also go and no go snap gauges made with four screws which I made adjustable, both of these tools are in common use now. I also invented the first thread micrometer for measuring diameter of taps in the thread in one thousandth of an inch.

Sometime later we hired a boy, and I told my brother we would pay him every week so If we found we could not pay him we could let him go and not have to keep him because we could not pay. At that time it was customary to pay once a month keeping back two or four weeks pay. Since that time we have paid every week, although it was some years after that the law was passed compelling employers to pay each week. Under name of Wells Bros., we continued to make taps and dies and added other tools, adding to rooms until we had used all the vacant rooms employing more help, doing more business each month than we had done the previous one for four years, when we found we must have more room. We then went to Newell Snow who owned the location which we had used when the

shop had burned, and proposed to him that he move a building on the place where the old was and build an addition we would oversee the building and pay him 10% on the investment, he accepted the proposition and as soon as the building was ready we moved in. There was a water wheel which we could use when there there was water but we had to use a steam engine part of the time.

At that time William M. Smead, who was in the grocery business offered to invest some money in the business and be a partner with us. We accepted the offer and he started to work but after a few weeks he said my brother and I worked harder than he wanted to and wanted to do his share if he was to stay with us, but he did not have to work that way and was not obliged to do so, therefore he gave it up.

Mr. Newell Snow knowing about it said his Franklin E. Snow, then in Chicago was not very successful; he was cashier in a bank in Michigan which failed there in the clothing business in Illinois, which did not succeed and at this time was in the insurance business in Chicago with another man and his father said he wanted to do something for his son. We could see no reason why he should not come in with us, and we told him he could do so if he would put in six thousand dollars for one third interest in the business, he thought that was a little too much and we finally agreed to call it fifty five hundred dollars provided that if we made a profit of ten thousand dollars the first year he would put in five

hundred dollars more, and that was agreed to. We did make more than ten thousand dollars, but the five hundred dollars was not paid, instead it was charged to his account, the fifty five hundred was raised by giving a note of the company, but I did not know it, nor was any record made in the book but some time afterwards. F. E. Snow told me and I objected to it. A little later he informed me the note had been paid.

The money put into the business was some help but Snow drew it all out within two years so it did not do as much good but it reduced his share, and he owned less than either my brother or myself. Our arrangement was that each partner should be credited with 6% on the amount of his own ownership and the rest of the profit would be divided equally between us. This would have been fair if all had been of use to the company but Snow was not of much value to it. The one redeeming feature, was that while he never suggested a plan for conducting the business and always objected to any plan, he always finally agreed to it. I made a rule in the beginning that we would not do anything unless all agreed.

I would not have cared so much if he had not been of so much use, if he had not made so much effort to make people outside the company think he was responsible for the success of it.

We continued to increase the business, and added to tools made, but I was not quite satisfied with the die we were making as it cost too much to make, and one day I was thinking

about it, and went to bed with it on my mind as I often did about any problem, woke up about 2 AM and a new idea about a die came to me, before morning I had it planned and what tools would be required, just as we finally made them, with one exception. I planned to mill the place for the die but my brother suggested we plane which we did. When I went to the shop in the morning I described what I had invented and we put a man to work and had a sample made within 24 hours, this die was a success at the start, and was the foundation of our business from that time.

Newell Snow died about 1889, and we needed more room. I proposed to his heirs that we buy the shop we occupied, but it was so good an investment and paid so much they declined to sell. Saying nothing to anyone I went to J. H. Sanderson whose father owned land near Federal St., and told him I wanted land enough for a shop to be given us, because the rest of his land would be worth enough more so it would be profitable for him to do it. His father finally agreed to do it, and we built a one story building in which we could make the goods to better advantage, and moved into it 1890. We had to borrow \$1500 which was the only time we borrowed except that sum after we started. Mrs. E. V. Ward loaned us \$500. We sold our tools by traveling salesmen and one of the first and best after my father was a young man (Samuel Truesdell) who came to us from a farm to work in the shop. I proposed to send him out to sell. He proved a good salesman and very loyal to us. Another sales

man was P. J. Leaman who after being with us about a year increased our sales under a system which I proposed by which we paid *him* a commission *on* all his sales, and in addition, a commission on any increase *of* sales over previous years, so that he made about \$6000, a year. Mr. Snow thought he was paid too much but I insisted that it was profitable to us as well, and that was the principal I worked on with men in the shop. A man who earned the most took up no more room in the shop than a man who earned less, but he produced more. We had a man Thos. Keefe who had the contract for polishing and under him he had several men, and he could plan his work better than any man we ever had. He managed it so his pay was \$6.00 every day and never varied, more than a few cents any time.

Among the machines we made was a universal tool *grinder* and I **thought** it would be a good plan to form another company to make it, which would give the man in charge a chance to have more interest in it and **small** enough so he could oversee everything himself. The company was formed and named the Greenfield **Machine** Co., Mr. Goodell and Edward Smith, took an interest in it and invested some money in it and was successful. It finally was merged with the Greenfield Tap & Die Co., after I had sold my interest in it.

Smead bought some of the stock, about \$6,000 had charge of the office and sales, unfortunately he contracted diptheria which left him in poor health. After partial recovery it was thought best for him to go to Spokane, where he finally recovered, but it left the business without proper management and was not successful for some time, and finally came into my possession as will be shown later.

About that time my son thought he was getting nothing of value in the high school and I agreed with him, he then went to Springfield to a business school, going down every day and found it very useful. After going to that school several months he started in the office of Wells Bros. Co., as office boy and in a short time he was given the charge of paymaster making out the pay roll and soon made more improvements in the system than had been made before. He continued in that work until he took charge of building a small shop on Riddell St., where he and I were to make a die I had patented for threading pipe and so started to manufacture under the name of F. E. Wells & Son. This die which we called the "Economy" we started to make in Wells Bros. Co. shop but I paid the company for the money which had been spent on it and started to make them as already stated.

About this time I decided that it would be a better chance for Fred if he and I carried on the business together than he could have in the company, and I was getting tired of having to use so many arguments to carry out my plans, so I

decided to try and sell my interest in the company, which I finally succeeded in doing but Mr. Snow put every obstacle he could think of to prevent it, I finally sold to him and F. O. Wells after F. O. proposed a plan to him.

I will now go back to tell about other activities. I have already mentioned that J. H. Sanderson and F. H. Hardison started to get subscribers for stock to form a company to make electricity and I was one of the first, if not the first one to subscribe. The capital stock was to be \$10,000. It was for the purpose of street lighting. I was one of the directors, J. W. Stevens, H. W. Warner, N. S. Cutler, J. H. Sanderson, and F. H. Hardison, the others. J. H. Sanderson was president and F. H. Hardison Treas.

We an arc light dynamo and installed it in Cutler and Lyons shoe shop on Olive St., and got the power from their engine as most of the lighting was done after the shop work was done. a little later we bought a building; in the rear of the shoe shop and installed a direct current generator stores and houses. We succeeded in getting a contract from the town for lighting the streets which had previously been done with gas and stores and other places put in electric lights, which they paid for by the month, and that proved very unsatisfactory, because the customers used no care and allowed lights to burn when there was no necessity for them. At that time there was no way of measuring the amount of electric current used, but later after the company was nearly ruined, meters were invented

We began to use them. At that time I was president of the company, and strongly advocated their use, although some of the directors, especially Mr. Sanderson were afraid we would lose many patrons but their fears were groundless for the meters were liked better than the old way by the month, and from that time the company began to make money and dividends which had been paid for a short time after the company started, were resumed.

A man by the name Hoyt who had some money came to town and had more leisure time than he wanted proposed that he would like to manage the company. This was about two years after the company was formed and Mr. Sanderson resigned in order to give Mr. Hoyt a chance. However Mr. Hoyt did not do much and after a year was succeeded by Henry K. Warren, whose health failed and I was chosen to president. After occupying the small shop I have mentioned sometime we needed more room and bought a tract of land near the Green River and installed a porcupine boiler and compound condensing steam engine and this enabled us to increase our business, by substituting alternating current in place of direct system, which could not be used when necessary to be long distance from the dynamo. Of course we used coal to make steam and about the year 1900 there was a strike of coal miners and only from the fact that we had a contract with a party to supply coal, and who kept their contract, were we able to keep running. That convinced me that we should find a water power, and I began to look up a location

for one. We found what appeared to be a good one, employed an engineer, and put the whole matter in his hands. The location looked good; there was rock on both sides of the river, we bought a farm, the engineer said it was all right, he made a contract with parties to build the dam, work was begun and it was not long before we discovered that to build the dam on rock foundation it would be necessary to go down 83 feet, I would not build unless on rock the cost would be too much, so we gave it up after considerable work had been done, and then found that while we had supposed that we would only have to pay the contractor for building a dam, that if the work was discontinued we would have to pay at cost for what work was done. The engineer knew this, and it cost the company \$20,000 to find out; so much for trusting an engineer to look after our interest, and then and there I made up my mind never to let one do that again, and this saved us a sum equal to which we had lost in later construction.

As soon as we gave up the dam had begun, I looked for another location and proposed to the Lamson & Goodnow Co., of Shelburne Falls that we buy their water power, pay them \$40,000, for it and furnish them with the power they needed for their business free of charge. It looked good to them, and our directors agreed to it. The Lamson & Goodnow Co. wanted their lawyer Henry Winn to make the papers. He drew up a skeleton contract including a lot of conditions which were not satisfactory and proposed to complete a contract

but wanted so much time to do it that I finally told him unless it could be done by a certain time and to our satisfaction that we would call the whole thing off and as he would not do it, I then told him we would not go on with it.

I then found a location about a mile below Shelburne Falls, called Gardner Falls, belonging to Frank A. Pond, which we bought and started to build a dam letting the contract, to a new contractor but keeping the same engineer, he planned the dam so that the water going over it would run down and near the bottom be thrown up and again fall into the river. I had found that the dam at Holyoke was built that way and the falling water had cut holes in the river bed below the dam, which had to be filled at much expense, and I objected to our dam being built that way and finally had my way about it. He also planned to build the wall of the canal of dirt but with no chance for the surplus of water to be taken care of, and I insisted on a place for surplus of water to go over a spill way. If this had not been done and the gate for water to get into the canal properly cared for the wall of the canal would soon have been washed away. In this matter and others I figured that I saved the money we lost.

The building of dam was begun late in the season and continued in cold weather. The contractor built several coffer dams, which were washed out, one after another, they were built by standing two rows of plank on end and filling between them with dirt. In the winter these dams were washed

out so after that the contractor became discouraged and wanted to leave completion of the dam until spring, but I proposed that instead of building the coffer dam as they had, that they build a crib of logs and fill with stone, and not build it so high, and when high water came let it flow over the coffer dam and when the water fell resume work, this was done and there was no more trouble. We found a foundation of rock clear across the river. I insisted on building the abutments higher than the engineer thought necessary, but after I resigned the company raised the dam three feet but without raising the abutments, and I predict that some time the water will go over them and do great damage.

When the dam was nearly completed a few men who thought we could make electricity cheaper with water than with coal thought they could get a little glory by demanding a lower price before the company had a chance to find how much the saving would be, the men were led by B. F. Porter and they made some trouble by getting a so called expert to look the matter over, and he cut our wires and did various things to bother us, and I decided that I had given time and work enough without having to contend with such work and after the dam and electricity was being generated and delivered in Greenfield, I resigned as president and director of the company, this was about 1905.

About 1895 Wm. M. Pratt who had worked for us several years as salesman and Charles D. Severance who had been our book keeper for a number of years bought the Goodell Bros.

business and wanted I should be president of the company, which I did and held that office for some ten or fifteen years, also as director for about twenty years. The company was very successful but I was not in any way responsible for its success as I took no active part in its management, but after about twenty five years Mr. Pratt became involved in the misfortune of the Greenfield Tap & Die Co., which he tried to help and also in his family business and to raise money for these things used his stock in the Goodell Pratt Co., to borrow money and his creditors took his stock and took over the management of the company with the result that no dividends have since been paid, and I expect to lose all I invested in the company. About the same time viz. 1895 I had a plan to organise small companies and put each one under the management of men who would be responsible for its success. The Wells Bros. company was then making a tool grinder and I organized such a company and sold the grinder business and necessary machines The members of Wells Bros. Co., taking the stock of the new company for payment. Edward Smith and Mr. Goodell bought some of the stock and managed the company. It took some time to get on its feet but eventually succeeded and was finally merged with the Greenfield Tap & Die Co. After that company was organized I also organized a company in the same way to make automatic screw machines and products, also speed lathes and tool grinders which had been made by Wells Bros. & Co. This company was put in charge of Charles Ball and John W. Smead

A new shop was built on Riddell St., but Mr. Smead was taken sick with diphtheria and was obliged to leave the business, and the business did not succeed. Mr. Ball left. I then took over the business management and agreed with Mr. Smead that as soon as I could make it pay to buy his stock. (Mr. Ball had no stock). In about a year I bought and paid for Smead's stock and merged the business with F. E. Wells & Son Co.

Now to resume when I sold my interest in Wells Bros. I had already invented a pipe die made by using two thin plates of soft steel in which were locked four pieces of tool steel which served for cutting parts, and Wells Bros. had started to make them. I bought this part of the business by paying what it had cost the company and induced Mr. J. W. Riddell to give some land on Riddell St., and build a small shop putting my son in charge. We made quite a number of the new dies, and added a number of other tools used by plumbers, such as pipe wrenches, pipe vises, pipe taps, but eventually dropped making the so called economy dies. My nephew, Frank A. Yeaw who was Treasurer of E. F. Reece Co., proposed that we merge that company with ours. That company was not successful, but I bought the stock of F. O. Wells and F. E. Snow, who owned a majority of the stock. F. A. Yeaw and Dana[?] Malone taking pay for their stock in stock of F. E. Wells & Son Co. Incidentally, Mr. Malone who owned about six thousand dollars in the Reece Co. , rec'd over thirty thousand dollars for it

when the F. E. Wells & Son Co., was sold some years later.

We also bought land and built a Drop Forge shop in Turners Falls.

The plan we adopted for running the business was to divide it in departments each in a separate building, one for forging, one for pipe tools, one for machinery, and one for taps & dies, each department under a superintendent to whom we paid a moderate salary, and the material supplied power and light, in fact everything used in each department, and we gave each department credit for all goods made at the selling cost less cost of selling and packing, and to the suot. we gave 7½ of the profit. This was very satisfactory to the company and superintendents.

By 1915 the business was well established. The debts of the companies we had taken over were paid and profits were satisfactory. I then decided that the time had come when it was more profitable to sell than to keep it, and I began to look for a customer. It took about a year before the sale was made. The preferred stock was sold to the public through stock brokers, and in order to have a management we gave a large block of stock to F. O. Wells, Wm. m. Pratt, and F. H. Payne, all of whom were connected with tho Greenfield Tap & Die Co., and they took over the management and afterwards sold the business to the Greenfield Tap & Die Co., and the preferred stock was called at an advance over the price it was sold for. Now my son and I were out of business F. A. Yeaw was . elected treasurer of the G. T. D. and Fred and I started

building houses. We built 42 houses that year. Fred drew the plans and superintended the building with John J. Hayes as foreman. We did not rent any of them but sold them all on very easy terms viz. a small payment down, in many cases as little as \$100 and a small payment each month, and every one to whom we sold, either did or could have sold at a profit of \$500 and some cases \$1,000 more than they paid for them.

We then began to look for a farm on which to raise fruit and finally bought the Walter Carpenter farm in Shelburne, and planted about all the land suitable to trees and a few years later bought the farm owned by Benjamin Andrews, which joined, and Fred took the management of them and has done it for about fourteen years, living there in the summer and in Greenfield the rest of the year. This brings my story to last part of 1930. Fred for the last year or more has been at work developing his invention pertaining to taps & dies and they look very promising, so I hope he will build up a business which will be valuable.