

THE HELIX

THE PATH OF A PERFECT SCREW THREAD IS A TRUE HELIX

VOL. IV

GREENFIELD, MASS., MAY, 1921

NO. 1

GTD New Building Built on Historic Site

The new modern five story cement building with its up-to-date appliances which has recently been erected and forms part of the GTD Plant No. 1, late Wiley & Russell Division, was opened and dedicated for use by a reception and dance on the evening of April 4th.

Few of the people who enjoyed themselves at this gathering realized that the ground adjacent to the site is of historical interest.

In the year 1699 when the sturdy pioneers in the Connecticut valley were still in danger of Indian attacks, the frontier town of Deerfield granted to Joseph Parsons the right to build a corn mill near what is now known as the Wiley & Russell dam, but which was then a natural rock dam. This was chosen for the water power it furnished for the purpose of grinding corn which was grown in the scattered settlements around, and was the first mechanical use of the water of the Green River at this place.

No doubt many a bloody fight was waged around here between the settlers and the Indians but history doesn't state whether this mill was abandoned or burned by the savages, but in 1713 Captain Jonathan Wells of Deerfield was also granted the right to set up a corn mill at this place, and a gratuity of 50 pounds or \$250.00 was given him. The power was also used to run a bark mill and afterwards for crushing flax seed to make linseed oil.



The dam continued to act as a power producer for these mills and nothing further is told us until 1796 when Ezekiel Bascom established a clothing mill on the east side of the dam and he kept it in operation as such until 1810, when the mill was sold and worked by Cyrus Martindale until the flood of 1835 when the dam and buildings were swept away.

In the following year of 1836, the John Russell Cutlery Company, who had operated a chisel works on land higher up, between where the Gas Works and Germania House are now, purchased the water power of the old dam, built a factory and continued the chisel works for a number of years and later started the manufacture of cutlery and dropped the making of chisels.

In 1870 the John Russell Company abandoned the factory and moved their equipment to Turners Falls and in 1874 this property including buildings on both sides of the river and also the water power were leased by Messrs. Wiley & Russell for the manufacture of taps and dies, and in 1880 these buildings were purchased outright by the Wiley & Russell Mfg. Co.

From this time until the merging of the Wiley & Russell Co. with the present GTD Corporation, as the business began to grow the various old buildings were razed and replaced by a more modern type until now only the boiler house remains of all the original cutlery buildings, probably as