

# THE WELLS LEGACY

Greenfield, Massachusetts, founded in 1763, with 365 residents, grew quickly due to its strategic location at the junction of the Deerfield and Connecticut rivers. Northampton resident John J. Grant moved to Greenfield with plans for a new die that would make a better screw. This die was patented in 1871 as the “two pieced die”. Prior to the creation of this invention, nuts and bolts were crushed into shape with little chance of a perfect fit. The new two pieced die cut the metal rather than compressing it to shape in the old manner. Grant’s two pieced die removed all imperfections and guaranteed a perfect fit every time. In 1874, the Wells brothers, Fredrick E. and Frank O., left the Wiley & Russell tap & die company. In a small building along the Green River in Greenfield, MA, they, along with their father, Elias, started Wells Brothers, a tap and die manufacturing business. Because of a fire, the Wells brothers were forced to relocate to the B. B. Noyes Foundry on Hope Street while they rebuilt their company. Here, the first adjustable die was invented. Their new building was their home for the next ten years. In 1900 the elder brother, Fredrick, split from his brother and began manufacturing pipe tools. By 1910 he and his son, Fred W. Wells, combined forces with the E.F. Reece company and prospered until 1922 when the company was absorbed by his brother’s company, Greenfield Tap & Die. In 1928, Fredrick founded the Wells Tool Company in the same B. B. Noyes building he resided in during 1889. Although his company was small, it survived because its foundations were laid by the man who virtually founded the tap & die industry. He emphasized the necessity of high quality and customer satisfaction. The company gained fame by being able to provide its customers with a variety of quality standard and specialty items. In 1946, Mr. Harold A. Gardner and Mr. Joseph Ballard acquired Wells Tool. Both men were former employees of the company and were well acquainted with how to make a quality tap based on the foundations of its previous owner. They also brought fresh and innovative ideas. The first of these ideas was to include alternative “H” limits not found in other catalogs at the time. In 1977, Robert Malloy, a former salesperson for the Bendix Tap Co., took over as Owner and President. It was his belief to give his customers top quality taps at the absolute lowest prices. Despite the fact that some consumers believed the lowest prices equated with the lowest quality, they quickly discovered that with Wells taps, this was not true. Constantly on the road, he peddled his taps and greatly broadened the Wells Tool customer base. Unfortunately, in 1994, he fell ill and passed away shortly after. Left to his family, Wells continued for almost five more years. However, during those years, the company slowly began to decline. In the fall of 1999, after almost 72 years of making taps, the company closed its doors. It seemed that the legacy known as the Wells Tool Company had ended. On January 2, 2000, my father, Philip Duda, reopened the doors of the all-new Wells Tool Company. Having been in the cutting tool industry his entire life with my grandfather John, it was important for him to keep the company alive and to continue the 130-year heritage. From the history above, you can see that Greenfield, Massachusetts was the center for the tap and die industry in America for well over 100 years. His vision was keep the tap industry going strong In Greenfield. In keeping his vision alive, my father has passed the torch to me to carry on the legacy of Wells Tool. I am proud to provide you with our brand new catalog and website. If what you are looking for is not within these pages, please call (413) 773-3465 or visit us [www.wellstool.com](http://www.wellstool.com).

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