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D. S. Morgan (Seymour & Morgan) Company

Charlie Cowling

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D. S. Morgan (Seymour & Morgan) Company Collections at Drake Memorial Library

This digitized sampler of the collections of the company contains the following items. The bulk of the original records have not been digitized at this time. (Summer 2013.) The *D. S. Morgan Collection: A History and a Guide* are based on the work of Philip Maples ’71, a graduate student in history at Brockport at the time the collections were donated by Fletcher Garlock (a descendant of D. S. Morgan.) Maples organized and documented the collections at the time they were received. Several other documents are given that present histories of the company.

A notable addition to the bibliography on the company is a title for which the author visited, among other repositories, this college and made use of the D. S. Morgan papers. That would be Gordon Winder’s 2012 title: *The American reaper : harvesting networks and technology, 1830-1910*.

- Image of a “New Yorker” reaper, the original model of the late 1840s; this was their own invention, patented by Seymour and produced after they ceased work for Cyrus McCormick.
- Article from *Farm Implement News*, January 1889.
- *The Reaper Industry in Brockport*. Helen Hastings (a descendant of William Seymour.) Date of writing is uncertain, but Miss Hastings died in 1953.
- 1955 *Brockport Republic* (local newspaper) article about the discovery of an original “Triumph” reaper, which was placed in the village museum. (This local newspaper is online and much more could be found in it on the company and its leaders: [http://news2.nnyln.net/brockport-republic/search.html](http://news2.nnyln.net/brockport-republic/search.html).
D.S. Morgan Collection:
A History and a Guide

Includes description of the arrangement of the materials
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In keeping this record, it is the intention of the trustees created under the last will and testament of D. S. Morgan, to chronicle their acts in a brief manner, that the motives actuating the same, may be better understood and appreciated thereafter by those interested under the said will.

George D. Morgan
Trustee
Background History

Cyrus Hill McCormick invented a practical Grain Reaping Machine in 1831. For over a decade he perfected the machine until the early 1840's when the set about the mass manufacture of his Virginia Reaper. In 1844, while touring the North in an attempt to see licenses on his patents, he stopped in Brockport for a demonstration (Hutchinson I, p. 210). The demonstration was held on the farm of Frederick P. Root in Sweden (Hastings II, p. 2) on the 17th of July, 1844 (Hutchinson, p. 210). This demonstration machine was sold to Ansel Chappell of the village (Hutchinson I, p. 210). At this time, McCormick made arrangement with Backus, Fitch and Company to produce machines for the six counties in western New York for the harvest of 1845 (Hutchinson I, p. 213). By August 6, 1845, when McCormick returned to Brockport, nothing had been done. As he wrote his brother William, they "just neglected the business ... Backus was blamed and took the responsibility (Hutchinson I, p. 222)." In 1846, Backus retired from the firm and it became known as Fitch, Barry and Company. After several changes, it became known as Johnston Harvester (McIntosh, p. 159).

It was at this time, 1845, that McCormick contacted William Seymour of the Globe Iron Works. This contact was probably brought about by the pressuring of Ansel Chappell, a partner of Seymour, and Representative Elias B. Holmes (Whig 1845-1849). According to Hutchinson (II, p. 233), the firm of Seymour, Chappell and Company was to construct 100 reapers for the western trade while Backus, Fitch and Company would meet the local demand for the harvest of 1846.

Seymour's organization was successful and sold most of their 100 machines. Whereas Backus and Fitch sold about 30 which were defective.

It should be understood by now that Brockport was a major manufacturing center with the railroad and canal providing transportation for both the raw material and the finished product. McCormick considered Brockport on a par with Cincinnati and Pittsburgh when he was looking for a site for a major factory (Hutchinson I, p. 224). There were few reaper manufacturers of note outside Baltimore, which was the base for Hussey, McCormick's rival. These manufacturers were centered in Brockport (Hutchinson I, p. 278). Seymour and Morgan, as the Globe Iron Works became known, manufactured McCormick's machine until 1849, when they came out with their own model, designed by George Barnett.

Although similar to McCormick's, it incorporated several changes (Hutchinson I, p. 423). They abandoned McCormick's cutting apparatus for Hussey's, his divider for Randall's and the reel support of Bell's. This rectified the imperfections in the machine. Cyrus McCormick brought suit against Seymour and Morgan in 1850 for the changes they made. He felt that they had infringed on his 1847 patent.
while they were supposed to be building machines under his, McCormick's, 1845 patents. For further information on this subject read Steward, Hutchinson and Paulick (see bibliography) and the court transcripts in the legal section of the collection.

Seymour and Morgan first produced the New Yorker in 1850 for the harvest of 1851 (Hastings II, p. 3). They also produced Katchum's mowers.

George H. Allen joined the company the 1853 forming Seymour, Morgan and Allen. He remained with the firm until 1873.

The firm's major contribution to the Agricultural Revolution was the quadrant platform, invented by William Seymour in 1851. This, coupled with Palmer and Williams self-ranking mechanism "became one of the most valuable monopolies in the self-rake industry" (Hutchinson II, p. 394). Seymour and Morgan literally ruled the industry for over two decades. Anyone who wanted to build a self-raking reaper had to pay them. McCormick paid out over $60,000 between 1862 and 1872 for its use (Hutchinson, p. 394).

By 1860, Seymour Morgan and Allen were exporting their machine to Europe, had a factory in Europe and several branch offices in the U.S. most notable of which was the Johnston Street office in Chicago.

George Allen left the firm in 1872. However, he returned a year later as treasurer of the corporation. William Seymour disposed of his interest in his patents to D. S. Morgan for his interest in a Hamlin farm in 1857. However, he continued as head of the foundry business until his retirement in 1877.

The Triumph or Reel machine appeared about 1872 and lasted until the firm closed down operations. The firm failed to recognize the importance and demand for self-binding machines and thus lost this hold on the agricultural machine market by 1880 (DSMba-12). Some experiments were handled by the company. In 1879, Samuel Johnston, formerly the founder of Johnston Harvester, became associated with D. S. Morgan. He agreed to pay one-quarter of the cost for experimenting on the Johnston Low Down Self-Binder. Fifty to sixty were made for the harvest of 1883. Unfortunately, the machine failed. Johnston resigned. The company switched over to the Appleby Binder and met with little better success (DSMba-12).

D.S. Morgan and Company became incorporated in 1882, with D. S. Morgan President, E. L. Lamb secretary and George Allen treasurer.
In 1885, the Stone Factory #2 was built east of the village on Spring Street, expecting to concentrate all work there. The secretary's records show that the company did not make money since the time they started in the binder business and factory #2 was built (DSMba-12). After the firm closed down the factory became the Brockport Wheel Works and today it is the Brockport Cold Storage.

The company suffered financially throughout the rest of the decade. In 1890, D. S. Morgan died and his son George took over as President.

The trustees of D. S. Morgan's estate, realizing the handicaps of doing business in a small town, decided to try to relocate, merge or sell the business. Finally, after several ill-fated attempts, the directors (trustees) decided to sell the patents and business in July 1894. Production was terminated at this time. In October, the Harrow business for the west was sold to E. Bement and Sons of Lansing, Michigan. At the same time, the Binder and Reaper patents were sold to Adriance, Platt and Company of Poughkeepsie, N.Y. The Wiard Plow Company in Batavia bought the Eastern Harrow business in November.

Meanwhile, in 1892, the trustees decided to erect an office building at the corner of Niagara and Pearl streets in Buffalo to house the new D. S. Morgan and Company. This twelve-story building was the first building of steel construction in that city. It cost $635,000 and was opened for tenants by the first of May 1895. The company flourished as a rental agency for the building and financiers. William P. Morgan handled the business until his death in 1937. Wilbur C. Dixon managed the building until it was sold in 1948.
The Collection

Content
The D. S. Morgan papers comprise the business papers of the company from 1896 to 1948. The collection, by no means complete, gives us a record of the litigation problems surrounding the reaper; the closing down of the Brockport operations; and subsequent company business until the sale of the building in Buffalo.

The documents have been grouped into eight categories and one subcategory reflecting the collection's major topics. Each category is arranged chronologically. This arrangement was brought about by the apparent lack of primary organization due to prior handling by disinterested individuals.

Description

Correspondence - DSMa
This category consists of two thousand odd pieces of company correspondence from 1854-1938. About three-quarters of the collection is centered on two periods; 1867-9 and 1895. Of special note is the correspondence between Morgan and his patent attorneys, Baldwin and Gifford. Below is a partial list of correspondents, among whom are many of the agricultural elites of the Nineteenth century.

Adriance, Platt & Co.
Ames Plow Co.
Henry Baldwin, Jr.
Wm. D. Baldwin
Joseph Bartlett
Buffalo Agricultural Machine Works
Philip Durland
Clinton Foster
Judge Fullar (Fuller)
George Gifford
James Guild
La Gonda Agricultural Works
Long, Black & Allstatter Co.
C. H. McCormick & Brothers
Miller, Wingate & Co.
Palmer & Williams
E. S. Rinwick
S. L. Sheldon
W. B. Spalding
A. B. Storyhton
A. H. Van Allen
Business Papers - DSMb
The general business papers from 1846-1936 include three boxes of bills, vouchers, journals and catalogs. Also, three company ledgers are filed separately.

History - DSMba
This subcategory is made up of a number of historically pertinent business papers including the Articles of Incorporation, policy letters, company publication (The "Triumph" Magazine), newspaper articles, annual reports, minutes of the board of directors and trustees, by-laws, and inventories. Of particular interest is Document Number DSMba-12; The Secretary's Report for 1897 gives a history of the business from 1875-1897.

Legal - DSMc
This category contains all the legal oriented documents in the collection. The chronologically arranged section consists of transcripts of court cases, judgements, affidavits, patents, applications for patents, re-issues of patents and licenses.

Writing - DSMd
Newspapers, booklets, broadsides and books not directly related to the business makes up this category. Among the books are agriculture reports and factory inspector reports that are not cataloged in this system. The main card catalog should be checked for these items.

Property - DSMe
The two boxes of property documents include deeds, chattel mortgages, mortgages, leases, abstracts of title and partial release deeds. Some of the properties are:
Clarkson, N. Y.
Brockport, N. Y.
Shannon Co., Mo.
South Chicago
Lake Co., Ind.
Chicago, Ill.
Kansas
Wolf Lake, Ind.
Michigan
Washington Heights, Chicago
Ironworkers addition, Chicago
"Sheffield 315 Acres"
Nobles Co., Minn.
West Pullman, Chicago
Buffalo, N. Y.
Iowa
Calument, Ill.
Lackawanna, N. Y.

Estate of D. S. Morgan - DSMf
This category includes papers on assignment of income for surviving members of
the family, bonds, stocks, bills, tax receipts, statements, bankbooks and power of
attorney.

Personal - DSMg
This section includes personal papers found in the collection but do not relate
directly to the operations of the D. S. Morgan Company. Material in this section
may not be used without written permission from the librarian of local history.

Personal papers pertain to:
Orson A. Morgan
William P. Morgan
Henry S. Madden

Graphics - DSMh
Inclusive of this category are photographs, glass plate negatives, print cuts,
drawings, maps and plats. The plats are cross-reference to the property (DSMe)
group.

The Card Catalog
The card catalog is organized in two sections, the subject index and a cross-
reference file. Examples of the subject index: correspondence, business papers,
legal, etc. The legal index is divided into two parts, the court cases and patents.

Each category is cross-reference by names, topics and other applicable categories.
For example: Legal-Patents documents number DSM-79 can be located under the
name of the assignee, Thomas Dodge; the inventor, Philip Kells; or the subject
covered by the patent, Harvesters.

The catalog number for each piece in the collection is prefixed by DSM. Each
subject category is denoted by a lower case alpha letter: a, b, c, d, e, f, g, & h.
The oversized pieces are stored separately from the main body of the collection; always check the oversize file for missing numbers.

**Glossary**

**D.S.M.** - Dayton Samuel Morgan, D. S. Morgan  
**Manuscript** - Any document in the collection that has been more than 50% hand written  
**Offprint** - Printed documents using typeset print  
**Pages** - The number of printed or marked pages  
**Printed** - See offprint  
**Trustees** - Estate of D. S. Morgan  
**Typescript** - Any document that is more than 50% typewritten
Bibliography of Related Titles


Martin, Charlotte Elizabeth. The story of Brockport for 100 years: 1829-1929.

Obed Hussey who, of all inventors made bread cheap. Follett L. Greeno, ed. Rochester, N. Y. 1912.


**Unpublished manuscripts**


Hastings, Helen M. *Some Old Houses of Monroe County*. "Ostrom, Morgan House." Monroe chapter D. A. R. Brockport, N. Y.

—*The Reaper Industry in Brockport*.


Queen, Gladys W. *Anecdotes of Old Brockport*. 1955.

Tuttle, Ray. *The Village of Brockport*. 
Appendix A

Biographies

Dayton Samuel Morgan

Dayton Morgan was born in Ogden (Spencerport), N. Y. on the 19th of November 1819. He was the son of Samuel, a prosperous miller and farmer, and Sara Dayton. Dayton's father moved to Ohio after he lost his wife and suffered severe financial reverses in the Panic of 1836 (Maples II, p. 6). Young D. S. was left with an aunt in Brockport. Eventually, he attended Brockport Collegiate Institute (now SUNY Brockport).

In 1841, Dayton was a clerk in the Brockport Erie Canal Collectors office. The following year he went to work in Whitney's dry goods store.

By the spring of 1844, Morgan had joined the Seymour's firm as a machinist becoming a partner a year later, when he bought out Thomas Roby's interests.

In 1864, D. S. Morgan married Susan M. Joslyn. They had seven children, George, William, Sara, Susan, Gifford, Henry and Gladys and lived in the large brick Italianette Villa at the corner of south Main and South Streets. The house remained in the family for 97 years.

Among D. S. Morgan's achievement, are Brockport Village Trustee (Dedman, p. 89), Vice-President of the central branch of the Union Pacific Railroad. He was also an organizer of the Central Crosstown street railroad in New York City. Both Seymour and Morgan were influential in bringing the State Normal School (SUNY Brockport) to the village where he served as President of the Local Board of Managers until his death.

At the age of 71, Dayton S. Morgan died from typhoid pneumonia on April 9, 1890.
William H. Seymour

William Henry Seymour, the senior member of the firm, was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, July 15, 1802. He was the son of Captain Samuel Seymour, a hatter. In 1818 William joined his elder brother James, a shopkeeper who owned a dry goods and merchandizing business in Murray Corners (Clarkson, New York) (Dedman, p. 5).

In 1823, they moved to Brockport where James built the first brick store in the town. He also constructed the first canal basin and warehouse on the future site of the reaper works (McIntosh, p. 158).

James left Brockport in 1825 to become Monroe County's first Sheriff (Hiler, p. ?).

Meanwhile, William continued in the family business enlarging it to the shipment of grain. During Andrew Jackson's administration (1829-36) he was postmaster (Elwell article, p. 2)

In 1833 William married Nancy Pixley, Brockport's first teacher (Dedman, p. 6). They had five children, three of whom reached maturity: Henry, Helen and James (Hiler, p.?).

William joined his brother-in-law, Thomas Roby, in 1844 and started the Globe Iron Works. D. S. Morgan bought out Roby's interest in the firm a year later.

Mr. Seymour retired from the partnership in 1877. During his retirement he remained active and toured England and the Chicago Exposition. He died October 6, 1903 at 101 years of age (Elwell article, p. 3).
George H. Allen

Born in Brockport in March 1825, George H. Allen was the junior partner in the reaper business. He joined Seymour and Morgan in 1853 and resigned in 1873 when he moved to the west. A year later he returned to Brockport and went into the banking business with John H. Kingsburg. Mr. Allen rejoined D. S. Morgan in the reorganized reaper company as treasurer where he remained until his death in 1892.
Appendix B

The following is a list of the machines made by the Morgan Company taken from H. S. Madden's Secretary's report and other sources in the collection.

Globe Iron Works (Seymour and Chappel)
   Stones and Agricultural Implements
   McCormick's Virginia Reaper
      Harvest of 1846 (100 made, 90 sold)
      Harvest of 1847 (200 made)
      Harvest of 1848 (215 made)

Seymour and Morgan
   McCormick's Virginia Reaper for the harvest of 1849
   Barnett Reaper for the harvest of 1850
   New Yorker for the harvest of 1851-1853
   Ketchum's mowers

Seymour, Morgan and Allen
   New York Self-Raker 1853-1872

D. S. Morgan and Company
   Triumph #1, 1875-77
   Empire State Mower 1875-77
   Triumph #2 1877-84
   Clipper Mower 1877-84
   Seymour Mower 1877-84
   Johnston Low Down Self-Binder (50-60 made) 1883-84
   Appleby Binders 1885
      #2 Reapers 1892-93
      #3 Reapers 1892-93
      #4 Mowers 1892-93
      #5 Mowers 1892-93
      #6 Mowers 1892-93
      #7 Binders 1892-93
      #8 Binders 1892-93
      #9 Mowers 1892-93
   A & B Spading Harrows 1892-93
   Rakes 1892
   Grape How 1892
   Wagons 1892-93
   Cultivators 1893
   Small Tools 1892-93
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D. S. Morgan

Morgan still gives personal attention to his business and exhibits the same energy, pluck and industry that characterized his early efforts. He has always pursued a conservative course, and the house of which he is the head has had its share of trade regularly since 1846, weathered through hard times and ups and downs. Competing concerns drop out of the way, but the conservative policy originally adopted is continued. It does so safely. Personally Mr. Morgan is a true gentleman, a gentleman of the old school; and his appearance is usually round about a full and continuous half-century of active life in the manufacture of harvesting machines.

To give a clearer idea of the crude beginnings in the harvesting machine business, and a better idea of the progress that has been made in the manufacture of machinery and the improvement of facilities for manufacture and in the improvement of the machines, we have procured cuts of the Globe Works and of the original reaper made there. They will repay careful examination for they show more

the chances of cutting their grain, or to look favorably upon such an innovation. But the hundred machines made that year operated successfully; they were sold and settled for, and their inventor inaugurated a revolution in the manner of cutting and harvesting grain, for up to that time the cradle had been the most improved implement used for the purpose.

Seymour & Morgan continued the manufacture of Mornclm machinery under license until 1848, when the original patent expired. They then introduced the reaper known as the "New Yorker," which gained a world-wide reputation, and was universally acknowledged as the best machine of its day. It was a hand taking reaper, with stand for raker or ferver, seat for the driver, and with slipped serrated sectional sickle substantially the same as now used. For the harvest of 1852 they ventured to make 500 of these machines; and people wondered how and where they could possibly be sold.

About this time Mr. Morgan purchased of Mr. Seymour the patent that controlled this reaper, and in the fall of 1855 licensed Warder & Co., of Springfield, Ohio, to build it for specified territory. Later it was made a closed reaper and mower and was put upon the market extensively incorporated, retaining the latter title, with D. S. Morgan as president, which position he still holds.

During the intervening years the concern has kept abreast of all mechanical improvements, and now builds what we are told to know the best, but to the ordering of men.

For time to time additions have been made to the original buildings as the increasing demands required, but the old "Globe Works" still remain as the first and longest engaged in the harvesting machine business. What wonderful changes in harvesting, and in all the stages of our real estate, the agriculture have occurred since their establishment, and what a retrospect for Mr. Morgan!

The kind when it is light. Seymour & Morgan were then founded, and in connection with the mercantile business they established the Globe Works, where they began the manufacture of stoves and agricultural implements, and afterwards reapers, as already narrated.

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D. S. Morgan

from old Welsh stock, that came to this country about the ye 1690, and settled in Connecticut, on the Connecticut River. His mother's name was Dayton, of New Jersey, and an English blood, her brother was a surveyor after whom Dayton, Ohio, was named. Mr. Morgan's father and his family removed from Connecticut to Ohio, and here his ancestors first settled, and thence went to Monroe County, and engaged in milling and farming. A few years later Dayton Morgan was born, and his mother died shortly thereafter. His boyhood was spent on the farm, attending country district school till 1858, when his father had the misfortune to lose a large portion of his property. In the general financial crush of that year. His father then moved to Ohio, leaving his son, Dayton Morgan, in Monroe County to look out for himself. He thenceupon took up his residence with an aunt in Brockport, N. Y. Her name, however, were limited and he had to support himself, which he did by teaching "district school," during the time studying days, and finally having gained enough to pay for winter schooling, he entered the Brockport Collegiate Institute; but he continued to teach in the summer time. It was his intention to prepare for a profession, but he decided that it would take too long to get a sufficient education and gain a foothold unaided and without influence.

In 1840 he decided to adopt a business career, and sometime in 1841 he obtained his first position as a clerk in the publisher's office on the Erie Canal, Brockport. He was not long in obtaining a position with E. Whitney, a merchant of Brockport, who was doing an extensive business for those times—hence his title of Mr. Whitney, or Whitney of Brockport. Mr. Whitney's enterprise, however, having failed during the panic of 1847, he took a position with Mr. Whitney, a merchant, and entered into the harvesting machine business, at the Brockport Collegiate Institute; but he continued to teach in the summer time. It was his intention to prepare for a profession, but he decided that it would take too long to get a sufficient education and gain a foothold unaided and without influence.

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plainly that words can express, the wonderful changes that have taken place during the memory of men still in the vigor of mature manhood.

One has but to remember that the picture of the Globe Works represents the extent of the reaper works of the United States, or in the world at that time, and then to take into consideration our many immense establishments and the several in other countries, in order to comprehend the extraordinary strides that have been made in the development of our country in field and factory store.

The cut of the old McCormick reaper shows the machine as it was when brought to Brooklyn. In setting it up for the photograph from which the engraving was made, the old wooden band wheel for driving the reel was left off the shaft, otherwise it is complete. The machine differs but little in form from the McCormick reaper which a few years after gave fame and fortune to its inventor and builder.

The New York hand-raker shows marked improvement during the few intervening years, still some crudities remain, such as the old wooden band wheel for driving the reel, etc.

The New York self-raker shows how quickly ingenuity developed radical improvement in providing an automatic rake by which one man's labor and the extremely hard work of hand raking were dispensed with. Improvements followed fast thereafter, other machines came also to the front, and the result finally, is the present substantially perfect system of harvesting.

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. DALRYMPLE.

Mr. Dalrymple, one of the greatest farmers of the Northwest, or of the world for that matter, is spending his winter in St. Paul, Minn. Our Mr. Leslie met him there, a short time ago, at the Merchants Hotel, and had a pleasant interview with him. Speaking of the past year's crops he said: "I put in 20,000 acres of wheat which looked very promising during the first part of the season, and up to Aug. 15, when we had the heavy frost, and that ruined all that was in the milly; there was some, however, too far advanced to be hurt. I had expected an average of twenty bushels to the acre; that would have given 600,000 bushels, on which at the advanced prices we would have made considerable money. We got, however, only about six bushels per acre, or 100,000 bushels in all; but it was enough to pay the expenses of the farm. I have put in thirteen crops up there and this is the first that the frost has materially injured."

Questioned about farm machinery, he answered: "We use a large number of implements, and have introduced a new one lately, a stacker for taking the ears and elevating it upon the stacks. Of binders, we use about half of Wood's and half of McCormick's. We do not use headers. We could save with them fifty cents per acre in the harvesting, but I think we would waste more grain than that, then we are saving and utilizing the straw more and more every year, and so are the other farmers. Then, we need a practical self-feeder for a machine very much, as our annual feeders are very unsatisfactory. Several years ago we used one of those devices, but they are not yet far enough advanced to be really practical. The Advance Thresher Company of Battle Creek, Mich., have one a little newer completion than any we have tried. "We use broad-end sockers entirely, but they are introducing drills up in the neighborhood, and I shall put a few on my farm next year to try them."

It is very gratifying to notice how general and widespread is the industrial activity in the South. In every State active progress is being made in the development of natural resources, and Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, the Carolinas and Georgia are all

The increase is in a longer localized or centered in iron alone, for while Alabama and her adjoining States are keeping up well towards the front, there is a wider diversity of industries receiving attention, in a greater scope of country covered by this activity. -Manufacterer Record.

AN ADDITION TO COUNCIL BLUFFS, Ia. - A VILLAGE OF IMPLEMENT WAREHOUSES.

There is likely to be such a congregation of agricultural implement warehouses in the western part of the city of council Bluffs, Ia., as there is now upon the flats of Kansas City. A large number of manufacturers of implements have purchased lots on First avenue in the section of the city mentioned; and it is expected that First avenue, within one mile of the east end of the new motor and wagon bridge connecting the two cities, will become the center of the implement and carriage trade of the West.

Among the prominent implement men who have purchased property are: David Bradley & Co., Partin, Orendorff & Martin, Altiman, Mier & Co., Platte Manufacturing Company—the company has already put up a large warehouse, H. Van Brunt, Weil, Shugart & Co., Eagle Manufacturing Company, C. F. Tidball Company, Sandwich Manufacturing Company, Red Oak Carriage Company, Peru Plew and the Minnesota Chief Threshing Machine Company. The railroad companies are preparing to afford them the fullest facilities.

The New Yorker self-raker, 1866. McCORMICK REAPER. 1866.

The Old "GLOBE WORKS," SEYMOUR & MORGAN.

THE OLD "NEW YORKER" HAND BAKER.

McCONNELL BAKERS, 1859-72.

The Denver Carriage Company, Denver, Col., will erect a factory for the manufacture of fine carriages.

THE FARM IMPLEMENT NEWS.

KEEPING TOOLS.

Keep your tools handy and in good condition. This applies everywhere, and from the smallest shop to the greatest mechanical establishment in the world. Every tool should have its exact place, and should be always kept there when not in use. Having a chest or any receptacle, with a lot of tools thrown into it promiscuously, is just as bad as putting the notes into an organ without regard to their proper place. If a man wants a wrench, chisel or hammer, go to the box or chest, or somewhere else, and the search begins. Sometimes it is found, perhaps sharp, perhaps dull, perhaps rusty. But at the time it is found enough time is spent to pay for several tools of the kind wanted. That habit of throwing things in boxes; of finding, any how, in any way, or any place, is one of the most detestable habits a man can possibly get into. It is only a matter of habit to correct this. Make it an inflexible end of your life to have a place for everything and everything in its place. It may take a moment more to lay a tool up carefully after using, but the time is more than equalized when you want to use it again, and so it is time saved. Habits, either good or bad, go on long in their influence on men's lives, and it is far better to establish and firmly maintain a good habit, even though that habit has a bad bearing on the moral character; yet all habits have their influence. Keeping tools in good order, and ready to use, is less necessary in large shops, but it is a great help in the proper place. To take up a dull saw or dull chisel, and try to do any kind of work with it, is worse than pulling a boat with a braid; and it all comes from just that habit of throwing down tools carelessly—habit. Nothing more nor less. To say you have no time to sharpen your tools is worse than outright lying, for if you have time to use a dull tool you have time to put it in good order. - Manufacturer and Builder.
As a great niece of William H. Seymour and long time resident of Brockport, New York, I have become well acquainted with many phases of the history of the reaper industry here, and in further preparation for writing this paper I have studied all that pertains to the subject in Monroe County histories.

I have also read carefully the leading biographies of Cyrus Hall McCormick.

The subject of the patent controversies is a perplexing one but I have tried to follow its main outline, and the authorities for certain of my statements are given below:


Helen M. Hastings
The Reaper Industry in Brockport

It was because of the chance meeting of two people in Washington, D. C. and the conversation between them that the manufacture of reaping machines had its beginning in Brockport, New York, a century ago. One of these persons was a Northerner – the other, a Southerner, the latter being Cyrus Hall McCormick.

Cyrus McCormick whose name is always associated with the reaping machine, was born on a farm in Rockbridge County, Virginia, in 1809. But this farm was not such a farm that we see around us in Monroe County, New York, today. Everything was primitive-when the grain ripened, it was cut down laboriously with a sickle or a cradle-scythe, only slightly more effective, and then as slowly garnered by hand.

McCormick’s father was obsessed by the idea that he could invent a reaping machine. He had a small blacksmith shop on his farm, in which he had originated various farming tools which were practical and which had been used with success, but all his efforts to produce a reaping machine were failures, though he kept right on trying.

Cyrus, who with growing skepticism, had watched the older man working at his hobby through the years, finally took over and, profiting by what he had learned by observation, he was able to produce a reaper that really worked.

According to the record, young McCormick obtained a patent on his invention in 1834, and then, still experimenting, he began making reapers during the winters, on his father’s farm in Virginia. In the summers he want about giving field trials of his reapers and selling a few of them, but the conviction grew upon him that the North and West were the best markets, not only because they were great wheat-growing regions but also because of their superior transportation facilities.

The story is told in all the Monroe County histories of the meeting in Washington, of a man from Brockport – usually said to be Elias B. Holmes – and Cyrus McCormick, who was on his way north at that time. Mr. Holmes informed the young man that Brockport, New York, on the Erie Canal, was in the center of a fine wheat-producing region – “no better wheat anywhere!” – and that Backus & Fitch, who owned a foundry in the village, would most probably make his reaper for him. McCormick must have been favorable impressed by what he heard about Brockport, for he soon demonstrated his reaper on the farm of Frederick P. Root, south of here, and arranged with Backus, Fitch & Co., to make reaping machines for him under his supervision. Something went wrong – Backus, Fitch & Co., would only make a few machines and McCormick soon turned to the Globe Iron Works, the other foundry in the Village, and arranged for them to make one hundred of his reapers for the coming harvest of 1846. The proprietors of the Globe Iron Works – Seymour and Morgan – made the full number asked for and, as this was the first time reaping machines had been produced in quantity in the country or anywhere else, they have rightly been called pioneers in the manufacture of the reaper.
It says, in Hutchinson’s biography of McCormick, that, although Genesee Valley grain suffered particularly from a blight that ruined much of the Eastern wheat, Seymour and Morgan alone did well in this harvest of 1846. The Mexican War was in progress and an army of 50,000 must be fed. There was a frantic demand for reapers in the West and most of the hundred machines built by this firm were shipped by canal to buffalo and thence by steamboat to Chicago, for use on the prairies.

The next year, Seymour & Morgan were ready to make reapers for McCormick again but they learned that he expected a royalty of $30.00 on every machine made for him, and this they considered too much. Cyrus was unwilling to modify his demands, no agreement could be reached, and so the young man let it be known that he was through with Brockport, and refused further use of his patent to the Globe Iron Works.

Here was a situation indeed – the manufacture of reaping machines had made an auspicious beginning in Brockport and there was no disposition to give it up; yet, how could it continue under the existing conditions? McCormick was already fighting another inventor – Obed Hussey – and there was every reason to believe that, if they infringed on his patent rights, he would soon be fighting them.

William H. Seymour, who frequently quoted Shakespeare, might have said, at this juncture, “There is a tide in the affaire of men,
Which, taken as the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.”

Difficulties and dangers might lie ahead but there seemed only one course to take and that was to go forward.

A number of the early settlers were inventors, as was demonstrated by the labor-saving devices they produced in foundry and workshop and placed on the market. Fortunately, a few of them chose to grapple with the principle of reaper construction. The Globe Iron Works soon began the manufacture of a reaper brought out by George H. Barnett, which, it was thought, did not infringe on existing patents. They built three hundred of them and were promptly sued by McCormick, who must have been on the watch. So, abandoning this model, the Company began the production of reapers after plans perfected by Mr. Seymour, the new machine being known as the New Yorker.

Mr. Seymour obtained a patent on this, and five hundred of the machines were made when the company was restrained from selling them by an injunction granted to McCormick by a Judge of the Federal Court. An appeal was made against this decision and, while the trial was of McCormick vs. Seymour & Morgan was going on in the United States Circuit Court in Canandaigua, Seymour’s
harvester with a self-rake which was attached to a unique form of grain deck called the quadrant platform, was on exhibition in that city.

The trial took place in the summer of 1851. It went against Seymour & Morgan for the injunction granted McCormick was sustained by the preceding judge. This, however, was not the crushing defeat it appeared to be; McCormick had established a factory of his own in Chicago in 1847 but he was no better off than the other manufacturers now unless he could get his patent monopoly renewed. It had expired in 1848 and, although he was making determined efforts to obtain the seven-year extension of time permitted by the existing patent laws, other manufacturers were as determined has he was to do everything they could to prevent him from having it.

In those days of American business, competition meant warfare to the bitter end; no quarter was given or expected, and, according to statements made in “The Century of the Reaper”, published in 1931 it was Seymour & Morgan who led the battle against extension of this 1834 patent.

William H. Seymour, born in 1802, had reached middle life and he probably had always been of a peace-loving disposition, averse to warfare of any kind; but Dayton S. Morgan, the junior partner of the firm, was of a different temperament and full of the vigor of youth. Under his leadership the firm pursued an aggressive policy during the never-ending patent war that began soon after 1850.

In “The Century of the Reaper”, just referred to, which was written by a grandson of McCormick, it states that Seymour & Morgan had strong political influence and they fostered a cleverly organized campaign to arouse active opposition among farmers to the royalty charged by the reaper monopoly.

The law provided that, in considering extension of patents, due regard should be given to the public interest, thus leaving it open so that if an invention had come into extensive use and was of great benefit to the public opposition to the patent might be considered favorably. The Board of extensions of patents received a remonstrance signed by one hundred citizens of New York State, asserting that McCormick had already made a great deal of money from his patent monopoly and the unrestricted use of this much-needed invention would be a boon to the farming population. Two of the three members of the Board, who were the Secretary of State and the Solicitor of the Treasury, were sensitive to this determined opposition and their verdict was against extension, but the Commissioner of Patents, third member of the Board, favored granting the extension solely because of the unusual merit of the invention.

When the Board of Patents ultimately ruled against McCormick by its two to one decision, he refused to accept defeat and turned to a higher authority. One of his biographers said he gloried in a fight and liked to follow the line of the most resistance; so it was not surprising that he appealed to the Congress of the United States to grant a special Act renewing his patent. Thus he dragged the reaper controversy further into national politics and the result of this was that on Capitol Hill the case became a cause célèbre which occupied much of the attention of Congressmen for several
years. Again and again the McCormick Bill was reported on favorable by committee, but “an immense array of political, social and commercial influences was brought to bear against it.” An anti-McCormick lobby was organized in Washington and the farmers of this country were said to be up in arms. Among the lawyers employed by the rival manufacturers were some who were famous or soon to be. Abraham Lincoln took part in these legal skirmishes, also Edwin M. Stanton, who was to be the future president’s Secretary of war; William H. Seward, ex-governor of New York, and others who were eminent attorneys in their time. In one way, all of this prolonged controversy served both sides for it kept the public aware of the importance of reaping machines and was therefore a good advertisement for all concerned.

And while the long-drawn-out tug of war continued, it must not be supposed that the Brockport manufacturers had given up their cherished plans to make reaping machines; injunction against them were futile so long as McCormick’s patent rights, which expired in 1848, were not renewed.

Inventors in Brockport went on with their work and patented some valuable improvements in automatic raking. By 1852 the firms of Seymour & Morgan and Huntley & Co., who were the successors of Backus & Fitch, out on the market their self-raking reapers which differed somewhat in construction but each possessed important principles essential to a perfect machine. These patents were subsequently consolidated to a perfect machine, each party holding specified interest. All of this ushered in new suits over the infringement of patents – sometimes one company took the offensive, sometimes another – and it was all only a phase of the everlasting battle over patent rights; royalties must be paid, or else!

Seymour’s “Quadrant platform” had come into general use, yet the patent was held by Seymour & Morgan and no other manufacturers could use it without paying license fees. This statement may need clarifying: for anyone who visits the Edison Institute at Dearborn, Michigan, will see there a group of ancient reaping machines made by different companies, and the only one of them which does not have the guardant platform is that of the Globe Iron Works (Seymour & Morgan). This can be explained by the fact that this primitive-looking wooden reaper with its rectangular grain-deck was built before 1851, when the quadrant platform was patented, and the others were built later.

In Hadrick’s Agricultural History of New York State there is a full page illustration of the New Yorker at work in the field, taken from an old wood cut. It has a quadrant’s platform and is drawn by two horses, but the text does not show where it was made or who made it. It was a Brockport product, made by Seymour & Morgan.

Mr. Seymour gradually withdrew from participation in the business but did not finally retire until 1878. Meanwhile, the reaper-making industry expanded rapidly here, so that Brockport became known far and wide as a manufacturing center. The other firm producing reapers here was the Johnston Harvester Company, which was successor to Ganson, Huntley & Co. in 1868 Samuel Johnston, an inventor, came to town and bought a controlling interest in the business. Reaping
machines made here were sold all over the country and in foreign lands. But in 1883, the Johnston Harvester Company’s plant on North Main Street was almost completely destroyed by fire, and Batavia was considered a better location to rebuild than Brockport. However, D. S. Morgan & Co., better situated than its rival, being at the side of the Erie, afterwards Bargo Canal, and with a spur of the New York Central Railroad close at hand, continued in active operation until Mr. Morgan died in 1890.

The reaper manufacture industry here brought prosperity to our Villager and made life easier for farmers everywhere.
“Locally Built Morgan Reaper Now At Museum

Generous Gift of Morgan Family by Mrs. Sara Manning

By A. B. Elwell

The firm of Seymour and Morgan was founded in the year of 1844. It was called the Globe Iron Works of Brockport. Its purpose was to manufacture stoves and agricultural implements. The building was located near the canal on the west side of Park Avenue.

The following year, the Hon. E. B. Holmes of Brockport, a member of Congress, while in Washington met Cyrus McCormick of Virginia, who was there to secure a patent on a reaping machine of his invention. This Brockport congressman told Mr. McCormick about the Globe Iron Works, also the character of the men in charge, advising him to go there to consult with them. This he did, bringing his crude machine with him for inspection by Seymour and Morgan.

Trials were made, with various improvements put into use on the reaper; but still one had to rake the grain from the platform by hand, and the driver of the horses had to walk.

As a result of these experiments, Seymour and Morgan were engaged to build 100 of these reapers for the harvest of 1846. These machines were sold, and this historical fact established, that the Globe Iron Works of Brockport, Monroe County, New York, became the first reaper factory in the world.

Seymour and Morgan continued to manufacture this machine until 1848. They then introduced a reaper of their own design known as the “New Yorker,” which gained world-wide reputation. For the harvest of 1851 they made 500 of these machines.

Seymour had invented the quadrant platform and the sweep rake was patented by Aaron Palmer. These two inventions together made the first successful automatic raking reaper known to have been used.

It was at this time that Mr. Morgan purchased Mr. Seymour’s interest in the patents that controlled the reaper, and licensed other manufacturers to build for specified territories.

Eventually, Mr. Morgan became sole owner of the concern which was subsequently incorporated under the name of D. S. Morgan and Company and he continued as its president and active head up to the time of his death in the year of 1890.

The “Triumph” reaper, which was called the perfect machine, was started in manufacture during the years of 1873-1874. This machine was the consummation of 40 years experience. This firm was the first to introduce the American Harvester to the world.
The D. S. Morgan and Company were making over 3,000 of these reapers each year during this period. The Republic-Democrat recently stated in its 75 year history that during the year of 1880 4,000 reapers were built and sold by this company.

One of the first reapers, the “New Yorker,” is on display in the Henry Ford Museum at Dearborn, Mich. Mr. Ford visited Brockport at one time, and while here Gifford Morgan presented him with this very old reaper. It was constructed mainly of wood, and this writer recalls how crudely built it appeared. Still, it was a marked advancement from the former method of cutting grain with the cradle. This was a scythe affair with four wooden prongs in front to catch the grain as it was swung by hand. Many prints have been made of this old wooden reaper, and a copy can be seen at the Seymour Library or Museum.

It was only recently that a “Triumph” reaper was discovered in a barn at Garland, on a farm which was owned by the Shafer family for many years. This reaper had never been taken out of the shipping crate, so it was in excellent condition.

A farm implement dealer in the town of Parma, who had purchased it, let this be known to the Seymour Museum staff and invited inspection. It was found in almost perfect condition, as it had never been put in use for harvesting grain. Through the generosity of Mrs. Sara Morgan Manning who purchased it and presented it to the Seymour Museum, this reaper has become one of Brockport’s most cherished souvenirs.

The village officials had it brought to Brockport intact, and placed it in the library yard. Charles Page volunteered to dismantle it, take the parts up to the large east room of the museum and reassemble them. Mayor Louis Smith and others assisted in the work and today the museum is very fortunate in having this fine specimen of 40 years of developing the first successful automatic raking reaper.

The painting and striping is in nearly perfect condition and the whole reaper has been coated with white shellac to preserve its present condition. A few of the minor parts are missing and Maxwell Karge has offered to make and replace them by observing a model possessed by Mrs. Manning.

The number of this reaper is 8995 as stenciled on the rear of the platform. We can deduce from this that this unit was manufactured about 1875, two years after production started.

There have been many explanations suggested why this reaper was never taken from its crate and put into use. It seems almost like an act of providence, that this should have happened, so it may now be viewed by posterity.

It is a rare occasion during this epoch in the history of our country that people see the need for preserving for the future great developments that have taken place.

Let us be grateful then that this one, one of the most important inventions during Brockport’s history, has come to rest in the Seymour Museum as a lasting memento...”